THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Being a geographer: Towards an understanding of primary teachers' constructs of subject-specific identity

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ABSTRACT

Being a geographer: Towards an understanding of primary teachers' constructs of subject-specific identity.

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Primary teachers working in English schools are usually responsible for teaching all of the pupils in their class all curriculum subjects. Therefore, it is likely that the relationship that an individual teacher has with each of these subjects will be significant in relation to their practice and, as a result, is worthy of investigation. This research uses geography as a lens to focus on the relationship that a group of primary teachers has with one area of the primary curriculum. The research explores each of the participant's unique geographical stories and applies a critical analysis to the relationship between the individual's subject-specific identity and their overall identity as primary teachers.

The participants in the research openly express an enthusiasm for geography and were purposively selected. The researcher was a participant. Phenomenology was employed as a research approach and data was collected over the course of one academic year using semi-structured interviews. The research findings, which are presented in a series of experiential descriptions and a play script, provide an insight into the lived experience of geography that each of the participants has and how this affects these individuals' lifeworlds.

The findings indicate that the teachers surveyed have a fused identity, whereby the teachers consider their subject-specific and generic primary pedagogy to be complementary facets that impact on their identity as teachers and not mutually exclusive. It is recommended that this concept of a fused identity is presented to both trainee and experienced teachers in order to facilitate reflection on individual primary teachers' subject-identity with a view to informing teachers' personal professional development and classroom practice.

The outcomes of this research contribute to the literature available on teachers' subject identity. The findings add to the body of existing knowledge in geography education and fill a specific gap in relation to research conducted with teachers of geography working in English primary schools.

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Abbreviations

AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
GA	Geographical Association
HEI	Higher Education Institute
IGU-CGE	International Geographical Union-Commission for Geographical Education
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IPC	International Primary Curriculum
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
MA Ed	Master of Arts in Education
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NSW	New South Wales
NC	National Curriculum
PPA	Planning Preparation and Assessment
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
RQ	Research Question
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SD	Schools Direct
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

> Section 1.1 introduces the research. In Section 1.2, the context is outlined and in Section 1.3, the rationale is presented. The methodology is introduced in Section 1.4 and the research details set out and an overview of the thesis provided in in Section 1.5. The chapter is summarised in Section 1.6.

1.1 Introduction to the chapter

Like many educators, I have multiple professional identities and roles. I trained as a primary school teacher, I have been a senior teacher and an assistant headteacher, and I am currently a teacher educator. I am also a geographer. For as long as I can remember, I have introduced myself professionally as both an educator and a geographer. Geography is important to me and is part of my professional identity. I am also an active participant in the geography education community; this research is intended to contribute to, and further research in this field.

This thesis is an exploration of the phenomenon of 'Being a Geographer' and how it relates to being a primary school teacher. The research uses geography as a lens through which to consider primary school teachers' subject identity using a phenomenologically-inspired methodology. It examines my own experiences and those of four other primary school teachers, of being geographers and considers this subject identity in relation to being primary teachers.

1.2 The Research Context

This research is concerned with geography and education in relation to geography as a school subject in the required primary curriculum in England. The participants of this research are all teachers who either currently work, or have worked in English primary schools teaching all the subjects of the primary curriculum. The research focuses not on their teaching of geography in the primary classroom but on their relationship with geography, their identification with this subject and its meaning for them. It looks at this relationship in order to consider ways in which primary teachers might hold and make use of a subject identity. The research is conducted against a backdrop of continuing educational reform in English primary schools and particular challenges for geography as a subject in the primary curriculum.

1.2.1 Geography and Geographers

> The art of Biography
>
> Is different from Geography.
>
> Geography is about maps,
>
> But Biography is about chaps.
>
> (Bentley, 1925)

There is on-going debate about the nature of geography as an academic discipline, compared to the subject, which is taught in schools in England and further afield.[1] Similarly, the ideas of being a geographer and the notion of geography expertise are the focus for much discussion;[2] and the information provided here is intended only to provide a context for the research.

Geography is currently a statutory subject in English primary schools and one of the non-core foundation subjects that was introduced as part of the National Curriculum (NC) following the Education Reform Act (HMG, 1988). However, although all primary aged children in England are required to be taught geography, the subject's position in relation to the rest of the curriculum could be described as precarious, in terms of the quality and quantity of what is taught in primary classrooms. Catling and Willy observe that:

> A key challenge is that for some years geography has been identified, albeit narrowly, as the least effectively taught primary curriculum subject. It seems that geography is less well understood and not fully appreciated by too many primary teachers. (Catling & Willy 2009:3)

In a further examination of the challenges that beset primary school geography, Martin (2013) identifies three areas of concern: the lack of time the subject is afforded in the school curriculum, the different perceptions that individuals hold about the nature of geography, and

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[1] One example of this debate is the definition given by Johnston & Sidaway that 'Geography exists as an academic discipline because there are people who call themselves geographers, who have geography degrees and who teach on geography degree programmes in university departments of geography' (2004:2). Meanwhile, it is not uncommon to hear individuals who teach geography in schools or who specialize in the training of future geography teachers in higher education establishments to refer to themselves as *geographers.*

[2] An example of this is the work of Downs & Liben (1991) who explored the development of expertise in geography. They suggested that it was necessary for those involved in geography education to make more explicit the links between cognitive development in individual students and an understanding of geographic expertise.

questions about the perceived relevance of the subject in relation to the other areas of the primary curriculum.

It is evident from my own research (Morley, 2010) and that of others (Martin, 2008; Catling, 2013) that the subject remains challenging for many primary teachers. In a report on the teaching of geography in primary schools, Ofsted stated that:

> Although they had good generic teaching skills, many teachers' subject knowledge was weak and they were insecure or unclear about what constituted good learning in geography. Most of the teachers surveyed did not consider themselves to be geographers and few had received any subject-specific training in recent years to help them to teach geography more effectively. (Ofsted, 2011:14)

As Ofsted notes, while many teachers working in English primary schools are ambivalent about geography, some are very negative, and only a limited number are enthusiastic. This is of particular concern to many working within the geography education community. Biddulph summarises this concern when she argues for inclusive geographies and posits that in the current political climate it is vital that 'all children and young people (not just some) have the right to access geographical knowledge that will help them to make sense of engage with and where necessary challenge a post-truth discourse' (Biddulph, 2017:46).

1.2.2 Training teachers to teach geography in primary schools

The extent to which a primary school teacher must be an expert in different subject areas is also debated. Eaude (2012) explores the issue of primary teacher expertise, what this looks like, the challenges of being an expert in the primary classroom, and how important it is for primary teachers to consider the complexity of the expertise needed to be an effective primary school teacher. Eaude (2012) references the five stages of development of expertise outlined by Alexander (2010) and the cross-phase Teaching and Learning Research Project (TLRP) (2006) project. Work in this area has concluded that there has been limited consideration of the distinctiveness of primary teacher expertise.

Interest in this issue has been reignited by the Carter Review of initial teacher training (ITT) (2015), and the proposed framework for core ITT (Munday, 2016) published in response to the Carter Review. Amongst the recommendations made by Carter (2015) is a suggestion that subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy should be a central part of any ITT framework and that schools should then include subject knowledge as an essential element of teachers' professional development. The proposed core framework for ITT uses the current

Teaching Standards (DfE, 2012) used in English schools, as a scaffold for setting out its recommendations and includes trainees having sufficient subject knowledge, being familiar with a range of subject-specific pedagogical approaches, and being encouraged to pursue their subject-specific professional development.

Because of the indicated challenges, these proposals present a problem for geography, which may also be faced by other primary foundation subjects. Despite considerable effort by those working within the geography education community, the combined result of these challenges is the continued fragility of geography as a curriculum subject in relation to other school subjects, particularly the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Geography is one of the ten or more subjects that primary school teachers usually teach their own class. In light of the issues outlined above, Martin contends that 'not only does geography have to find a place in the primary curriculum as a whole, but it also has to find a place in each class teacher's mind as being worthy of inclusion' (Martin, 2013:18). Teachers working in primary schools must contend with questions about the relevance of geography in comparison to other curriculum subjects as well as the challenge that for the most part, they are not specialists in the subject (Martin, 2013).

Butt and Lambert (2013), working within the field of geography education, contend that it is important for those working in the field to understand and consider 'political and ideological influences on the curriculum, the school system and the accountability environment in which it operates' (Butt & Lambert, 2013:5). Accordingly, this research is located within the field of geography education, but also within the current wider educational landscape.

1.2.3 Teaching today

In an article for the *Telegraph*, Paton (2014) suggested that Ofsted, the education watchdog, had acknowledged that schools need to ensure that pupils are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum including subjects such as music, art, history, and geography rather than the current over-emphasis on English and mathematics. This issue was further addressed by Ofsted's Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman in a commentary published in October 2017, which expressed concern for the lack of attention currently being given by teachers to reflecting on curriculum design. Whilst it is encouraging to note that Ofsted appear to be indicating that there should be a shift away from just teaching core subjects in primary schools, teachers today have more to contend with than just the pressure of what they teach.

The emphasis appears to have shifted to support education policy rather than how teachers can support the pupils for whom they are responsible for (Coffield *et al.*, 2007). Buchanan (2011) is one of several authors (Troman, 2008; Wilkins, 2011; Locke, 2015) who extend this argument, and suggest that as the focus for education policy has moved away from a concern for pupils' education to a focus on teachers' performance and educational achievements, teachers' autonomy has been devalued. Ball (2003) suggests that the move towards a culture of performativity in schools has resulted in a focus on teachers' struggles as opposed to learners' experiences. The contention is that education reforms, particularly in the form of an increased focus on targets and testing, have changed not just what teachers do in the classroom but also their identities as professionals.

In this climate, where it is alleged that teachers have been stripped of their unique identities (Furlong, 2005), it is even more important that teachers as individuals are clear about their own professional identity and what it is that they stand for and believe in. Löfström *et al*. (2012) suggest that new teachers entering the profession should have a clear sense of their professional identity. In addition, these points need to be considered in the context of the on-going changes to teacher training with the balance in ITT, moving from university-based to school-led training and teacher recruitment. It could be argued that there is even more of a need for teachers completing their training within a school based setting to be enabled to develop their own sense of identity and maintain a sense of autonomy, to avoid feeling that they must become the teacher that the school they are training in wants them to be.

A report by the National Audit Office (2016) found that only 50 percent of school vacancies in England are filled by teachers with the experience and expertise required for the positions advertised. Additionally, the report compared the amount of continuing professional development that teachers working in England received with that of teachers working in 36 other countries, concluding that it is approximately 60% less. The challenging situation presented here suggests that there is a need to find every way possible to provide teachers with the means to strengthen their professional identities in order to work in such demanding environments. For primary teachers who are usually required to teach across the primary curriculum, the relationship that they have with each of the subjects that they teach is important because they need to teach them well for the benefit of the children in their class; this subject identity is the focus of this research. The research is based on a belief that, 'if we assume that identity is a key factor influencing the teacher's sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment and effectiveness, then it becomes necessary to investigate the

positive and negative influences of these factors on identity development' (Löfström *et al.*, 2012).

1.3 Research rationale, purpose and significance

Although I have always been aware that I felt a positive connection to geography, compared to other curriculum subjects, I had never examined this connection in any detail. On completing my Masters dissertation (Morley, 2010), one of the markers observed that I had written about a range of individuals' perceptions and understandings of the subject, but had at no point explained what geography meant to me and why it was so clearly part of my overall professional identity as a teacher. This led me to consider the following questions:

- Why do I consider myself to be a geographer?
- What does it mean to be a geographer and are there other people with similar professional profiles to myself who view themselves as geographers?
- What are the similarities and/or differences between those people who do consider they are geographers?
- Is being a geographer just a label or is it part of my teacher identity?
- Does being a geographer impact on my generic teaching and if so how?
- What constitutes a primary teacher's subject identity?
- How useful is it to be aware as an individual teacher in a primary school of your subject identity?

I am currently a teacher educator working within a Higher Education Institution (H.E.I) preparing new teachers to work in primary schools. In the past, this work has included preparing beginner teachers to teach geography in primary schools, but currently my time is concerned with generic pedagogical preparation. This preparation includes introducing trainees to areas such as lesson planning for continuity and progression, differentiation and assessment across the primary curriculum. I am also responsible for the trainees' transition into their induction year programme, which involves the audit and evaluation of individual trainees' strengths and areas for development.

Despite this shift in the focus for my work, my geographical identity remains. I believe being a geographer impacts the generic work that I do: one of the reasons for embarking on this research was to reflect on why this might be. In addition, I contend that having moved away from being first and foremost a geography teacher educator, I have gained an insight into how being aware of one's own identity as a teacher, and the relationship that an individual has to

different areas of the primary curriculum, benefits those who are about to enter the teaching profession. My own experience evidences how a teacher's identity is constantly changing in response to an individual's developing values, their personal circumstances, and the changing educational landscape. Whilst a primary school teacher could be branded as being a jack-of-all-trades, and a master-of-none, authors such as Eaude (2012) state that a primary teacher's role is complex and demanding. Primary teachers must meet multifarious aims for a range of children and usually teach all curriculum subjects. I know that my own relationship with the different primary curriculum subjects varies appreciably and that my confidence to teach each subject in the classroom is affected by the strength of these different relationships. Therefore, the relationship that a primary teacher has with each of the subjects taught, would seem to be significant and is worthy of investigation.

This research is concerned with the teaching of geography in primary schools, an under-researched area. 'Effective high-quality geography teaching and learning in primary classrooms and schools is vital in the development and progression of children's geographical thinking, yet there are few studies of the practices of primary geography teaching and learning which provide guidance about this, though there is much advice' (Catling, 2015:13). Chapter 2 reviews literature related to this study and concludes that only limited research has been completed in relation to teachers' subject identity and even less in the area of the subject identity of teachers working in primary schools.

Catling (2013), mentions that the teaching of geography in and outside primary classrooms is largely under-researched. Additionally, whilst there has been some research into beginner teachers' understanding of geography, there has been little or no research into experienced teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. To date, the empirical research conducted into primary school teachers' relationships with geography has drawn attention to the negative relationship that many individual teachers have with this curriculum area (Martin, 2000; Catling, 2004; Morley, 2012). This research fills this gap in the current body of research. Moran (2000) contends that understanding an experience from the experiencing person's eyes is critical to understanding the phenomenon itself; this research investigates being a geographer from the perspectives of primary school teachers who are content to be described as such. The participants are all experienced primary practitioners and enthusiasts for geography, who were identified by a Local Authority Geography Advisor. By gaining a better understanding of the relationships with geography, held by a sample of primary school

teachers who are enthusiasts for the subject, this research aims to inform thinking and understanding within geography education and primary education more widely.

1.4 Choosing a Research Approach

Lambert (2010) suggests that geography education research has not kept up with research in other areas because it has concentrated on understanding the curriculum, whilst there has been a move in education more widely to evidence informed change. Further to this, Butt (2010) considers how researchers might best produce high-quality research in geography education, contending that care must be taken in selecting the research methods used. Butt states that 'the adoption of a rigid theoretical or methodological structure may mean that important evidence is missed or previously held beliefs are simply re-enforced' (Butt, 2010:104).

The theoretical orientation of this qualitative research is broadly constructionist and has its foundations in a belief that 'all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty, 1998:18). This theoretical perspective is distinct from constructivism, which focuses on individual meaning making. Constructionism focuses on collective meaning making (Crotty, 1998) and in the case of this research, describes the meaning made from the individual participants' experiences when considered as a group of primary teachers who profess to be enthusiasts for geography. It is assumed that there whilst there will be personal, individual, and unique experiences for each of the participants, there will also be common themes identified across the sample. The subjectivity of the participants and the researcher is central to the research and there is no one single interpretation but rather multiple possible interpretations. Accordingly, the chosen research approach facilitates an opportunity to examine how participants who have experienced the same phenomenon construct and make sense of their own unique experiences of the world around them, and considers the common themes emerging from these collective experiences.

Qualitative research methods used to study experience include those in the ethnographic tradition, which aim to study the behaviours of culture-sharing groups (Cresswell, 2009). Other approaches include those based on grounded theory as used by Bouji (1998) and Draves (2014) to research music teachers' subject-identities, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith *et al*., 2009), and life history studies as employed by Sikes and Everington (2003).

Research specifically into geography teachers' subject identity is limited. However, the research that has been conducted has tended to be in the social constructivist mould and employed qualitative methods. In a collection of autobiographical essays, Gould and Pitts (2002) present a collection of recollections from prominent academic geographers who entered the academic world between 1955 and 1965 with the aim of painting a picture of 'one era of geography' from the narratives. Autobiographical memories collected from geography education tutors and student geography teachers, were used by McPartland (1996) to assess the significance of such memories and a similar study by Catling *et al*., (2010), recorded the autobiographical memories that respondents considered had 'turned them on' to geography. A grounded theory approach was used by Catling *et al*., (2010) in this research to elicit the nature of these experiences and the degree to which they had influenced individuals.

This research aimed to get below the surface of each participant's relationship with geography and required a research approach that facilitated a detailed examination of the phenomenon. Ultimately, phenomenology, as outlined below, was deemed the most appropriate methodology to employ; it was seen to stand apart from other approaches in that it is a systematic attempt to uncover and describe structures of lived experience, with the aim of arriving at a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of experiences or phenomena (Husserl, 1970; Giorgi, 1985; van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994).

1.4.1 Introduction to phenomenology

As a qualitative approach to research, phenomenology provides a naturalistic description of the way in which individuals experience a chosen phenomenon. It satisfies one of the core criteria associated with research located in the qualitative paradigm in that it is concerned with unique situations and aims to 'describe in detail and interpret with a view to explaining' the focus of the research (Greig & Taylor, 1999:46). The focus for those engaging in phenomenological research is not on measuring the phenomena as it might be for those working in a positivist/post-positivist paradigm: they are concerned with providing a 'rich description of some aspect of experience' (Langdridge, 2007:9).

The epistemological focus for phenomenology is on the structures of consciousness as experienced from the subjective or first-person perspective. The aim is to examine and uncover the essential structures of the phenomenon as lived by individuals (Willson, McIntosh & Zahra, 2013). From the phenomenological point of view, the principle structure of any experience is the way in which it is directed to be either about or of something (the object), its intentionality. The content or meaning of the experience is the representation of this direction

to the object and it is this content or meaning that is observed by phenomenologists, to make sense of the experience.

At its core, phenomenology has as a philosophical standpoint an interest in the ordinary conscious experience of everyday life. Phenomenological studies do not aim to provide definite answers but rather they aim to describe experience so that the reader is brought nearer to the phenomenon (Nielson, 2000). In its simplest form, phenomenological enquiry is used by qualitative researchers to study the lived experience of individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon with the aim of being able to describe experience rather than conceptualise it. Figure 1.1 outlines the stages in the phenomenological process.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Deciding on the experience that is to be the    │
│             focus for the research               │
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                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Locating participants who have lived that      │
│                  experience                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   The researcher putting his or her thoughts on  │
│    the subject to one side (epoché / bracketing) │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Collecting data from individuals  about their  │
│          experience of the phenomena             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Undertaking a process of methodical thematic    │
│   analysis (reductions) of the transcribed data  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Producing textural and structural descriptions  │
│        of each participant's experience          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Extracting the essential structures of the       │
│ phenomenon from the textural and structural      │
│ descriptions to produce a composite description  │
│ of the phenomenon                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1.1: The stages of the phenomenological process

The emphasis in phenomenological studies is on the individuality of experience and understanding the 'lifeworlds' of those experiencing the phenomenon.[3] Each subjective

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[3] The 'lifeworld' comprises the world of objects around us, as we perceive them and our experience of our self, body and relationships (Hegel, 1949). This lived world is pre-reflective – it takes place before we think about it or put it into language. The idea of 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*) is that we exist in a day-to-day world that is filled with complex meanings, which form the backdrop of our everyday actions and interactions. The term lifeworld directs

experience is examined in detail, including how the individual understands and is affected by it (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Cilesiz refers to phenomena as 'the object of a conscious subject's experience as it presents itself' (Cilesiz, 2011:494); in this research, geography is used as a lens through which to explore the lived experience of each participant in relation to the chosen phenomenon, their experience of the subject.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the methodology adopted for this research and outlines the differences between descriptive Husserlian phenomenology and interpretative Heideggerian phenomenology, both of which are reflected in the design of this phenomenologically-inspired research. Further reference is also made to the fact that I am both the researcher and a participant in the research. The experiences that the other participants have with geography are described by me as the researcher, but as I have my own experiences with geography, it is impossible to completely suspend my own pre-understandings of the phenomenon. A valuable part of interpretative phenomenology is the researcher's own knowledge and experience of the phenomenon (Conroy, 2003; Cresswell 2009); however, it is also necessary to explain any preconceptions and biases, which the researcher is aware of and considers, that may influence the research (Lester, 1999).

This research includes adherence to the phenomenological process of bracketing or epoché (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004), which is associated with Husserlian descriptive phenomenology and whereby the researcher seeks to consciously set aside thoughts, experiences and objectivity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). My own experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon are used as an instrument for interpreting the experiences elicited from the other participants. The concept of constitutionality (Koch, 1995) or the fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1976), which are central to the theory of interpretative phenomenology involve the fusion of the experiencing individual's experiences, knowledge and beliefs with those of the researcher. From the beginning of this thesis, I have categorised and described myself as a geographer and as a starting point to the process of uncovering the essence of my experience and those of the other participants;[4] my own initial reflections on the phenomenon are presented in section 1. 4.2. My aim in presenting this reflection is to establish the point from

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attention to the individual's lived situation and social world rather than some inner world of introspection (Finlay, 2012).

[4] The word essence is used in phenomenology to describe the structures of an individual experience. Husserl (1970) outlined how examining a single experience in detail could identify the essence of an experience. This is one of several controversial elements of traditional Husserlian phenomenology.

which I embarked on this research. Further details of my own lived experience of being a geographer emerge in the findings of the research. This initial reflection sets out my own experiences and provides a background to the assumptions upon which I designed and conducted this research and which are set out in section 1.5. Recording my own experiences with geography has enabled me to make clear my role as an instrument in this research (Cresswell, 2009) and recognise my own subjectivity.

1.4.2 I am a Geographer

As a child, I remember being fascinated by maps. There is photograph of me when I was about 4 years old studying my grandfather's atlas, which showed all the routes he had flown as a pilot, but I have no memory of any geography lessons in primary school. My memories of secondary school are of 'colouring maps', which I enjoyed and was, according to my school reports, very good at! When it came to choosing my options, I had to choose either history or geography. I remember wanting to take both subjects but, as the history teacher was marginally less scary than the geography teacher, history won.

I started history, economics and R.E. at A-Level but soon asked if I could drop R.E. and take geography. I was originally told no, but eventually, I was permitted to take the subject on a 'trial' basis. Geography quickly became my favourite subject and certainly the one at which I worked hardest. I had a good relationship with my teachers and always tried to go the 'extra mile' in my lessons. My A-Level independent study about children's mental maps was a labour of love, I then applied and was accepted to do a B.Ed. (Hons) with Geography Specialism at Homerton College, Cambridge.

My first year at university was not a happy one. The only part of the course I was interested in was the geography and that was a small element. In my second year, I took two courses with the students doing single honours geography degrees. I loved being taught by experts and I found myself entranced by the subject library. My interest in geography sustained me and enabled me to complete my education tripos papers. I found myself perceiving of myself as a geographer rather than an education student. In the fourth and final year of my degree, I could not face the thought of not studying geography and decided to see if I could swap one of my education papers for a geography paper. Despite consternation from the college authorities, I was permitted to do this, even though no student at the time had ever done it. It involved evening tutorials after teaching practice and getting the lecture notes from peers taking the single honours route.

Whilst at college, I became a member of the Geographical Association (GA) and went to my first Annual Conference. Not long after this I was asked to join the GA's Early Years and Primary Committee. I then started teaching and did a 20-day geography course run by the LEA. Again, people were significant in my 'geography life' and I formed a close friendship with the LEA advisor and a few years later, edited a series of books for the Geographical Association with her. The sense of being part of a community was important to me and I felt a strong affinity and connection to colleagues in the geography education world. Through my connections, I was asked to act as a consultant when the National Curriculum was revised and helped write supporting documentation for primary teachers. Another significant person who entered my life, was the then-chief HMI for geography who became my 'professional mentor', which continued until his sudden and unexpected death in 2013.

Although I stayed involved with the GA, even editing their newsletter for a few years, in 2001 I decided to go and work in Southeast Asia, where I taught the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). I coordinated the history and geography element of the curriculum. Again, my identity as a geographer was prominent: I put myself forward and was asked to write two new geography-specific modules for the IPC. After 2 years, I returned to the UK and was appointed as senior teacher in a primary school. This was the beginning of a period when geography took a back seat as I took on the role of assistant headteacher. After 5 years in that position and having gained my national professional qualification for headship (NPQH) but at the same time, realising I did not want to do any more school administration, I decided to leave the primary classroom. A position became available at the local H.E.I. and I applied and was offered a job as a senior lecturer. The job I was appointed to did not involve me in teaching geography, but by a quirk of fate, within a week of me starting, one of the geography tutors decided to leave with immediate effect and the head of programme remembered that I had described myself in my application as a geographer.

I started what was to be five years of teaching all the undergraduates on the BA (Hons) programme a generalist geography course; I also re-engaged with the geography community. This led to my involvement in various research projects initially with my Master's dissertation and then in collaboration with colleagues from other institutions. I then started to become involved in the international geography education community and joined the British Sub-Committee of the International Geographical Union-Commission for Geographical Education (IGU-CGE). In August 2016, I travelled with other members of the committee to Singapore and

then China to the formal launch of the 2016 International Charter on Geographical Education and then to Lisbon in October 2017 to share my own research findings.

Throughout my professional career to date, I feel that my core identity has been that of a 'geographer', which I define as someone who has an innate affinity to the subject, which guides what I do sometimes in a less than obvious way but at other times quite overtly. It guides the way I think about things when I am teaching but also when I am learning. A colleague in the geography education community once commented to me that she thought that there were some people who were born with 'geographical genes' and I often wondered if I might have a few of these.

I think it is this breadth of the subject and its relevance to the world in which we live that attracts me, as well as the fact that geography is not a static subject and is constantly evolving. I concur with the view that, 'so many of the world's current issues – at a global scale and locally – boil down to geography, and need the geographers of the future to help us understand them' (Palin, 2011:17).

1.5 Research Overview

In summary, a multiple case study was adopted as a strategy for this research. The cases consisted of five primary school teachers including myself as the researcher. This research was phenomenologically-inspired and the design was initially guided by the principles of transcendental phenomenology as identified by Husserl (1931). Previous research in different subject areas, that had employed this qualitative method as outlined by Moustakas (1994) such as that conducted by Wertz (1985), Bargdill (2000), Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004), and Cilesiz (2011) was reviewed and the research design formulated. Hermeneutical phenomenology as developed by Heidegger (1927), Gadamer (1976) and Ricoeur (1981) and used in research by Sherwood (2001) and Lydall, Pretorius and Stuart (2005), then influenced the analysis and presentation of the research findings. Further details of this approach are outlined in Chapter 3.

It was decided to conduct a series of in-depth interviews across one academic year with the participants including myself, in order to uncover the nature of the chosen phenomenon. Additionally, they were given the option to reflect on their experiences of being geographers using concept maps and personal journals throughout the research process.

1.5.1 Research aims and questions

The research aims were:

1. To explore, compare and analyse critically the constructs of geography held by a sample of primary geography teachers by examining their experiences of the subject.

2. To use a methodological approach in order to undertake a critical evaluation and analysis of the relationship between subject-specific knowledge, aspects of pedagogy and teachers' subject identity identified in participants' lived experiences, with the view to evaluating a theoretical framework that may be applied to other subjects and/or aspects of teachers' identity.

These aims are addressed in the research by considering the following research questions:

RQ1.   What are these participants' experiences with and of geography?

RQ2.   What constructs of geography do these primary geography teachers hold and what influences these constructs?

RQ3.   How do these subject-specific constructs relate to the overall identity of each of these primary teachers?

Each of these questions was formulated in line with the research approach adopted. The first of these questions was deliberately broad and designed as an overall guide and focus for the research (RQ1). The second question was designed to provide further insight into the individual and collective experiences of the participants' relationships with geography (RQ2). The final research question (RQ3) facilitated an opportunity to explore how the participants' subject-specific constructs identified through using RQ1 and RQ2 relate to these individual's identities as primary teachers.

1.5.2 Assumptions

In consideration of the points outlined in this chapter, this research assumes the following:

- That geography is an important subject and that everything should be done to develop the teaching of the subject in primary schools.

- That if a teacher has a positive relationship with a subject, then they are more likely to be able to convey the subject content in such a way that it is meaningful for those being taught.

- That it is useful and beneficial for teachers to reflect on their professional identity and their relationship with different subjects.

- That the use of a phenomenologically-inspired methodology can uncover the essence of each participants lived experience of being a geographer.[5]

1.5.3 Limitations

Phenomenological studies as outlined in Chapter 3 are usually small-scale and the meanings and interpretation of those meanings are bound and situated within a context of space and time and may not be reflective of reality for individuals beyond the sample. However, whilst it is not intended that the findings from this study be generalised to a wider population, it is presumed that the findings might inform research into other primary curriculum subjects, and other phases of geography education, but it is acknowledged this may require further investigation. Cresswell (2009) intimates that qualitative research of this type focuses on the experience of a small number of individuals to infer aspects of the phenomenon involving many. This intention is supported by van Manen (1990) who highlights that the intention of a phenomenological study is to present evidence of the phenomenon to increase awareness, prompt discussion, encourage personal reflection, and provide insights for further research.

1.5.4 Outline of Thesis

Each of the chapters in the thesis begins with a synopsis contained within a shaded text box. This is intended to help the reader navigate each chapter of the thesis; it outlines the chapter content and includes details of the chapter sections.

In this first chapter the phenomenon under investigation, 'Being a Geographer' is opened to the reader. This is in part done through a presentation of some of the researcher's own experience with the phenomenon. The context for the research regarding the status of geography in schools today and the wider educational landscape is set out and a rationale for the research presented. The chapter also introduces phenomenology as the theoretical framework adopted as well as the research aims, questions, assumptions and limitations.

In Chapter 2, texts which illuminate the essential themes related to the phenomenon are reviewed and discussed. Gaps identified in the research undertaken so far in this area are exposed. Theories of identity relevant to this research are discussed. The literature reviewed

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[5] Other assumptions relating to the use of phenomenological methodology include the assumption that participants will be honest about their experiences, that they will remember these experiences and that as the researcher I am able to set aside (bracket) my own personal bias and look objectively at the nature if the participants' lived experiences. This issue of bracketing is further discussed in Chapter 3.

includes work which has examined primary teachers' general professional identity and more specifically subject identity.

Chapter 3 explores the methodological decision-making process for the research and the methods employed. The chapter outlines the theoretical perspectives, which underpin the research. A further justification to that outlined in Chapter 1, for the choice of a phenomenologically-inspired research approach is presented and discussed, before different interpretations of this approach are outlined. Details of the sample and procedures adopted are presented, as well as information pertaining to the research tools employed to generate the data. Methods of data analysis and information regarding the way in which the data is presented are outlined before general ethical issues are discussed alongside issues relating to the validity and reliability of the findings.

Chapter 4 is the first of three chapters, which present the analysis and findings from the research in a series of phenomenological texts. In Chapter 4, composite identity portraits for each of the participants gleaned from their lifeworld texts are presented. The portraits synthesise both the textural and structural descriptions of participants' experiences, to provide the structural textures for the experience. Each portrait provides an essential description of the phenomenon under investigation, as experienced by the individuals. In Chapter 5, the five individual cases are considered as one 'multi-layered' case and three essential structures of the overall phenomenon, shared by the participants are exposed in a series of short descriptions. A composite portrait of the essence of the phenomenon uncovered is then advanced. Chapter 6 presents the final phase of the research analysis and findings influenced by the principles of phenomenology. The essential elements identified as being shared by the participants, together with the composite portrait of the essence of the experience are presented in the form of a play script. The chapter outlines the reasons for choosing this genre.

Chapters 7 discusses the research findings, and reviews the methodology employed. The discussion refers to theories of identity and some of the presuppositions associated with phenomenology. Reference is made to the research aims and questions stated in Chapter 1 and existing research literature reviewed in Chapter 2. A visual configuration of the key finding is presented with a supporting narrative. The chapter reviews the phenomenological processes employed in the research and includes a reflection by the researcher on the lived experience of undertaking the research.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings. The chapter outlines the significance and contribution of the research, and considers implications for practice arising from the findings.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the context in which this research is conducted. It has highlighted issues of increasing accountability and changes to the nature of the role being undertaken by primary teachers working in English schools. Particular challenges for the teaching of geography as a non-core primary curriculum subject, which many primary teachers have only limited background and training in are presented, and a rationale for the research is made with reference to the researcher's own professional background and interests. The methodological approach adopted for the study is introduced alongside details of the aims and specific research questions used to frame this empirical investigation, the assumptions on which the study is based and its limitations. Finally, an outline of the way this thesis is organised is presented.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

> Section 2.1 introduces the chapter and Section 2.2 considers the concept of identity. Section 2.3 narrows the focus of the review to literature concerned with teacher identity. In Section 2.4, the focus of the review is further narrowed to consider teachers' subject identity before Section 2.5 summarises the main points of the chapter.

2.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter serves to further contextualise the research, building on the points made in Chapter 1 by reviewing a range of literature relevant to the research. Theories of identity are outlined, gaps within the existing literature are exposed and a frame of reference for the findings is presented. As a precursor to Chapter 3, which outlines the methodology used, some reference is made to how different ideas about identity have influenced the research design.

Whilst this research is concerned with one element of primary teachers' identity, their subject identity, this chapter initially considers the general concept of identity, before considering literature associated with teacher identity and then more specifically teachers' subject identity. This research is concerned with primary teachers' subject identity, but reference is made to related and relevant research around the subject identity of secondary school teachers.

2.2 The Concept of Identity

> Identity is troubling. Just at the moment when you might think that you have a handle on it the narrative is reframed and its structure becomes uncertain. Identity matters, but perhaps it matters because it is so troubling and so difficult, if not impossible to contain (Woodward, 2002:158).

The idea that the concept of identity is both complex and fluid is supported by a range of literature addressing several aspects associated with the term. The different meanings attributed to and interpretations of the concept have resulted in work on areas such as: individual's internal structures (Schwartz, 2001), theories of social identity (Turner *et al.*, 1987), membership of groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), nationalism (Schildkraut, 2007), and identity theory (McCall & Simmons, 1978). The complex nature of identity as a concept is, in part, a result of the multi-dimensional nature of identity as a construct, which can not only describe an individual's characteristics but also their interpersonal patterns of communication. In acknowledging this extensive and wide-ranging literature about identity, Lawler comments

that 'more or less everyone knows more or less what it [identity] means and yet its precise definition proves slippery' (Lawler, 2008:1).

To contextualise this empirical research, it is helpful to consider the dual aspects of identity prompted by the questions *who am I?* and, *who are you?* used by Castañeda (2011), in an investigation of how primary language teachers construct their identity. In this study, it is noted that what, at first, may seem a simple separation between introspective reflections provided by individuals to the question, *who am I?* is in fact more complex. This is because a respondent could answer this question about their self, in the same way that they could respond to an external enquirer asking *who are you?* This example illustrates how the personal and social perspectives of identity are intertwined. In this research, aspects of both personal and social identity are important. Whilst the research evidence is collated from participants' responses to external questions asked of them by me, the researcher, in order to answer these questions, the participants are asked to look inwards and reflect on who they are.

Classical views of identity can be traced back to the work of Rene Descartes (1985 [1641]), who put forward the concept of individualism through the idea of the Cartesian Subject. This view contends that it is the foundation of individual existence that provides the focal point for the formation of human identity; building on the belief that an individual's thoughts are the only source of certainty. According to this theory, identity is seen to develop through the experiences of crises and contradictions, which every individual must overcome on a day-to-day basis. The concept of Cartesian Substance Dualism is based on the premise that only an individual can know their own mental state and that any claims made about mental states by individuals such as beliefs and desires are intractable. Accordingly, if an individual perceives themselves as being in a particular mental state and as having a particular identity, such as a being a geographer, then others cannot contradict this perception. But this idea of the self-sufficient subject (Gil, 2000) raises questions about the way in which identity is interpreted. Lemke (2008) talks about subjective identities, which describe our self-perceived identity, and contrasts it with the concept of projected identities, which is who we wish to be seen as to others and who others see us as. In the context of this research, it might be the case that an individual perceives themselves as a geographer and that this is also the identity that they wish to be projected so they might overtly describe themselves as such, but others may or may not agree with this interpretation.

2.2.1 The Evolution of ideas about Identity

In contrast to the views put forward by Descartes (1985 [1641]), who suggested that it is the mind or conscious substance that gives us identity, Locke (1996 [1689]) aligned individual personal identity with individual consciousness and memory. Locke, maintained that the self is 'a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places' (Locke, 1996:37). This resulted in Locke contending that consciousness always accompanies thinking (Locke, 1996 [1689]) and that it is the consciousness of one's experiences brought forward to the present moment that gives us identity with our prior self. The assumption here is that the concepts of consciousness and personal identity are inextricably linked to memory and how experience impacts on individual identity. 'As far as [a] consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now as it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done' (Locke, 1996:226). In the context of this research, such an idea would suggest that individuals would only be viewed as perceiving of themselves as geographers because of the experiences that they have had and which they disclose.

Controversially, whilst Locke (1996 [1689]) suggests that if an experience can be remembered then the individual has had that experience, he also suggests that the opposite is true and that if an experience cannot be remembered, then doubt is raised as to whether the experience has actually occurred. In accordance with this view, memory is viewed as a necessary condition of personal identity. The concept of the self and how individuals personally identify with this idea, extends and persists only so far as one's own consciousness. These particular views have been questioned in relation to the idea of false and implanted memories. For example, a 1996 study by Hyman and Pentland found that depending on experimental variables, at least some kind of false memory could be implanted in between 20 and 40 percent of participants. The question asked in relation to Locke's theory is: if we mis-remember something are we now identified with a person who never existed? Within this research, it is assumed that participants are honest when talking about their experiences with geography. Measures associated with the sampling strategy outlined in Chapter 3 are designed to negate any challenges to the reliability of the findings that this assumption presents. Additionally, guidelines for checking the validity and reliability of data collected in phenomenological studies (Polkinghorne, 1989), which include checking that the textures and structures identified in the data can be traced back to the raw data, are adhered to.

While many of the classical theories of identity focused on the self as governed by institutional processes, as theories of identity have evolved, there has been a shift towards the individual's perception of their self. Mead (1934) emphasises how an individual must move outside of themselves to be self-conscious and aware of their identity. The methodology adopted for this research facilitates participants with an opportunity to delve deeper into a phenomenon through a retrospective process, and in this manner, reflect on historic lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990; Creswell, 2009). Related to this point, Garfinkel (1967) posits a view of identity which relates to practical achievement by an individual. This theory contends that the identity presented by an individual is a response to the role that that person takes, resulting in a person's identity being aligned with specific situations and the emerging actions of the individual in that situation. So, an individual teacher might become a geographer or a historian because that is the role that they find themselves in. Further to this suggestion, Giddens (1991) asserts that identity is not so much concerned with who we are, but rather what we make of ourselves. This implies that individuals can only be characterised by the way that they enact their being and that awareness of individual identity is only possible through adopting a reflexive position. Identity theory, outlined in Section 2.2.3 encompasses some of these ideas.

Within recent debates about identity, Woodward (2002) and Lawler (2008) suggest that definitions and related theories become more explicitly spoken about in times of crisis. Woodward uses the example of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City in 2001 to suggest that 'identity satisfies a demand for some degree of stability and security' and that 'crisis occurs when an identity position is challenged or becomes insecure' (Woodward, 2002:x). These contentions are rooted in theories that are founded on the idea that an individual's identity is constructed when boundaries are set. Such boundaries relate both to the physical boundaries that the bodies we inhabit provide us with, but also to those boundaries that individuals set themselves as they form their identities. An example of a physical boundary would be one that someone who is physically unable to get outdoors encounters. An illustration of the second type of boundary would be an individual who chooses to go and live outside their native country to immerse him or herself in the culture of that country and learn the language, thus adding a different dimension to their identity, contrasted with someone who refuses to contemplate such a move, thus actually putting in place a boundary to one aspect of his or her identity. So, in the context of primary education, a teacher who has undertaken a general training may decide of their own accord to attend a local subject-network meeting or attend a national subject association conference to improve their subject knowledge and pedagogy with a view to putting themselves forward to take on a specific

subject role. In contrast, another teacher with a similar background might decide not to engage in any subject-specific CPD and rather focus only on teaching using their pre-existing subject and pedagogical knowledge.

Woodward's (2002) proposal that identity is a fluid and dynamic concept seems to stem from the idea that individuals are constantly searching for and encountering the boundaries described. As individuals, we are constantly crossing boundaries and creating new boundaries as new situations are encountered and decisions made about what to do in these new circumstances. This process leads to the formation and establishment of new and evolving identities. This is illustrated in my own identity. I have worked in a university for nine years and have until recently considered myself to be a primary teacher and a teacher educator. It is only recently as I have completed various research projects and actively involved myself in a range of research knowledge exchange (RKE) activities that I have also considered myself to also be a university academic. My identity has evolved as I have identified myself in different ways.

2.2.2 Identity Formation and Location

Cooley (1964) contends that the self is formed in the context of how an individual interacts with those around them. The term the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1964) is used to describe how when presenting ourselves, we consider how we imagine we appear to others and in turn what others think of us. Building on this theme, Garfinkel (1967) intimates that individuals can be characterised by the way that they do things and that there are clues to an individual's identity in the way that they organise, manage, and present themselves. This research seeks to uncover the clues to the individual identity of a sample of primary school teachers who share an identified characteristic; an enthusiasm for geography. Furthermore, it aims to disclose participants' attitudes and beliefs. This supports the idea that 'each person is unique, each of us has a personal destiny for which we can take some responsibility' (Taylor, 1989:65).

Mead stipulates that identity is not present in infants when they are born, but 'arises in the process of social experience and activity, that develops in the given individual as a result of relationships to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process' (Mead, 1934:135). This links to work by Erikson (1968) in the field of psychology, which looked at different stages of identity formation. This work developed from the view that the physiological traits within human beings, result not from changes to the DNA sequence, but rather from both external and environmental factors. The presentation of these ideas led to the development of what was termed the epigenetical principle (Erikson, 1968); this contends

that every new phase of life adds something specific to the next phase, whilst referring to previous phases.

This suggestion that those with whom we have interacted and the prior experiences and encounters that we have had, can have an influence on our identity is supported by Walker and Leedham-Green (2010). This is an extension of the view that Goffman outlines when talking about the dramaturgical effect that an individual has when they present themselves in everyday life, suggesting that 'when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation' (Goffman, 1959:17). This implies that some individuals may manipulate the way that they present themselves due to the tradition of the setting they are presenting themselves within: it may require a certain type of expression. Taylor draws these points together by concluding that 'an identity […] is a layering of events or participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other' (Taylor, 1989:51). This research involves the extraction of the phenomenological textures and structures of each participant's experience. These are the layers of an individual's identity that the research aims to unpeel considering what and whom has influenced participants with a view of building a composite description of how these teachers manifest their subject identity.

Merleau-Ponty (1962), extends this line of reasoning and links theories of identity to the concept of embodiment with a focus on the role of the body in relation to identity formation and presentation. In recognition of these ideas, Woodward (2002) notes that in what appears to be a challenge to the idea of Cartesian Substance Dualism, there has been a movement away from viewing identity as a separate entity, instead viewing it as interconnected with the way in which an individual embodies their identity. Woodward (2002) then suggests that the identity of an individual might be established by considering the way in which they embody a role. In this research, the geographical stories of each participant and the ways in which the participants embody their subject identity in their daily and professional lives, as reported by themselves, are considered. Ricoeur (1991) uses the term emplotment to describe this idea of an individual's identity being manifested through a series of 'episodes'. He highlights that the self is constructed as the result of these episodes, which, when taken together, provide an expression of that individual's identity. The manifestation of the self by this account, is open to constant reinterpretation according to both temporal and contextual factors.

> Emplotment configures a self which appears as the inevitable outcome and actualization of the episodes which constitute a life. The self is configured as unfolding through episodes, which both express and constitute that self. (Lawler, 2008:17)

Ricoeur (1991) goes on to suggest that as individuals we see ourselves in the way that we constantly re-tell stories about our experiences, and it is these stories that in turn produce the self. This research is designed to enable each participant to tell their own geographical story and those episodes which have contributed to this narrative as it is told at one point in time.

The idea that that our identity, once formed, is socially located, is one posited by several authors (Mead, 1934; Giddens, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Woodward, 2002). Whilst Lawler claims that the different ways of theorising identity have resulted in different definitions of the term, she herself takes a broad view of identity as 'not as belonging within the individual person but as produced between persons and within social relations' (Lawler, 2008:8). The definition, posited by Wenger in the form of his social theory of learning, specifically locates identity within a social context and describes it as 'a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and [creating] personal histories of becoming in the context in our communities' (Wenger, 1998:3). The argument pursued by Wenger (1998), is that it is impossible to separate the individual from their surroundings and therefore, identity and the context within which it is located, are intrinsically linked.

Despite signifying the importance of these wider social and cultural contexts, Wenger (1998) is careful not to dismiss the importance of individuality. He explicitly rejects the idea that there is inherent conflict between the collective and the individual and suggests that it is a mistake to try and make a clear distinction between identity and the social context within which an individual operates (Wenger, 1998). Rather, he maintains that the focus should be on mutual construction, commenting that 'in a duality it is the interplay that matters most not the ability to classify' and that 'it is as misleading to view identities as abstractly collective as it is to view them as narrowly individual' (Wenger, 1998:146). This view is supported by Woodward (2002) who cautions against taking account of only the social and cultural manifestations of the body, and infers that in doing this, the concept of identity is itself in some way destabilised. Part of this research involves building up a composite description of each participant and how their social context informs and influences their identity. Teacher agency[6] and time are other factors considered in the analysis of the research data. Consideration is given to the extent to which

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[6] The concept of agency is much debated in the field of sociology but is often defined at the capacity to act. It is a concept that is often considered alongside that of structure or the drivers and inhibitors afforded to society. In the context of education and more specifically teachers working in school, issues of agency, which might affect teachers' identity, include the requirement or not to prioritise wider agendas such as those proposed by government over an individual's priorities (Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2014).

the participants feel able to live and project their subject identity, amid continuing educational reform. Questions are asked about how participants' identities are influenced by what the individual is able to do and perceives that they are able to do in their given circumstances, but also where they are and what they are doing at a particular point in time. This acknowledges the observation that 'the identity of a person is thus thought to be not some static innate entity but rather [the identity …], through on-going verbal and nonverbal activities with others, a construction that undergoes constant change as these activities unfold' (Mockros, 1995:120).

Whilst it is possible to make some generalisations in relation to the specific factors influencing the identity of any one participant in this research, the degree to which different factors are an influence is unique to each individual. This research aims to provide an indicative picture of how the chosen participants live their experience of geography and how this influences their identity as primary teachers.

2.2.3 The Theory of Social Identity and Identity Theory

There are two particular theories of identity relevant in relation to this research: Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel (1978) and Identity Theory proposed by McCall and Simmons (1978). Whilst some see significant differences to these two theories (Hogg *et al*., 1995), others take the view that there are, in fact, overlaps (Setts & Burke, 2000).

The theory of Social Identity (Tajfel, 1978) states that an individual's sense of whom they are is based on their group membership. The contention is that being in a group gives an individual a sense of belonging in the social world, a process known as *self-categorisation*. Furthermore, the theory purports that individuals may even enhance the status of a group to which they belong to increase their own self-image. Another hypothesis of the theory is that those in certain groups (an in-group) may then attempt to find negative aspects of other groups (out groups) of which they are not part leading to prejudice. The examples given of such 'in' and 'out' groups include; male and female, middle and working class and Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

In Identity Theory (Stryker, 1968; McCall & Simmons 1978),[7] which can be traced back to the work of Mead in 1934, individuals also classify themselves but this process is called *identification*. Central to this process are the roles that individuals use when designating

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[7] Stryker & Burke (2000) claim that Stryker first presented identity theory at the 1966 meeting of the American Sociological Association. McCall apparently approached Stryker and said, 'You've just presented our book'- a book that was published later that year.

position. The naming of roles invokes meaning and this then leads to expectations being formed in relation to individuals' own behaviour and how they view others should behave. A person has as many identities as they have distinct networks of relationships in which they occupy a position and play roles. The theory 'asserts that role choices are a function of identities so conceptualized, and that identities within self are organised in a salience hierarchy reflecting the importance of hierarchy as an organisational principle in society' (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286). The concept of salience is key to the theory, with the contention that an individual organises the identities that they have in a hierarchy and that these then serve as a framework for interpreting experience. It is claimed that the higher the salience of one identity in relation to another one, the greater the probability of the individual making behavioural choices in accord with the expectations of that identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000:286).[8] This theory would suggest that within the field of primary education, the salience of each subject to be taught by each primary teacher might then be reflected in his or her confidence and enthusiasm to teach the subject. The theory also considers salience of identity across time and situation suggesting that the salience of a primary teacher's different subject identities, may or may not be reflected in how much attention they continue to give different curriculum subjects when they are put under time pressures.

2.2.4 Section Summary

This section has considered how theories of identity have evolved over time in response to questions about identity, the self, and identity formation and location. Classical theories of identity focused on the self, but more recently, the focus has shifted to a concern for social and collective identity with the influence of the context in which individuals operate, taking more prominence. Alongside this, it has also become more commonplace for ordinary individuals to talk openly about identity and it is no longer the case that identity is a discussion topic for just a few. 'Early formulations of identity were the rarefied preserve of philosophers; more recently the topic has made unprecedented strides into the popular realm, permeating everyday talk and practices from self-help literature to the pseudo-theory of television chat shows' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006:17). The change in emphasis during the 20th Century has been in the view of Giddens (1991) to give an increasing priority to the self-constructing self, whilst taking greater account of the fluidity and fragmentary nature of identity. Taylor (1989) does not link these changes to a concern with the inner voice as problematic, but instead views it as

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[8] Research to illustrate this point includes that by Nuttbrock & Freudigner (1991) who concluded that the saliences of the mother identity in first time mothers explains to an extent whether they accept the burdens of motherhood and make sacrifices for their child.

just part of the passage of time, as older concepts of reason in relation to natural systems of hierarchy become less prominent.

This section has served to highlight that Identity is both complex and difficult to define and is impacted on by a range of factors. It is a concept that continues to evolve and continues to be theorised in a range of ways. Two theories of identity used by previous researchers, relevant to the research are outlined. Because of the complexities acknowledged and in accepting that the concept of identity means different things to different people, this initial review of the literature prompted a decision to narrow the focus for the research. The research is concerned with primary teachers' identity as discussed in the next section but, more specifically, one aspect of this identity: teachers' subject identity as outlined in Section 2.4 of this chapter.

2.3 The Concept of Teacher Identity

In the same way that the concept of identity is difficult to grasp and problematic to clearly define, it is difficult to define what is meant by teachers' identity. Korthagen (2004) mentions the fact that there appears to be no clear definition and Goodwyn (2010) supports this by suggesting that the teaching profession is unsure of how to define itself in relation to other professions. Janzen personalises the issue to teachers themselves, asserting that 'teachers are caught in a tug of war between what they are supposed to be and who they are trying to become' (Janzen, 2015:117). Despite these challenges, there do appear to be some elements of teacher identity that are widely recognised. Firstly, it is seen as a role that is assumed by an individual (Beijaard, 1995). Additionally, it is the recognition of the teacher as a certain kind of individual that a person demonstrates via communications or actions which both implicitly and explicitly give a sense of that individual's being, including their goals, values, beliefs and actions (Puvirajah & Calandra, 2015). In the context of this research, the idea that identity is about how individuals view themselves (Cooley, 1964) but also about how individuals are defined in terms of their social interactions (Mead, 1934; Wenger, 1998) as posited in Section 2.2, provides a starting point for further reflection.

There has been considerable research into how teachers learn and subsequently construct their own mental images of what it means to be a teacher in terms of their beliefs, expectations and motivations and the work by Clandinin and Connelly (1996) is a good example of research into how teachers view themselves. That research found that teachers were more concerned with who they were than what they knew. A later study by Soreide (2006) looked at how teachers in elementary schools contrived to understand themselves; it concluded that there were four teacher types: the caring and kind teacher, the creative and

innovative teacher, the professional teacher and the typical teacher. Whilst the teachers surveyed were not seen as confined to just one group, most of the teachers involved in this study perceived themselves primarily as kind and caring teachers.

Beyond research conducted into teachers' self-perception, the process of learning to teach, which is both challenging and by no means straightforward, has attracted considerable attention from researchers and overlaps with the research into teacher identity. Britzman is one author who suggests that teachers' identity is inextricably bound up with them learning to teach, which 'is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing and who one can become' (Britzman, 2003:31). Another line of enquiry, has been research into the social dimension of teacher identity and how a teacher's identity is the result of the social role that they inhabit in relation to the community around them. Tsui (2003) argues that teacher identity is significantly influenced by culture and the socio-political context in which teachers live and work, positing that as teachers' experience being part of the wider community of teachers and engage in classroom practice, their identity also develops.

Whilst it is important to consider the internal self that teachers construct alongside their external or projected identities, any perceived boundaries between these two areas are not always clear cut or useful to a study of teacher identity. A teacher's sense of self in terms of understanding their beliefs about teaching, principles, values and motivations cannot be isolated from the immediate social context that they work in or the wider socio-political context in which they operate. Each of these aspects of a teacher's identity will inform, shape and sometimes complement the other. If, for example, a teacher has a strong interest in one curriculum area, they may choose to associate with others from that wider subject community. These communications may then, in turn, impact on the teachers own beliefs and sense of themselves. The borders between the individual self and the external reality that the self is located within are blurred. Research into this area suggests that teachers' identity is fluid, which leads to a constant renegotiation and reshaping of individual teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rogers, 2011; Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2014). This, in turn, changes the teacher's relationships between the individual self and the agency. This research considers both the internal (personal) and external (social) dimensions to the participant's teacher identities by examining in depth each participant's subject identity.

Augmenting the rationale for this research outlined in Chapter 1, is a view promoted by Schaefer (2013) who explored the increasingly prevalent issue of beginning teacher attrition.

Schaefer (2013) concluded that the problem is not just contextual, brought about by increases to the teacher workload but also a problem of teacher identity and identity shifts. This issue was researched by Hong (2010), who examined the similarities and differences between individuals who chose to leave the teaching profession within five years of starting work and those who chose to stay. The research found that those who left the profession had weaker self-efficacy beliefs and were less effective in setting boundaries for the work they needed to do. Hong (2010) concluded that teachers' decision making and career practices were interwoven with individual's meaning making processes, suggesting that teachers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, needed a stronger sense of identity in order to be better prepared to face the challenges that teaching brings. Similarly, an earlier study by Bullough (1997) argued that one of the key foci for teacher education should be the examination of the teaching-self and identity. This research has undertaken this task; part of the rationale for this research is to evaluate how useful it is for experienced teachers to consider their teacher identity, with a view to then using this experience to inform my wider work in teacher education and my current professional identity.

Much of the research concerned with the concept of teacher identity has been centred on student or pre-service teacher identity formation, the influences on this initial identity, and the way this identity changes as new entrants to the profession embark on their teaching careers (Smith, 2007; Anspal *et al*., 2012; Pillen *et al*., 2013). Another area covered has been that concerning the reconstruction of existing teachers' identity, set against a backdrop of constant change within the field of education. This appears to be a global issue and research includes in this field has been undertaken in Australia (Sachs 2001, Clarke & Moore, 2013), Portugal (Lopes, 2002), South Africa (Smit, Fritz & Mabalane, 2010, Oswald & Peroid, 2015), the United States of America (Buchanan, 2015) and the U.K. (Moore *et al*., 2002, Troman, 2008). Before reviewing the research related to the changing nature of teaching, consideration is given to the word 'professional' because it is attached to some of the literature about teacher identity, but by no means all of it.

2.3.1 Teachers as Professionals?

The fact that there are inconsistencies in the use of the word professional in relation to teachers, suggests there is on-going uncertainty by some as to whether teachers are professionals. As a starting point, Furlong et al., (2000) provide the following description of the components of teacher professionalism:

The three concepts of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility central to a traditional notion of professionalism, are often seen as interrelated. It is because professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialized body of knowledge if they are to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need the autonomy to make their own judgments. Given that they have autonomy, it is essential that they act with responsibility - collectively they need to develop appropriate professional values. (Furlong *et al*., 2000:5)

Whilst this might appear to those outside the field of education as describing exactly what it is that teachers do, there are others who might contest the degree to which each of these concepts apply in the case of teachers working in school. According to Gillard (2005), one of the reasons cited for the raising of doubts about the status of teachers in relation to other professions, such as law and medicine, is how schools have developed historically. During the late 1800's, staff in state-run elementary schools were 'trained' as teachers whilst those working in private schools were required 'to be educated' but not trained. Gillard (2005) suggests that this has led to the creation of an element of doubt, both within and outside the field of education about how to classify teachers. Whitty (2006), posits as another reason for the confusion over teachers' standing: the fact that they have never been afforded autonomy to regulate themselves, as is the case for other professions such as lawyers and medics.[9]

Findings from by Fuller *et al.*'s 2013 research which examined the introduction of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) status and its impact on teachers' perceptions of their professional identity, concluded that there are several factors that fuel the constant state of mistrust, which exist across different levels within the teaching profession. These factors include individuals believing that the wider public does not perceive them as professionals, on-going issues related to low morale because of constant reform and recruitment as well as retention challenges. But it is significant to note, that in recent years, debates about what it

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[9] This observation by Whitty (2006) was made at a time when the General Teaching Council (GTC) existed. The GTC was established by the Teaching and Higher Education Act in 1998, with the remit to take responsibility for awarding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), to regulate the teaching profession and advise the government and other agencies on issues that affected the teaching profession, including standards and teaching and learning. It was abolished in 2012 with some of its functions being subsumed by the Teaching Agency (TA) and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). These two organisations then merged in 2013, to become the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), an executive agency of the UK's Department for Education (DfE). The close relationships of these different organisations to government departments are viewed by some as evidence of how little autonomy, the teaching profession is afforded (Blower, 2011).

means to be a professional have not been confined to the field of education. A report commissioned by the General Dental Council (GDC) (George Street Research, 2010) and another one published by the Health and Care Professions Council (hcpc) (2014), addressed concerns about the nature of professionalism and how the term professionalism is perceived by those working within the health care system as well as those outside the field. The conclusions drawn from this report are similar to those of Fuller *et al.,* (2013) in relation to teachers and suggest that there remains uncertainty as to whether individuals working in these fields should be classed as professionals.

Building on the earlier points made about the blurring of boundaries between the teacher's internal and external realities, the professional identity of teachers, in the context of this research is defined as how a teacher identifies and perceives them self in the field of teaching. This perception is part of the composite picture of experience that the research is designed to disclose.

2.3.2 The Changing Nature of Teaching

There is a great deal of literature which focuses on the changing nature of teaching and which highlights the continually changing landscape that teachers work within. Moate and Ruchotie-Lyhty (2014), contend that this continuing educational reform has changed the nature of what it is that teachers do, and subsequently their identities. This builds on a point made by Whitty (2006), who argues that the teaching profession needs to acknowledge that it has undergone a process of re-professionalisation, a process whereby teachers have to increasingly take on board, in a personal capacity, those national agendas of raising achievement pursued by central governments. This contrasts with taking what is, in the opinion of Whitty (2006), a more negative view of this change, which views the same process as de-professionalisation. In an earlier observation about this issue, Sachs (2001) petitioned for a more solution-focused approach to the issues faced by teachers, suggesting that what is needed, is for teachers to embrace change and become more involved on a day-to-day basis with the reforms and become what she calls activist teachers. Sachs (2001) calls this 'democratic professionalism' and calls for teachers to respond collectively to the challenges presented. This call, for teachers to assert some control over their place within the ever-changing educational landscape, is supported by Lopes (2002) whose work with Portuguese teachers concluded that teachers need continually to change their identity to succeed against the backdrop of relentless change in education.

This underlying theme of subjection (Butler, 1993) whereby teachers are simultaneously pushed and pulled between competing discourses, threads through much of the literature on teacher identity (Troman, 2008; Clarke & Moore, 2013; Buchanan, 2015; Janzen, 2015; Oswald & Peroid, 2015). On the one hand, it is suggested that teachers are subject to authoritative discourses, many of which are initiated by education reforms; on the other hand, they are challenged by their own internal discourse, developed from their own sense of what it means to enact the role of a teaching professional. With specific regard to primary school teachers, Alexander argues for 'an alternative view of professionalism' (Alexander, 2010:308) tested by the degree to which individual teachers not only demonstrate their skills in delivery but also in the way their personal teaching repertoire is established and utilized beyond that prescribed by government policy. It is the way in which the professional identity of the teachers involved in this research is manifested that the research seeks to expose. Moore *et al.*, (2002) speculate that it remains to be seen if teachers can use their existing pedagogic identity, and prior experience, to strengthen their professional identity in the face of constant change, or rather simply opt for taking on the role of a contingent pragmatist who just aims to survive.

Pursuing the thread of changing teaching identity in response to educational reform already established in this thesis, Buchanan (2015) contends that what it means to be a teacher has changed, and that in the current climate, whereby standardised assessment is the main driver within schools, there is now an instrumentalist view of teaching. Woods and Jeffrey (2010) see this change in a teachers' role, as requiring teachers to be perfect. This change they suggest threatens teachers' self-esteem (Woods & Jeffrey, 2010) and they observe that 'in general teachers have been forced to become more strategic and political in defending their self-identities against the counter-vailing inroads of the new teacher social identity' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2010:104). In consideration of the move within education towards more standardised systems, Clarke and Moore (2013), acknowledge that these changes could be viewed as a positive and that teaching can now be seen as more transparent and predictable than previously. In contrast, it is argued that the introduction of these standardised systems can result in a reductionist view of teaching, whereby the actual multidimensionality of teaching is not fully grasped (Clarke & Moore, 2013). This view would seem to be particularly pertinent to primary teachers who are usually responsible for teaching their pupils all areas of the curriculum and not just one subject. Shulman and Shulman (2004) go so far as to compare the complexity of what a primary teacher does in the classroom with the work done by doctors stating that:

> The regular classroom teacher is confronted, not with a single patient, but with a classroom filled with 25-35 youngsters […] the only time a physician could possibly encounter a situation of comparable complexity would be in the emergency room of a hospital during or after a natural disaster. (Shulman & Shulman, 2004:504)

Despite the concerns outlined, Buchanan suggests that 'these external influences do not entirely shape teachers - it is more complex - and teachers bring their unique mix of personal and professional experiences and commitments' (Buchanan, 2015:701). This view appears to support the claim made by Woods and Jeffery (2010), that teachers do, in fact, hold on to their values and self-esteem, and instead their commitment is adjusted. For example, whereas in the past, teachers might have been content to give up time to run sports teams in their lunch hours and after school, they are no longer as willing or able to do this because of pressures on their time. This squeezing of teachers' time is viewed by some as evidence of a move in schools towards a culture of increased performativity (Ball, 2003).

In a study which specifically examined the implications for teachers working in primary schools of changes to the nature of their workload, the conclusion drawn is that whilst 'identities are in a state of flux' and that 'there is no settled state,' (Woods & Jeffrey, 2010:105), there is evidence of teachers having multiple identities which are situated in the contexts in which they are identified. This view concurs with the earlier conclusions of Troman who records that 'Primary teachers are developing complex identities to deal with the new and uncertain roles within rapid social, cultural and economic changes and the changing experience and meaning of work in post–industrial society' (Troman, 2008:630). This is also consistent with the ideas already presented in this thesis, which counsel that identity is a dynamic entity and with the view that teacher identity can be viewed as a 'continued becoming' (Giddens, 1991; Smith, 2007). The composite portraits of the participants in this research presented in Chapter 4 illuminate how these individuals negotiate educational reforms.

The fact that societal structures appear to provide identities and positions for individuals to inhabit and also possibly incline individuals to work in particular ways, affords the questions of: how much agency teachers now have, and to what extent are they constrained by larger forces? Buchanan (2015) refers to the resources that teachers use in the classroom as being a result of their identities and suggests that the identity that a teacher has also impacts on the agency that they then demonstrate in relation to their work as a teacher. Beijaard *et al.*, observed that 'identity is not something that one has, but something that develops, during one's whole life' (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004:107) a point which is further supported by Gee (2001)

who observes that it is not unusual for a person to change who they are from one place and time to another. The fact that teachers' identities change in response to wider educational reform may not in itself be a bad thing; however, what may be significant in terms of observations made regarding challenges with teacher retention, is the way in which the teachers in this research may have changed or altered their identities in response to these wider reforms.

> An individual's professional agency is reciprocally related to his or her professional identity. As teachers construct an understanding of who they are within their school and professional context, they take actions that they believe align with that construction. Those actions (and how the actions are perceived by others) then feed back into the on-going identity construction process. (Buchanan, 2015:704)

Several factors appear to influence teacher identity including the context in which individual teachers work. Context and the way in which this relates to teachers' identity is a factor that is particularly relevant to this thesis, in that it is concerned with teachers working in the context of primary schools, an area that is under researched. Much of the literature about teacher identity referred to in this review concerns the identity of secondary school teachers. This literature has been drawn on because it provides insights and perspectives which are pertinent to the identity and work of teachers working in primary schools.

Coldron and Smith, state that 'identity as a teacher is partly given and partly achieved by active location in a social space' (Coldron & Smith, 1999:711) and go on to warn against the narrowing of teaching to just a singular approach. Working within the Turkish education system, a study by Gur (2013) provides a useful summary of the array of factors, which may pertain to impact on teachers' professional identity, including the instruction or education that the individual has received, as well as personal dimensions including upbringing and wider family expectations. Gur (2013), Day *et al*. (2006) and Janzen (2015) also cite wider societal factors, including major changes and reforms to the teaching profession as being influences on teachers' professional identity. It is also worth noting that the findings from the study by Gur (2013) suggest that pupils partly shape teachers' identity, with teachers adapting to each new group of students encountered. Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2014), conclude that it is as important to consider with whom and why a teacher's identity forms, not just how.

Establishing this context and whom exactly the participants in this research interact with forms part of the composite descriptions of each participant.[10]

2.3.3 Teacher Identity Formation Frameworks

Two theoretical frameworks employed by researchers investigating teacher identity are particularly relevant in relation to this thesis. These are the framework designed by Gee (2000 - 2001), and the framework used and developed by Beijaard *et al.*, (2000).

Gee (2000-2001) used an analytical lens for studying identity in education as a basis for his framework: it considered the type of person an individual is. The components to the framework are: nature, institution, discourse and affiliation; it describes four identities which can coexist at any one time in an individual. Building on the ideas previously posited in this chapter, that the personal and professional identity of a teacher are closely interlinked, the teacher identities of the participants in this research are compared against this framework in Chapter 7.

The first identity is the Nature Identity (N-Identity), which describes those characteristics that are biological or recognised by other people so for example tall or brown-eyed. The second identity is called the Institutional Identity (I-Identity) and would describe the role fulfilled by an individual. In the case of teachers in England, this role is currently set out by the Teaching Standards (DfE, 2012) which outlines the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). The third identity in this framework is the Discourse Identity (D-Identity) and relates to achievement and how a person is perceived but is again recognisable by others. Teachers may project one type of identity to one set of people: for example, they may project one identity to their pupils, but another to their colleagues. The fourth identity is the Affinity Identity (A-Identity), which describes a group with whom an individual shares a common interest of experience. It is this last identity that is particularly relevant to this research. The participants were all purposely

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[10] One influence on teacher identity not covered in detail in this thesis is the impact of initial teacher training (ITT) although the participants do give details of their training route into teaching and this is considered as part of their identity portraits. Work in this area includes that by Smagorinsky *et al.*, (2004) who deliberately provoked tension and challenge to the identities of pre-service teachers. The work by Gaudeilli & Ousley (2009) is particularly interesting considering the changes to routes into teaching whereby many teachers are now training through School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and Schools Direct (SD) programmes based in schools. Gaudeilli & Ousley (2009) organized for a weekly seminar to take place in one of the schools where a group of teachers were placed during their teaching practice and concluded that the students appreciated the opportunity to meet and share experiences during this intensive period of their training.

chosen as they have an enthusiasm for geography and they have all worked as primary school teachers; it is therefore likely that this identity will be stronger for geography than for other subjects. This research considers the extent to which this A-Identity interacts and overlaps with the individual's other identities.

The work by Beijaard *et al*., (2000) focuses not on the type of person that the teacher is but rather on what a teacher does. Three areas are used as a basis for teachers to self-categorise: content knowledge, pedagogical decisions, and didactical experiences. The first of these categories describes the extent to which the teacher feels that they understand their subject area. The second area of pedagogical decisions relates to how the teacher shows awareness of pupils' needs and prior experience that they bring in relation to teaching and learning and is related to the work of Shulman (1987) referenced in the next section of this chapter. The third and final component of the framework is concerned with the way in which teachers reflect on what does and does not work in the classroom to make their teaching more effective as they perceive it. Each of the three elements contained within this framework provide a useful basis from which to analyse the identities of the participants in this research.

2.3.4 Section Summary

This section has considered the concept of teacher identity and how this has adapted and evolved in response to wider educational reform. As teaching and schools have changed, becomingly increasingly complex, so teachers' identities have changed and increased in number, resulting in individual teachers having multiple lived experiences. Teachers working in school today are responsible not just for the curriculum but also for monitoring a range of factors. Teachers are increasingly involved in the social and emotional well-being of their pupils, a good example of this being the introduction of the Prevent Duty (DfE, 2015). This requires teachers to have due regard to prevent young people being drawn into terrorism. Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2014) summarise the impact of these changes to teacher identity by asserting that the increasing instability of environments, which result from educational diversity, reform, innovation and transition, are mirrored in the instability of teachers' professional identities.

The notion of what it means to be a professional has also been considered. Brooks (2016) contends that what has been absent from debates about teacher attrition amid continuing educational reform is a focus on what qualities teachers need to operate effectively in these changing times. Brooks (2016) uses the metaphor of a professional compass and promotes the idea that the disciplinary orientation that an individual teacher has is a significant part of their

identity and can be used to help them navigate in times of change. This idea is pursued in Section 2.4 of this chapter.

The theoretical frameworks outlined in this section, provide a starting point from which to consider the identity of the teachers involved in this research. But the complete professional identity of any one teacher would be complex and time-consuming to unravel, thus providing a rationale for choosing to limit the focus of this research to specifically examining teachers' subject identity.

2.4 Teachers' Subject Identity

Beijaard *et al.,* (2000) determined that teachers' professional identities are the result of the different ways in which teachers see themselves as didactic, pedagogical and subject experts. Whilst recognising that this research was conducted with experienced secondary school teachers, these conclusions could be used as the basis for promoting the view that in primary schools, where individual teachers are usually responsible for teaching all subjects, the relationship that the teacher holds with each subject and how they perceive of this relationship, is significant. The fact that primary teachers often only receive a generalist initial training, with little time spent on individual subjects further supports this argument (Catling, 2016, 2017b; Randall *et al.,* 2016). Thus, it is surprising that so little research has been conducted into the relationship that primary teachers have with different subjects. This is a gap that this research seeks to fill. This research takes the subject widely recognised in schools as geography,[11] albeit developed by teachers from the academic discipline taught in universities, and uses it as a means for reflecting on how individual primary teachers identify with and connect to one subject area. Notwithstanding the limited research in this area, this section of the literature review outlines some of the work in the field.

With regard to the term 'subject', Alexander describes this as having been both 'demonised and defended' (Alexander, 2010:245), observing that discussions about 'subject' have become entangled with the debates about subject knowledge. Deng (2012) outlines how schools are mandated to teach different academic disciplines and teachers charged with transforming the content of each discipline into classroom content. He affords the following definitions of

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[11]The purpose of primary geography as stated in England's National Curriculum (NC) is to 'equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes' (DfE, 2013b:184). It is then stated that 'Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills provide the frameworks and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time (2013b: 184).

school subjects and academic discipline: school subjects are defined as an 'area of learning within the school curriculum that constitutes an institutionally defined field of knowledge and practice for teaching and learning'; academic discipline is defined as 'a field or branch of learning affiliated with an academic department within a university, formulated for the advancement of research and scholarship and the professional training of researchers, academics and specialists' (Deng, 2012:40). Whilst Stengel (1997) argues that policymakers, researchers and educators have paid too little attention to the distinction between school subjects and academic disciplines, Alexander cautions against too much attention being given to the concept of subjects with a reminder that 'a subject is merely a named conceptual or organisational component of the curriculum' (Alexander, 2010:246). In a further observation, Alexander notes that 'a subject's relevance or lack of relevance, resides not in its name, but under whatever name is chosen, in exactly what is taught and how […] if, as enacted in the classroom a subject is irrelevant, it is the teacher who makes it so' (ibid). This line of reasoning is particularly pertinent to this research, where the focus is on individual teachers and their relationship to individual subjects.

Whilst the nature or identity of geography as a subject is not a central focus for this thesis, it useful to consider briefly in this section of the literature review some of the ideas pertaining to what geography is and is not in order to further contextualise the research. As indicated in Chapter 1, the nature of geography as a school subject compared to the academic discipline is in itself a contested area and Bradbeer et al., (2004) conclude that because of the plurality of paradigms associated with the subject, it can be difficult to talk about a single type of geography. This observation is explored by Bonnett (2008) and Dorling and Lee (2016).

Despite observations such as those by Catling and Willy (2009) who describe geography as a 'wide-ranging discipline' (Catling & Willy, 2009:11), there is some consensus to support the idea put forward by Lambert who states that ultimately 'geography is a subject that above all helps us make sense of world' (2007:1). Bonnett recognises geography as a 'characteristically human enterprise' (Bonnett, 2008: 6) and goes on to state that 'geography is an attempt to find and impose order on a seemingly chaotic world; an attempt that is simultaneously modern and pre-modern, ancient and contemporary' (ibid). This is something that we all do. In previous research I put forward the following view to which I still subscribe: 'Geography is both the stage (the earth) on which the play is performed but also the performers (the people) and the interactions that take place on that stage and with the audience' (Morley, 2010:90). This mutual interplay between the physical environment and people is grounded in the

interdependence of the two, and the impact that they have on and within each other. Dorling and Lee (2016) identify contexts and examples - including globalisation, sustainability and inequality - which highlight both this interplay as well as its contentious nature, and link this to the need to consider and reflect on the future of the earth, its population and their interrelationship. They see place, space and environment as crucial to understanding the world around us and why and how it exists. They argue that this is increasingly significant as we are in a period of considerable natural and human generated change and impact (Dorling and Lee: 2016). The learning of geography is vital for current and future generations.

There is some agreement within the geography community about what geography is not. An example of this is put forward by Lambert (2011b) who cites the most recent Ofsted (2011) report, and records that geography is weaker in those primary schools where pupils are not introduced to the breadth of the subject and where it is reduced to little more than factual recall of capital cities; he reinforces the consensus that geography is multifaceted and multidimensional subject. Individual interpretation is fundamental to this research and it builds on the premise that each of the participants' view of geography will be influenced by his or her own experience and perception of the subject.

Much of the research exploring teacher subject identity has been completed within the confines of a limited range of subjects, notably mathematics, science and music. Research conducted within the field of music education (Hargreaves & Marshall 2003; Kraay 2012; Draves 2014; Garnett 2014) has been extensive, possibly because music is one of the few primary subjects that is currently often taught by specialist teachers. The issue of specialist teachers is discussed further in section 2.4.2 of this chapter but it is helpful to record here that Alexander (2010) suggests that it is too simplistic to have specialists and generalists working within primary schools and that what would be a better fit would be a more flexible system which includes: generalist teachers, generalists with specialisms who might work throughout schools but also combined-domain specialists and single-domain specialists who would most likely work in upper end of primary schools.

The research within the field of music education focuses primarily on answering the question; to what extent do those who work as music teachers conceive of themselves as being teachers as opposed to being musicians? An early example of work in this area, is that by Hoffer and English (1961) who posit that in general those involved in music education fall into one of two camps; those who believe that generalist teachers cannot and should not teach music and those who believe that the generalist teacher makes a very good music teacher and should be

encouraged to teach the subject. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) suggest that much of the work in this field has been concentrated on increasing the confidence of generalist teachers to teach music. The authors suggest that, contrary to previous research which indicates that generalist teachers can teach music successfully, a closer examination of the issue reveals that these generalist teachers do not, in fact, teach in such a way that connects to or fosters children's musical understanding. In contrast to the specialist music teachers, the generalist teachers surveyed and observed tended to teach music in a way that promotes non-musical skills such as motor skills or following directions.

Whilst the research reviewed here is subject-specific, it is relevant to this research, because the same questions about the degree to which teachers consider themselves generalist teachers rather than subject specialists could be asked of any teacher, teaching in any phase of education, teaching any subject, but particularly of teachers working in primary schools. In considering other literature concerning teacher subject identity, two significant themes emerge and are discussed below. These themes are: the nature of primary teachers' subject knowledge, expertise, and pedagogy and, as already intimated, the place of generalists versus subject specialist teachers in primary schools.

2.4.1 Primary Teachers' Knowledge, Expertise and Pedagogy

Whilst the concepts of knowledge and expertise are distinct, they are used interchangeably within literature on teacher identity, this gives the impression that having subject knowledge is a precursor to having expertise. Berliner (2001) records that there are particular challenges in defining expertise in relation to teaching. These challenges include the extent to which context and practice negate any pre-existing talent that the individual teacher possesses. The problems associated with measuring expertise arise given that to an extent this is a subjective concept, and linked to this is the tacit nature of expertise which is manifested in a variety of ways and impacted on by factors such as resources. Eaude (2012) expands on this theme to observe that there are less obvious factors affecting how expertise is conceptualised including cultural traditions whereby pupil attainment and achievement are perceived differently. As outlined in the introduction to this thesis the degree to which a primary teacher must be an expert in any one subject or in each subject taught has emerged as a current issue of debate in educational circles, raised by publication of the Carter Review (2015) and the proposed framework for core ITT (Munday, 2016). It is a requirement with no apparent simple answer.

Pedagogy is another term that is used regularly within education circles and is a vital component in every teachers' skill set. In order to clarify its use within the context of this

research, it is helpful to reflect on the different definitions and meanings attributed to the term. As a starting point to this discussion, Alexander proffers the following definition of pedagogy:

> The act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decision of which teaching is constituted (Alexander, 2010:280).

However, both Alexander (2010) and Eaude (2012) contend that pedagogy is a term that many teachers in England have come to view with suspicion as governments have increasingly sought to tell teachers how to teach. Andrews (2007) argues that many involved in education in England deliberately avoid using the term pedagogy because of these fears and uncertainty about what it means, a factor which contrasts with the situation in mainland Europe, where educators appear to be more confident and comfortable with using it alongside the term didactic, which covers pedagogy, curriculum and subject understanding. But Andrews (2007), contends that this may in part to be the result of differences in the understanding of the term. He suggests that educational literature and discussions in mainland Europe are informed by an interpretation of pedagogy, which includes reference to didactics, whereas within English educational circles, the two terms are viewed as separate entities. Andrews states that in England, pedagogy or the theory of teaching is viewed as being quite different to what some see as the 'anti-intellectual perspective' (Andrews, 2007:22) which underlies definitions of the term didactic.[12] He goes on to proffer that the wider definition of pedagogy which encompasses both a pedagogical and didactical element is in fact more appropriate for describing the practice that teachers working in schools are actually involved in:

> Pedagogy includes didactics, which comprise the strategies and warranted approaches to subject teaching and learning, which may vary from one subject to another, but would necessarily include consideration of the sequencing of ideas and the extent to which the sequence is intellectually coherent. Didactics also acknowledge theories of teaching and learning but from the subject-specific perspective. Didactics would

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[12] The term didactic has tended to be viewed as a pejorative term in the U.K. Banning (2005) describes how the term has tended to be associated with the transmitting of factual information to large groups. This contrasts with for example the German tradition of didactics which is generally associated with the theory of teaching and learning including how to teach, what to teach and the aims of choosing these methods and reasons for choosing the content taught (Pepin, 2000).

include both the day-to-day and in the moment decision making of teachers and the manner in which they are informed (Andrews, 2007:22).

There are two reasons why this research subscribes to the views of Andrews (2007), and of Eaude (2012), who suggests that pedagogy is more than simply planning and delivering lessons but rather an interactive and fluid process which is more aligned with European definitions of the term. The first reason is that in my position as the researcher, I am influenced by my identities as both a primary teacher and primary teacher educator and it is my belief that this wider definition of pedagogy is a more accurate reflection of what it is that teachers do in the classroom. The second reason concerns some of the literature reviewed in this chapter, such as that by Beijaard *et al.* (2000), which informs the research. Their work was undertaken in mainland Europe, so it is likely that their findings are underpinned by these wider and more composite definitions of the term pedagogy.

Shulman's work (1987) is central to debates around the subject and pedagogic content knowledge of teachers; Shulman asked 'where did subject matter go?' and asserted that there had been a shift within teaching. The shift, it is argued, is towards a focus on procedure and an emphasis towards how teachers manage classrooms, organise activities, allocate time, and structure work. Debates about the place of subject knowledge in relation to teaching in schools have included a call for a re-emphasis on subject knowledge in the classroom and what Young (2008) calls 'powerful knowledge'. The result of the many calls from the wider educational community, and the reality for teachers working in English primary schools today, is a revised National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013a) which has a stronger emphasis on subject knowledge, and a set of revised standards for teaching (DfE, 2012). All teachers in England are required by these standards to demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge. The detail of this requirement being, that teachers are expected:

> To have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject and address misunderstandings and also demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum area and promote the value of scholarship. (DfE, 2012)

These teaching standards are the baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of all teachers both qualified as well as those training for the profession.

This shift in focus towards subject knowledge being viewed as one of the more important knowledge bases that a teacher possesses and uses, is not without its critics: Eaude comments

that 'teaching is more complex than as set out in the Teachers' Standards' (Eaude, 2012:57). Such a shift, further evidences the point made previously, that certainly within English education circles the job that teachers undertake is viewed in narrow terms compared to other parts of the world. Andrews (2007) suggests that, in England, the professional discourse of teachers is not fully validated.

Not everyone is as sceptical about this 'knowledge turn'; Lambert (2011a) contends that, in principle, a return to knowledge should be welcomed. However, Lambert cautions against reducing debates in this area to simply that of 'knowledge v skills' (Lambert, 2011a:245), referring to earlier work, which suggests that teachers should engage in a process of curriculum making (Lambert & Morgan, 2010). This idea affirms that individual teachers working in their classrooms must draw from three resource domains: subject knowledge, teacher pedagogy, and student experience to create meaningful learning to meet curriculum requirements.

These ideas build on those of Beijaard *et al.* (2000), whose work with secondary teachers concluded that in general the teachers surveyed saw themselves as a combination of subject, didactical and pedagogical experts.[13] One of the conclusions drawn from this study was that as the teachers moved from being beginner teachers to more experienced teachers, they self-assessed themselves as shifting from being subject experts to didactical and pedagogical experts (Beijaard *et al.*, 2000). What was not possible to identify in this study, was the extent to which the learning experiences, provided for pupils in relation to subject, didactical, and pedagogical expertise influenced the teachers' perceptions of their professional teacher identity. Beijaard *et al.* (2000), recommend further research into how teachers perceive themselves as well as any predispositions towards areas of expertise held by teachers. In addition, these authors counsel consideration of the factors which influence this expertise as they contend that these will impact on the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom. In seeking to present a composite picture of each of the primary teacher participants, this research aims to pursue some of these lines of enquiry by looking at, for example, any evidence which suggests that participants have a predisposition towards geography.

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[13] 'A subject matter expert is a teacher who bases his/her profession on subject matter knowledge and skills; a didactical expert is a teacher who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of teaching and learning processes; a pedagogical expert is a teacher who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills to support students' social, emotional, and moral development' (Beijaard *et al*., 2000).

Within the field of geography education, research by Brooks explored the different ways in which both expertise as a general term and specifically teacher expertise, are defined within a range of literature, concluding that 'teacher expertise can be easy to recognize but difficult to describe' (Brooks, 2007:64). She then went on to argue that expertise is a value-laden term, and that those involved in education should be aware of how some education discourses, often those initiated by government, result in the term being associated with a competency and capabilities definition of what it means to be a good teacher. The conclusion drawn is that teacher expertise is a socially constructed phenomenon that is 'denoted to teachers by others [and that …] expertise is embedded with the values that people have about education' (Brooks, 2007:70).

Burn (2007) takes a broad view, that those in education need to acknowledge that there are different ways in which to conceive subject knowledge and that subject knowledge for teaching is different to subject knowledge. Although the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is not without its critics (Brooks, 2007), PCK as promoted by Shulman (1987), can, in the opinion of Burn (2007), be viewed as a way of understanding the nature of teachers' knowledge and the decisions that a teacher makes using their different knowledge bases. This idea leads to the contention that it is useful for individuals to be able to make the connections between the different categories of knowledge that they hold. Burn (2007) specifically used the concept of connected knowledge bases to examine secondary student teachers' identity as subject specialists, as they developed their professional knowledge in their journey to become secondary school history teachers. One of the findings to emerge was that the teacher mentors assigned to these new incumbents wanted to stay within the comfort zone of their existing identity as the designated expert teacher and were sometimes reluctant to engage in the generation of new professional knowledge with the beginner teachers. Burn (2007), concluded that the mentors who participated in the research did not appear to have conceived that the concept of teacher expertise is broader than just their existing knowledge and skills. The mentors did not seem to relate to a holistic view of teacher expertise, whereby expertise in a subject can be used as a basis for extending both subject and professional knowledge as new situations are encountered and is therefore crucial for new teachers to develop under the guidance of more experienced teachers.

Whilst Lambert's work (2011a) concerning teacher knowledge specifically relates to geography teachers working in secondary schools, Catling and Martin (2011) have considered the idea of powerful knowledge and how this relates to the context of the primary classroom. The authors

use the work of Young (2008) and earlier work by Catling (2003, 2005) and Martin (2008) to contend that children bring with them to school every day geographical knowledge. Catling and Martin (2011) take the view that this knowledge itself is powerful and should be recognized and used *with* traditionally accepted geography subject knowledge, to enrich and enhance the overall geographical learning of the individual pupil. It would appear that in using these different types of knowledge, primary teachers would be doing what the secondary teachers in the study conducted by Beijaard *et al*. (2000) were found to do and enact a process of combining their subject, didactical and pedagogical expertise.

Extending this theme, the research conducted by Brooks (2007), who worked with geography teachers in secondary schools, explored how teachers use their subject-specific knowledge to resolve the conflicts that exist between how they understand geography at an academic level and the way they prefer to teach it. Brooks (2007) proposes that the ideas put forward by Shulman (1987) are too simplistic and do not fully capture what happens in the classroom. The proposition is that instead, individual teachers realise that their subject expertise fits synoptically into their broad understanding of how they teach generally, and as a result impacts on their practice and the overall quality of their teaching (Brooks, 2007). This view of how teachers operate in the classroom appears to complement the view that the influences on the quality of teachers' practice, includes their own perception of their subject, didactical and pedagogical expertise (Beijaard *et al*., 2000). Furthermore, Brooks (2007) suggests that teachers' expertise assists them in making sense of their work, whilst also motivating them. Since conducting this research, Brooks has further developed this idea as noted in Section 2.3.4, using the analogy of a professional compass (Brooks, 2016) to describe how significant teacher subject expertise is in relation to overall teacher identity. The composite portraits created in this research using individual's descriptions of how participants engage with geography, are designed to uncover how the individuals in this research perceive their own teacher expertise.

Eaude (2012) puts forward the view that all too often, the expertise that is required by primary school teachers is dismissed as not comparable with that required by secondary school teachers and my own experience of working as a primary teacher would support this. 'Teaching a class of young children is demanding, because of the multiplicity of aims, the diversity of children's different needs and the breadth of knowledge and qualities required' (Eaude, 2012:57). Linking back to the point made about the fact that generally primary school teachers are required to teach all subjects of the curriculum, whilst acknowledging that the

expertise required by primary teachers is not the same as that of secondary school teachers, the expertise required by primary teachers is considerable and has multiple dimensions.

In a study undertaken by Trainou (2007), the focus was on expertise in relation to context. The research examined expertise in primary science teaching and looked at the concept of expertise being defined in practice, by the relevant community and not 'as some normative theory of knowledge or learning' (Trainou, 2007:65). Using the case of one expert science teacher, Trainou (2007) focused on expertise in action, by asking the teacher about her views on subject knowledge, learners, the learning process, the actual act of teaching science and the role of the teacher in supporting the development of children's scientific understanding. The findings suggest that the teacher sees her science understanding as a network of links between different concepts, which are dynamic, and continually evolving as the teacher encounters different experiences (Trainou, 2007). Related to these points, work within the field of geographical education, by Tambyah (2006) considers the issue of primary pre-service teachers in Australia and the nature of their expertise. Tambyah (2006) contends that teacher threshold knowledge in geography amongst Australian teachers is a concern. The conclusion drawn is that ensuring that pre-service teachers receive more subject-specific course content gives these teachers an avenue for developing a professional identity as educators rather than an identity based on nurture and care (Tambyah, 2006). This view appears to be at odds with that of Brooks (2016) who suggests that primary teacher expertise comes first and foremost from an understanding of child development, with primary teachers asking questions about how can geography or any other subject help develop this child rather than how can I help this child gain more geographical understanding. Building on the ideas of Tambyah (2006) and Eaude (2012) who intimate that primary teacher expertise should be conceptualised as a broader multi-faceted construct, the conclusions of Brooks (2016) appear simplistic and not to fully appreciate the complexity of primary teachers' expertise.

2.4.2 Primary Teachers as Generalists or Subject Specialists

The debate over the use of subject specialists and generalist teachers in primary education is not confined to the UK. A study by Ardzejewska et al., (2010), conducted in Western Australia, concluded that there was widespread support for the use of subject specialists in government primary schools. The research draws attention to what happens in England where it is claimed that subject specialists make a useful contribution to the quality of curriculum delivery. Whilst this may be the case in many independent schools, in most state-run infant, junior or primary schools in England, pupils are organised into classes, which are then taught by the same

teacher in the same classroom for all or most of the time. Such organisation is based on the premise that this provides a more stable and nurturing environment for children in the early stages of their schooling. Although they may be responsible for coordinating a subject across a school and giving guidance to colleagues about one or more subjects,[14] primary teachers do not tend to specialise in one curriculum subject. Primary teachers' expertise tends to be founded on teaching a particular age-range or Key Stage and developing the whole child across the curriculum. However, against the backdrop of educational reform and the 'knowledge turn' (Young, 2008), there does though appear to have been some shift in the demands being made for subject specialism in primary classrooms, with the findings from the Carter Review (2015) and the proposed framework for core ITT (Munday, 2016) appearing to support these demands.

A report by Ofsted (2009), which looked specifically at primary teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum emphasised the importance of subjects in primary education but acknowledged the demands that this made on primary teachers. This report (Ofsted, 2009) also acknowledged that because of the greater emphasis in recent years on Literacy and numeracy in primary classrooms, there has been little opportunity for primary teachers to build on their subject knowledge. In 2015, the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) recorded that teachers need to not only have knowledge of their subject, but that they also need to know how and why to teach subject content. They further counselled that teachers also need to know what progression looks like in subjects, noting that in the case of primary teachers this means that they need both the subject knowledge and subject pedagogy for a range of subjects but that the two facets are indivisible (CfSA, 2015). The 2009 Ofsted report concluded that having teachers within primary schools with specific subject knowledge often led to more effective teaching and learning. In the absence of such expertise, the Ofsted report recommended that schools link with partner schools where such subject expertise was available and used advanced skills teachers or other experts.[15] It is, however, noticeable that in

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[14]Whilst some primary teachers do have a background in the subject that they coordinate, either through completing a first degree in the subject before doing a PGCE or school-based route into teaching or they have taken an undergraduate degree which allows them to specialise in a subject, this is not always the case. Catling, (2006, 2015) has explored these issues in relation to the teaching of geography in primary schools.

[15] The issue for those working in primary schools is further complicated by the range of different sized primary schools that exist in England. Whilst some schools will have multiple classes in each year group and with that a number of staff allowing for individuals to specialise, some schools are very small with only a few teachers who are each responsible for coordinating a number of subjects.

certain subject areas, such calls for the place of subject experts in primary schools has been repeated. A 2014 report by the Wellcome Trust into the use of science and maths expertise in schools, concluded that all primary schools should have access to science leaders with expertise in primary science and ensure that resources and infrastructure to enable this are provided. Barker (2014) made a similar claim about the teaching of modern foreign languages in primary schools, reporting that only 23 percent of the primary schools surveyed had a teacher on the staff that had a GCSE qualification in a foreign language. In the case of geography, Catling (2016) intimates that the situation is similar but reports that such data is not currently available and asserts the need for more research in this area.

One particular area of the primary curriculum which exemplifies the debate about the place of specialists working in primary schools is music. Holden and Button (2006) investigated the teaching of music by non-music specialists in English primary schools and concluded that despite generalist classroom teachers reporting that they were confident in their pedagogical skills for the subject, it was the subject content and knowledge which was of a concern to them. In the survey conducted with 71 non-specialist primary teachers, it was found that music was perceived by the research participants to be a specialist subject because it was seen to require both expertise and performing ability.[16] In response to the challenges identified in the study, Holden and Button (2006) propose that music specialists are appointed to work with non-specialists in the classroom or, where this is not practically possible, to work across schools supporting generalist non-specialist teachers.

Despite these calls for subject specialist teaching in primary schools, there remains uncertainty as to how important a factor this is in achieving high standards of teaching and learning. In relation to the teaching of English and mathematics, a report by the Teaching Schools Council (2016) concludes that; 'many schools are using specialist staff in some subjects but at present there is no evidence that subject specialists are more effective at teaching core subjects than generalists'.

With regard to looking at the factors which influence teacher identity-construction, and considering how these might impact on how the teacher works in the classroom, Kraay (2012) conducted research with specialist and non-specialist Canadian Middle School teachers. The conjecture, upon which the research was built, is that non-specialist teachers of music will not

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[16] The study by Holden and Button (2006) reports that the participants have lower confidence levels in music compared to other subject areas with lack of confidence to teach music theory and notation and the ability to be able to perform themselves being cited as reasons.

teach the subject as well as specialists because they have lower self-esteem. The study involved examining the teachers' previous experiences of music. A starting point for analysing these experiences and their impact on the teachers' practice was the work of Woodford (2002) who distinguished between primary and secondary socialisation factors. Kraay (2012) found that the non-specialist teachers relied on primary socialisation factors including the beliefs and practices individuals were exposed to by teachers and parents in childhood when constructing their identity as teachers of music. This contrasts with secondary socialisation factors which included specialist instruction in later life and the context that the teachers worked in. The work by Woodford (2002) suggested that unless individuals consciously adopt an open and critical approach to the on-going development of their professional identity then primary socialisation factors will over-ride secondary factors. The importance of teachers investing in their own continuing professional development is emphasised in the proposed core content for ITT, with the statement that 'if we are to have teachers who consistently deliver teaching that is of the highest possible calibre, then it is essential that high-quality professional development is seen as an integral part of a teacher's professional life' (Munday, 2016:3).

Related to the concept of socialisation factors is the perception that an individual teacher has of their own self–efficacy or their belief in their ability to complete a task successfully. Levels of confidence and subject knowledge are considered to impact on the concept of self-efficacy (Kane, 2005) held by an individual teacher. This acknowledgement leads Kraay (2012) to conclude that communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) in the form of subject associations are important in building this self-efficacy, as is time spent in ITT on subject specialist studies. 'When primary socialisation remains a teacher's only mode for identity construction, new teachers are unconsciously continuing hegemonic traditions' (Kraay, 2012:35). This is likely to be a challenge for teachers teaching geography and other non-core curriculum subjects in primary schools, as the current time spent in ITT on subjects other than core subjects is limited (Catling, 2016; Catling, 2017b).

Other work in the area of teacher's self-perception includes that by Bouji (1998) who worked with music-teacher students in Sweden. Bouji considered how individual trainee music teachers understood and think of themselves as (educated) music teachers (Bouji, 1998:24). An extension of the work looked at how these new music teachers were prepared to teach across age phases, then examined the role identities of each of these teachers after their first two or three years of teaching in the classroom. The model of socialisation into the music teacher arena proposed by Bouji (1998) considers the extent to which a teacher sees himself

or herself as a teacher or a musician. The model presents the individual teacher's musical comprehensiveness, which is depicted as either narrow and concerned with just his or her own musical interests or broad and encompassing of music more generally. Figure 2.1 shows the model and the four categories of identity attributed to the teachers surveyed by Bouji (1998).

Broad Musical Comprehensiveness

A: All-round musician   B: Pupil-centered teacher

C: Performer   D: Content-centered teacher

Narrow Musical comprehensiveness
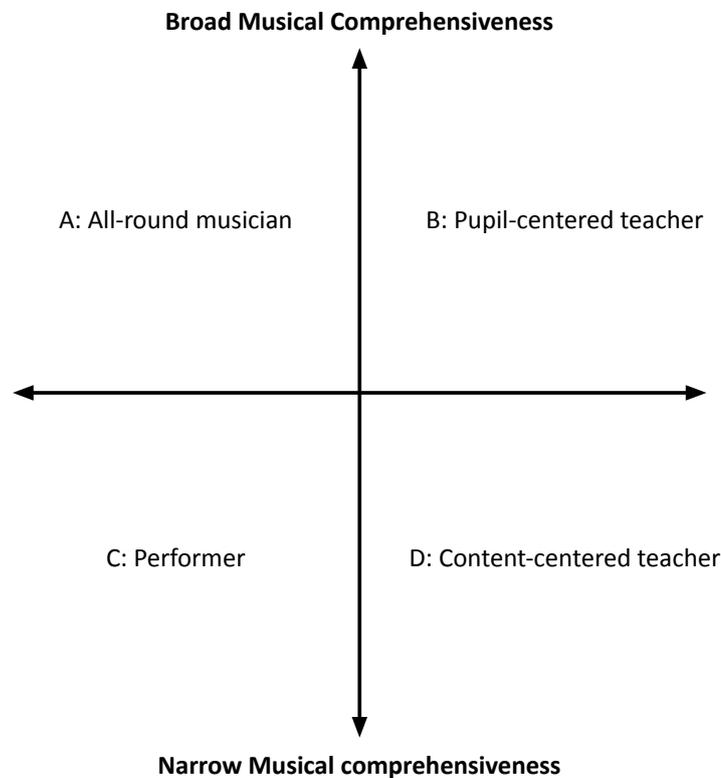
Figure 2.1: Salient role-identities of music teachers (Bouji, 1998:25).

Related work was carried out by Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) and made clear a distinction between 'identities in music' (IIM) and 'music in identities' (MII). The latter of these two – MII – describes the way in which music forms part of an individual's professional and personal self-system. Hargreaves and Marshall make the point that 'self-identity is an inextricable part of the process of development itself: thinking the road to becoming one' (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003:272), suggesting that if for example, one thinks of oneself in a role, so for example as a scientist or a geographer, then an individual might be more likely to enact that role. This work and that of Bouji (1998), links to the concepts of Identity Theory (Stryker, 1968; McCall & Simmons, 1978), as outlined in Section 2.2.3.

It is notable that much of the research into the place of subject specialism in ITT courses and then subsequent CPD for qualified teachers, although conducted with both primary and secondary teachers is work completed with individuals specialising in science and mathematics

but not English, the other primary curriculum subject designated as 'core' content.[17] This is most likely because there continues to be an acknowledged global shortage of teachers in mathematics and science, which has resulted in the establishment of several programmes aimed at both encouraging graduates into the profession to teach in these areas, and several schemes set up to enhance the subject knowledge of existing teachers. Woolhouse and Cochrane (2015) reported findings from one such programme: The Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) programme that aimed to improve the subject knowledge of applicants to PGCE Secondary courses. The participants in the research were described as chemists, physicists, or mathematicians because they had gained initial degrees in these subjects. In line with the idea of subject knowledge for teaching (Burn, 2007), the enhancement programmes were aimed at strengthening these individuals' subject-specific professional identity as classroom teachers and the participants engaged with the other secondary trainees in several ways. These programmes included teachers being expected to take part in and contribute to theoretical discussions about their specialist subjects and how these might manifest themselves, in classroom settings. The researchers concluded that participants showed evidence of becoming immersed in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), and the benefits from the experience included improved subject and pedagogic knowledge for these teachers.

In an earlier study conducted with experienced secondary science teachers, Woolhouse and Cochrane (2010) examined how these teachers came to know themselves as professionals using their subject specialism as the focus for reflection. The results suggest that peer support and the opportunities to reflect on practice, facilitated through several CPD sessions, which explored the themes of subject knowledge and competence, resulted in these experienced teachers undergoing a shift in how they each perceived themselves as subject specialists. Woolhouse and Cochrane deduced from the findings that participants considered being viewed as a professional as being 'synonymous with critically reflecting upon one's knowledge, practice and experiences and sharing this with supportive colleagues' in contrast to a teacher who is merely 'spinning plates in the air to get pupils through their exams' (Woolhouse & Cochrane, 2010:616).

Luehmann (2007) also looked at preparation programmes for new secondary teachers and suggested that a teacher's professional identity is like the view of teacher expertise put

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[17] Section 3.3 of the introduction to the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) for use in English primary schools sets out the structure of the curriculum stating that 'It is organised on the basis of 4 key stages and 12 subjects, classified in legal terms as 'core' and 'other foundation' subjects. The core subjects are listed as English, mathematics and science.

forward by Brooks (2007), in that it is holistic and much more than just the knowledge and beliefs about practice that a teacher possesses. 'Professional identity includes […] professional philosophy, passions, commitments, ways of acting, values and morals' (Luehmann, 2007:828). In support of this idea, Gee (2005) posits the idea of recognition work being part of how a teacher demonstrates their identity. Gee (2005) suggests that this recognition work describes any actions an individual takes to make themselves visible to both themselves and others and supports the point made by Luehmann (2007) that taking on a new identity may involve risk and therefore requires teachers to be confident in what they are doing.

The degree to which individual teachers, experienced or inexperienced, are confident in the teaching of a subject is a theme pursued by Fox (2010) in a study undertaken with secondary school teachers of mathematics. None of the participants had originally trained in the subject and the findings suggest that the barriers to the teachers' conceptions of themselves as subject specialists included school-based practical support and the school's attitude to CPD. These findings are particularly relevant to primary school teachers who may only have limited knowledge and experience in much of the subject content that they are then expected to teach. A report published by The Geographical Association (GA) in 2015, which focuses on secondary school teaching, contends that there is an impending crisis of teacher supply in geography. The report states that only 60 percent of the 1001 places allocated for new geography teachers to be trained, were filled in the autumn of 2014. Whilst it was encouraging to note that the figure had risen to 83 percent for the year 2015-16, this is countered by concern within the geography community (Rawding, 2017; Jones & Lambert, 2018), that a growing number of pupils in secondary schools are being taught by teachers who are not subject specialists. The issues highlighted by the GA (2017) draw upon evidence from the 2016 Ofsted annual report which expresses concern about recruitment of subject specialist teachers, and also the National Audit Office report (2016) which notes that in the future a number of unfilled teacher training places may be taken up by students who have achieved lower entry qualifications than those originally set. Given that one suggestion by members of the geography community to improve primary pupil's learning in geography is to collaborate with secondary school colleagues (Gillman, 2017), the overall impact of the issues discussed here may be on primary and secondary teacher subject confidence and self-efficacy and ultimately learning for both primary and secondary pupils.

Whilst the conclusion in the GA Report (2015) that access to the subject community is one way of developing teacher subject expertise is supported by Fox (2010), this assertion does not

come without reservations. Findings from Fox's 2010 study suggest that for some teachers, working closely with other subject specialists only served to reinforce some of the individual's feelings of inadequacy in relation to their peers. For some of the individuals, the fact that they had to take part in what they viewed to be an intervention programme increased their lack of confidence. It would seem then, that whilst the concept of the community of practice put forward by Wenger (1998) is in general perceived to be a positive, allowing individuals to learn through participation in such communities may not be right for every individual.

Another point raised by Fox (2010) is that of the support offered by schools for the subject-specific aspect of a teacher's role. The research conducted by Garnett (2014) with secondary music teachers, took as one of its major themes, the subject of employability and to do this, the researcher undertook a series of interviews with several head teachers. Whilst the head teachers interviewed did appear to recognise the importance of subject knowledge, the findings showed that they also demonstrated a preference for candidates who were interested in working outside their subject and who put a strong emphasis on pedagogy. The head teachers interviewed appeared to define employability as the general qualities of a teacher, with some of the head teachers even suggesting that a good teacher of music does not need to be a good musician. In reporting the findings from talking to these head teachers, Garnett, notes that 'what they look for in a teacher of music is fundamentally the same as what they look for in a teacher of geography or English […] they want a teacher first' (Garnett, 2014:138). Furthermore, Garnett (2014) goes on to highlight the tension between this view and that of Ofsted (2012), who have levelled criticism that there is not enough music in some lessons observed. These findings echo those of Roberts (2010) who in reflecting on her role as a university external examiner, which involves watching trainees deliver geography lessons in secondary schools, poses the question 'Where's the Geography?' Whilst the issue requires more investigation, it may be possible that even in secondary schools, where it might be expected that teachers will have had considerable subject-specific training prior to entering the profession, this may not be the case, and the provision of on-going subject-specific support in the form of CPD may not be guaranteed or a priority for schools. This situation is then, more likely to be exacerbated in primary schools, where individual teachers are usually teaching the whole curriculum.

The challenges regarding subject teaching in English schools highlighted here, are further complicated by on-going recruitment issues. Doherty and Gerrard (2015) talk about the 'knock-on' effect for primary schools of secondary schools failing to meet their recruitment

targets in certain shortage subjects such as maths and foreign languages. The observation that 'teachers shape children's lives and play a key role in futures' [online] is accompanied by the suggestion that in addition to the bursaries and incentives already given to some secondary trainees designed to tempt them into the profession, the unique expertise of primary teachers could be recognised with similar financial incentives (Doherty & Gerrard, 2015).

Throughout this literature review, it has been found that it is difficult to separate aspects of teacher identity. The different dimensions to a teacher's identity are interlinked. An example of this was the research conducted by Hodgen and Askew (2007), who looked at the emotional relationship that primary school teachers had with mathematics and the factors that encouraged these teachers to continue with their own professional learning in the subject. The findings from this research conclude that not only is there a need to develop mathematical and pedagogical expertise in teachers of primary mathematics, but also that what these teachers who lack confidence in particular subject areas need, is opportunities to explore their identities as subject specialists (Hodgen & Askew, 2007).

2.4.3 Section Summary

Themes discussed in the final section of this literature review include the extent to which a primary teacher is as subject, pedagogical, or didactical expert or, as it would seem, a combination of all three of these. The interlinked nature of aspects of teacher identity already noted in earlier sections of this chapter has again emerged as a theme. Bukor (2015) surmises that there is probably a wider range of influences on teacher identity development than acknowledged previously: this appears to be the case.

Hattie (2011) discusses the fact that expert teachers can make use of their subject knowledge to organise and use content knowledge more effectively for their students to understand. He intimates that expert teachers are more likely to be able to respond to the needs of any classroom, recognising students who are struggling and changing the way the information is presented to make it more understandable (Hattie, 2011). Despite this acknowledgement of the significance of subject, didactical and pedagogical expertise, for all primary teachers, the picture is, it would seem, more complex than it might first appear. Within any one classroom in any one teaching situation, there is a complex interplay of variables at work. In order, for example, for a teacher to know the next steps for learning for an individual pupil in relation to a specific subject area, the teacher needs to understand what the pupil is capable of, how the pupil can best express that understanding and what an improved understanding in that subject might look like. The teacher needs to call up and employ skills related to continuity and

progression of understanding, subject-specific knowledge as well as their knowledge and understanding of that pupil and how they learn. These factors contribute to the complexity of a primary teacher's identity. Teachers, whether they are subject specialists or generalists need a wide range of different skills and attitudes if they are to assist their pupils to achieve high outcomes and teaching requires a range of abilities and skills carefully woven together, in such a way as to provide the most meaningful experience possible.

The literature reviewed in this section sets the specific context for this research. It is deliberately tapered. What is being examined in this research is the composite identity of each participant focusing on the role that they each inhabit as a primary teacher subject expert, when this expertise is defined in broad terms, what influences this expertise and how it manifests itself. Personal identities are devised of many characteristics unique to each person and it is the uniqueness of these identities together with the similarities between participants that this research aims to uncover.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Each of the three sections in this chapter has served to contextualise the research, expose the gaps in the existing literature, and provide a frame of reference for presenting the research findings. The review of the literature concerning general theories of identity has had two main outcomes. Firstly, it has affirmed that knowing about these theories serves as a worthwhile starting point for planning, designing and conducting research in the field of education, as individual teachers not only bring their personal identity to the classrooms in which they teach, but they are also located in certain contexts such as the schools in which they work. The second outcome has been to highlight how work in the under-researched area of primary teachers' subject-specific identity could complement and build on some of the general theories of identity posited. Such research crosses the disciplinary boundaries of psychology and education.

The issues highlighted in Section 2.3 of the review relate to teachers' overall identity, and how teachers view their status as professionals particularly in times of change and provide a context in which to consider findings from this research. The literature prompts a focus on finding out about participants' subject-specific and general pedagogical approaches to teaching. Against the backdrop of continued educational reform, the research considers the extent to which individuals view that they have the capacity to be themselves in terms of their professional situation. The general theme of changing identities which emerges from reviewing literature in each of the sections of the chapter, prompts consideration of the

suggestion by Woolhouse and Cochrane (2010) that professional identity evolves from the writing by each teacher of an ever-changing narrative.

In consideration of the literature reviewed in Section 2.4, this research aims to build on previous research (Martin, 2008; Catling and Martin, 2011) and to find out more about the significance and interplay of primary teachers' knowledge bases for teaching. In addition, it seeks to highlight the degree of importance attributed to pedagogic and subject content knowledge by these teachers and the way that they describe their work as both geography teachers and teachers of geography. This research builds on previous studies (Brooks, 2007, 2016; Trainou, 2007), by examining participants' identities as teachers working in the primary classroom in broad holistic terms. The issue of expertise in relation to primary teachers (Eaude, 2012) and definitions associated with the term pedagogy are considered, as the research reflects on the degree to which participants' sense of *being* geographers and their expertise in the subject and subject-specific pedagogy, influences how they view themselves as practicing teachers in broad terms.

Unlike previous research, which has examined how secondary school teachers are connected to the subject of geography (Brooks, 2007), and teachers' relationships with other curriculum subjects such as mathematics, science, and music, this research considers individual primary geography teachers' identities. In contrast to the work conducted by Martin (2005), which considered the relationship between trainee primary teachers' conceptions of geography, knowledge and pedagogy and then their development as teachers of primary geography in their first year of teaching, the focus in this research is on how the participant teachers who are all experienced teachers, view their geographical identities in relation to their overall teacher identity. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) contend that by understanding the relationships that individual teachers have with certain subjects, it can start to explain how these individuals' views of themselves, influences their motivation and possibly even performance in teaching the subject. Furthermore, Hodgen and Askew state that 'developing a strong disciplinary bond is central to the teaching of any subject and as such teachers need space to develop both disciplinary intimacy and integrity' (Hodgen and Askew, 2007:484). This research aims to bridge the gap identified in the research into primary teachers' subject identity, and examine to what extent the participants already hold such disciplinary intimacy and integrity in terms of their relationships and connections to one subject.

Drawing together the ideas presented in this chapter, the diagram in Figure 2.2 shows the integrative framework that drives this research. This diagram is intended to be a metaphorical

visual display.[18] It is represented as a 3D sphere shaped like the Earth for two reasons. The first reason is that this is intended to show that the investigation is multi-dimensional with a focus on individual primary teacher identity with the following elements:

a. How the teacher perceives him or herself (inner core identity)

b. What the teachers do and how the teacher uses their subject identity in relation to their overall teacher identity in their classroom (outer core identity)

c. How the teacher demonstrates their subject identity beyond their classroom so in their workplace and in their wider professional and social context (the mantle)

d. How the individual teachers contend that they are perceived by others in their workplace (the crust)

The second reason for representing this framework in this way is that in approaching this research from the perspective of perceiving myself as being a geographer, my default position is to find a geographical metaphor to represent the framework, a factor that replicates some of my initial reflections about being a geographer presented in Chapter 1. Adopting this position supports the view of Jackson (2006) who posits the concept of 'thinking geographically' as a powerful way of seeing the world. Jackson suggests that geographical thinking is a 'unique way of seeing the world, of understanding complex problems and thinking about inter-connections at a variety of scales' (Jackson, 2006:199) and intimates that not everyone sees the world in this way or realises the power of thinking in such a way. As a geographer, I contend that I am constantly making interconnections, hence the reason that I have used this framework to scaffold the links between aspects of teacher identity, which this research seeks to uncover. Chapter 3 builds on the context and background provided by this literature review, outlining the methodological approach used to conduct the research.

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[18]Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013) describe how diagrams give readers the possibility of seeing meaning represented more than textually.

INNER CORE IDENTITY
How the teacher perceives
him or her self

OUTER CORE IDENTITY
What the teacher does and
how they use their subject
identity in relation to their
overall teacher identity

THE MANTLE
How the teacher
demonstrates their subject
identity beyond the
classroom (workplace and
wider professional context)

THE CRUST
How the individual teachers
are perceived by others

Figure 2.2: The Integrated Research Framework

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Section 3.1 introduces the chapter. Section 3.2 provides details of the research approach employed and its philosophical presuppositions. Section 3.3 details variations to this type of research approach before section 3.4 gives an overview of the research design. Ethical considerations are addressed in Section 3.5 and reliability and credibility discussed in Section 3.6. The data collection methods are outlined in Section 3.7 and the method for data analysis is presented in Section 3.8. Section 3.9 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter of the thesis provides further information about the research approach chosen, justifying the methods employed and giving details about the research process and the participants. Chapter 1 outlined how, in designing this research, consideration was given to what was the most appropriate methodological approach to use to answer the research questions. Some of my beliefs and assumptions about research that underpinned the decisions made in relation to this research have also been presented. These views on the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and reality (ontology) determine the theoretical position adopted for the work, subscribing to the view that 'All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:31). This view is supported by Sikes, who asserts that identification of the methodology for any piece of research requires a comprehensive examination of the researcher's own 'evidence basis for the construction of knowledge' (Sikes, 2004:20). Creswell (2009) asserts that ontology is the claim those researchers make regarding knowledge: epistemology is how individuals have arrived at that knowledge and methodology is the process of studying it.

3.2 Phenomenology

It is generally accepted that the philosophical movement of phenomenology began with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938); however, whilst branches of the movement including transcendental, existential and hermeneutic phenomenology have their roots in the original philosophical thinking of Husserl (1970), it is important to acknowledge that phenomenology is not just one consistent way of thinking. Criticism levelled at Husserlian Phenomenology resulted in the development of different branches of phenomenology, such as the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962); it also resulted in it being described as both 'a singular but also a pluralistic endeavour' (Smith *et al*., 2009:12).

Despite these concerns, Dall'Alba presents a robust rationale for the use of phenomenology in an educational context, praising it as a way of understanding the 'complex phenomena we encounter in the dynamic and sometimes confronting world, in which we find ourselves in this 21st century' (2009:9). Teaching is a multi-dimensional profession, within which a range of phenomena is present to differing degrees and which inter-play to different extents depending on a range of factors. These factors include cultural and temporal factors as well as individual teacher's own epistemologies and ontologies.

Whilst phenomenology has clearly influenced this research, Lichtman (2013) warns against labelling research as phenomenological, when the essence of the lived experience of those studied is not fully captured, suggesting that this is an ideal that is never actually achievable. Significantly, Husserl (1931) talked about adopting a phenomenological attitude, which requires the researcher to be reflexive when undertaking phenomenological studies. 'Through reflection, instead of grasping simply the matter straight-out, the values, goals and instrumentalities – we grasp the corresponding subjective experiences in which we become 'conscious' of them in which (in the broadest sense) they 'appear'' (Husserl, 1931: para 2). Wertz (2005) also advocates caution and suggests that researchers use the terms phenomenologically-inspired or phenomenologically-orientated to describe work which has been founded upon phenomenological philosophy and techniques but which does not fully attest to all the characteristics widely attributed to phenomenological research (Giorgi, 1997).

This research has its foundations in the philosophical presuppositions of phenomenology as proposed by Husserl (1931). The set of procedures that phenomenological researchers generally follow (Sokolowski, 2000; Langdridge 2007), served to guide the development of the research design, the collection and analysis of data and finally the presentation of findings. Therefore, the research is described as phenomenologically-inspired. The research process followed by researchers undertaking phenomenology is prescribed and based on philosophical presuppositions which are outlined below.

3.2.1 Philosophical Presuppositions of Phenomenology

'Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the way things present themselves to us in and through such experience' (Sokolowski, 2000:2). It seeks reality in individual's narratives of and feelings about specific phenomena, but it is not as previously indicated one single philosophy. Despite this complication, there are suppositions common to the different strands of phenomenology, which are reflected in the design of this research (Langdridge,

2007). These include: the phenomenological concepts of essence and experience, and the concept of intentionality.

3.2.1.1 Essence and Experience

In his original conception of transcendental phenomenology, Husserl (1970) emphasised the importance of knowing one's own experience of a phenomenon in order to extract the phenomenological essence of the experience. This idea evolved from the work of Descartes in the 17th century and the idea of a dualist ontology of both realism and idealism. This idea purports that there exists a natural and real world of which humans are not conscious and where reality precedes appearance of the consciousness of this reality, but also that all we really know is what is in our own consciousness, and that the whole external world is merely an idea or picture in our minds.

The word essence, which has its origins in the Greek word *ousia,* is translated to mean 'the true being of a thing'. According to Plato (427-347 BC), who put forward a philosophy of essence, this is the grasp of the very nature of something. This appears at first to be different to the ideas of Aristotle (384-322 BC), who advocated a philosophy of substance wherein that which makes a thing is *what it is*. It is worth noting that Ricoeur (1976), whose ideas about phenomenology have influenced this research, suggests that the divide between Platonic essentialism and Aristotelian substantialism is not as wide as it might first appear. Ricoeur (1976) suggests that Aristotle's work on substance is a continuum of the ideas that Plato presented about essence and that there comes a point where Aristotle reaches the ontological ground of Plato when he asks about the being of being. Nevertheless, Husserl's (1970) ideas appear to be more closely attuned to Platonic philosophy as within his writings 'essence often refers to the *whatness* of things as opposed to the *thatness* (their existence)' (van Manen, 1990:177).

The phenomenological essence of an experience will be unique to each person and, for the purposes of this research, essence is seen to be the intrinsic qualities that serve to characterize or identify the experience. In this research, the aim is to uncover participants' thoughts about, and ultimately their relationships with, geography through in depth discussions about their experiences of and with the subject. The phenomenon under investigation is the lived experience that each person has of the subject and it is explored by looking at the outward and perceptible indications of this lived experience. It is this experience, that Husserl (1970) would consider to be *the thing*, when he argued that we should 'go back to the things themselves,' to study the *lifeworld* (German: lebenswelt) which he stated was 'what we know

best, what is always taken for granted in all human life, always familiar to us in its typology through experience' (Husserl, 1970:123).

The results of any one study of experience are only a representation of those manifestations of the essence at one point in time and in a certain place and as seen from the perspective of one researcher (Moustakas, 1994). In the context of this research, the focus is on the relationship that each participant has with geography as manifested and uncovered at the point at which the research is undertaken. The extent to which this factor raises concerns about the validity and reliability of the data is discussed later in the chapter.

To extricate the essence of an experience, phenomenology requires the structures and textures of an experience to be identified through a process of eidetic intuition (Wesensschau) whereby the researcher uses their subjective intuition to gain an insight into the essential nature of things. This eidetic intuition which is a procedure for *seeing essence* or *essential seeing* is in turn, used to identify, examine and describe the fundamental forms of the activity related to the experience, such as perception, enumeration and anticipation. Husserl (1970) used the concept of eidetic intuition as a justification for the assertion that phenomenology was a philosophical science. The act of eidetic reduction by which one subsequently attempts to reduce phenomenon into its necessary essences is a phenomenological procedure for acquiring insight into the essence itself, which then in turn places us in cognitive contact with general or universal knowledge. The result of this reduction is in Husserl's (1970) view, a clearer and more distinct consciousness of the universal. This reduction or intuition is a rule-governed act, which direct intuition often resists and is the way in which Husserl (1970) claims phenomenology can reach universal knowledge concerning the features of consciousness and thereby stake its claim as a philosophical science.

With regards to the term experience in the context of phenomenology, it is significant to note that in German, which was the language in which the critical phenomenological texts were originally written, the two words *Erlenis* and *Erfahrung* both translate to mean experience. *Erlenis* can be aligned to the English usage of the word experience, i.e. the events that one participates in, while the word *Erfahrung* is used to describe more than just a lived experience, it describes the experiences in life that an individual has had. 'Life experiences (Lebenserfahrungen) are more inclusive than lived experiences (Erlebnisse)' (van Manen, 1990:177). Husserlian phenomenology conceives of experience as *Erfahung* and as 'the act of consciousness in which something real is given to consciousness as what it genuinely is' (Kockelmans, 1994:82). This research is concerned with the essence of the participants' ideas

about their relationship to geography and is founded on the view that everyone's ideas are formed from their conscious experience of this relationship. At another level, the phenomenological concept of experience takes the view that each experience has both textures, which are the different ways in which an experience may outwardly appear, and structures, which lie underneath the experience and are the possible reasons for the textures. For example, in the case of this research, one participant may demonstrate their relationship with geography by being an active participant in a nationally recognised geography subject association whilst another may show this through their commitment to living sustainably.

Husserl (1970) describes each experience has having two interrelated components: noesis and noema. This idea evolves from the ideal-material duality ontology in which phenomenology is founded: it posits that although ideas and things are viewed as separate, meaning only derives from the interaction of each component part of the reality. The noesis refers to the act of experience and includes feelings and perceptions about an experience where as noema describes the object of the action such as the felt, the thought and the perceived. The combination of the noesis and the noema form the consciousness of experience, which might manifest itself as for example the remembering of an action or the perception of an event (Moran, 2000). In this case, the relationship with geography that the participants have is the noema whilst the act of having a relationship with geography is the noesis. A fundamental element of phenomenology is the relationship (noesis) that conscious subjects have with the object of the experience (noema), termed phenomenological intentionality (Sokolowski, 2000).

3.2.1.2 Intentionality

The Husserlian concept of intentionality centres on the idea that as conscious beings we are always conscious of something and that we do not just exist alongside the component parts of our environment. The act of being conscious is generally accepted to describe the state of being aware of something. However, the concept of consciousness itself cannot be described directly (van Manen, 1990); philosophers, including Descartes (1985), have been unable to define its essential characteristics. There has also been debate as to whether consciousness can be understood in a way that does not require a dualistic distinction between mental and physical states or properties. Therefore, whilst anything that presents itself to consciousness, either real or imagined, or through empirical research or subjectively is of interest to phenomenologists, van Manen (1990) warns that when 'consciousness is the object of consciousness,' which might occur when an individual reflects on their own thinking process, then 'consciousness in not the same as the act in which it appears' (van Manen, 1990:10).

Reflection from a phenomenological perspective is not introspective but retrospective and focused on lived experience that has passed. The focus of this research is on using participants' recollections of their experiences of and with geography in their everyday existence or lifeworld to better understand their relationship with the subject. The foundations of this research, as outlined previously, lie in awareness by the researcher that, as an individual, I have throughout my professional career been conscious or aware that I classify myself as a geographer. My relationship to geography is the noema; the way in which this has manifested itself, including describing myself as a geographer to other colleagues in the teaching profession is the noesis.

Sokolowski (2000) notes that the phenomenological concept of intentionality applies primarily to the theory of knowledge, not to the theory of human action and that the phenomenological use of the word is 'somewhat awkward because it goes against ordinary usage, which tends to use 'intention' in the practical sense' (Sokolowski, 2000:8). Within the context of phenomenological research, the meaning of the word intending refers to the 'intrinsic 'relatedness' of consciousness to the object of its attention' (Smith, 2003:7). This builds on Husserl's theory of consciousness, which is presentational and which purports that human beings are present to either the world or some aspect of it. Thus, in my own self-assessment that I consider myself to be a geographer, I am in several ways, through my choices to specialize in this subject and to actively seek out further training in this subject during my career, conscious or aware of one element of my identity as being subject-specific. In adopting a phenomenologically orientated methodology for this research, an opportunity to examine the nature of the intentional relationship that each participant has with geography as a subject is provided.

3.3 Description versus interpretation: A Methodological Dilemma

In exploring the similarities and differences between different phenomenological approaches, Laverty observes that 'phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology are often referred to interchangeably, without questioning and any distinction between them' (Laverty, 2003:3). This is supported by Finlay (2009) who suggests that researchers working within the phenomenological tradition, must address a number of questions when deciding on exactly how to carry out phenomenological research in practice. One of the questions that Finlay (2009) raises is the extent to which interpretation should be involved in phenomenological descriptions of experience. Interpretative phenomenology is most usually associated with Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) a pupil of Husserl. Heidegger challenged and altered Husserl's

phenomenological assumptions, taking the emphasis away from what people consciously know towards what individuals experience and the meanings of those experiences (Solomon, 1987; Crotty, 1998).

The original design for this research was based on the traditional approach to phenomenology as conceived by Husserl (1970) usually referred to as descriptive phenomenology. The intention was to identify the essence of the relationship with geography held by the participants using a combination of epoché and then subjecting the data to a series of phenomenological reductions as outlined in Section 3.8 to present a description of the phenomenon. As the research design evolved, consideration was given to how the collected data might be analysed and this led to reflection on the theory of hermeneutics.

The focus in this study is on interpreting participants' experiences. Taylor (1989) describes humans as 'self-interpreting' beings, whilst Breakwell *et al.,* expand on this notion, asserting that 'how we ascribe meaning to an event, person or object is always filtered through an already existing experiential knowledge' (Breakwell *et al.,* 2012:329). Each participant in this study has their own unique relationship with geography, formed because of their own experiences of, and interaction with the subject. The interpretation that each person has of the subject is personalised and it is these unique interpretations and the factors, which have informed these interpretations that the research aims to uncover. Consideration also needs to be given to the temporal dimension of these interpretations as well as to the historical and cultural contexts in which they occur. The participants, will probably have changed their interpretations of experiences as they have encountered new experiences and as the contexts in which they are situated have altered. Historical factors which may, at one time, have influenced individual's interpretations may be more, or less of an influence, at any one point in time. It is therefore important to note that there are temporal boundaries in this research. The interpretations given by individuals of their experiences of and relationships with geography are confined to a point in time and they are subject to change. Henriksson and Friesen, who describe hermeneutics as the art and science of both interpretation and meaning, make the point that 'meaning in this context is not a thing that is final and *stable, but* something that is continuously open to revision and interpretation' (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012:1). In relation to these factors, the data collection component of the research design is bounded by an identified period of time of one academic year and within this time frame; four points were identified when participants were interviewed as close to each other as possible.

Heidegger noted that our very presence or being in the world is a 'hermeneutical situation' (Heidegger, 1962). He emphasised a concern with the immanent world of everyday objects and concerns but stressed the importance of studying how we find ourselves. In his work 'Being and Time' (1962), Heidegger maintained that as individuals we are compelled to ask questions about ourselves and the nature of the situation we are in and who we should be and who we should become in it. This idea is central to this research as it asks questions about the nature of being a geographer. The research asks each participant to reflect on their situation as self-professed enthusiasts for geography working within education in the current cultural and historical context and at a point in time. This process of reflection involves each participant in a process of interpreting their experiences. Two participants might have identical experiences but might interpret them and subsequently recount them in a completely different way. Central then to the principles of Heidegger's interpretative phenomenology is the relation between individuals and the world in which they live. This idea of being in the world is referred to as *Dasein* (German for 'being in the world') and contends that an individual cannot detach himself or herself from the world in which they live. It is the meanings of individual narratives that are the focus of interpretative phenomenology and how these meanings influence the choices that individuals make (Lopez & Willis, 2004). As such, it is contended that it is only possible to fully understand an individual's experiences and derive meaning form these experiences if the conditions of daily life for each person is fully acknowledged and understood. The design of this research, which involved producing individual portraits using the data collected, serves to provide this information.

Thus, whilst this research is described as phenomenologically-inspired and draws on Husserlian/transcendental phenomenology, it is more inclined towards Heideggerian/interpretative phenomenology. This research aims to do more than simply describe the experiences of the participants; it also considers their transactions within the situations in which they inhabit (Kock, 1995; Maggs-Rapport, 2000).

At another level, this research is influenced by the ideas posited in the work of Gadamer (1975) and Ricoeur (1981) both of whom further developed the original philosophy of hermeneutical phenomenology as put forward by Heidegger (1962); taking as a theoretical starting position, a view of human beings, being-in-the-world or embodied. A focus on language links the work of Gadamer (1976) and Ricoeur (1981). In the view of Gadamer (1976), it is through conversation that the essence of an experience is uncovered. In pursuing the ideas of Heidegger (1962) this philosophy asserts the view of individuals as 'meaning makers

thrown into a world where all possibilities are already experienced interpretations; and that these interpretations are all communicated through language' (Langdridge, 2007:43). Conversation viewed in this context, is seen to facilitate an opportunity to recall meaning whilst also providing a way to embody and understand experience.

Ricoeur's philosophy is also centred on the importance of language and speaks of the 'hermeneutics of empathy' describing how the meaning intended by individuals is interpreted (Ricoeur, 1981). According to Ricoeur (1981), this interpretation is achieved, by looking not only at the structure of a text which is produced using phenomenological reductions but also by considering the discourse surrounding the text in more holistic terms, as distinct from just the language spoken. To do this, Ricoeur (1981) believes what is spoken by an individual, needs to be considered from the following perspectives: the act *of* saying (locutionary), what an individual does *in* saying (illocutionary) and finally what an individual does *by* saying (perlocutionary). Ricoeur (1981) takes the view that it is only possible to extract the essence of any meaning ascribed to a recounted experience by considering each of these perspectives. To achieve this level of understanding, Ricoeur (1981) advocates the use of a process, which he describes as 'appropriation', which in practical terms involves the researcher engaging with the discourse being analysed closely and then removing themselves from it to consider the bigger picture and then repeating this process several times. Langdridge (2007) describes the essential element in this process as 'the to and fro' … in which like dance one is carried away to another realm' (Langdridge, 2007:49).

Schleiermacher (1998) places an emphasis in his writings about hermeneutics on grammatical interpretation but also on psychological interpretation with a focus on the individuality of each author. 'The person is also a spirit which continually develops and their discourse is only an act of this spirit of connection with other acts' (Schleiermacher, 1998:9). Gaining an understanding of the author or speaker is an important component of the interpretation process, with the aim of finding out the meaning of the language used by the individual as opposed to just concentrating on the effect of the language used. This idea builds on another element of Ricoeur's (1981) philosophy termed the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' and describes the search for the meaning hidden beneath the surface, which may, when uncovered be at odds with the meaning originally assigned to the recollection of an experience by an individual. Schleiermacher (1998) appears to suggest that ultimately the interpreter can end up knowing the author better than himself or herself. While Gadamer (1976) agrees that the author does not necessarily have complete interpretative authority over the meaning of a text, supposes

that it is more realistic to make a clear distinction between understanding the meaning of the text and understanding the person. 'Understanding means primarily to understand the content of what is being said and secondarily to isolate and understand another's meaning as such' (Gadamer, 1976:168). In terms of this research, the production of the identity portraits involved reflecting not just on the words spoken but also on the way the words were spoken and/or any gestures made whilst being interviewed. One example of this is the memorable way in which one of the participants visibly smiled as she spoke about geography during the interviews. Where possible, as the interviewer, I made a point of commenting on points like this so they could be drawn on when compiling the portraits.

In summary, phenomenology is an iterative approach to research whereby the data is continually reassessed in search of finding new layers of meaning as attempts are made to make explicit the essence of the phenomenon being studied. Researchers who employ hermeneutical phenomenology show a greater concern for interpretation and attempt to do more than just describe experience, as is the case with descriptive phenomenology (Giorgi, 1985). This research adheres to the idea proposed by Finlay whereby, rather than being viewed as distinct from one another, description and interpretation are viewed as a 'continuum where specific work may be more or less interpretative' (Finlay, 2012:22). This research is both descriptive and yet also interpretative and supports the idea promoted by Finlay (2012) who suggests that this is inevitable with all research conducted in the phenomenological tradition. The research aims to uncover meaning, but in doing this through the process of deconstructing the descriptions of experience provided by the participants, interpretation occurs. Langdridge (2007) in defending researchers who come to this conclusion, about which boundaries within the phenomenological tradition their research crosses, suggests that 'such boundaries would be antithetical to the spirit of the phenomenological tradition that prizes individuality and creativity' (Langdridge, 2007:113).

3.4. The Research Design

This research, which was guided by the research aims and questions outlined in Chapter 1 consists of two layers. Each of the participants in this study presents a single case of the relationships that one individual has with geography, and the degree to which this lived experience forms part of that individual's identity as a teacher. In addition, the group of participants collectively form a case study, which seeks to explore the convergent and or divergent relationships that this selected group of primary teachers has with geography.

Whilst case studies do appear to offer an opportunity to enquire about 'real people in real situations' (Cohen *et al.*, 2017:251), they also attract criticism and remain a contentious issue within the field of education. Hopwood (2004), in his own research into secondary school pupils' conceptions of school geography, questions the strength of case study research and suggests that the term case study lacks specificity and clarity. Specific criticism of this approach includes the claim that case studies are 'seriously deficient due to both inadequate methods and a lack of methodological self-awareness' (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985:34). The uniqueness of each case studied means that it is difficult to apply a precise definition to a case and what it looks like*.* In defence of case study research, Yin comments that such research is 'enquiry in a real-life context as opposed to the contrived contexts of experiments or survey' (Yin, 1993:13) and therefore valuable.

The use of phenomenological enquiry as a method for this research, with its detailed and prescribed format (Moustakas, 1994), negates some of the criticism afforded to case study research. Stake refers to the 'particularization' of case study research and whilst sounding a note of caution in relation to this type of research, states that 'an ethic of caution is not contradictory to an ethic of interpretation' (Stake, 1995:9). It is not uncommon for researchers, particularly in the field of education, to make assertions based on small samples. However, it is important to note that such an approach requires an acknowledgement that such research will be 'invoking the privilege and responsibility of interpretation' (Stake, 1995:9) and must have rigorous and vigorous analysis applied to the collected data, with the question being asked 'what is this a case of?' If these principles are adhered to, then case study research can make a worthwhile and useful contribution to research in the field of education.

From within the field of geography education research, where this study is located, Butt advises that researchers should ensure 'consistency and compatibility between the methods used to collect research data and those used to analyse it' (Butt, 2010:105). Furthermore, he suggests that it is not possible to generalise knowledge in most education settings and cautions that attempts to do so, may lead to real-world situations being 'subjected to a reductionist approach, which oversimplifies their components and bias the eventual data analysis' (Butt, 2010:105). The overarching aim of this research is to generate evidence, which then in turn provides a basis for reflection on by teachers and teacher educators. Therefore the 'fuzzy generalisations and predictions' described by Bassey (2001) which are drawn from case study research are valid. This research seeks to develop rather than confirm theory.

The phenomenological process as illustrated in Figure 1.1, Chapter 1, involves several stages. Figure 3.1 shows how each stage of the research process conducted was mapped against the phenomenological process and the time frame for the research.
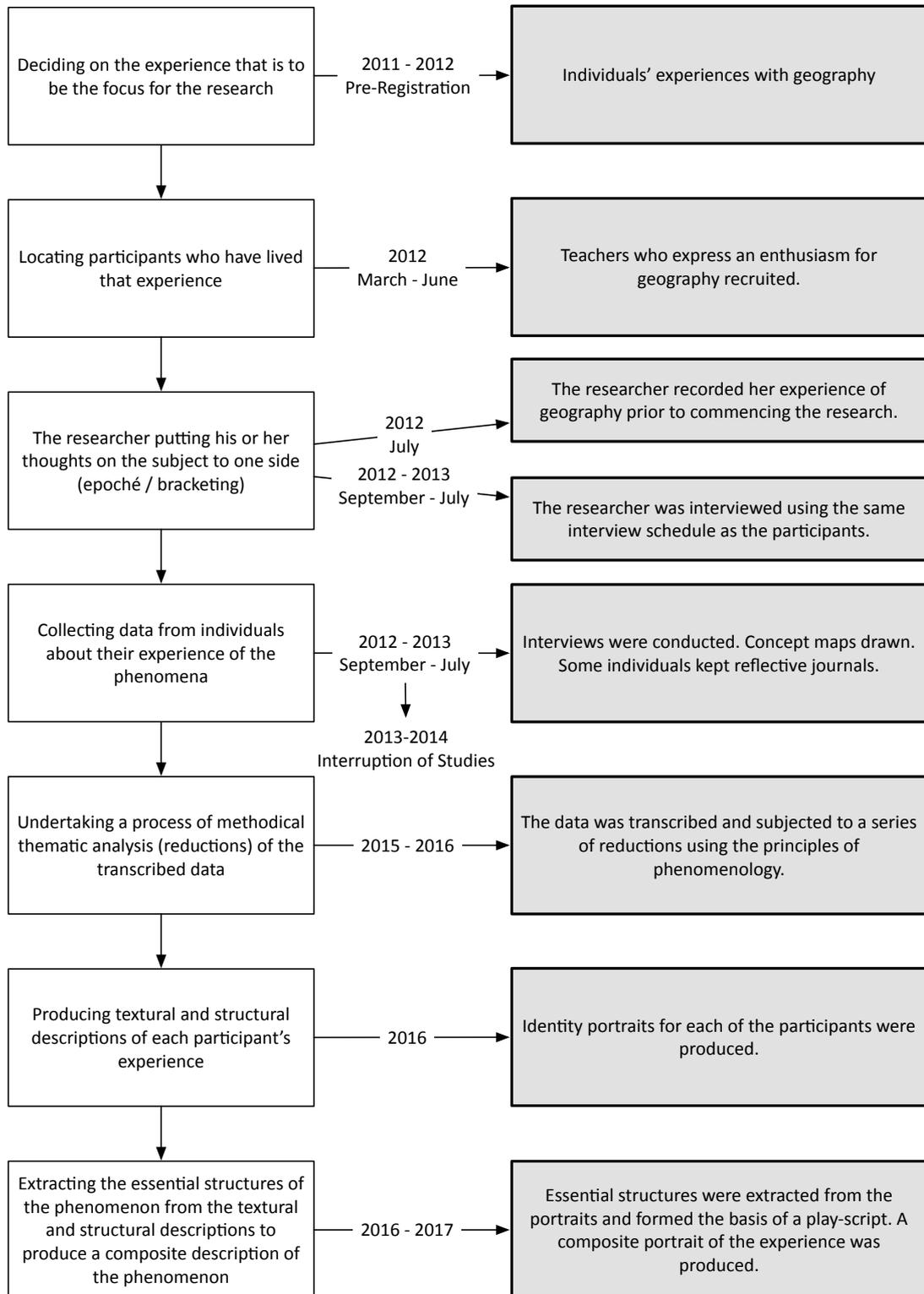
Figure 3.1: The research process and time frame mapped against the phenomenological process

3.4.1 The Sampling Strategy

The emphasis in phenomenological enquiry, as highlighted by Denovan and Macaskill (2013), is on using a purposive homogenous sample to explore the issues under examination in depth. Smith *et al*., (2009) who employ interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), stress the importance of the sample in this type of research being theoretically consistent with not only the qualitative paradigm within which fits, but also with the orientation of the particular phenomenological study. Phenomenological enquiries require the research questions to be meaningful for all those involved in the study leading to a relatively homogenous sample, a characteristic that is not viewed by those advocating the approach as a negative.

These requirements often result, as was the case for this research, in potential participants being contacted following a referral. The phenomenon under investigation in this study is the relationship with geography that an individual primary teacher has; therefore, each of the participants had to have at the very least some experience of the subject. The participants in this study were self–selecting from a larger group who were recommended by a local authority geography subject advisor. Purposive sampling techniques such as this are favoured methods in qualitative interpretive research, to gain access to participants and develop theory (Kumar, 1996). Use of this type of sampling strategy allows the researcher to seek people who meet the purpose of the research aim and can contribute due to their specific knowledge or experience of the phenomena under investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Six potential participants were originally suggested for the study in addition to the researcher. Each of these potential participants was contacted by telephone and a meeting was set up in the individual's school to outline and explain the research. These meetings took place over the course of three months. The purpose of these communications was to ensure that the participants understood the focus of the study, what their contributions were and to answer any questions. Appropriate approval was obtained from the University of Winchester Research Knowledge Exchange (RKE) committee and then each participant was sent in advance of the meeting, a project-information letter (Appendix 1). The purpose of this was to provide information about the research, why it was being undertaken and what was required of any participant choosing to take part. Additionally, the letter informed participants about issues of confidentiality. Attached was a consent form where individuals could indicate that they had understood the information in the letter and were happy to have the conversations recorded and used for research purposes. Information about the research was also sent to the participants' head teachers.

Of the six individuals spoken to, five initially agreed to sign up to the study. Written consent forms were then completed by each participant. One potential participant, who was at this stage of the process personally very keen to take part in the research withdrew on the request of her head teacher, having been advised that her participation in the study did not complement the overall school aims at that time. Prior to the first round of interviews which were scheduled for October 2012, I was contacted by a colleague of another of the participants and informed that her colleague had had to withdraw reluctantly from the study because she had several personal issues, which had forced her to take a lengthy period of absence from work. As a result, the study started in October 2012, with a total of five participants – the researcher and four purposively selected practicing primary teachers.

None of the potential participants for the research put forward was male and therefore the final sample was all female. The fact that these individuals were male or female was not part of the decision to recruit them. If a suitable male participant had been found for the study then he would not have rejected on grounds of gender but comparison could be made between male and female teachers' relationships with geography in the context of this research. This was also the case for social class and ethnicity. Recruitment for the study was focused on the nature of these participants' experiences with geography. Basic information for each of the participants in the study is set out in Table 3.1 and whilst the names of all participants have been changed with a view to protecting participant identity, this is not possible in the case of the researcher, so whilst I have changed my name on the data for the purposes of continuity, it is obvious from the information given that I am Tabitha. The inclusion of the researcher in this research as discussed in Chapter 1, was an acknowledgement that 'an interpretation depends on sharing some ground with the person being interpreted' (Smith *et al*., 2009:23). As an individual who shared with the participants an enthusiasm and interest in geography, I had some pre-existing common ground with each of the participants.

Case	Setting	Age	Number of Years Teaching	Role at time of data collection
Grace (GN)	Infant School	30	8	Assistant Head teacher Foundation Subject Curriculum Coordinator
Hilary (HL)	Primary School	58	30	Deputy Head teacher Class Teacher Geography Coordinator
Wendy (WL)	Primary School	45	20	Assistant Head Class teacher Geography Coordinator
Millie (MT)	Primary School	50	20	Class teacher Geography Coordinator
Tabitha (TE)	HEI	45	23	University Academic Geography Education Specialist and former primary teacher

Table 3.1: Individual case participants' details *(Names changed to protect anonymity)*

3.4.2 Research Overview and Timeframe

Initially a series of three rounds of interviews were planned to be conducted across one academic year (2012-2013) to achieve the purpose of following participants' unique trajectories. This 'intermittent' approach (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004) towards data collection was pre-planned, as was the chosen time frame for data collection, which was bound to one academic year. The aim in setting this time frame was to restrict any disruption for the participants who were employed as full-time class teachers within their schools as much as possible. It also ensured, to some degree, an element of continuity, as teachers often move schools between academic school years. This 'selective intermittent time mode' to data collection, which usually covers a total period of between three months and two years, is 'a flexible approach particularly with regard to the frequency of site visits.' (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004:620).

Ahead of each of the interviews, participants were given a reflective task to complete. These were communicated to the participants by e-mail and in a written letter. Details of these tasks can be found in Table 3.2 and copies of the letters sent to participants explaining each of the tasks can be found in Appendix 2. Interviews were conducted with each participant at a similar time so usually within the same month. Although there was an initial plan for the focus of each interview, the foci for each round of the interviews evolved over the course of the data collection period. This approach allowed for external events such as the publication in February 2013, of the draft framework for the revised Primary National Curriculum for use

English schools, to be accounted for in the research process. The publication of this document, resulted in an additional round of interviews taking place.

Date	Pre-Interview Task (Extract from covering letter sent in advance of interview)	Focus of interview
1a) October 2012	'In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to fill out the attached questionnaire which asks a few questions about your current role and your qualifications'	'Individual and personal understanding, thoughts and beliefs about the nature and purpose of geography'
1b) October 2012	N/A	Additional interview conducted with the researcher by supervisor
2) February 2013 EXTRA INTERVIEW	'I am attaching a copy of the draft proposals for geography in the new primary national curriculum which you may or may not have seen. In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would cast an eye over these and just jot down some general thoughts either in the journal I gave you on my last visit or on a separate piece of paper or even as annotations on the attachment'	Geography component of the draft framework for the new Primary National Curriculum published in February 2013
3) March/April 2013	'Ahead of the interview I would like if possible for you to draw me a 'mind map' or other visual representation which shows the following: a) Your perception of geography as a subject b) Your personal relationship with the subject – how it contributes to your overall professional identity as a teacher and finally c) The different influences on your practice as a teacher of geography indicating their relative importance e.g. support from head teacher'	A) Opportunity for participants to explain the mind maps and/or visual representations that they completed ahead of the interview and B) An opportunity to follow up on answers to questions asked in previous interviews
4) June 2013	'In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to reflect on the conversations that we have had this year and jot down in your journal any reflections that you have on the process and the research that you have participated in'	A) Having reflected on all the answers given by the participants during the academic year, each person was asked a series of questions picking up on particularly answers they had given and B) participants were given the opportunity to feedback on their experience of the research process

Table 3.2: Pre-Interview tasks, timing and foci of each interview

One additional interview was conducted with the researcher. This was conducted by a supervisor in December 2012 and involved using answers from the first interview conducted in October 2012, as a starting point for a more 'probing' interview which explored in more detail the researcher's relationship with geography. This served two purposes; firstly, it forms part of the phenomenological process of epoché/bracketing whereby the research attempts to set aside their own beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation and which is further discussed in Section 3.8 but also as a pilot study. Kim (2010) contends that the main benefit of conducting a pilot study is that it provides researchers with opportunities to adjust the main study. It was using this definition of a pilot study and that put forward by Prescott and Soeken (1989), that a pilot-study is intended to ensure that methods will work in practice that guided the use of a pilot study in this research. Kim (2010) contends that pilot studies are not always intended to produce results, but this additional interview with me as the researcher provided material upon which to reflect. The research questions served to guide the interviews and there are indications on the interview schedules which show where specific questions are intended to prompt answers in response to these main research questions (Appendix 2). Reflection on each the first round of interviews served to prompt consideration of what questions participants might need to be asked in future interviews in order to extract further meanings from their experiences of being geographers. The interview questions which are discussed further in Section 3.7 of this chapter were not planned to provide responses which could then be considered in isolation. Rather they are parts of a bigger jigsaw which, when seen together, provides a picture of the experience that these individuals have with geography. The data generated by the extra interview conducted with me the researcher, formed part of the data analysed and was used to present a profile of my own lived experience with geography.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In acknowledging that 'society places limits on what researchers can do in the pursuit of knowledge' and that 'it has expectations about how research should be conducted' (Denscombe, 2014:305); the ethics of this research were considered during the design phase but also whilst the research was being conducted and when it was reported on. In addition to general ethics, there were several considerations pertaining to phenomenology specifically that were incorporated into the research design. Because the research was conducted over a full academic year, I ensured that as each interview approached I contacted the participants and checked that they were still content to be a part of the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). All the participants were retained for the duration of the research period.

3.5.1 General ethical considerations

King and Horrocks (2010) suggest that the ethical practice of social research with human participants is both complex and demanding and they point to the individual morality that researchers bring to the research process. This researcher morality is evidenced by the ethical principles around which the research is designed and conducted. The welfare of participants guided all stages of the research. Once ethical approval had been granted for the study and the participants had given their informed consent, several steps were taken to protect the participants. Every interview date was set with the participants at their convenience. I also gave participants the option of being interviewed either in their own setting or to come to the university. All participants chose to be interviewed in their own settings and intimated that this was more convenient to them as it saved them travelling time. Interviews were also timed to ensure that they were convenient for the participants and these varied from being conducted after school but also during the daytime when participants had Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time and were relived of class duties. Only one interview was ever conducted with one participant on one day to ensure that as the researcher I was fully focused on listening to the experiences of just that one person on that day.

During each meeting, I ensured that I allowed enough time for a general light-hearted conversation before the main interview began. This enabled the participants to relax. All the participants seemed happy to chat and showed a genuine interest in the research and asked about its progress throughout the academic year. Before the tape recorder was turned on, I made sure that participants knew that they could ask it to be switched off at any time they wished. As for the information shared was to be confidential, I explained that the participants would be allocated a pseudonym, which will be used in the thesis and any future publications. All participants were given the option to choose their own pseudonym. Only one participant chose this option and seemed visibly excited about choosing her own name for the research.

Confidentiality of the participants' names and the information they gave was maintained, with only myself as the researcher and the interview transcriber having access to the participants' real names. I was the only person with access to the information given in the ethics consent form and information sheets. In addition, I ensured that any identifying details, names, places or references to other people who should not be identified, were, either removed from or substituted in the data to provide anonymity. All recorded notes, digital and written, were, and continue to be stored securely. Electronic data is secured with the use of encrypted passwords. Once the interviews were concluded, the participants were thanked and informed

that they would be sent copies of their interview transcripts for checking. Immediately after the interviews, I took the time to record some notes including general observations about the participants and their level of interest in the study. The process of transcription began as closely following the interviews as possible. These measures were all intended to ensure that the way in which the research participants were treated, and continue to be treated, remains of fundamental importance (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

3.5.2 Specific ethical considerations for phenomenological research

The philosopher Levinas (1987) is viewed as a significant contributor to the development of phenomenology. Moran (2000) notes how his contribution was in giving phenomenology a 'radically ethical orientation' whereby a concern for others was promoted as being the focus for the ethical stance taken in this type of research. In contrast to the view that adhering to ethics, provides a justification for behaving in a certain way, this perception of ethics attaches significance to the responsibility that an individual gives to another:

> The term 'ethics', then, for Levinas, has a special and unique meaning. For him, ethics is never an egocentric mode of behaving, nor the constriction of theories, but involves the effort to constrain one's freedom and spontaneity in order to be open to the other person, or more precisely to allow oneself to be constrained by the other. (Moran, 2000:321)

Phenomenology involves trying to seek below the surface of experience to extract the essence of the chosen phenomenon. Langdridge (2007) offers the following note of caution with regards to the issue of privacy and more specifically any invasion of an individual's privacy, which it may be deemed phenomenological studies are more susceptible to than other research approaches.

> Invasion of privacy does not occur only with observational methods … it is also a possibility when interviewing if an interviewer is not sufficiently sensitive to a participant and the participant's desire to not talk about particular issues. Consent is no defence in such circumstances…. (Langdridge, 2007:63)

This research involved asking searching questions about both personal and professional background so, for example, participants were asked about any experiences that they had when growing up that they considered had contributed to their interest in geography. I briefly explained the principles of a phenomenological interview before the tape recorder was turned on, indicating that whilst I had a set of loosely worded questions, the participants would be

leading the interview into any direction that they considered meaningful to them. During the recorded interviews, as a researcher, I tried to listen carefully to the answers given. Whilst acknowledging my situation in this research, I tried to approach each interview with a clear mind. I made efforts to suppress my own biases to create a neutral basis for the conversations. The intention of this was to avoid leading the interview, instead ensuring that the participant led the conversation. This did not always prove possible and to a degree I used my own understandings and experiences of geography to understand the participants and create trust and empathy. Mostly, the conversations flowed well but I encouraged the dialogue when needed by asking questions such as 'why do you think this was?' or 'what influenced your thinking?' The more interviews I conducted, the more comfortable I became with this interview approach, which was also reflected as the participants seemed to be more relaxed.

The phenomenological process of reduction set out in Section 3.8, whereby the data is reduced during the analysis process to a series of meaning units thus distancing the data from the individual, providing a means for protecting participants' privacy. An additional layer of security was added in this instance by paying particularly close attention to the participants' anonymity during the writing up of the individual identity portraits.

3.6 Credibility and Reliability

In terms of how valid and/or reliable any data collected from this research is, it is apt to initially consider these terms generally but also to discuss them in relation to the chosen research approach. Scheurich (1997) suggests that the many kinds of validity that have been delineated across the growing array of research paradigms are 'simply masks that conceal a profound and disturbing sameness' (Scheurich, 1997:80). In pursuing this line of argument, Lincoln and Denzin, highlight a 'crisis of legitimation' in relation to qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:43) and draw attention to those critics who stress that the traditional judgements of objectivity, reliability, validity, and generalisability cannot be applied to this type of work.

This research is conducted within the field of education and Cohen *et al.,* (2017) highlight two specific types of validity within educational research. Internal validity which 'seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can be sustained by the data' (Cohen *et al.*, 2017:135), and external validity, which refers to the degree to which the results of the research can be generalised to the wider population. In adopting a relativistic interpretative stance in line with general phenomenological perspectives the aim was to recognise and present the participants'

subjective positions. I was not planning on being able to present one defining 'truth' but rather a contextually defined and subjective perspective. Through the idea of reflexivity, it is therefore recognised that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:14).

With specific regard to validity in phenomenological research, the Husserlian position adopted by those engaging in primarily descriptive phenomenology is that any claims about knowledge, can only be made by a subject understanding the world in which they operate. In answer to questions raised about the validity of such knowledge, given the possible bias of subjectivity, the key according to Langdridge; 'is for the researcher to be fully present to the phenomenon being investigated, such that the researcher is able to derive a structural understanding of the experience being described' (Langdridge, 2007:155). Guidelines for checking the validity and reliability of data collected in phenomenological studies (Polkinghorne, 1989), include: checking the accuracy of transcripts, checking that textures and structures identified in the data can be traced back to the raw data and consideration of the specific context of the data and therefore its generalisability. Phenomenological studies are deemed valid if they accurately capture and represent the investigated phenomenon (Hycner, 1985). Because the individual as-it-is-lived experience lies at the core of phenomenology, it is suggested that the most sophisticated validity checks are the participants themselves (Hycner, 1985).

Several strategies were employed to promote credibility and enable future verification of the data where appropriate. These included reviews by one of my supervisors of the statements selected from the data and which then formed the basis of the meaning units from which the textural and structural phenomenological descriptions were composed. Participants were sent their transcripts so that inaccuracies and inconsistencies could be checked for. Finally, the individual identity portraits from which the final themed composite descriptions were developed, are, as far as possible, both comprehensive and detailed; they serve as an accurate portrayal of how participants experience geography.

Yardley (2000) advises phenomenological researchers to pay attention to agency. In the case of this research, my role as researcher will have formed part of the social context of the responses provided by the participants. The participants were selected for the research because they had a similar professed interest in geography to my own and an effort was made to present myself on an equal-footing and build up a relationship of trust and transparency about the research in the pre-interview meetings. This included outlining my own background and interests and explaining in detail what I intended to do during the research process and

why. My own researcher bias is articulated through the inclusion of my reflections on my experiences of geography, presented in Chapter 1.

Bassey (2001) highlights that generalisation can be conceived of in three distinct ways: scientific generalisation (what the classical physicist looked for); statistical generalisation (expressing the chance that something will be the case, usually coming from studies of samples such that the result should be the same if a different sample is drawn); and fuzzy generalisations (a kind of prediction that says something may happen, but without any measure of its probability). Bassey (2001) believes fuzzy generalisations are legitimate and do not reduce the validity of the work. In respect of the efficacy of phenomenological research, Langdridge whilst conceding that 'research findings should be useful to someone other than the researcher' (Bassey, 2007:157) questions the requirement for research to be practically applied for it to be considered useful and as a result deemed valid. This research is designed to uncover participants' experiences with geography. It aims to consider how the understanding of these experiences and the reflection on the research approach used to uncover these experiences might inform and improve the practice of both the participants and other practitioners.

The rigorous and systematic approach to data analysis adopted in this research using the steps outlined in Section 3.8, is also recommended as a way of increasing the reliability and validity of data collected in research of this type (Yardley, 2000). To facilitate this coherence, Langdridge (2007) advises that researchers are transparent at every step of the research process including detailing how data is collected and analysed and include extracts from the original transcripts alongside thorough explanations of how the researcher was reflexive throughout the whole research process. Ricoeur (1981) suggests that research findings from phenomenological studies should be presented in a similar way to the way in which evidence is presented within a court of law, whereby all claims made can be supported. If such evidence cannot be found within the data to support the claims made then they should be considered invalid.

This research subscribed to the view that, whilst acknowledging that it is difficult to develop new images of validity alongside the development of social science, transparency, honesty and openness in research are key to ensuring that validity, however it is defined, remains as one of the 'necessary truth criteria of conventional social science' (Scheurich, 1997:80).

3.7 Data Collection Methods

The main aim of phenomenological research is to obtain a 'description of some lived experience, with the interviewer aiming to elicit the maximum amount of information about the topic at hand' (Langdridge, 2007:87). Interviewing is widely accepted (van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994; Pollio *et al*., 1997) as a particularly effective technique for collecting data about individuals lived experiences. Langdridge (2007) goes on to outline how it is usual for researchers adopting phenomenological approaches, to use either: concrete retrospective description of experience, completed by participants themselves; the talking aloud method, whereby individuals vocalize their thinking to the researchers or as in this case, semi-structured interviews. In addition to a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with each participant, this research employed individually constructed mind-maps or visual representations and the optional use of personal journals. Each of these three data collection methods, is discussed below.

3.7.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

In accordance with the generally accepted requirements of phenomenological enquiries (Moustakas, 1994), a semi structured interview schedule comprising open-ended questions designed to encourage the participants to talk (Smith *et al*., 2009) was constructed for each of the four rounds of interviews. Mason cautions that qualitative interviews are challenging to plan, making the point that 'in the absence of a pre-designed set and sequence of questions, the qualitative interviewer has to prepare themselves to be able to 'think on their feet' in the interview itself' whilst also needing to 'simultaneously orchestrate the intellectual and social dynamics of the situation' (Mason, 1996:43).

The interviews conducted could be more accurately described as professional conversations, which imitated the normal conversational process. Whilst each in-depth interview was planned and there was a focus to it (Kvale, 1996), the design of the interviews allowed for the participants' realities to be explored from their own perspectives. For this research, using in-depth interviews allowed the participants' voices to be heard and their experiences of geography to be recounted. This balance of control is significant in terms of phenomenological interviews as, unlike traditional interviews, where the researcher controls and defines the direction of the interview, in phenomenological research, the participants are often referred to as co-researchers (Giorgi, 1985). The researcher takes on the role of being a facilitator and asks some generic questions and from these starting points other questions follow often prompted by the participants' responses. Smith and Osborn observe an advantage of this conversational

style of interviewing: that it 'allows a greater flexibility of coverage and allows the interview to go into novel areas and it tends to produce rich data' (Smith & Osborn, 2010:59).

Each of the interview schedules (Appendix 2) was guided by the research questions but was designed to be flexible enough to facilitate each of the interviews being adapted to the narratives provided by the participants in response to the questions posed. Rieman and Schutze (1987) cited in Flick (2009) explain that the interview has three components: the use of a 'generative narrative question', which refers to the topic of the study and is intended to stimulate the interviewee's main narrative; a second stage of narrative probing where narrative fragments not exhaustively detailed; and finally a 'balancing phase in which the interviewee may also be asked questions that make an attempt at balancing the story reducing the 'meaning' of the whole to its common denominator. This final part of the interview may extract some understanding of the theoretical accounts of what is being recounted. For each of the schedules, a set of basic questions was drawn up together with a set of supplementary questions, which were designed to prompt the interviewee into giving more information.

For this interview technique to be successful, it is important to ensure that the researcher has a level of rapport with the interviewees (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This rapport was built in this research by meeting with participants before the study as previously outlined and making sure that they were fully informed about what their participation in the study would involve. I made sure that the participants understood that there were no right answers and that they were free to say what they wanted to say and to steer the conversation. The pre-interview tasks were partly designed to help participants think about their experiences with geography and begin to consider what aspects of their life worlds they wish to share in the interviews. Each of the interviews began with a very general conversational question such as 'what are your thoughts about the new National Curriculum?' designed to ease the participants into the interview and lay the foundations for subsequent questions. Throughout the interview, I used prompts to encourage participants to deepen their thinking and to try and elicit more detail about their experiences. Data Extract 3.1 provides an example of how I prompted one of the participants to think more deeply. This example illustrates a turning point in my conversations with Hilary as I realised through prompting her that she actively seeks to make geography the centre of what she does in the classroom every day.

Extract from interview with Hilary (Focus: General/ Subject pedagogical beliefs)

I: *And what are your other subject interests?*

HL: I'm only teaching Year One at the moment, I've got a handle on all subjects but if I had to go up to Year Six I would choose to teach geography or do literacy with them

I: *So, you've definitely got a preference for those subjects, I mean we have to teach everything in primary school…*

HL: Oh yes, and you've got to give it that slant or extend that area if I need to, if I want to fill in any time, it's geography

I: *So, you find the gaps to drip-feed it in?*

HL: Yes, yes, yeah

I: *And …do you ever combine the subjects, do you ever bring in your literacy, or bring in your geography to other subjects?*

HL: Yes, I mean, with Year One we've just been…because I only teach two days in that class, the other teacher was going to be doing some of the geography. But she has been thinking about it being difficult going out and about, and I said, I'll come with you. And we actually did go out and about, and we used…it's our literacy but we are doing describing what we saw round out and about. So, we were doing it through literacy, but it's our geography

Data Extract 3.1: Extract from interview with Hilary, which shows how she was prompted by the interviewer to think more deeply about her experiences with geography

Moustakas (1994) cautions against researchers influencing or leading interviewees to give the answers to questions that they think they are required to give. To try and avoid this, I tried to say less and listen more. It is noticeable that I said less over the course of the four interviews suggesting that I became more adept at interviewing and the participants were becoming more relaxed and happy to talk without prompting. I also deliberately restated some of the information the participants gave me during the interviews. This in turn on occasion led to evidence of further understanding of the participants and their experiences. An example of this is given below in Data Extract 3.2.

Extract from interview with Millie (Focus: New National Curriculum)

I: *Do you envisage that you'll change much from what you're doing at the moment?*

MT: I don't think so, because I know that … we're doing this, we hit those two with the lower key stage work. I know that in the upper key stage they're doing all this with looking at rivers – they do rivers, coasts

I: *So, what it sounds like is what you're going to try and do is try and work what you've got to fit this.* Why is…that?

MT: Well, probably because I'm a geographer, and I'm a passion for it, and I will make it fit

Data Extract 3.2: Example of how restating information given during the interview led to deeper understanding of individual's experience with geography

Where I thought that it should be recorded that participants were using non-verbal cues or animations that were important features of what they were telling me, I spoke about these on the tape so that they could be recorded. Data Extract 3.3 gives an example of the recording of one of these non-verbal cues. These measures were designed to try and build trustworthiness (Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007) between me the researcher and my co-researchers or interviewees with the aim of achieving a situation whereby participants felt 'safe, comfortable and as though what they are saying is valued' (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2006:128).

Example of non-verbal cues recorded:

GN: I think history's different, because you can easily make history come to life, so we've done, you know, you can dress up, you can have visitors, you can role play, you can do lots of drama…YouTube nowadays, the most amazing clips you can find, and show, and you know, a suitcase full of artefacts…
I: When you talk about that, you seem quite animated

Data Extract 3.3: Non-Verbal Cues recorded in interview transcripts

The interviews were transcribed in preparation for the subsequent data analysis within two weeks of each interview being conducted.

3.7.2 Mind Maps and Visual Representations

Since the earliest cave paintings, man has consistently pursued more effective and elegant ways of conveying information. More recently, advances in technology and in

our understanding of cognition and perception have led to new techniques and methods for visualizing information (Canas & Novak, 2006).

In preparation for the third round of interviews, each participant was asked to draw a mind map or other visual representation. They were asked to show: their perception of geography as a subject; personal relationship with the subject, defined as how it contributed to their overall professional identity as a teacher, and finally the different influences on individual's practice as a teacher of geography indicating its relative importance. The term 'mind map' was deliberately used rather than the term 'concept map' although either would have been appropriate to the task. This was because although primary teachers do use concept maps in their classroom practice, mind maps are more commonly used and it was felt that that the use of this term would be less pressurising for participants. The letter asking participants to do this task, ahead of the third interview (Appendix 2) was worded in such a way as to not make the task too onerous. The BERA (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research state that educational researchers should 'operate within an ethic of respect for any persons involved in the research they are undertaking'. The term 'mind map' (Buzan, 1974), which refers to maps or diagrams used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central key word or idea, was considered less intimidating than the term concept map. One participant chose not to complete a mind map and explained at the start of her interview that lack of time permitted her from doing this task before the interview. I gave this individual the choice of completing a mind map during the interview or to just talk about what influences her ideas about geography: she chose to talk.

The reasons behind using this method of data collection were two-fold. The first of these was to give individuals an opportunity to express their relationships with and connection to geography in a different format, with the aim of extracting a greater sense of the real phenomenological essence of each of these relationships. One important characteristic of this type of visualisation diagram is that they show not just the different component parts of individual's thoughts about a focus, but also an indication of how these different components link to one another (Appendix 5). The inclusion of these cross-links makes more explicit any perceived relationships that the author of the visual relationship considers to be significant.

3.7.3 Personal Journals

Van Manen describes how a 'journal, diary, or log writing, … may contain reflective accounts of human experiences that are of phenomenological value' (van Manen, 1990:73). Each of the participants in this research was given the option of filling out a reflective journal during the

research process. I purchased the journals ahead of the first round of interviews and then during these interviews gave these to the participants in person explaining that it was entirely up to the individual if they decided to write in the journal or not. Jacelon and Imperio (2005) posit that personal journals allow research participants to focus on daily activities and reflections that they value. My suggestion was that there might be thoughts or reflections on the research that might occur to the participants between interviews and which they might want to record. Ortlipp (2008) records that the keeping and using of reflective journals facilitates the opportunity for individuals to make experiences, thoughts and feelings visible during the research process and thus meets the criteria of qualitative research.

Only two of the five participants in this research decided to record their thoughts in these journals. Because I had presented the journals as optional, I did not feel that it was ethically appropriate to question why some participants had not chosen to use the journals. What was noticeable was that the two participants who did choose to use the journals, Grace and Wendy, did so with considerable regularity. In discussion with these two individuals it appeared that the use of the journals did more than ensure methodological rigour and paradigmatic consistency (Ortlipp, 2008). Both participants appeared to use the journals to develop their own thinking between interviews and rehearse some of what they wanted to share with me when we met in person. The examples below in Data Extract 3.4, seem to support the finding that the keeping of these personal journals helped these individuals bring the 'unconsciousness into consciousness and thus open for inspection' (Ortlipp, 2008:703).

> *Extract from Grace's Personal Journal*
>
> *Enjoyed thinking about on subject in more detail and having to answer some quite challenging questions.*
>
> *Really made me think, made me passionate but has that come through/ across to other members of staff. Maybe everyone needs a form like this to be able to go and just discuss the subject.*
>
> *Extract from Wendy's Personal Journal*
>
> *Just having a look at the draft proposal for geography in the new primary national curriculum.*
>
> *I looked back at current NC at the "Learning across the National Curriculum' which reminded me what a fab subject it is – covering pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development, promotes citizenship, communication skills, numerical skills, use of ICT, working with others, reviewing and evaluating in order to make improvements and problem solving.*

Data Extract 3.4: Extracts from participant's personal journals

Elliott (1997) supports the idea that personal recorded reflections can be followed up by the research in subsequent interviews and this is one of the ways in which I used these journal entries. In addition, extracts from these personal journals were used when writing up the individual identity portraits that comprise the research findings presented in Chapter 4.

3.8 Methods of reducing the data and interpreting the lived experience of participants

The phenomenological process of data analysis involves several stages, which Moustakas (1994) describes as a process of reduction and then interpretation. There are four main components to this process, which are indicated on Figure 3.2. This figure also shows how each stage of the data analysis process was conducted mapped against the phenomenological process. Details of each stage of this process are outlined in detail in this section.
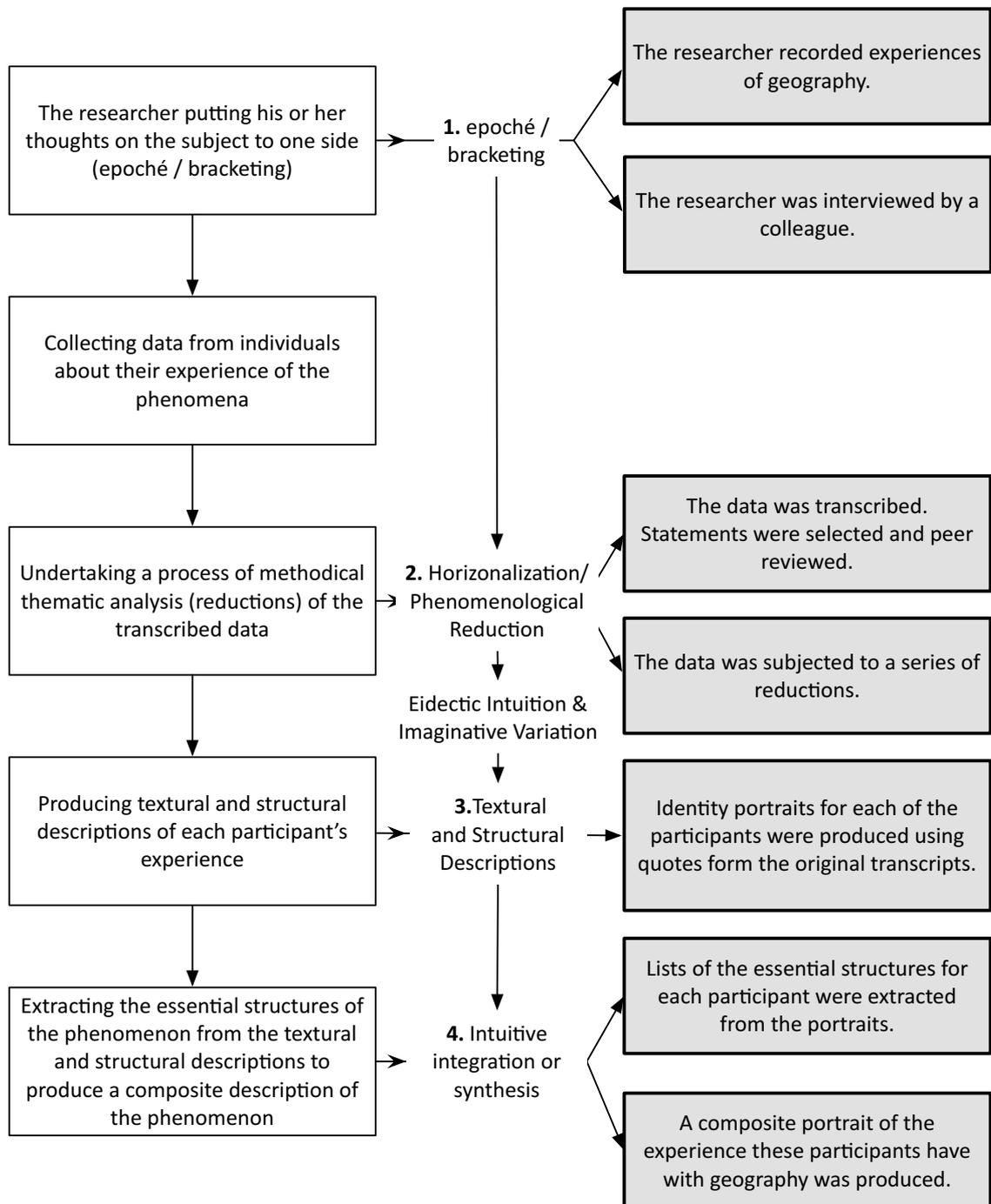
Figure 3.2: The data analysis process mapped against the phenomenological process

3.8.1 Epoché

Central to the phenomenological method and a first step in the phenomenological reduction process is the concept of epoché, sometimes referred to as bracketing or the deliberate suspension of judgement. This process involves the researcher placing his or her thoughts about a phenomenon in suspense or out of the question. 'Putting it in brackets shuts out from the phenomenological field the world as it exists for the subject in simple absoluteness; its

place, however, is taken by the world as given in consciousness (perceived, remembered, judged, thought, valued, etc.)' (Husserl, 1931: para.3).

This process is a particularly controversial element of the phenomenological method and there are many who question if the process of bracketing is actually possible. Heidegger (1962), Satre (1989) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), all note that the way, in which we are embodied in the world, makes it impossible to achieve such a transcendental position. Heidegger (1962) has a concern with the role of bracketing in relation to the interpretation of qualitative data and instead suggests a more dynamic notion of fore-conception. This process contends that an individual is seen to always bring their preconceptions or assumptions about certain phenomena to any encounter and is unable to discard their own prior experience. Heidegger (1962) suggests that there is a cyclical process taking place in this instance, whereby an individual's preconceptions about a phenomenon are only illuminated after an encounter with a new phenomenon. 'Our first, last and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out the fore-structures in terms of the things themselves (Heidegger, 1962:195). This belief, that the researcher will only become fully aware of their own preconceptions during the act of interpreting, is also advanced by Gadamer (1976), who suggests that a person's individual fore-projections are continually revised as the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation emerges and is understood. 'Every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning … this constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation' (Gadamer, 1976:267).

The suggestion, that all phenomenology involves interpretation to some degree has already been discussed in Section 3.3. As a practical solution to this challenge, a decision was made to follow the advice of Lichtman who contends that 'it is too simplistic to think that a researcher can set aside his or her own ideas about a phenomenon' (Lichtman, 2013:88), but suggests that by writing down his or her own ideas about a topic, the researcher is at least making their own ideas about an issue explicit. The presentation of my own reflections on my experiences of geography and its place in relation to my professional identity as presented in Chapter 1 are one of the ways in which I adhered to this guidance in this research.

Additionally, as part of this 'clearing my mind through the epoché process' (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:7), the research process outlined in Figure 3.2 details how it was planned for a colleague to interview me using the interview schedule which was then used as a basis for the

subsequent participant interviews. This process enabled me to try and gain 'a sense of closure' (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:8) so that 'as I moved toward receptiveness, I was able to concentrate fully, to listen and hear the participants' presentations without coloring it with my own habits of thinking, feeling and seeing' (ibid). I was forced to consider and then articulate my own preconceived ideas and set aside my natural attitude and those assumptions (Langdridge, 2007) that I have about my experiences of geography.

To further distance myself as researcher from my own preconceived ideas about the issues under investigation, I decided to only re-access and then analyse the data that I had provided for the investigation after the data from all the other participants had been processed. Finally, I asked one of my supervisors to peer-review the statements (Appendix 3) that I had selected for the data reduction process outlined below.

3.8.2 Phenomenological Reduction

The second step in the analysis process involved the reduction of the data. The aim of epoché (bracketing) according to Husserl is to return to the essence of the phenomenon: a goal that, in his view, could be achieved through a series of reductions. By this, he means a process of continually looking at the phenomenon from different perspectives, again taking the researcher away from their own assumptions and preconceptions. There are two stages to this process of phenomenological reduction. In the first stage, the collected data in the form of the transcripts are read and reread multiple times with the aim of identifying and extracting from the data significant statements, which provide information about the experiences of the participants. At this stage of the process, all meaning is given equal value with the aim of achieving horizontalization.

There are two parts to this process of horizonalization. The first part of the process involves selecting statements from the transcripts and the second stage involves deleting those statements, which are irrelevant to the topic being researched, and then clustering those statements which remain - these are termed the textural meanings.

Complete copies of the transcripts with the chosen statements for each participant are kept securely in the author's possession but Data Extract 3.5 gives examples of statements that were identified in the interview transcripts that appear to provide information about the experiences of each participant. As indicated above as part of the process of epoché, the statements identified were peer reviewed by one of my supervisors and comments made, indicating either agreement or disagreement with the choosing of each statement for further

analysis (Appendix 3). Where the reviewer indicated that additional statements should be selected, this was done. At this stage of the phenomenological process, each of the selected statements is considered to have 'equal value as we seek to disclose its nature and essence' (Moustakas, 1994:95).

The Horizontalization Process Stage 1- Examples of Significant Statements Selected from Transcripts	
Hilary	- the head knew me, so she knew geography would be my thing - no such thing as bad weather, just not dressed for the right occasion - I think geography is always changing, it's quite vibrant, and just depending on what angle you take, you know you can go up on all different sorts of angles. Human, or environmental - I had a couple of uncles that did a lot of travelling, and they'd bring things back that were interesting,
Wendy	- I think we did geography, but from textbooks, so it was map work, and sort of surveys, and very general - I think it's just vital that the children understand that everything they do has an impact, as a person, so it's not about countries, it's about people. And it's that connection between people and places locally and globally, and that we have a difference with everything we do
Grace	- I think geography is still sometimes underrated, as a subject - That's what geography is, it's about enquiry, it's about finding out for yourself, it's about participation, it's about passion, it's about purpose - It's a picture of a car, and I'm just saying that's my personal relationship with geography, it's been a journey, it's something that's really developed
Millie	- They're just frightened by the word "geography" - They don't have the faith in themselves to teach it - There is a little more technicality to it than history - The children don't realise they're doing geography - I'm always saying, tell them it's geography, get that word out; "It's GEOGRAPHY", we write it on our boards - The reason I took geography is because I have an interest and a passion
Tabitha	- I didn't do an O-Level in Geography, that was because I couldn't stand the teacher - it is probably the subject I feel the most confident, because I've done so much of it - I think people miss the relevance of geography - If you just teach me about a pile of rocks it's not going to be interesting – I think you've got to, children have to know why, why a particular, why information is important

Data Extract 3.5: Examples of statements selected from transcripts in Stage 1 of the process of horizonalization.

Sometimes, a researcher employing phenomenological methods may discard any statements, which are considered irrelevant to the focus of the research, which are repeated or which

overlap with other statements before a second reduction of the data is completed. In the case of this research all the statements were left and a note was made where a statement appeared to relate to a theme already noted. At the same time a process of statement refinement was employed to make the second stage of the horizonalization process, which involves clustering the selected statements easier. Data Extract 3.6 shows an extract of the data and how the selected statements were refined to keep the focus on the phenomenon under investigation. During this process, the question, "What does this statement add to the meaning of the participant's experience?" was posed.

Original Transcript ➔	Selected Statement ➔	Refined Statement
HL: …he said there's very few people who are actually trained, geography trained. And yeah I think it has, because of literacy and numeracy and everything, it sort of has slipped off the edge really. And it's more money than anything – people would be interested I think; if there were courses laid on people would do them. They have got the interest, but I know that they think that heads want to see, you know, reading and writing, and the statistics on that, and I think all the other subjects, if they're not core subjects, they sort of…well, here they don't slip off the edge, but I think they easily could do, couldn't they? And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit	because of literacy and numeracy and everything, it sort of has slipped off the edge really ➔ it's more money than anything – people would be interested ➔ if there were courses laid on people would do them. They have got the interest➔ I know that they think that heads want to see, you know, reading and writing, and the statistics on that ➔ here they don't slip off the edge, but I think they easily could do, couldn't they? ➔ And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit➔	it sort of has slipped off the edge really. it's more money than anything people would be interested I think They have got the interest Here they don't slip off the edge, but I think they easily could do, couldn't they? And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit

Data Extract 3.6: Extract from data showing the process of statement refinement

Stage two of this horizonalization process involves clustering the remaining statements into themes. The selected statements are referred to as horizons or textural meanings and they are initially presented alongside the statements from the original transcripts, which substantiate the meanings claimed. This part of the process may involve splitting some of the identified

statements, removing overlaps and the taking out any repetitions leaving only the horizons -

the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A list

is made of meaning units and whether they occur in just one participants' experience or across

experiences. Moustakas describes how 'each horizon as it comes into our conscious

experience is the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinctive

character' (Moustakas, 1994:95). Each of the horizons extracted from the original data adds

meaning to the data and provides an increasingly clear picture of the phenomenon: the

relationship that the individual has with geography, how that individual enacts their

relationship with geography in their personal and professional life, what has in the past and

what continues to influence that individual's relationship with geography and their thoughts

and feelings about the subject. Data Extract 3.7 shows some of these meaning units or

horizons recorded against the data.

Original Data ➔	Selected ➔ (Refined Statements)	Identified Meaning Units (Horizons)
because of literacy and numeracy and everything, it sort of has slipped off the edge really ➔ it's more money than anything – people would be interested ➔ people would be interested I think; if there were courses laid on people would do them. They have got the interest ➔	• it sort of has slipped off the edge really➔ • it's more money than anything ➔ • people would be interested I think ➔ • They have got the interest➔	• Concern for subject because of time pressure • Effect of reforms/lack of money • Geography is of interest to people
I know that they think that heads want to see, you know, reading and writing, and the statistics on that➔ here they don't slip off the edge, but I think they easily could do, couldn't they? ➔ And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit➔	• here they don't slip off the edge, but I think they easily could do, couldn't they? ➔ • And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit➔	• Importance of school support for the subject • Concern for subject if taught by non specialist

Data Extract 3.7: Example of Meaning units (Horizons) recorded against the original data

Data Extract 3.8 shows some of the horizons for one of the participants with some of the selected statements that provide substantiating evidence for each of the horizons decided upon.

Horizons/Meaning Units	Evidence in Hilary's Statements
Influence of/significant people and organisations- includes subject association, school environment	-"the head knew me, so she knew geography would be my thing" -"but I liked English and I liked geography, and those were my two favourite teachers, so I just went with that"
Possessive/Territorial of the subject	-"I went on to college and that was my subject, and that was…it's always been something that I've taught or helped people" -"as soon as she left I sort of wanted it back, because I just wanted to keep it going"
Subject knowledge	-"Their knowledge is much poorer than ours" -"it has to be somebody … that has knowledge of the subject"
Subject pedagogy- includes relevance, going outside, a vehicle for other subjects	-"it has to be pertinent to those children, doesn't it? And that area where they come from" -"through geography you can get all the other subjects"
Concern for future of subject- includes new curriculum, time in school for geography, subject specialism, new teachers, CPD, subject status, teacher training, childhood changes	-"that's gone by the wayside, because I think the time" -"And if you're not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit" - "But I think they need quite a lot of, um, help to see what the potentials are" (Teachers)
Innate Feelings about the subject	-"Yes, I really love geography" -"I've got the passion"
Subject confidence	-" I can take from it what I need to"
Clear personal perception of the subject	-"I think they need to know about the world" -"Not that you want children to be reciting facts and figures"
Personal determination	-"we've just got to adapt it to what we want to be teaching" - "if we want to get out there with the children we'll get out there"
Personal commitment to the subject	-"I'll go that one stage more … to make it a bit more … interesting or broader"
Generic pedagogic beliefs- includes importance of role of the teacher, experiential learning	-"children learn more through experiencing" -"unless you've got somebody who says "right, this is geography"

Data Extract 3.8: Examples of the horizons extracted from transcripts of Hilary's interviews with supporting statements.

The second stage of the reduction process is the production of textural and structural descriptions. These descriptions of each participant's experiences are comprised of the textural element, which provides information about the 'what' of the participant experience as well as a structural element, which elaborates on 'how' the phenomenon was/is experienced. In practical terms these descriptions often take the form of narratives for each participant and they allow for connections to be made between ideas and overlapping ideas to be consolidated. These descriptions also enable the researcher to prioritise themes that appear to

be significant over those that may be incidental. One of the questions asked of the data during this process was "Is this example essential to preserve the essence of this individual's experience?" with the aim being to reduce the data to the essence of each participant's experience with the phenomenon. In this research, identity portraits for each participant were written using the identified horizons for each participant as a framework for the portrait. Quotes from the original transcripts were included to support and exemplify the descriptions. Table 3.3 shows an example of how the horizons extracted from one set of data were re organised to provide the framework for the subsequent identity portrait. The table also includes the quotes from the original transcripts used to support the horizons, which form the basis to the description.

Tabitha – Horizon Framework		
Horizon ➜	**Final Order of Horizons**	**Quotes**
Fusion between personal and professional relationship with geography	Fusion between personal and professional relationship with geography	"Defined her identity" "Because it's been there…"
Geography as security	Influence of individuals	"Inspiring"
Clear about nature of geography	Clear about nature of geography	"About the world we …"
Role of the teacher and the school	Importance of/views on subject knowledge	"Knowing a bit about rocks …"
Confidence in subject pedagogy	Views on new curriculum	
General pedagogy	Fusion between subject and general pedagogy	'We've had loads of flooding recently …"
Personal geography	Role of the teacher and the school	"I think they should be there to lead …"
Fusion between subject and general pedagogy	General pedagogy	I think what's absolutely key for teachers…"
Importance of/views on subject knowledge	Personal geography	"you make sense of .."
Influence of individuals	Confidence in subject pedagogy	
Value or reflecting in practice	Geography as security	"Its like a security…"
Views on new curriculum	Value or reflecting in practice	"I think my professional identity is made…"

Table 3.3: Example of horizon framework used to create one of the identity portraits with supporting quotes extracted from the data

The completed identity portrait for each of the participants in this research is presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Each portrait represents a textural description of the relationship that the individual has with geography.

3.8.3 Eidetic Intuition

Throughout the phenomenological process of reduction, the researcher engages in what Sokolowski (2000) terms 'identity synthesis', or what is usually referred to as eidetic intuition.

This process assumes that a researcher can use an experience to identify the universal structures and essences of a phenomenon. It is through using this idea of eidetic intuition, whereby the researcher catches a glimpse of the essence of the experience that they are looking for, that a researcher moves from describing experience to investigating those structures, which underlie the experience (Langdridge, 2007).

Sokolowski (2000) outlines the three levels of intentional development that are required for the process of eidetic intuition to result in the essential elements of each essence to be made known. The first of these is that similarities between experiences are identified resulting in typicality. This then leads to the second level where the researcher reaches an empirical universe, and then the final level is reached when the universals or necessities of the experiences are extracted through the process of imaginative variation – see section 3.8.4 below, by which 'we strive to reach a feature that it would be inconceivable for the thing to be without' (Sokolowski, 2000:177). In this research, the individual identity portraits provided the basis from which the shared essential elements were drawn out. These shared essential elements are presented to the reader in Chapter 5.

The process of eidetic reduction and the related concept of eidetic intuition are also controversial elements of the phenomenological method as proposed by Husserl (1970). Merleau-Ponty (1962) was one such opponent who took the view that the reductions themselves should be a means to an end – enabling one to 'return to the world as lived in an enriched and deepened fashion' (van Manen, 1990) as opposed to the idea purported by Husserl (1970) that each phenomenological reduction is an end, itself. These debates relate back to the point made previously, that there remains disagreement over definitions of what exactly constitutes phenomenological research. Finlay (2009) sounds a note of caution about research which claims to be Husserlian but in which, 'there is no evidence of any reductions being attempted' and about 'researchers who claim to have bracketed and, therefore, transcended their assumptions while using a hermeneutic approach' (Finlay, 2009:9) citing this latter case as one which demonstrates both confusion and naivety. This chapter has demonstrated how in this research an attempt was made to reduce the data. I also engaged in eidetic intuition leading to the writing of the descriptions of the essential elements of the experience, presented in Chapter 5.

3.8.4 Imaginative Variation

One of the most powerful stages of phenomenological data analysis it is claimed (Moustakas, 1994) is that of imaginative variation or imaginative free variation. This involves considering

each of the textural descriptions extracted from the data from several different perspectives in order to ascertain more precisely the structures, which underlie the experiences of each individual. The aim of this part of the phenomenological method is to answer the question, what could possibly account for the experience? Through this process, a more comprehensive picture of the essence of each experience is sought. In the case of this research an example of following this procedure would be if participants' transcripts were to have details of significant individuals such as teachers who they have come in to contact with and to consider how the data must be altered if these significant figures were replaced with other individuals. Another example might be to imaginatively vary the different contexts in which participants have worked. Data Extract 3.9 shows an example of how imaginative variation was employed in this research using questions in the data.

• *(Teachers)* they don't make that link • I don't know where that stems from • It's something that I push a lot: "and this is geography"	• The role of the teacher • The importance of discreet subjects	**Would it matter if teachers were not explicit about what is geography?**

Data Extract 3.9: Example of questions asked of the data for the phenomenological process of imaginative variation.

The aim of undertaking this process is to allow the essence of the experience to be revealed and to force the contingent or insignificant aspects of the experience to be neutralized. Moustakas (1994) advises that at this stage of the analysis process, any data that contradicts most of the data should be discarded. It is worth noting that Langdridge (2007) cautions that the process of imaginative variation is not without its difficulties, as it can be challenging to 'free oneself from the natural attitude to the phenomenon being investigated' (Langdridge, 2007:20). As each noema-noetic structure is analysed to find out it invariant elements, this reduces the actual to the possible and ideal and essential elements of the phenomenon are revealed through exposure of the full horizon and its possibilities. It is these essential elements drawn from each of the textual descriptions after employing this process of imaginative variation, that then provide the basis for the final stage in the phenomenological process: the synthesis of meanings and essences.

3.8.5 Intuitive integration or synthesis: The Essence of the Experience

'The next step in the phenomenological research process is the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of

the experience of the phenomenon as a whole' (Moustakas, 1994:100). The 'essential invariant structure of ultimate 'essence', which captures the meaning ascribed to the experience' (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:22) is the product of a composite description produced by synthesising the different textual and structural descriptions of the experiences extracted from the data. This final composite description is produced in two stages using similarities identified in the textures and structures of each participant's experiences. In the first stage of the process, shared meaning units form the basis of a single narrative, which acts as a synthesised version of the individual textual descriptions: the composite textual description.

Next, a final composite structural description is produced using elements from each of the individual structural descriptions of the experience. Both narratives are usually written in the third person. Verification is only then attempted in the final stage of data analysis when tentative suppositions are made about possible hierarchies of meaning found within the data, before a concluding textual description of the individual and collective experiences is presented. The synthesizing of both the composite textual descriptions and composite structural descriptions provides a general description of the phenomenon known as the textual-structural synthesis which is usually produced in the form of a narrative and which aims to provide both an in-depth description of the experiences of the phenomenon and a representation of the essence of the experience of the phenomenon. In this case of this research, the textual-structural synthesis describes the essence of the relationship with geography held by the participants. In summary, the phenomenological analysis process employed in this research is in fact a derivative of the constant comparative method (Thomas, 2013), which is, in turn, the basic method of analysis used in all interpretative research. The method involves constantly looking at the data and then comparing the elements of the data. The list of essential elements drawn from each set of data (Appendix 6) are the starting point from which the similarities in the lived experiences of the phenomenon, are extracted to produce the textural-structural synthesis of the experience being investigated. In this thesis, the composite descriptions are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Each of the descriptions written as part of the phenomenological analysis process, was intended to answer in part, one or more of the research questions introduced in chapter 1 and reference is made to these questions in the descriptions:

1. What are these participants' experiences with and of geography?
2. What constructs of geography do these primary geography teachers hold and what influences these constructs?

3. How do these subject-specific constructs relate to the overall identity of each of these primary teachers?

In Chapter 4, composite identity portraits are presented for each of the participants in this research. Chapter 5, contains descriptions for each of three essential elements identified as being shared by the participants. In addition, the three essential elements identified are combined into another phenomenological description – the textural-structural synthesis. In Chapter 6, the three essential elements identified are presented alongside the final textural-structural synthesis of the experience in the form of a play script. Each essential element forms one scene in the first act of this play. This is followed by Act 2, in which the final textual-structural synthesis describing the ultimate essence of the relationship with geography held by the participants is presented. Further details as to why it was decided to present the data in this format are outlined in the introduction to Chapter 6.

At the end of Chapter 6, the ultimate essence of experience identified in this phenomenologically-inspired research, the findings from this research, are set out as a description. These findings are then discussed in Chapter 7 with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the aims of this research posited in Chapter 1.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the methodology which underpins this research. Sarantakos (2012) describes how it is the methodology of any piece of research that translates the ontological and epistemological principles of research into guidelines that show how research is conducted. This chapter has set out in detail the philosophical presuppositions of phenomenology, which was the research approach employed. Additionally, this chapter has considered the contested nature of phenomenology and indicated how features of Husserlian descriptive phenomenology but also Heidegger's interpretative phenomenology are present in the design of this research.

Akin to the research by Mason (2012), which used phenomenology to explore the professional identity of teachers working in a religious seminary, this chapter indicates how the theory of hermeneutics was used to analyse the data through the following steps:

1. The interviews were transcribed.
2. The researcher read the transcripts multiple times.

3. Using refined selected statements from the data, meaning units in the data were identified and then clustered before being used as the basis for writing descriptions of each participant's experiences with the phenomenon.

4. These individual composite descriptions were considered and re-occurring themes were extracted. These themes became the three essential elements that formed the basis of the final overall description of the experience.

5. The individual participant's experiences contributed to the shared and final composite descriptions but awareness of these shared essential elements provided a focus for consideration when editing and rewriting the individual's descriptions. Throughout the analysis process, the data was constantly re-read and the descriptions produced re-written and edited. The process was iterative and cyclical and the research questions were used to frame each part of the process.

6. The data was repeatedly validated using the process of imaginative variation and included supporting statements taken from the original data in the descriptions produced.

In addition, this chapter has detailed the research design, the data collection methods and the analytical process. Measures to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the research processes and findings are discussed alongside an account of the ethical considerations made.

The emphasis in this research as outlined in this chapter is on the individual experiences of the phenomenon and on the context in which the individual experienced it (Smith & Osborn, 2010). The research processes outlined are designed to reveal the individual's experience of geography in relation to their individual lifeworld. The methodology aims to provide an insider's perspective (Larkin *et al.*, 2006) of each participants' world whilst acknowledging that the presentations of the findings is dependent on my own understanding and experience of phenomenon, an issue confronted through the process of epoché. There are two stages to achieving this aim. The first of these is to generate a description that is as close as possible to the participant's view of the experience (Larkin *et al.*, 2006) and the second stage involves making sense of these experiences. The meanings and understandings attributed to the experiences described by me as the researcher are in fact a product of interpretation by both the participant having reflected on and revealed their experiences but also by me as a researcher having listened to, recorded, collated, and interpreted the experiences shared.

This chapter has outlined the processes employed to generate, collate, analyse and interpret the data. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the different phenomenological descriptions produced as

part of the analysis process and also the findings from the research. Figure 3.3 clarifies where Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the thesis sit in relation to the phenomenological process employed.
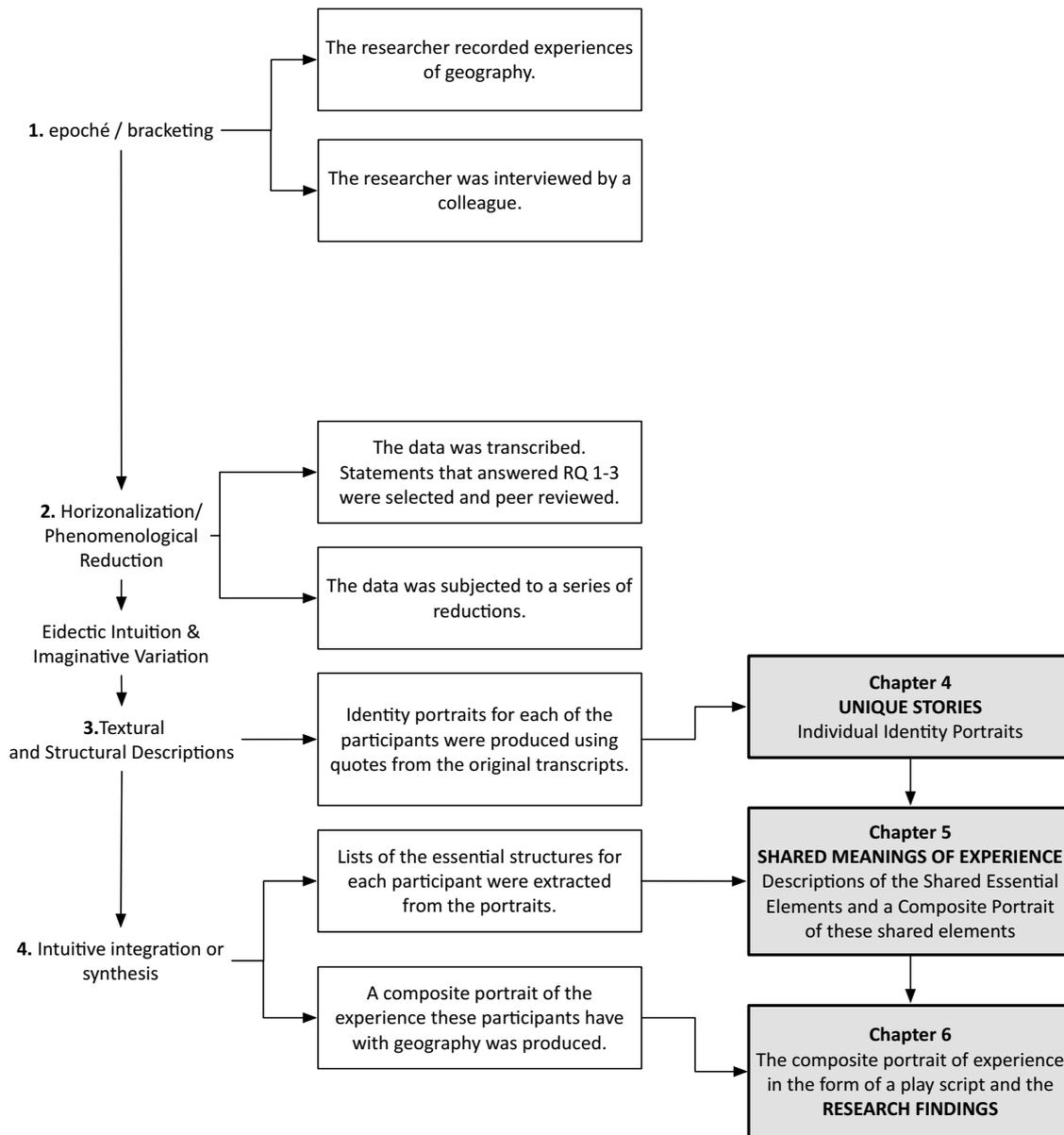
Figure 3.3: Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the thesis mapped against the phenomenological process

CHAPTER 4 – UNIQUE STORIES

Section 4.1 introduces the chapter. Section 4.2 outlines how the composite identity portrait for each of the participants was created and then presents these. Section 4.3 summarises the chapter and explains how the data presented here links to the data and findings presented in Chapter 5.

4.1 Introduction to the chapter

This is the first of three chapters which present an analysis of the collected data which is informed by the principles of phenomenology. The goal of phenomenological research is to try and understand the lived experience of the chosen sample (Rossman & Rallis, 2011), whilst at the same time providing interpretative texts which are rich and descriptive using the data collected (Smith, 1998). In this research, the data was generated in a series of four semi-structured interviews with each participant over the course of one academic year. In addition, participants were invited to keep personal journals recording their reflections throughout the process and to draw mind maps illustrating their experiences of geography. Having reduced the data to a series of selected statements for each participant using the methods outlined in Chapter 3, the next stage in the analysis process was to compile individual participant portraits. This chapter presents the composite identity portraits for each of the participants and is the first of two chapters in which the data, having been reduced using the principles of phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), was further analysed, leading to the presentation of the research findings in the form of the ultimate essence of the experience/phenomenon in Chapter 6. Each portrait provides an essential description of the phenomenon under investigation, as experienced by the individuals.

4.2 Creating the Portraits

The compiling of the portraits was complex and as such, as the researcher, I became immersed in the data, constantly revisiting it to verify the meaning attributed to the participants' responses. Langeveld (1983) refers to this process as developing a narrative of the phenomenon; Smith posits that phenomenological writing is 'a language of rich description, of metaphor and of anecdote that has the capacity to stir deep feelings of experience, to reawaken echoes of emotions, sounds, colours and images that provide the connecting bridges between author and reader' (Smith, 1998:191). Figure 4.1 illustrates how the research questions introduced in Chapter 1 provided a framework for each of the stages of analysis

presented in Chapters 4 - 6 and also the research findings presented in Chapter 6. Whilst these research questions guided the analysis and they are referred to in each stage of the process, the questions did not constrain or limit the analysis. The questions in phenomenology research are not designed to be answered or solved but rather they are designed to facilitate understanding of phenomena. Phenomenological questions are never restricted with only one correct answer: they are open in order to provide new meaning and insight to those who hope to benefit from the response (van Manen, 1990). This chapter references each of the research questions in the concluding paragraph of the portraits. The abbreviations, RQ (Research Question) 1, 2 and 3 are used, and inserted in order to summarise how the content of each of these descriptions provides a response to the questions posed.
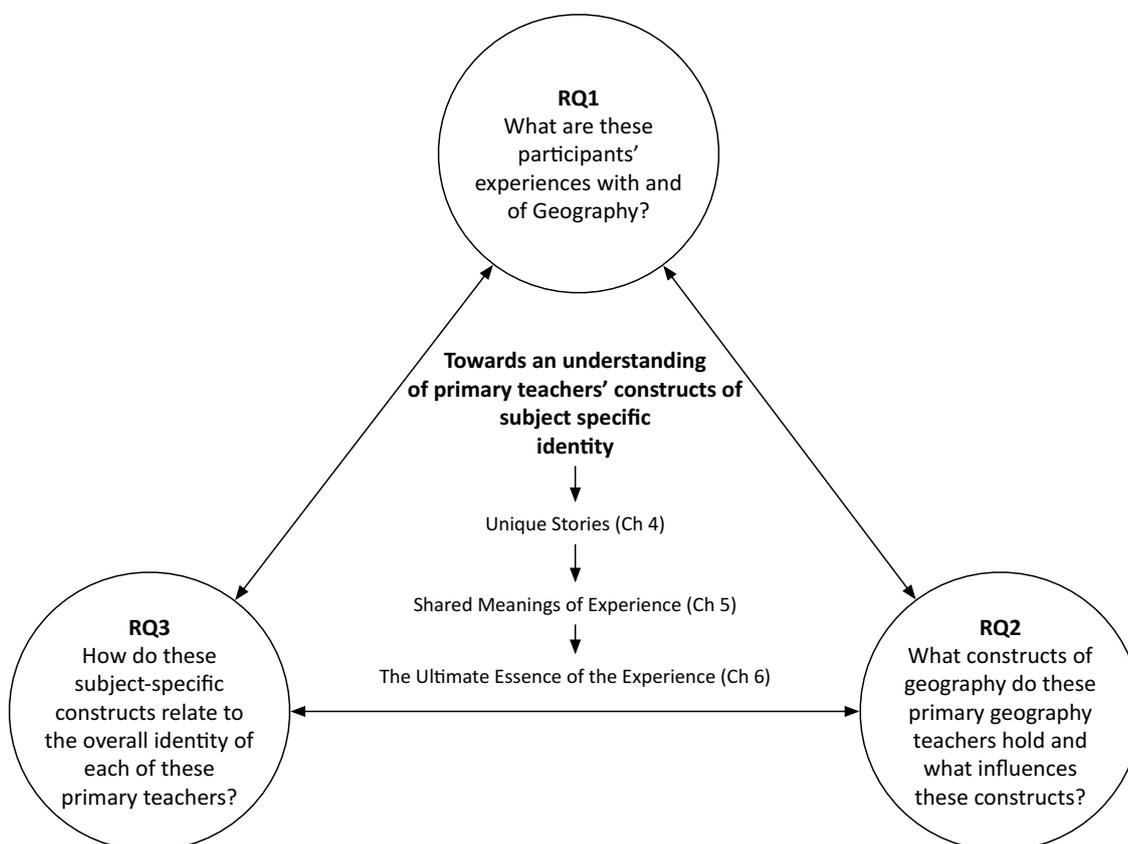
Figure 4.1: Representation of how the stages of the analysis process and the research findings are framed by the research questions.

In line with the theoretical foundations of Heideggerian interpretative phenomenology outlined in Chapter 3, the portraits include details of the context in which these individuals were working (Larkin *et al*., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008) and accounts of individual's

experiences of geography shared with me during the interviews. As the researcher presenting these descriptions, I bring to the research my own understandings when making sense of the participants' experiences (Larkin *et al.*, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Set against this context the portraits are designed to provide the reader with a glimpse into the day-to day lived experiences of each participant in relation to geography. There is no one way in which to present phenomenological writing (Smith, 1998), thus, the composite descriptions of experience are presented as portraits. These portraits are designed to reflect how the individuals experienced the phenomenon, whilst acknowledging that it is not possible to generate a fully accurate and complete picture of another person's world.

The horizons extracted from the data through the process of phenomenological reduction, outlined in Chapter 3, provide the framework for each of the texts. Originally these were recorded chronologically, in the order that that were extracted from the data; however, they were then reorganised for each participant to provide a text which relayed a story of the experience shared in response to the research questions (Beattie, 1995). The portraits are written so as to connect the reader to the individual participant's experiences; descriptive language is used in an attempt to reveal a composite picture of the participant's experience. Quotes from the original transcripts are included aimed at providing detailed insights (Smith, 1998) and to represent the realities experienced (Crotty, 1998). The profiles have been written in the third person, and extracts from some of the participant's personal journals and/or their mind maps are included where I felt it would further illustrate the experience being described. The original mind maps are retained in the author's possession and typed copies incorporated in the text to ensure they are legible for the reader. Where necessary, names on the mind maps have been removed or changed to ensure anonymity.

There was no set length for the portraits, so they are of different lengths but share a similar structure: they begin with background information on the individual and end with a summary of their experience related to the study's three research questions. The use of portraits in phenomenological writing is commonplace, however Fendt *et al.*, (2014) warn against the use of lengthy portraits, as they can risk the reader losing sight of the phenomenon under investigation and can be repetitive. Whilst acknowledging these potential disadvantages, in the context of this research I decided that the individual portraits were an important part of the emerging picture of the experience under investigation and chose to present them in full. Each portrait is intended to provide a rich description, demonstrate meaning, and initiate relatedness with the audience (Smith, 1998).

As stated in Chapters 1 and 3, it is neither possible nor necessary within the context of this phenomenological research to protect the identity of myself as the researcher. In the context of this thesis I am referred to as Tabitha and my portrait is presented in section 4.1.5. One of my supervisors read my portrait to ensure that it represented a description of my experiences of geography as recounted in my interviews as faithfully as possible.

One notable point relates to the use of the term pedagogy. This term has been discussed in Chapter 2 and in this and subsequent chapters is referred to appropriately. The phrases primary pedagogy and subject pedagogy are sometimes used specifically; however, in some instances they are implied rather than stated, with examples given of 'acts of teaching' (Alexander, 2010:280), that exemplify the broad interpretation of pedagogy that this research assumes.

4.2.1 Hilary

Hilary has been teaching for over thirty years and is close to retirement. She trained as a secondary school teacher specialising in geography, but currently works in a two-form entry primary school teaching a reception class; she is also the deputy head teacher. She coordinates geography across the school.

Hilary considers geography to be a broad holistic subject, which is relevant to individuals' everyday lives. She describes it as "exciting" and this is visible as she becomes very animated when she is talking about the subject, emphasizing her language with expressive hand gestures. Hilary takes the view that geography is about people and places. She acknowledges that the subject has changed over time, particularly with technological improvements that enable children to find information through the internet, bemoaning that children today rarely get outside. Hilary also takes a view that children's general subject knowledge is lacking compared to that of her own generation. She acknowledges that there have been changes to the content of the geography curriculum taught in schools, but neither this nor the publication of the revised National Curriculum (DfE, 2013a) for use in English primary schools appear to concern her. Her core beliefs about the way that geography should be taught are very strong and she gives the impression that she will hold on to these and make any new curriculum fit her way of teaching the subject. Hilary is adamant that geography is an important part of the primary curriculum and that it is of interest to everyone.

Hilary's relationship with geography is illustrated in her mind map - Figure 4.2. This mind map includes reference to her personal relationship and her professional relationship with geography, although from the way she talks these two elements are inextricably linked.

Personal
Enjoy finding out about people and places
Visiting/reading about/
Favourite subject at school/college/teaching

Professional
Subject co-ordinator
Organising Outdoor Study
Visiting places
Inviting people in to share ideas
'Hands-on'

GEOGRAPHY
who, what and where of people and places

Influences

Children enjoy &
benefit from off-site visits

Always been supported and encouraged
in all schools worked in, especially present head

Local Area
Can walk to a
variety of sites

technology available to find out more

Open minded staff willing to try new ideas

Figure 4.2: Hilary's mind map in answer to the question what is geography?

Personal passion and interest in geography are recurrent themes in Hilary's description of her relationship with geography. This relationship is both practical and emotional and she declares, "I really love geography" and talks about "people who have geography in their heart". She connects her interest in geography with her own character traits referring to how she likes finding out about people and visiting places.

Hilary has a clearly articulated subject identity. She considers herself to be a geographer and believes the subject permeates much of what she does in the classroom. She views geography as a vehicle through which to teach other curriculum subjects and is confident in teaching the subject across the primary age range. Hilary takes her role as geography coordinator seriously and considers that she has a responsibility to secure and maintain the quality of the subject, which has been acknowledged in her current school as 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

Hilary appears to want to instil her own passion and love for the subject into both her pupils and her colleagues. She states that she will, "always go that one stage more… to make it a bit more interesting" and believes that she has a certain way of looking at things, which she links to her being a geographer. Hilary has a sense of ownership over the subject and refers to it as "my subject" admitting that she has "pushed" the subject in schools where she has worked. She believes that teachers should have personal connections to subjects and not just want to deliver the curriculum and talks a lot about the importance of the individual teacher in relation to the way that subjects are taught. She also thinks that it is important for new teachers to be passionate about a subject when they enter the profession. She places importance on subject knowledge for both pupils and teachers, stating that it is preferable to have "somebody… that has knowledge of the subject" in every school.

Complementing this subject-specific identity, Hilary has a strong primary teacher identity. Her pedagogy is centred on her own understanding of child development with a focus on children learning from first-hand experience and needing to be interested in what they are learning. Hilary has a strong desire for children to enjoy what they are learning. She asserts that it is easier for children to understand and learn if they have something tangible to engage with and uses this as a reason for advocating learning outside the classroom. Hilary is currently working in the Early Years (EY) and thinks that EY pedagogy, where the focus is on first-hand experience is beneficial to all primary school children. Hilary's subject-specific pedagogy beliefs mirror her wider beliefs about primary teaching, so for example, she does not believe that children should be required to memorise and recite facts and figures. She feels strongly that subjects in primary schools should be taught discretely and that even if teachers are using subjects such as geography to teach other subjects, then they should make clear what it is that they are teaching.

Hilary talks frequently about how geography is important in a primary school because it facilitates an opportunity for children to learn outside of the classroom. This love of the outdoors is central to her pedagogical beliefs and she is adamant that children enjoy learning outdoors and will benefit from it. She comments that, "there is no such thing as bad weather, just not dressed for the right occasion". Her love of the outdoors extends to her personal life as she talks about spending time outdoors with her family. She thinks that a misunderstanding of health and safety guidelines sometimes stops teachers taking children outside; when she talks about taking children out on school trips, she comments that "the children love it".

Hilary's mind map refers to how she has been supported and encouraged to foster and develop her relationship with the subject and how several individuals have had an influence on her relationship with the subject. She remembers relatives travelling, and how listening to them talking and looking at the artefacts they brought back ignited her own curiosity of the wider world. School teachers were also an influence: Hilary made her A-Level choices based on liking the geography teacher. Throughout her career, Hilary has worked in schools where individual school leaders have acknowledged and embraced her love of geography. She was appointed to her current post by the head teacher, who already knew that geography was "her thing", with a view to developing the subject in the school. The former local authority advisor/inspector for geography has also influenced her: she met him on a training course in the early part of her career. He further inspired her passion for the subject and she sought out CPD events that he was leading.

Hilary is possessive about her role as geography subject coordinator. She expresses concern that the subject will not continue in the school in the same way once she has retired. She states that "when I go there isn't another geographer". She is also disillusioned by some of the new entrants to teaching that she comes in to contact through her work with the School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) routes, describing them as more concerned with delivering the subject rather than having a passion for what they are teaching. She continually reiterates her belief that teachers need to have an interest in the subjects that they are teaching. She questions new entrants' subject identity stating, "I don't know what their subjects are". In addition, she questions the abilities of new teachers to personalise the geography curriculum and fears that they will just deliver what they are given without putting their own interpretation on it. Overall, Hilary is concerned for the future of the geography in primary schools. In addition to citing the lack of personal interest that new teaches seem to have in certain subjects, she notes the lack of availability of and the decrease in money spent by schools on continuing professional development (CPD). Hilary believes that new teachers really gain from watching experienced teachers teach and model for them and cites the value of belonging to subject associations as well as the value to be had by teachers meeting in subject cluster groups. In her own area, the cluster group has recently ceased to exist and she believes this to be a shame as she thinks that teachers can really gain from talking with one another about their subject and sharing ideas. Her school does not currently belong to a subject association because of cuts to school funding and she thinks that this is unfortunate. She also thinks that cuts to education funding have affected the way that geography is taught with fewer outdoor visits being arranged.

Hilary talks about increasing time pressures in schools today and expresses concern that geography will "slip off the end" of the curriculum, bemoaning the fact that only core subjects and ICT matter in schools today. She expresses concern that teachers will get overwhelmed because of how much they must teach and appears disillusioned at times when talking about the current situation, describing it as "fighting a losing battle". She talks about teachers needing to be very strong in the current political and educational climate and the need for them to use evidence from their own practice as a way of justifying the inclusion of certain subjects in the primary curriculum and certain ways of teaching these subjects.

Despite these concerns, Hilary believes that geography in primary schools will survive because it is so important. Whilst she acknowledges that new reforms and guidelines can seem to be a barrier to allowing children to learn from experience, she does not think these barriers are insurmountable and suggests that individual teachers have just "got to be really organised", to overcome these hurdles. Hilary believes that teachers' views about what should be taught and the way in which it should be taught, are important.

(RQ1) In summary, Hilary talks about a range of positive experiences with geography. These experiences are both personal and professional and have contributed to her teacher identity. Geography is a subject that Hilary is interested in and her experiences of the subject have inspired and enthused her. She talks with passion about her "love" of geography and how it permeates everything that she does. Hilary enjoys being a geographer.

(RQ2) Hilary perceives of geography as a broad holistic subject centred on the study of people and places and which is relevant to human people's everyday lives. She considers it an important primary curriculum subject and a vehicle through which other subjects can be taught. The use of the outdoors for teaching and learning geography and the importance of geographical subject knowledge are key to her constructs of the subject. Several individuals have influenced her views on the subject including relatives, school teachers and LEA advisors as well as supportive colleagues in schools in which she has worked.

(RQ3) Hilary's overall primary teacher identity is influenced by her subject identity. She believes that individual primary teachers should have strong connections to particular subjects as she does. Her generic and subject pedagogical principles are inextricably bound together and influence each other. She believes that primary-age children learn from first-hand experience and that they need things to be tangible in order for them to learn. She is of the opinion that geography is the perfect subject for promoting this approach to learning. Her belief in the relevance and importance of geography, alongside her determination to teach the

subject in accordance with her own pedagogical beliefs, mean that she is not personally fazed by continuing education reforms.

4.2.2 Wendy

Wendy has been teaching for twenty years and is a non-teaching deputy head teacher in a two-form entry primary school. She is actively looking for promotion to headship. She is the geography coordinator and works as a geography subject consultant to teachers in other primary schools on a part-time basis.

Wendy has a strong subject identity and exudes confidence when talking about the subject, but has few positive memories of her own learning experiences of geography in school stating that "the content just went over my head". Whilst Wendy identifies with being described as a geographer in relation to her current role, she is reluctant to describe herself as such. This distinction originates from her own beliefs about what it means to be an expert and her own background. She initially trained as a music teacher and describes herself as a music specialist. She only developed an interest in geography after attending a CPD course during the early part of her career. The CPD course leader acted as a catalyst for change and ignited her passion and enthusiasm for geography. Although Wendy continues to teach music, this love for geography has sustained Wendy throughout her career.

Wendy has a strong subject-specific pedagogy and emphasises the way in which geography permeates everything that she does in the classroom. She also has a deep-seated primary pedagogy, believing that EY pedagogy is important and that it should be implemented across the primary age range. Wendy talks about using geography as a starting point and then hanging other subjects, particularly core subjects, off the geography. Wendy is adamant that primary school geography should be taught in a certain way, believing in outdoor learning, fieldwork, and the necessity of children's familiarity with their local area before learning about the rest of the world. She links her subject pedagogy to her own experiences of being outside as a child, going on family camping trips and walking the family dogs. She expresses concern that children today do not have "that whole outdoorsy life". Her strong views about primary geography pedagogy extend to her expressing opinions about the way in which other teachers she has observed teach geography, commenting that she has been "horrified" at what she has seen in some schools. She makes a connection between these observations and her own negative experience of being taught geography at school, which she describes as "old-fashioned" and reliant on the use of text books and worksheets. She highlights the need for the geography curriculum to be fun. Wendy believes that geography is about people, places,

and the impact that individuals have on the world. She thinks it is vital that children understand this connection. Her views about the nature of geography are detailed and are illustrated in Figure 4.3. This is a reproduction of one of the mind maps that Wendy drew in her personal journal, in order she said, to record her thought processes during the research process.

sense of identity, self, potential
curiosity
awe & wonder

Communication
Application of number
ICT
Working with others
Problem Solving
Improving learning & performance

Reasoning
Enquiry
Processing
Creative

right & wrong
decision making

Spiritual development
Moral development
Social development
Cultural development

Understanding own
and others' cultures

Skills

Thinking Skills

Rights and responsibilities
similarities & differences
sense of community
democracy

GEOGRAPHY

Creative

Mapping

OS
atlas, globe

scale

local, national
global

Rivers
Coasts
Settlements
Environmental
Issues
Local Study

enquiry

change

questions

Fieldwork

Knowledge

sense of place

memories   human   physical

Global dimension

trips

school grounds

vocab   personal geography

features, processes

sustainable development

Figure 4.3: Wendy's mind map in answer to the question 'What is geography?'

Wendy is determined to teach in the way that she believes to be correct by making geography relevant to the children she is teaching and not having them just learning for the sake of it. She describes geography as a subject that develops individuals. She asserts that beyond teaching pupils about physical features such as rivers and coasts, geography helps develop an individual pupil's sense of identity and their ability to tell right from wrong. Her view that teaching

geography helps prepare global citizens, is evident in how she passionately discusses the subject's place in the curriculum. She has a sense of wonder at the world in which we live, describing it as "taking her breath away". It is this wonder that she wants to share with pupils through geography lessons. Wendy's determination to teach the geography that she believes should be taught and in the way that she believes it should be taught is evident when she talks about the proposals for the new curriculum. She asserts "I will continue teaching it … the bits I am really passionate about... I will get it in somehow". Wendy seems genuinely perplexed by the new curriculum, saying "if you landed from Mars and looked at the KS 2 and 3 programmes of study, you would almost think that they were the wrong way around".

Wendy thinks that it is quite possible for teachers without a background in the subject to gain the required subject knowledge to teach the primary curriculum, if appropriate training is offered. She suggests that geography is a subject that everyone can teach in primary schools and links this to stating that subject specialists will teach pupils at secondary level. She is also unsure about the turn towards a knowledge-based curriculum, stating that "there needs to be a balance between the knowledge and the skills". She is adamant that subjects in the primary curriculum need to stay current and bemoans the loss of environmental and sustainable development issues from the geography curriculum. She is confident that she knows what sort of geography will engage children, citing global disasters as an example saying that pupils, "love any global disaster". Overall, her concern is that the geography being prescribed in the new curriculum is not always relevant to the pupils. She expresses concern for non- specialist teachers or teachers who are not able to access CPD and outlines how she wants to be part of improving the situation for geography in primary schools. She talks about new teachers struggling to make cross-curricula links between subjects and how teachers seem to prefer history to geography but does not give a reason for this.

Wendy believes that individual teachers have a significant impact on how geography is perceived in school and cites her own children as examples of pupils who have been turned off the subject because of teaching methods. She talks about her personal passion for the subject and compares this what she describes as a lack of "sparkle" in new teachers coming into the profession. She connects these personal qualities to what she perceives as a different work ethic, whereby newer teachers entering the profession are "reluctant to do more than they need to". She expresses concern that "not enough care" is made with appointments in school, but excuses new teachers by acknowledging that "anything can be thrown at you now". She describes how a new teacher may be asked to lead subjects which they have no background in.

Wendy also talks about the way the quality of the geography curriculum is affected by the senior management team of a school, suggesting that if resources are not kept up-to-date and staff trained, then the subject can become very dry. Wendy acknowledges that specialist subject training in Initial Teacher Education might be the only way to ensure that geography is developed in primary schools but is sceptical as to whether this will happen. She is concerned about the marginalisation of geography in comparison to core subjects in primary schools and is not convinced that the changes that need to be made in terms of additional training for staff will happen in the current political climate. She makes it clear that money from the government allocated to improve geography in the past did have a positive impact. She praises the Action Plan for Geography and acknowledges the positive impact of specific subject association initiatives such as the Geography Champions but bemoans the fact that the funding for such initiatives is no longer available. Wendy is concerned that the goodwill shown by teachers in the past to promote marginalized subjects may not continue as teachers are under increasing pressure.

Wendy's personal and professional relationships with geography are intertwined and she contends that geography has helped to further her career, stating "without geography I wouldn't be where I am. I needed that recognition from another source other than from the management team". Geography has been the rescuer for Wendy as she comments, "in every other way, I think I just feel kind of bashed down constantly". Wendy emphasizes the connection between the marginalization in school of geography and the promotion prospects of those who are interested in the subject. She cites the example of a colleague who has been promoted, but who has had to put geography to one side and watch a less experienced and enthusiastic colleague lead the subject while he took on a leadership role. While Wendy acknowledges that her school management team have been supportive in allowing her to put the school forward for external recognition in the form of the GA Primary Quality mark, she is cynical in analysing their reasons for doing this. She suggests that it might be about the school looking good and not that they really value the subject or her leadership.

The extent to which Wendy values the external recognition that she has been given for her work in developing and promoting geography in primary schools is striking. The recognition from the subject association has given her the confidence she needed to sustain her career. Wendy describes the award of the GA gold quality mark as the thing that affirms her identity as a geographer and without which she considers herself to be just a class teacher. She talks explicitly about the value of the subject community and acknowledges the importance of the

conversation that goes on between geographers in subject association forums. Wendy describes how significant individuals from within the subject community have encouraged her: she openly acknowledges how important this has been in confirming that she has something important as an individual to give back to the community and to other primary teachers. In terms of working within and for the subject community, Wendy makes it clear that she wants to nurture the interests and enthusiasm of the individual teachers that she encounters. She also talks about the importance of cross-phase collaboration.

Outside school, Wendy considers the way that she chooses to live sustainably by composting and recycling illustrate her strong personal geography. She acknowledges that geography is "deep-rooted" in her upbringing and suggests that she has two identities which complement each other: that of an individual who is interested in geography personally as manifested in the way that she lives, but also as a teacher and promoter of the subject.

(RQ1) In short, Wendy has had mixed experiences with geography. Her early experiences of being taught the subject were not particularly positive; however, her feelings towards and experiences of the subject changed early on in her teaching career as a result of attending a CPD event led by an "inspirational" advisor. The impact on her feelings towards the subject was dramatic and she now talks about geography with passion and how it has sustained and even "rescued" her career.

(RQ2) Wendy construes geography as a subject which is not only about people and places but about the impact that individuals have on the world. Equally, she perceives of geography as a subject which helps prepare global citizens and which develops individual's own sense of their identity. There have been a variety of influences on Wendy's constructs of geography. These include the LEA advisor who led the initial CPD course that she attended and her on-going engagement with the subject association.

(RQ3) Wendy's confidence as a teacher has been impacted on by her specific subject confidence and the way she has been able to use this to support others in the teaching of geography in primary schools. The battles that she has had to develop the subject in her current school have increased her determination to pursue her subject interest beyond her own setting. Wendy's personal enjoyment of geography and enthusiasm for teaching the subject are fused. She lives her geography through choices she makes in her personal life such as choosing to live sustainably. She actively promotes the subject to colleagues in her own school and beyond and uses it as a basis for teaching other curriculum subjects. The subject percolates many aspects of her identity as a primary teacher.

4.2.3 Grace

Grace has been teaching for ten years and is currently one of two assistant head teachers in a two-form entry infant school in a relatively deprived urban area of Southeast England. She did a generalist teacher training and is now responsible for coordinating all foundation subjects across the school.

Grace had a negative experience of geography at school, recalling that it was "just boring". She made a conscious decision not to study the subject at GCSE and considers that the geography she was taught was traditional, hard and technical. Grace describes her school geography as "geeky and boring", due to its specialist vocabulary and difficult concepts and then says that she does not feel as confident about teaching geography creatively in comparison to other foundation subjects. She suggests that it is the technical aspects of geography that make it hard for some teachers to engage pupils in the subject. Grace has strong views about what geography is and the way in which the subject should be taught in schools today. These views contrast considerably with the way in which she was taught at school.

Grace believes that geography is about people and places but also participation, describing it as a subject that "you need to be involved in". She thinks that geography should be linked to citizenship and rights respecting education and asserts that primary school geography needs to be relevant and hands on. Grace has clear ideas about progression in the subject and what it is that children need to know. She believes that children need to know about and be familiar with their local area before they learn about the wider world. She worries that the new curriculum asks children to study places that they have no connection to whilst ignoring what is on their doorstep. Grace considers going outside to be a vital part of geography.

Grace has a strong sense of what she believes is good pedagogy and talks about teachers needing to pitch the work at an appropriate level and build on children's prior learning. Grace describes herself as instinctively thinking about any new content she is given and then deciding how she can translate this appropriately to her pupils; she is not sure if some of these skills can be taught to new teachers. She is adamant that the children's learning needs should be prioritized when planning any subject teaching and believes that teachers need to be increasingly able to use a range of pedagogic skills to facilitate a range of creative subject-specific learning opportunities in the primary classroom.

Grace thinks that teachers need to take a broad view of geography and consider the geography of the local area when planning their teaching. She thinks that the importance of

teaching outside of the classroom should be emphasised to all teachers and stated explicitly in the curriculum documents. She thinks that fieldwork should be the starting point for developing other geographical skills. Grace also believes that it is important that children learn to look after their immediate environment: she views geography as a vehicle for this.

Grace believes that subject knowledge is important but also contends that geography should provide children with skills that are transferable to other subject areas. She believes that teachers need to balance being creative with ensuring children are given the subject matter, stating that "it's about being creative without losing sight of what it was you wanted to teach them". Grace believes in a holistic curriculum but makes it clear that it is important that children know which subjects they are studying and states that "you can do it in a holistic way but I think you've also got to make it explicit this is geography". Grace states that the content of what children learn is as important as the way they learn it; she expresses concern that teachers might lose sight of the content in their enthusiasm to make activities "exciting and whizzy and fab". This is where she makes a link between good subject knowledge, subject pedagogy and effective teaching.

When discussing the revised National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), Grace expresses concern that its design will result in some teachers teaching geography in the way that she was taught, which she found unenjoyable. She is concerned that the new curriculum is prescriptive and will result in the subject being taught in a less engaging and exciting way. She is also critical of existing teachers who she thinks might slip into doing things the way that they have always done them. She suggests that less experienced teachers might teach factual content without realising the need to base the curriculum in experiential learning starting with children's everyday worlds. Grace is also concerned that those primary teachers not based in supportive school environments like her own or those who have not had appropriate training, will struggle to interpret the curriculum. The role of the teacher in making the curriculum interesting is central to Grace's beliefs about primary pedagogy. She acknowledges that the curriculum is a starting point and that it gives a subject a focus, setting out what must be done, though the "how" it is done is reliant on the teacher.

Grace has a specific interpretation of what it means to be a geographer. She sees it as a role which she embodies when she considers the experiences that the children in her school are receiving as part of their geography. She includes auditing the curriculum in this role and making sure that staff realise that they are doing geography. Grace has a clear view of how primary pedagogy needs to be constantly monitored and evaluated to keep improving. She

sees her role as one of always encouraging teachers to look for new and better ways of doing things. Within her own setting, whilst Grace asserts that the school has "come a long way" in terms of the geography provision, she still considers that it is the subject which has the lowest profile in teachers' minds. In response to this challenge, she takes a view that she needs to try and "sell" the subject as part of school cross-curricula provision. She expresses concern at the lack of CPD available for staff. Building on this concern, she acknowledges the importance of having individuals in the community who have both the qualifications and the interest in the subject to promote and develop it. She expresses concern about teachers' confidence in certain subjects, such as geography, but praises the support that she gets from her current LEA advisor; however, she highlights that staff could do with even more support in developing the subject. Grace refers to the school context she is working in and discusses the way experienced staff model pedagogy for newer staff. She values the teachers' experience of teaching as much as the children's learning experience and takes a view that it is part of her role to make staff realise how enjoyable geography can be to teach. She also emphasises the importance of the senior leadership within a school, praising her own head teacher who she describes as "hands on" and "very much tuned in to actually teaching".

Grace underwent a change in her relationship with geography during the research. She became more positive about the subject, explaining that she had increased her understanding of geography's nature and purpose, having taken time out to reflect on the subject. Towards the end of the research, she drew a line between her personal geography and her experience of geography at school. She states that "I've always enjoyed it on a personal level", something which is not completely clear at the start of the research process: her memories of the subject seem tied to her negative experiences of the subject at school. She talks about having grown up enjoying the outdoors and being encouraged to be outside by her father who travelled a lot for his job. She describes herself as having a love of the outdoors and asserts this personal connection to the subject more confidently as the research progresses.

Grace was a conscientious user of the reflective journal and used this to explore her relationship with geography. She talks about "taking in a bit more of my surroundings" on her daily walks with her dog and says that her involvement with the research drew her attention to the everyday geography around her. She reflected on the teaching opportunities that she provides for the children in her school and talks about an example of realising where she could have used maps when she did not use them before. When referring to the geography in the school, Grace talks about "a real sense of purposeful passion […] a feel about geography that

wasn't there before". She summarises her journey in a diagram that she drew in her reflective journal (Appendix 4) and by saying "I have really enjoyed thinking about one subject in more detail, and having to answer challenging questions. You have really made me think, you have made me quite passionate about geography and I really do feel differently about it". She talks about how the emphasis that she puts on geography in her own classroom and as foundation subject coordinator has both increased and changed since being part of the research project.

Despite this, Grace expresses concern that not every teacher will "get geography" as she does and suggests that everyone needs a forum through which to connect with the different subjects that they teach. Grace is adamant that individuals need to understand the holistic nature of geography as a subject and asserts a need for advisors to help individuals increase this understanding. She is very clear about the way she thinks geography should be taught and raises the issues of how geography, to her mind is misunderstood across all phases of education. She suggests that work needs to be done to promote the nature and purpose of the subject. Grace links this to teachers seeing geography as a vehicle through which to teach other subjects, particularly core subjects. She is adamant that the success of geography in any school is about more than one individual and that there is a need to "get everybody on board". Grace talks about the differences between history and geography and how much more difficult teachers seem to find it to make geography more engaging as a subject than history. She talks about this in the context of her own increased understanding of what geography is about.

(RQ1) At the start of the research process she shared her negative personal experiences of the subject linked to her memories of being taught geography at school. Parallel to this were her professional experiences of the subject which were more positive and involved working in her current position as foundation subjects' coordinator with the LEA advisor for geography. Through reflecting on these experiences, at the end of the research period, Grace was able to recall a range of positive personal experiences of the subject.

(RQ2) Grace perceives geography as being concerned with people, places, and participation. The "getting involved" aspect of the subject is key to her construct, as is her view that geography is a wide-ranging subject which should involve fieldwork and the teaching of both subject knowledge and transferable skills. Influences on her views about geography include the work with the LEA advisor and the supportive environment that she works in. Grace believes that individual teachers' interest and connections to particular subjects is of great importance in determining how effectively individual subjects are taught.

(RQ3) Grace is explicit in contending that effective primary teaching in different subject areas relies on and is complemented by good subject knowledge and pedagogy, as well as the will and interest of the individual teacher. She is personally determined to use her own well-defined primary pedagogy as a basis to teach what she believes children should learn in geography, fusing these different aspects of her practice. Grace re-defined her own personal relationship with geography during the research process, coming to understand how her personal enjoyment of the subject and belief in its importance as a curriculum area were manifested in the way in which she has sought to improve the school where she is working, seeking help from the LEA advisor in areas where she is less confident.

4.2.4 Millie

Millie has been teaching for twenty years and is a class teacher and the geography coordinator in a primary school on the outskirts of a small city in South East England. The school is a faith school and most of the children in the school come from middle-income families. Millie had originally intended to do a primary education degree specializing in geography, but due to a change in circumstances, did a B.Sc. in geography followed by a one-year primary PGCE course.

Millie suggests that geography might be in her genes. She refers to her grandfather who worked for Ordnance Survey as a cartographer and to family members who work in occupations such as landscape gardening, as well as her own earlier life spent outdoors in the territorial army. When Millie trained as a primary teacher, she specifically chose geography because she felt she had an innate connection to the subject; however, she states that she lacked the confidence in her subject knowledge to become a secondary school teacher. Despite this, Millie regrets that she does not teach more geography and suggests that she might prefer being in a secondary school saying that, "if I was a geography teacher in secondary, I could think, live and breathe geography all the time, I'd be in my element". She does not recall any memories of being taught geography at school but describes having a sub-conscious curiosity with environmental events such as floods and oil spillages and remembers trying to work out why these things happened. The personal affinity to geography that Millie has blends with her love of the outdoors and is reflected in her personal life. She once owned a guesthouse in the Lake District and professes to love walking. There is evidence of a two-way relationship whereby she uses her personal interests when teaching the subject but also the geography she teaches impacting on her personal life, claiming that "the geography I teach in school has driven a lot of my holidays in recent years".

Millie refers to geography being about the world around us and claims that many people do not understand that they are surrounded by geography. She talks about the breadth of the subject and questions why subjects such as citizenship even need to be taught as she feels that much of the content of these subjects is geography. While Millie prefers physical geography and states that human geography "bores the pants off me", she acknowledges that there needs to be a balance between the strands. Millie talks about the emotional side of geography, describing the subject as being about making children aware "of the wonder of what sustains them". Millie stresses that geography is about interconnectedness and gives examples of how geography is connected to other subjects and asserts that geography is as important as the other foundation subjects and the core subjects.

Millie is especially puzzled that history seems to be given a higher profile in school than geography and bemoans the fact that schools always seem to have more history resources. She includes the senior management team in this observation, stating "I think it would be imperative for heads […] to ensure that there is still an equal weighting for the history and geography that is taught". Millie refers to geography seeming to be more technical than history and makes a point of saying how much more accessible than geography she thinks history is. Millie wonders if teachers see geography as a technical subject and suggests that teachers are less confident with geographical subject knowledge in comparison to history. Millie suggests that geography takes more effort to organise than history and therefore, as teachers are so busy, history will be taught more than geography. She refers to teachers being "frightened" of the word geography and suggests that they did not "have faith in themselves to teach it". She describes the physical and human components of geography, questioning whether it is a science, concluding that it is, which might put some pupils off the subject in secondary school.

Although Millie talks about teachers using the geography around them as a starting point for looking at other subjects, she is adamant that teachers should be explicit about what curriculum content is geography when talking to children. She thinks that there is a real need for primary teachers to use the word "geography" and to be clear when they are teaching it. "I'm always saying, tell them it's geography, get that word out; It's GEOGRAPHY". She agrees reluctantly that if time is a real pressure than it would be better to teach cross-curricula units, perhaps linking geography to history rather than not teach the subject at all. She believes that when geography is linked with other subjects, it "becomes more accessible, for some reason".

Millie talks about geography being poorly perceived by the wider population and explains that what children are taught in primary schools under the subject of geography is important: if you enthuse children at a young age, then they are more likely to carry on with the subject. However, she does think that the general public's poor perception of geography has been improved by TV programmes such as *Country File* and *Coast*. Millie thinks that work needs to be done to improve the perception of geography by colleagues and parents. She believes that if parents understand that geography is all around them, then they can help their children improve their understanding just by taking them out in the freely accessible environment.

Millie identifies as a geographer and was appointed to her current job by a school leadership team who were looking for a geography specialist following a poor subject inspection. She highlights that she feels more confident to teach geography than other subjects. Millie contends that she must do a lot more preparation to teach other subjects than for geography. Although Millie is adamant that she is a geographer, she does not consider herself to be an expert. She has strong feelings about the difference between those who teach in primary schools and those who teach in secondary schools. She talks about primary expertise being the ability to teach across the whole curriculum, although she says that the more familiar you are with a part of the curriculum the more likely you are to be termed a specialist. She also states that the length of time you have done something affects whether you are a specialist: she describes herself as a specialist in teaching Year 3 and 4 pupils. Millie acknowledges that she is unusual in having such a strong subject background but states that subject specialism is not normally the thing that headteachers appointing primary teachers prioritise. Millie highlights the necessity of teachers to keep their subject knowledge up-to-date.

When talking about the proposals for the new curriculum, Millie expresses concern that the content is now pitched too high for children in primary schools and that some teachers who do not have a background in the subject will find it difficult to teach. She goes on to assert that teachers who are unsure of what they are doing will not bother to teach the subject at all and thinks that the result will be a decline in the quality of the geography taught in primary classrooms; she states that she does "fear for it". She is concerned about the removal of levels and questions how teachers will be able to assess children's progression. Millie suggests that teachers might not fully endorse the new curriculum and then says, "I make up my geography". This assertion is based on her belief that she knows what geography primary aged children need to be taught regardless of what any curriculum document might state. Despite her own confidence, Millie is concerned at the limited guidance offered with the new

curriculum and returns to her previous observation that compared to history, geography as a subject will be worse off. Millie is concerned that the curriculum has narrowed and is worried that it is very dry in its new format.

Millie is confident in her own subject pedagogy and is unsure that the new curriculum matches this. She believes in experiential learning, describing herself as an "experiential geographer" and stating that "I think an experience you have early on, can sow that seed" and she uses her own example of enjoying camping as a child and being outdoors to support this claim, suggesting that it led at a later point to her choosing to study geography. Questioning and thinking are skills that she believes need to be developed in all children, and thinks that this can be done easily in geography. Millie is quite clear that children need to know about what is around their immediate environment before they learn about other parts of the world and criticises the new curriculum for putting too much emphasis on other parts of the world. Millie wants children to understand the concept of living geography. She suggests that beyond their everyday geographies, children have natural affinity for the subject and cites examples of how children are fascinated by atlases and maps. She laments the lack of exposure to these types of resources that children have at home and says how important it is for everyone both at home and in school to talk constantly to children about their everyday geographies and when they are making geographical decisions such as where to go on holiday. "It's life, it's everyday living. It's living geography all the time. Everything you do is geography based".

Millie is concerned about the time spent on the core subjects and suggests that children need the opportunity to be creative offered by the foundation subjects alongside the core curriculum. She is adamant that primary aged children need a balanced curriculum and that they need the school day breaking up, so that they have what she calls a "lighter side to the day," but she is unsure if the wider education community realises that this is the case. In Millie's opinion, the foundation subjects offer children something that the core subjects do not: for example, the opportunity to get outside and learn.

Millie suggests that her background in the subject makes it easy for her to see the links between geography and other curriculum subjects. She is concerned that teachers who do not have a background in the subject may find it more difficult to make these connections and may not even try. She sees the role that the teacher plays in delivering the curriculum as key to primary pedagogy. Millie says that "the quality of the children's learning would only be as good as the enthusiasm of the person who can take those bullet points and be creative with them". She then links this ability to be creative with the curriculum to individual teachers'

subject confidence and goes on to share concerns for new teachers coming in to the profession without a background in the subject, dealing with a curriculum which has limited guidance but which requires a substantial amount of subject knowledge. She says that schools need to have at least one teacher with the background in the subject to provide this guidance to other staff.

When discussing teacher training, Millie is alarmed at the lack of time spent on foundation subjects and claims that new teachers entering the profession "wouldn't know where to begin, how to plan a unit of work". She is not critical of these teachers as individuals but rather when comparing the amount of time, she spent on foundation subjects in her own training, thinks they are not being adequately prepared. Millie talks about how new teachers coming into the profession do not seem to think immediately about going outside for their lessons. She thinks that the context that they are working in is very significant as this can result in them developing a broad picture of geography or basing what they teach on their own experiences. She emphasises the importance of guidance and support for newer teachers.

Millie has a very hands-on approach to being subject coordinator and plans all the subject units herself. She uses her subject knowledge and offers support when colleagues are unsure of terminology or geographical concepts. Millie bases this approach on her belief that many colleagues do not like geography as a subject, are unsure of what to do, or simply lack confidence. Millie believes it is important that as the subject coordinator, she not only guides colleagues in what needs to be taught but also models how the subject should be taught. She strives to use her subject pedagogy to model lessons to colleagues and show them how they can use the everyday geography around them to teach and enthuse children. She makes a point of saying how important it is that all the staff in a school are on board and talks about how her leadership has empowered the staff to take the subject forward themselves. Millie then refers to the two successive Gold Awards that the school she works in have been awarded from the Geographical Association and suggests that this external recognition is important as it confirms the importance of the work she has been doing in the school. Millie has done some work supporting other staff in nearby schools and she has also run workshops for colleagues at the authority-run conference, but is reluctant to watch her own colleagues teach given the increasing pressures they are under in school.

Millie is aware that she is in a school where the head teacher and the staff are very supportive and knows that it is not the same in all schools. She acknowledges her particular context of being in a faith school means that the church will support those less well-off pupils and make

sure they can go on school outings. She thinks if she was in a different setting she would have to work in a different way and maybe do something radical to try and get teachers on board, like a whole-school event. Millie acknowledges that geography can be dry if care is not taken to plan interesting lessons for pupils and praises the support that she has personally had both from the LEA advisor and from her own school senior management team in developing and improving the geography in the school where she works. She thinks that this support is important but acknowledges that changes to school budgets mean that fewer teachers are now able to attend courses to improve their subject knowledge and teaching of any curriculum subject. This raises concern for Millie, as she notes that geography as a subject is often given to less experienced teachers to coordinate without a background in the subject. She believes that all teachers should be given access to CPD. Millie thinks that it would be useful if teachers could share practice between schools and has in the past helped other schools with planning; while this move was initiated by the authority advisor, a lack of time and money has stopped this initiative.

(RQ1) To conclude, the experiences that Millie has with geography are very central to her personal and professional life: her experiences are deep-rooted and embedded. She talks about an innate connection to geography, citing examples from both her personal and professional life which she thinks illustrate her close connection to the subject. She has a secure subject knowledge which led to secure subject pedagogy and confidence. She states that "elements of the subject feature strongly within my own life, the way I do things, what I'm interested in, what drives me, considerations I might have". Millie makes a link between describing herself as a geographer and simply living in the world, stating that, "we're all geographers really in the nature of life".

(RQ2) Millie considers geography to be a broad subject, which is both technical and emotional. Importantly for Millie, geography is a "living" subject with which she believes human beings have a natural affinity, however she acknowledges that many people do not see or understand this connection. She believes that children need a broad and balanced curriculum and she maintains that geography and other foundation subjects are an important part of a primary child's experiences. She believes that having a strong subject background and good subject knowledge is important for primary teachers because this provides confidence to be creative with the curriculum. Millie believes that as a primary teacher she should develop questioning and thinking skills in the children that she teachers and embed in them a concern for the world in which they live. She argues that geography is the perfect starting point for this process. She

considers geography to be a subject that is challenging for the non-specialist primary teacher to get to grips with and which takes a lot of organisation. In promoting the subject, Millie thinks it is a subject which when understood, is perfect for linking with other areas of the curriculum.

Millie's own secure subject background and belief in the importance of the subject are significant influences on her own construction of the subject. She has also been influenced by schools where she has worked and in particular supportive senior leadership teams such as the one in her current school, who appointed her specifically because they knew she was interested in the subject and it was an area the school needed to improve on. External agencies such as the subject association and support from the LEA advisor also influence Millie's constructs of the subject

(RQ3) Millie's identity as a geographer in the primary classroom is interwoven with her personal identity. She is determined to do what she thinks is right when teaching geography and states that "because I'm a geographer, and I've a passion for it, I will make it fit". She credits subject confidence as being the key to her success, claiming that "you can explore and go beyond the boundaries if you're confident yourself in what you're doing, or happy to". In putting geography at the centre of what she does in the classroom, Millie demonstrates how her subject identity influences, complements and impacts on her identity as primary teacher.

4.2.5 Tabitha

Tabitha is currently working in the higher education sector as a teacher educator. Previously she had been a primary school teacher, working across a range of settings both in the UK and abroad. In each of these settings she has taken on the role of geography subject coordinator. Tabitha describes geography as having "defined her identity" and helped her find a professional niche. Tabitha considers herself to be a geographer but thinks that others such as academic geographers might not consider her to be such a person. There is a fusion between Tabitha's identity as a teacher and her identity within her professional context as a geographer. She states, "because it's been there from the beginning, I can't imagine my teaching career, my professional career without geography at the core … it's almost impossible for me to detach myself from the subject". Her connection to geography is different to the connection that she has with other subjects in the primary curriculum.

Tabitha has few early memories of learning geography at school and does not remember the subject being made relevant to her. She had a bad experience with one teacher who dissuaded

her from taking the subject at O-level but, despite this, her connection to the subject remained and she went on to take the subject later. "There must have been subconsciously some connection to the subject that I perhaps had", she pondered. Several significant individuals have impacted on Tabitha's relationship with geography. She describes her A-level geography teacher as "inspiring" and was in awe of his intellect and subject knowledge. Other significant individuals include LEA advisors that she has worked with in the past, members of the subject community and the former chief HMI for geography.

Tabitha has her own view of the nature and purpose of geography, describing it as being "about the world we live in and the people in that world and the way that they interact". She sees geography as a relevant subject but expresses concern that it is not a subject that everyone understands. Some of this misunderstanding she believes, is down to poor teaching of the subject in schools. Whilst Tabitha believes that primary geography should be taught as a discrete subject so that children are clear about the "core essentials', she also sees it as a vehicle through which to teach other subjects. Additionally, she considers geography to be a very broad subject with many dimensions. For example, she says, "I think the emotional side of the subject is completely underestimated".

While Tabitha talks about valuing subject knowledge and considers knowledge to be the foundation of learning, she expresses the need for different types of knowledge. Tabitha questions whether geography is taught poorly because teachers do not see how important all the different types of knowledge are so that they just concentrate on traditional subject knowledge not taking account for example of pupils' everyday knowledge. "Knowing a bit about rocks and soil can be […] is useful to an extent, and I would never put down learning a lot about rocks and soil. I think it's, […] great if you've got lots of time, but if you've got to really narrow it down to what you really need […] you need to understand the breadth of […] the subject". Tabitha says that geographical skills need to be taught alongside knowledge.

Tabitha continually emphasises the importance of the teacher in interpreting the curriculum and expresses concern that new teachers will not be able to do this. When discussing the curriculum, she talks about the teacher "actually taking it off the page". She thinks that teachers have a huge role to play in guiding children to understand their everyday geographical experiences, "I think that's what's absolutely key for teachers, you know, at primary school, you've got to be literally assisting them, […] you've got to be like a guide really, and show them that some of the experiences they're having in all different sorts of ways". She expresses concern about new teachers, questioning whether they understand the nature of

geography as a subject discipline, suggesting that they do not see the importance of using the world around them as a starting point for learning as well as children's everyday experiences of the world.

She talks about the need for good general pedagogic skills and sees a curriculum as being something that should encourage "thinking outside of the box". She talks about the importance of the whole school staff in taking a subject forward and how in her previous role as geography coordinator in school she aimed to empower teachers to teach geography. She expresses concern for non-specialist teachers and links this to the amount of time given to foundation subjects in initial teacher training. She is concerned about the new curriculum content, bemoaning the lack of reference to global issues and wondering whether the curriculum is anglicised. She also bemoans the lack of what she sees as appropriate geographical subject pedagogy, so for example no geographical enquiry and criticises the curriculum for being too factual with a lack of emphasis on geographical skills.

Tabitha gives examples of how there is a blending between her general pedagogy and her specific-subject pedagogy. "If you just teach me about a pile of rocks it's not going to be interesting – I think children have to know why information is important". At the same time, she makes a point of saying that this fusion between specific-subject content and general pedagogy is not unique to the way she teaches geography and that she would, for example, teach maths in the same way, contextualising the subject knowledge for the children. She talks about thinking laterally, so for example she says: "we've had loads of flooding recently, and I keep using this example with the people I'm teaching, and you know, if you understand how a river works, and a flood system, you know that building your house on a flood plain's not a particularly sensible thing to do; to me that's lateral thinking". Tabitha connects thinking generally in a logically way and thinking geographically, and talks about valuing connections and sees these as a big part of geography and the context in which knowledge is given: "I am always trying to contextualise the traditional types of knowledge, making sure why we need to know this, and making explicit the connections between bits of knowledge".

While Tabitha is unsure of the exact nature of subject expertise, she advocates the need for subject specialists in primary schools, as they are needed to: "lead the way, to exemplify good practice, to engender enthusiasm, show teachers how and where they can improve their subject knowledge, facilitate training opportunities and all that sort of thing". In response to the practical shortage of subject specialists, she suggests that schools work in clusters. She also

acknowledges the value of primary and secondary schools working together and sees these links with secondary schools as one way of increasing expertise.

Tabitha herself appears to have a strong sense of personal geography and awareness of the "everyday geography around her". This is something that she is not sure why she has and some others do not. She talks about how personally, when she gets to a new place, she always orientates herself and sees this as something she does automatically. She makes the point that she knows that not everyone sees things the way that she does, but that she believes that everyone thinks geographically. She describes geography as helping "you make sense of the informal experiences that you're having". In a fusion of her personal and professional life, Tabitha talks about liking the outdoors and wanting to travel and how this extended her interest in geography. This fusion extends to her feeling about natural landscapes and her interests in watercolour painting, which to her "is just calming and therapeutic, and I feel at home in that sort of a landscape".

Tabitha talks about having the confidence to enact the geography curriculum. She talks about confidence in geographical knowledge but also subject pedagogy. In terms of where her confidence stems from, Tabitha believes that this comes from the amount of geography that she has done and the subject knowledge that she has gained through studying it as part of her initial teacher training qualification and from undertaking an extended CPD course early in her career.

(RQ1) In summary, Tabitha has had a had a range of geographical experiences, which have been both positive and negative. The early negative experiences that she had at school, resulting from the attitude of one teacher did not deter her from the subject. From the age of 16, geography became the subject with which she had the most positive connection: a connection which was different to that which she had with other subjects. Tabitha recalls experiences of encountering geography in her personal life through the medium of travel and her interest in landscape painting which complemented her professional interest in the subject.

(RQ2) Tabitha's constructs of geography are broad, including a belief in the importance of children's everyday geographies, the recent advent of subject strands such as emotional geography, as well as more traditional configurations of the subject. She places significant value on the relevance and contextualisation of the geographical knowledge presented to primary-aged children, citing the important role that the teacher has to play in this process. Influences on her constructs of the subject include these wider pedagogical beliefs, a number

of significant individuals that she has encountered in her career, and her involvement with the subject community.

(RQ3) There is evidence that Tabitha's personal and professional identity have synthesised at various times. Geography is a subject which Tabitha has used to affirm her own confidence and identity. At times, Tabitha has used the subject to boost her professional standing, and as a result, her professional identity. Her pictorial representation of her relationship with geography (Appendix 5), reflects this view of her subject identity as a support. She says, "it's like a security... because when I look at my professional development and my career, geography has actually helped define me as a person and as a teacher. It was there. It was my way introduction to a subject community. It was a support to me". Whilst geography has played an important part in Tabitha's career to date, she acknowledges how her relationship with the subject has changed suggesting that it is not the prop that it perhaps once was, as she has developed her new professional identity as a teacher educator.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This research was designed as a multi-layered case study. Each of the participants whose portrait is presented in this chapter forms a case study. Additionally, the five cases taken together form a multiple case study or a small set of cases (Thomas, 2015, 2017). The identity portraits presented in this chapter are intended as an introduction to the shared meanings of experience identified and findings presented in Chapter 5. The portraits provide an insight to the reader of each of the participants that took part in this research; Fendt (2015) notes that a phenomenological text can be regarded as successful, if it brings the characters to life and if the stories told invite the reader into the experience.

Phenomenological writing aims to resonate with the reader (van Manen, 2014) and in doing this both embraces the reader but then draws them in so that they can relate to the phenomenon under investigation (Smith, 1998).

CHAPTER 5 – SHARED MEANINGS OF EXPERIENCE

Section 5.1 introduces the chapter. Section 5.2 gives details of three shared essential structures of the phenomenon identified from the data in response to the research questions posed and how they were used to create a composite portrait of experience. The composite descriptions for each structure are presented in this section. In Section 5.3 a final composite portrait of the three structures is tendered before the chapter is summarised in Section 5.4 with an explanation of how the data presented here links to the data and findings presented in Chapter 6.

5.1 Introduction to the chapter

The previous chapter provided an insight into each of the participants' lifeworlds, their values and beliefs and the factors influencing those aspects. This chapter presents the next phase of the data analysis process informed by the principles of phenomenology and presents interpretations of the lived experiences shared by participants.

5.2 Creating a composite portrait of experience

Three essential meanings were uncovered using a detailed process of phenomenological analysis as outlined in Chapter 3, which involved reducing the data and applying a process of imaginative variation. The complete table of essential elements (Appendix 6) drawn from each of the data sets was used to identify those essential elements which were shared by the participants (Appendix 7). Many of the essential elements were related and it proved necessary to continually revisit the data to ensure that the horizons or meaning units ascribed were accurate and that the subsequent essential elements decided on, reflected the shared experience. Gradually the essential elements were combined where they overlapped. It was not possible to find just one word, which adequately described the essential element and therefore the phrases listed below were used. The following three shared essential structures of the phenomenon were identified and recorded:

1. Fusion of personal and professional life
2. Clearly articulated views on primary pedagogy – including views about expertise and knowledge
3. Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject including views on primary geography subject pedagogy

A description of each of these elements is presented in sections 5.2.1-5.2.3 of this chapter. Each description results from continually reflecting on and considering the possible meanings behind the data and provides a deeper analysis of the chosen phenomenon. In these descriptions 'every perception is granted equal value, non-repetitive constituents of the experience are linked thematically, and a full description is derived' (Moustakas, 1994:96). Some of the descriptions include quotes from the data to exemplify the points extricated. Like the identity portraits, the descriptions are of no specific length; some of them are longer than others, and there are places where the descriptions over-lap in their content. Where an illustration of the lived experience given by one participant illustrates the shared essential meaning being described, it is used; there is some repetition between the portraits presented in the previous chapter and the descriptions presented here. As noted in Chapter 4, each of the research questions served to guide the writing of these shared elements but did not constrain them. Each of the three descriptions provides an answer to one or more of the three research questions to varying degrees and some specific reference is made to these in the descriptions.

The analysis does more than record in writing elements of the experiences shared with me as researcher during the interviews with participants. The process of distanciation (Gadamer, 1976; Ricoeur, 1991) involves creating a relationship between the reader and the text; it is an important part of phenomenological writing (van Manen, 2014). The relational space during an interview or a conversation is immediate, whereas the relational spaces between the writer and the person who speaks the words recorded by the writer and between the writer and the reader are wider. Writing phenomenological descriptions involves reflection and inevitably a relationship between the writer and what is being written. 'The object of radically qualitative research is essentially a linguistic project: to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible' (van Manen, 2014:364). In Chapter 3, reference was made to the way in which Ricoeur (1981), talks about looking at the meaning in texts from the perspective of: the act *of* saying (locutionary), what an individual does *in* saying (illocutionary) and what an individual does *by* saying (perlocutionary). In these descriptions, I have demonstrated this signification by describing the way in which the participants spoke about different topics discussed. For example, when participants appeared to feel strongly as they did about the publication of the new national curriculum, I have tried to describe as accurately as possible how they came across in the way that they spoke about this. Once again this involves a level of interpretation on my part, but van Manen (2014) suggests that for phenomenologists and those engaging in hermeneutical phenomenology this is not an issue.

> Writing is a producing activity. The writer produces text, but he or she produces more than text. The writer produces himself or herself. The writer is the product of his or her own product. Writing is a kind of self-making or forming. To write is to measure the depth of things, as well as to come to a sense of one's own depth. (van Manen, 2014:364)

The next stage of the writing process in this research was to draw together the shared meaning from the three essential elements identified and present these in one composite description. This composite portrait of the lived experience that these participants have is presented in section 5.3.

5.2.1 Essential Structure 1

A fusion of personal and professional life

Each of the participant teachers in this research lives or embodies their connection to geography as a subject in a tangible form. They offer examples such as recycling at home, enjoying walks in the countryside and camping as illustrations of active connection with the subject (RQ1). This process seems to be rooted in each of their backgrounds, going back to their respective childhoods. Reference is made to individuals who the participants have had contact with such as relatives who have travelled and then spoken of their journeys and to family members with whom they have enjoyed exploring the world around them. Each of them talks about either a personal love of the outdoors and/or travelling to and enjoying visiting new places (RQ2). There is a fusion between their personal and professional lives; they talk confidently about geography and appear to have an intrinsic connection to the subject. One participant describes this connection as instinctive. Some of them talk about this connection explicitly whilst for others it is implied in the way that they describe their long-held feelings about the subject, "I think I've always been interested in the subject" (RQ3).

These primary teachers describe an instinctive ability to think geographically. They talk about the everyday decisions that humans make, such as routes taken to avoid traffic, as being geographical decisions. Use of emotive vocabulary such as passion and love, in addition to phrases that are used, such as: "when you look at photos of the world it takes your breath away". They are animated and excited when talking about geography, often using hand gestures or talking rapidly. Each of them talks with confidence. Phrases such as "the subject that really gives me a buzz" illustrate their connections to the subject and seem different to

the feelings that they have about other curriculum subjects. They talk positively about geography as a subject and convey a sense of enjoying teaching it (RQ1).

The participants make specific reference to having a geography subject-identity. They suggest that this is inextricably linked to their general identity. "It's almost impossible for me to detach myself from the subject". Each of the teachers when asked if they considered themselves to be geographers is comfortable with being described this way although they each have different interpretations of what this means to them. There is also a sense that geography has had a utilitarian function for these individuals, providing a professional niche, an area of expertise or even a confidence boost (RQ3).

Finally, there is evidence that whilst these primary teachers are comfortable with geography as a subject, they are aware that this is not the universal feeling held amongst colleagues. They suggest that as open supporters and advocates for the subject, they are unusual. They counsel that such commitment to and appreciation of geography is not something shared by all teachers, a factor which seems to disappoint but not surprise them.

5.2.2 Essential Structure 2

Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher

These primary teachers communicate confidence when discussing their own primary pedagogy. They talk about children learning from experience and needing a variety of stimuli to engage them in learning. They contend that geography can provide a starting point and a vehicle for learning about other curriculum subjects: reference is made to teaching core and foundation subjects through geography. The nurturing element of working as a teacher in a primary school and the role that the teacher has in securing an environment where learning will flourish are championed but the importance of subject knowledge is also recognised (RQ3). These teachers talk about primary aged pupils needing to have a balance of knowledge and skills. This includes both subject knowledge and knowledge about the subject and they express concern for new entrants to the profession without a background or adequate training in specific subjects. These experienced teachers advocate that new teachers will require support and further training to teach the subject effectively. "I know that […] people don't like teaching geography in school because of the skills and that sort of thing, so it can put them off, so as much support as you can give them, and direction. They're just frightened by the word 'geography' […] they don't have the faith in themselves to teach it".

The participants do not view themselves as subject experts. Rather, they see themselves as specialists in broad terms referring to being more of a specialist in geography than in any other area of the primary curriculum. They indicate that they are probably at very best quasi-specialists and suggest that secondary school teachers are more likely to be subject specialists or experts.

There is a strong consensus as to the importance of teachers being interested in the subjects that they are teaching and the significant role that the teacher has in interpreting and teaching pupils in such a way that engages them in their learning. The importance of supportive school leadership teams in sustaining and improving the teaching of subjects such as geography is emphasised; there is an indication that these teachers feel that they have an altruistic role to play in encouraging and nurturing their colleagues and new entrants to the profession (RQ2).

5.2.3 Essential Structure 3

Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject-pedagogy

These teachers are confident not only in their generic primary pedagogy and what they believe is good primary practice but also in their subject-specific pedagogy. Each of these primary teachers exudes confidence when talking about geography (RQ1). Each of them is clear about their own understanding and perception of the subject and what they see as the purpose of geography. They talk about geography being a broad and holistic subject that involves learning about people and places and how they interact. They are unambiguous about the importance of each of the different strands of geography, citing physical, human and environmental geography. Their understanding of the subject is extended to include it being a subject that produces global citizens of the future, linking it with citizenship and rights respecting education. Illustrations of this understanding are given by referring to children being encouraged thorough geography to take pride in where they live.

The participants ask questions about the content of the new curriculum in terms of the purpose of children being asked to learn about places where they have never lived. *"How do you develop that sense of pride in your own community, and develop a sense of wanting to care, and wanting to look after your local community, if you're focusing on places that some of the children will never ever go to?"* Such is their personal commitment to and belief in their expanded interpretation of primary school geography that they appear to be quite affronted about what they see as a new narrow curriculum. Their indignation extends to them being

dismissive of the new curriculum documentation, suggesting that they will teach what they believe children should be taught anyway. "We've just got to adapt it to what we want to be teaching". This is based on what the participants think is good geography (RQ1).

These teachers believe that geography is a hands-on subject, which cannot be experienced in the classroom alone. They are at pains to say that geography is not just about learning facts and figures, although they suggest that this is the way that some teachers still teach the subject. Each of them talks about the need for children to go outdoors in the environment and experience their surroundings. They use phrases such as *experiencing it* and *doing it*; this suggests that geography is a subject to which practical teaching and learner engagement is key. There is an emotive element to the language used by the participants to describe their geography-specific pedagogy and they suggest that unlike other subjects, it involves immersion into the world in which individuals live. They talk about the subject connecting individuals to the world and suggest that one of the aims that they have, is to make both colleagues and the children they teach understand this. "What I want is the children to get out …I want them to realise there's a landscape around them". Each of the teachers talks about teaching geography in such a way as to promote caring for the world and the environment. They speak about topical issues such as sustainability, diversity and inequality, and the place that these have within geography as a school subject: especially at primary level (RQ1).

Comparisons are made to other subjects suggesting that, unlike history, which they consider to be two-dimensional, geography requires pupils to engage all their senses. Enquiry based teaching is at the centre of what the participants view to be good primary geography with learners encouraged to make connections between people, places and processes. Geography is seen to provide explanations for the world and the way in which humans interact with the world. "Geography helps you make sense of the informal experiences that you're having".

These primary teachers believe that geography should be taught starting with the individual child and consideration of pupil's own personal geographies (RQ2). They advocate the need for geography to be taught in a way that is meaningful and real to pupils at an age-appropriate level. They talk about the difference between the way geography is taught in primary and secondary schools and suggest that there is a tendency for secondary teachers to start with subject content rather than the children's experiences-something that they do not support. The participants purport that geography is more important now than in the past as changes in the amount of time children spend outdoors has resulted in children being less in touch with

their local environment. They contend that to be taught well, geography requires those teaching the subject to connect with the outdoors and employ experiential teaching strategies.

Concern is expressed that with the marginalisation of geography and the other foundation subjects, due to increasing time pressures on the curriculum, an over-emphasis on English and maths and many teachers who do not connect with and understand the subject, that schools will let it "slip off the edge". These teachers are magnanimous in wanting to help colleagues and future teachers perceive geography in the same way that they do. They want to pass their love of the subject on to future generations. "Even if I've made a difference in two […] schools, I think, well, that has been worth it […] I just want to pass on that sort of feeling of awe and wonder". They bemoan the loss of CPD for existing teachers and suggest that the existence, quality and further development of geography in primary schools requires individuals who not only understand its nature and purpose, but also value the contribution that it can make to a pupil's wider education (RQ2).

5.3 The composite portrait of experience

A fusion between subject-specific and generic pedagogy

When taken together, the three shared essential elements, combine to suggest that the significant finding from this research and the essence of the phenomenon investigated, is a fusion between participants' subject pedagogy, generic pedagogy and practice. The teacher's subject identity is interwoven with their teacher identity, which is incomplete without subject identity (RQ3).

These primary teachers are committed to geography as a component of the primary school curriculum and see it is as a vehicle for teaching other primary curriculum subjects, including the core subjects. The links that they make between subjects are not forced or tenuous, but rather meaningful and purposeful. This linking of subjects to one another is the way that these individuals view teaching and learning in the primary classroom, as part of the process of ensuring that pupils are exposed to information which is contextualised and linked to other information. Prior learning forms the basis for further developing pupils' different knowledge bases: learning is not seen as occurring in silos but rather as parts of a whole.

The participants take the view that to be taught well, primary geography must be based on experiences; this view complements and cements their view that good primary teaching is based on age-appropriate experiences for children, which both enthuse and motivate. As primary teachers, they do not view learning as being about merely transmitting information to

children who are passive recipients. Rather, they view learning as a two-way process whereby the teacher is required to use the curriculum prescribed as a starting point from which to craft learning experiences, which are both relevant and interesting. These teachers see geography as a perfect conduit for their generic pedagogical beliefs about primary teaching.

The participants believe that primary school children require a balance of knowledge and skills and that it is the teachers' role to ensure that they receive both. They caution against activity-led lessons, where learning objectives are unclear and suggest that good primary teachers are those that can ensure that children receive high-quality education which is delivered in an enjoyable way, both for the children and the teacher delivering the curriculum. These teachers view geography as the quintessential subject for achieving this aim.

Each of the teachers talk about children needing more than a diet of English and maths and contend that foundation subjects, such as geography, are necessary to provide children with a holistic primary education. Breadth and balance are considered as being central to a primary child's education. Geography is epitomised as being a real and relevant subject without the need to make tenuous connections to the everyday reality of children's lives. Children's geographies are viewed as an inherent part of children's lives; when taught in primary school, geography provides a place in the curriculum for pupils to study their place in the world physically but also in relation to other people. These primary teachers contend that geography in primary schools provides an opportunity to talk, learn and enquire about children's being and living in the world (RQ2).

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described elements of the lived experience of being an enthusiast for primary geography as shared by the research participants. It has also presented the universal character of these elements in the form of a composite portrait of the experience. The descriptions contain interpretations of the experiences shared and recorded and are presented at two levels. The first of these is as the researcher, reading the data and trying to apply meaning. The second of these is as a participant in the research who has experiences of being a geographer. In the context of this phenomenological research, this interpretation is considered part of the research process, as the phenomenologist's consciousness is not viewed separately from the research process. It is generally accepted that the researcher's lifeworld, experiences, views and interpretations are an important part of the meaning made from the data collected (Heidegger, 1962). In hermeneutic phenomenology, many interpretations of others' lived

experiences are possible, and therefore, the interpretation of the researcher can and should be viewed as one of many possible interpretations.

This chapter has introduced the practice of phenomenological writing and how this is more than recording the spoken word.

> In the reflective process of writing, the researcher not only engages in analysis but also aims to express the noncognitive, ineffable, and pathic aspects of meaning that belong to the phenomenon. The project of phenomenology not only rests on the critical role of reduction, it also requires the expressive method of the vocative'. (van Manen, 2014:240)

Phenomenological writing is explored further in Chapter 6, where a phenomenological text constructed from the essential elements and the composite portrait of experience outlined in this chapter, is presented. The aim of this text is to take the reader to a deeper level of understanding of the phenomenon investigated.

CHAPTER 6 - THE ULTIMATE ESSENCE OF THE EXPERIENCE

Section 6.1 introduces the chapter before the theoretical underpinnings and rationale for choosing to write a phenomenological text in the form of a play script are outlined in Section 6.2. In Section 6.3, the play script entitled 'Being a Geographer' is presented, before the ultimate essence of experience identified in this phenomenologically-inspired research is further outlined in Section 6.4. The chapter is summarised in Section 6.5.

6.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter presents the final phase of the data analysis process informed by the principles of phenomenology and the research findings. Chapter 4 provided an initial insight into the lifeworlds of each of the participants in this research. Employing principles of phenomenological analysis this led to the presentation of the essential elements of experience deemed to have been shared by the participants and which were described in Chapter 5 (Moustakas, 1994). Finlay (2017) contends that it is the power with which a phenomenological study draws the reader into its discoveries, that determines its quality. There is limited literature about phenomenological writing, despite the claim that the texts produced from phenomenological research are a significant part of phenomenological research (van Manen, 2014). However, mindful of the advice of van Manen (2014), that the vocative dimension of the phenomenological method is important in the process of phenomenological writing, I determined to find a way to bring the findings from this research off the page, so that as far as possible the reader could get an inside view of the experiences shared by the participants. Sections 6.3 of this chapter presents the shared essential elements described in Chapter 5 in the form of a play script and section 6.2 explains the reasons behind the decision to do this.

Within the phenomenological process, the description of the ultimate essence of experience is termed as the final textural-structural synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). Each of the three essential structures and the composite portrait of experience were examined and the essence 'severed from the individual appearance which manifests it' (Satre, 1989:xlviii). In Section 6.4 of this chapter, the emerging findings from the research in the form of a single overarching meaning or essence of how these participants identify with and experience geography as primary teachers is presented. The ultimate essence of experience investigated in this research, describes how the participants have a *fused identity* whereby their subject-specific pedagogy blends with their general primary pedagogy.

6.2 Deciding on a format for the phenomenological text

My intention in writing this phenomenological text as a play script was to give a third dimension to the findings so that the reader could picture the interviewees and hear them speaking. I want the reader to gain a deeper sense of the feelings held by the participants about the experiences that they share. As I was writing the play script, I recalled and reflected on how the individuals had spoken to me when I had interviewed them, their tone of voice, the hand gestures they used, when they seemed confident in what they were saying or rather unsure. This approach is in line with the theories of embodiment put forward by Merleau-Ponty (1962) which are referred to in Chapter 2. Findlay (2006) suggests that researchers consider: bodily empathy, embodied self-awareness and embodied intersubjective when conducting phenomenological research. The hand gestures and general demeanour of participants recalled and used in the play script illustrate the concept of bodily empathy noted at the time and recalled by me the researcher, whilst the inclusion and depiction of myself in the script exemplifies embodied self-awareness. Embodied subjectivity describes the interactions between me as researcher and those I was researching and these are intended to be encapsulated by setting the play in one room where all participants are present at a fictional meeting.

The play script, which is entitled "Being a Geographer", is written in three acts with the three essential elements providing the basis for the scenes in Act 1 and the composite portrait of experience providing the basis for Act 2. The final act is based on the ultimate essence of the experience revealed through the research. Thus, the play script represents both the stages of the analysis process but also an integration of participants' responses to research questions 1-3. It is a shared story of how these individuals experience geography, what it means to them and what influences these meanings. The physical act of writing the play script served as another stage in the analysis process, culminating in the writing of Act 3 which introduces the ultimate essence of the experience investigated.

The idea of presenting the findings in the form of a play script originated from reading about research conducted by Smit *et al*., (2010) who constructed conversations from data generated when researching aspects of teachers' identity. The purpose of using these constructed conversations was to use the participants' voices to describe their lived experiences. According to van Manen (2014), there is more to the voking dimension of phenomenology than producing text which demonstrates understanding.

'The voking features of a text have to do with the recognition that a text can "speak" to us, that we may experience an emotional and ethical responsiveness, that we may know ourselves addressed. There exists a relation between the writing structure of a text and the voking effects that it may have on the reader'. (van Manen, 2014:241)

A setting for the play script is outlined so that the reader is given an idea of the context in which it is imagined that such conversations between participants might take place and to give the reader the impression of watching or listening to such a drama. Details of the characters and stage directions are given. Whilst the piece is a fictional representation of how I imagine what might happen should the participants be placed together in a room and asked to talk about the topics discussed during the research process, the dialogue was constructed using actual statements and words spoken by the participants during the interviews. I inserted a small number of words into the dialogue with the aim of linking some of the elements together and maintaining the flow of the dialogue. These are often words which give clarity because the statements are taken out of their original research conversations. Considerable care was taken not to alter the meaning inferred by the participant's original statements or the context in which the words were spoken. Any inserted words are highlighted in red. A phenomenological text aims to balance both structure and texture (Todres, 2007) by presenting original research data in a format which enables the reader to be drawn into the text and empathise with the research participants.

'On the one hand, phenomenological writing is a rational process in the sense that it tries to systematically explore the meaning structures of a phenomenon or event. On the other hand, it is also non-rational in the sense that it tries to find expressive means to penetrate and stir up the prereflective substrates of experience as we live them'. (van Manen, 2014: 240)

6.3 'Being a Geographer'

<div align="center">OVERVIEW</div>

ACT 1   **The essential structures of the phenomenon**

Scene 1   A fusion of personal and professional life

Scene 2   Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher

Scene 3   Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject-pedagogy

ACT 2   **The composite portrait of the experience**

Scene 1   Fusion between subject pedagogy and generic pedagogy

ACT 3   **The textural-structural synthesis**

Scene 1   A fused identity

<div align="center">CHARACTERS</div>

Grace   A 30-year-old teacher working as an assistant head teacher in an infant school, in an economically-deprived area on the south coast of England. She did a generalist teacher training course. She coordinates foundation subjects.

Wendy   A 40-year-old teacher working as an assistant head teacher in a one-form entry primary school in a deprived area of a city in Southern England. She trained as a music teacher and came to love geography through attending an inspiring CPD course early in her teaching career. She coordinates geography throughout the school and works as a consultant to other schools.

Hilary   A 60-year-old teacher working as a deputy head teacher in a two-form entry church primary school on the outskirts of a small town in rural southern England. She trained as a secondary teacher and now teaches reception as well as coordinating geography.

Millie   A 50-year-old teacher working as a Year 4 teacher in a three-form entry Church primary school in the centre of a small city in South East England. She came in to teaching in her late 20s. She did a geography degree and then a PGCE. She coordinates geography throughout the school.

Tabitha   A 45-year-old teacher now working as a university lecturer in Southern

England teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education

programmes. She has coordinated geography in several schools prior to her

current position and has acted as a consultant leading training sessions.

SETTING

The play takes place in the staff room of a two-form entry primary school in

Southeast England. Millie, one of the characters, works as a teacher in the

school. It is 4.30pm on a Thursday afternoon in March 2013. The rest of the

school is deserted and the characters are sitting drinking tea. They met a few

months earlier at a county training course and discovered over lunch that they

all share a similar interest in promoting geography in their settings. Having

realised that they all faced similar challenges, they agreed to form their own

informal support group and arranged a date to get together and chat through

their perceptions of geography and how they each try to juggle their subject

interest alongside their general primary teacher responsibilities. The new

primary national curriculum document has recently been published.

ACT 1

Scene 1 A fusion of personal and professional life

Grace: *(Talking enthusiastically)* My dad was in the RAF and is extremely well travelled …when we were little, we were always out and about doing things… so I think my love of being outdoors definitely comes from him.

Wendy: *(Using hand gestures)* We had a massive garden, and we had a track, a bridle track at the end of our garden, so you could just walk for miles and miles without crossing a road.

Hilary: *(In a wistful tone)* I think I've always been interested in the subject, my children both love geography, because if there are any field trips going or anything like that, yes, they'd be on them … we did it as a family.

Millie: We moved to the Lake District and had a guest house there … *(pauses)* my husband was an outdoor leader …he's ex-Army. I was out camping, and doing all those sorts of things … I just loved it. We're great walkers.

Hilary: I enjoy finding out about people and places … I enjoy visiting places, reading. I think for me, it was always my favourite subject … *(pauses)* that was my subject …geography… it's always been something that I've taught or helped people with. I like all the other subjects, but they don't all fit in to that mould, they're not all geography… *(Voice tails off as she finishes the sentence as if slightly regretful)*

Tabitha: *(Putting her mug on the table and addressing the group in a confident and cheerful tone trying to lift the mood)* It's the subject that really turns me on … it gives me a buzz … never boring … there were certain subjects when you'd think "oh no, not again". You know, I didn't really have the… I never really felt that about geography.

Millie: *(Looking at Tabitha)* I like to travel … the geography I teach in school has driven a lot of my holidays in recent years … I'm outdoorsy, adventurous, exciting.

Wendy: *(Thoughtfully)* Maybe it's much deeper, deeply rooted in my whole upbringing.

Tabitha: *(Sitting back in her chair and looking lost in her own thoughts)* It seemed such an instinctive thing for me … to connect with the environment around me and the people … it literally is something that we all do ... there was a light bulb moment …I realised that the school curriculum subject where we studied that formally, that's what I was doing.

Millie: I think those things are in your genes – all my grandfather's family worked for the Ordnance Survey; surveyors, and all that sort of thing … I think that comes in the genes. You either really like geography or you don't want to go anywhere near it. *(Tabitha, Wendy and Hilary nod in agreement whilst Grace looks thoughtful)*

Scene 2- Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher

The characters are still in the staff room. Millie has been to the cupboard, taken out a packet of biscuits and opened these and put them on the table besides a teapot. She takes a few minutes to re-fill the cups and then they all settle back into their seats. She also puts on the table a copy of the recently published revised National Curriculum for use in English Primary Schools.

Wendy: It's all about relevance…we should be looking at what relates to them.

Hilary: *(As if talking to herself but saying the words out loud)* It must be pertinent to those children, shouldn't it? And based in the area where they come from.

Grace: They might like it *(dismissively),* but what skill do they learn? Subject knowledge…*(pauses)* I think it's massively important*. (Pauses and thinks for a few seconds)* It's about being creative without losing sight of what it was you wanted to teach them … *(pauses)* it's also about understanding, you know, what do they need to know, and what do they not need to know.

Tabitha: *(Speaking to the group as if they are a class)* The excellent teacher communicates that subject knowledge.

Grace: *(Tentatively at first but gaining in confidence as she talks*) If you're not secure in your subject knowledge, how can you teach effectively? You've got to know what you're doing, you've got to know your stuff really… *(pauses)* not at expert level, but you've got to have a really good understanding.

Hilary: The children need knowledge, but they also need a breadth of experience *(pauses)* and lots of outdoor learning and things like that, *(speaking as if she is talking about something obvious)* anybody that's been in early years knows the benefit of children learning from outside.

Grace: *(Tentatively)* You've still got to keep your skills discrete... I think you've got to have that balance...You can do it in your holistic way, but I think you've also got to make it explicit, you know, *(drawing imaginary quotation marks in the air)* "this is a geography skill".

Wendy: The curriculum has gone much more towards knowledge... *(speaking in a mournful tone)* I just don't see the whole child being nurtured. I just think there needs to be a balance between the knowledge and the skills.

Millie: *(Loudly and confidently)* The key is *(long pause while others wait for her to finish her sentence)* – a love of it, an enthusiasm to teach it, and to make it interesting.

Tabitha: *(Responding to Millie)* I think when you become enthusiastic about something, ... out of school or ... in school, you then want to learn more about it.

Hilary: *(Looking wistfully towards the ceiling and appearing to talk to herself)* I'm not sure about the younger teachers coming in, *(pauses)* unless they've got a love of it, I think it'll be...oh, that's something that you've got to teach. *(Shaking her head)* You don't see the passion for it ... you just see the delivery, and everything is slotted into boxes. *(Long pause)* Their knowledge is much poorer than ours!

Grace: *(Cheerfully trying to lighten the mood that has appeared to descend on the group)* I think you've got to take what they want to give you and *(emphasising the next few words)* you've got to be creative. It's comforting to have the skeleton there but it's up to you how you put the meat on the bones, *(looking towards the rest of the group)* isn't it? Our role is so *(holding arms out wide)* encompassing, as an infant school or a primary school teacher, you're a bit of everything, aren't you?

Millie: *(Hands on hips as she gets up and talking as she walks away from the group towards the window to close it)* That's why the quality of geography I think suffers, it's only the people who have an interest, who like it themselves, that can enthuse other people and bring something interesting to the curriculum.

There is a pause in the conversation as one of Millie's colleagues walks into the staffroom and collects a book from her pigeon hole- smiles at Millie mouthing that she is heading home. Millie returns the greeting mouthing that she will see her tomorrow. Some of the group take a comfort break. When they return, they settle down and continue their conversation.

Scene 3 Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject-pedagogy

Tabitha: *(Addressing the group as if they were a class of pupils)* Geography ...helps you make sense of the informal experiences that you're having ... if geography is taught well in school ... it helps you interpret and make sense of the world around you.

Wendy: (Earnestly) I think Geography is about understanding about our place in the world, the impact we have on the world. I think it's just vital that the children understand that everything they do has an impact, as a person, so it's not about countries, it's about people. It's that connection between people and places locally and globally, and that we make a difference with everything we do.

Grace: (Looking at Wendy and nodding as she speaks) Yes, geography is about people, and it's about places, and it's about participating and being engaged in what's going on

around you. If I had to explain it to somebody, that's what geography is, I would say it's about people, it's about places, and it needs to be hands on, you need to be involved in it. You can't get a sense of the world or the place around you from book you've got to get out there.

Hilary: Geography encompasses everything, because it's all about people and places, it's all about us as we are now, and the places we go, places we've been, and for the children things for the future. (Pauses and then says wistfully) I think it's all about the here and now really.

Millie: People don't realise that everything that they do comes under the umbrella of geography. If you're in a traffic jam, you're suddenly thinking "oh, which other route can I take?"

Tabitha: I think that if you wanted a really straightforward definition, it's about the world we live in and the people that live in the world, and the way that those interact with one another. I think that's essentially it in a nutshell.

Hilary: (Excitedly) I think geography is always changing, it's quite vibrant.

Wendy: *(Slightly randomly and not addressed to anyone specifically)* What a brilliant subject!

Grace: *(Tentatively)* I think very carefully about the experiences we give our children… I believe that we do a lot more geography than we give ourselves credit for… people don't know that they're doing geography.

Millie: *(Confidently and in direct response to Grace)* It's just about making them aware of the wonder of what sustains them … they don't realise that everything that they do comes under the umbrella of geography …it's life, it's everyday living … everything you do, is geography based.

Wendy: I've made the National Curriculum work for us … in my eyes, geography is the most successful subject.

Tabitha: *(Pointing at the National Curriculum Document on the table and talking in a dismissive tone).* This isn't really a threat… I feel that I can put my own take on it.

Grace: *(Laughing as she holds up her mug to the group)* It may not be everyone's cup of tea, or hold what we believe to be most dear at the forefront … but we do know that we'll stick to our guns … we will teach what our children need … we will teach geography in a fun, meaningful way … we'll still get out and about a lot … we'll continue to be creative with the statutory stuff that they make us do.

Hilary: *(Holding her mug up and speaking as if on an election broadcast)* I can take from it what I need to … we've always taught what we think is important …if we want to get out there with the children we'll get out there. I'll go that one stage more … to make it a bit more … interesting or broader.

Wendy: *(Clinking mugs with Grace and Hilary as if in agreement and saying Cheers)* Yes, I will cover it through the bits that I'm passionate about … the global dimension …sustainability, environmental side of it … I will get it all in somehow.

Millie: *(Sitting back in her chair and taking in a considered tone)* I think, even if you bend the rules, you've got to know where bending the rules is taking you … and what the

children, what learning experience the children will get out of that. *(Whispering)* I make up my geography.

Tabitha: *(Opening her arms to the group as she speaks)* I guess those of us who are in education, have got to make sure that happens, and you know, we've got to encourage, continue to encourage this thinking outside the box.

Millie: You can *(emphasising these two words)* explore and go beyond the boundaries if you're confident yourself in what you're doing. Because I'm a geographer *(pointing at herself)*, and I've a passion for it, I will make it fit. *(The others all nod in agreement and then settle back into their own thoughts).*

MILLIE leans forward and asks passes the biscuits round.

Wendy: *(Opening the National Curriculum document and looking at the Programme of Study for Geography – p.184)* Geography for children is …*(pauses)* that slowly expanding concept of the world around them. It's just got to be real, hasn't it?

Hilary: *(In reply to Wendy)* It must be pertinent to those children and that area where they come from.

Tabitha: *(Pointing at the 'locational knowledge' section of the document on p.185)* I don't agree with a list of facts and figures about rivers and things like that. I'd stress …*(pauses)* relevance of the subject.

Grace: *(Using lots of hand gestures to indicate the breadth of geography)* There are so many amazing things that children can get out of it, not just sat listening to facts. It needs to be a lot more hands on, participative. You need to go out and about and you need to notice what is here right in front of you.

Wendy: *(Relaxing back into the chair and speaking in a reflective tone)* I think we tend to do local… I think we need to bring it even closer and it's just vital that the children understand that everything they do has an impact, as a person.

Millie: *(Jabbing her finger at the Place Knowledge section on p.186)* That was something I felt quite strongly about … *(pauses)* we do all this about the rest of the world, and they don't know anything about the place where they live. I want them to appreciate the landscape around them.

Wendy: *(Speaking to the group as if what she says is just obvious)* Geography is just everything; it's all about us. It's not just being packaged into a little box with the dreaded textbooks, to me that's completely the wrong … *(pauses)* it starts from them, their personal geography and then moves out.

Hilary: *(Looking towards the window and speaking as if addressing someone looking in on the group)* It must be something tangible, otherwise it's just something you study, isn't it? You can't do it all in the classroom …*(pauses)* you've really got to be out there seeing. It's got to be, you know, first hand, first hand observations. The children themselves, when we go anywhere, they just remember it.

Millie: *(Closing the National Curriculum quite forcefully as she speaks)* You can't get this in a classroom; you can't get it from a book.

Grace: *(Talking directly to Millie)* I agree; you can't possibly talk about something they haven't got any experience of. You've got to get out and about first, and you've got to be out in the environment.

Tabitha: We talk about *(makes quotation marks in the air)* "good" geography in a primary school being based on problem solving, interaction, enquiry based learning.

Millie: *(Starts speaking before Tabitha has finished her sentence)* We were doing something in English today about dinosaurs, and we started discussing continents, so I'm afraid my globe came out … *(pauses)* and we ended up having half a geography lesson.

Grace: It shouldn't be a subject in a box …*(pauses)* it's part of the relationship with other subjects …we focus on teaching transferable skills.

Hilary: *(Looking at Grace and nodding in agreement as she speaks)* Yes through geography you can get all the other subjects. We don't call it humanities; we call it … *(pauses)* history or geography. And I think they are distinct.

Tabitha: *(Addressing group as if a class)* Sometimes children don't know what the geography is …*(pauses)* and I think that's a mistake …*(pauses)* I think they need to know something about the core essentials of the subject. It's the way it's taught. You must contextualise subject knowledge. *(The group nod in agreement as these words are spoken)*

ACT 2

Millie makes another pot of tea and as Grace visibly shivers and puts her coat on, Millie signals for the group to join her at the table in the corner of the staff room where there is a radiator.

Scene 1 Fusion between subject pedagogy and generic pedagogy

Tabitha: *(Hands clasped around a cup of tea)* Children increase their knowledge about people, places, processes, but they do it through a series of tasks, which are interactive – that they can get involved in, and they are real and relevant. That's the skill of a really good teacher. It's that interactive approach, and trying to find tasks, settings tasks that are real and relevant, things that are going to help engage children.

Millie: *(Fiddling with a ball of blu-tac left on the table)* Children need a different type of lesson, a lighter, not so stringent "sit down, be quiet, do this", you know. I think all the foundation subjects offer that. *(Looking around the table)* It's a different set up, isn't it? A different format, and it's always delivered and presented in a slightly different way to the way you do your English and maths. I think children need to have that change throughout the day.

Grace: *(In a matter of fact tone)* I just think that you need to understand the skills that children need to learn from that subject, and how they can transfer them to other subjects. You need to think really carefully about what is age appropriate. I think sometimes, the temptation is to run before we walk, and then you've lost the children, and what was the point of that? It's about being creative without losing sight of what it was you wanted to teach them. It's also about understanding what children need *(emphasised)* to know?

Tabitha: If you just teach me about a pile of rocks it's not going to be interesting *(disparaging)* – I think children must know why information is important. But *(pauses)* I think that

about all subjects. I mean *(pausing and talking as if what she is saying is common sense)* if I was doing that in maths, I'd think the same – I need to know about area because I need to know how many bathroom tiles I need.

Wendy: *(Talking as if addressing an election rally)* I will strive to always make it relevant to the children. I just don't see any purpose in it if it's not. Just learning stuff for the sake of it – that's how we learnt at school and I hated it, and didn't go anywhere with it.

Hilary: *(Teacher voice)* The children must learn, bottom line, but there are ways and means of actually getting children motivated to do it, it isn't always bums on seats, is it? I think the children just get so much out of being out on the field, being out. We get people in *(gesturing)*, but it's not quite the same as getting the wellies out *(standing up and demonstrates getting wellies on- at which the rest of the group laugh)* and going down to the brook. *(Sitting down again as she speaks)* Children learn more through experiencing.

Tabitha: Relevance *(emphasising)* is probably the underpinning word to what I do; always trying to contextualise the traditional types of knowledge, you know, knowing why we're doing this, why we need to know this, and making explicit the connections.

Grace: *(Excitedly and talking quite quickly)* You can be really enthusiastic about something and not actually know what you're doing and then *(emphasised)* lose sight of what it is you're teaching – what are the children supposed to be learning? You can make something exciting and whizzy and fab *(using hand gestures)*, and at the end of the day nobody really knew *(shrugging shoulders)* why he or she were doing it.

Millie: *(Having walked over to the coffee table and picked up the National Curriculum Document and brought it back to the table where the group are now sitting. She holds it up as she talks and puts it down when she finishes.)* This curriculum doesn't give you the opportunity to be as creative. It's very prescriptive. You're talking about young children that need to be kept excited and enthused, and some of this would be a big turn off really.

Grace: *(Sitting with elbows on the table and chin on her hands and looking reflective)* I've got the experience to be able say "I know they say this, but what do our children need". I think ... how can you do that in a more participative way? And then everything else comes from that, like your facts and the vocabulary.

Millie: *(Nodding towards Grace)* The quality of the children's learning would only be as good as the enthusiasm of the person who can take the curriculum and be creative with it.

Millie pushes back her chair and takes the mugs and puts them in the dishwasher.

ACT 3

The school caretaker comes in and looking at Millie points at his watch. She mouths back that she is almost done and will lock up.

Scene 1 A fused identity

Tabitha: *(Walking over to the chair where her coat is and picking it up and bringing it back to where there are sitting resting the coat on her knee and starting to talk as she walks*

back to the table) I've always introduced myself as a geographer … it's quite a defining thing for me … I've never known any different *(pauses)…* I can't imagine my teaching career, my professional career without geography at the core … *(pauses)* it's almost impossible for me to detach myself from the subject … it's so*… (looks perplexed for a few seconds before finishing her sentence)* envelops my professional identity.

Wendy: *(Addressing the group)* I started with being a subject leader, and the result of that was to lead CPD. The impact that's had has been on my whole professional development and moving into leadership, so without geography *(pauses)* I wouldn't be where I am**.** That's the most important part of geography. It's that bit … *(pauses)* that develops you as a person. It makes our learners learn who they are – gives them a sense of identity.

Hilary: *(Smiling as she talks)* I've always taught it because I've enjoyed teaching it. I was appointed by the head, who knew me, knew geography would be my *(emphasised)* thing. I think I've always been interested in the subject. So it's personal, and professional and really it sort of ties in. I seem to have always been the subject coordinator.

Millie: Interestingly *(looking at Hilary),* whilst obviously, I met other criteria, I was appointed because I was a geographer. I just was fascinated with geography, you know, *(starts playing with the blu-tac again)* and at the university I applied to were looking at oil spillages, and that aspect of things. I found it really fascinating and understanding why things are happening today. The reason I took geography is because I have an interest and a passion in it. I like the landscape, and I like talking about it.

Tabitha: *(Cheerfully)* I automatically can go to somewhere and very quickly orientate myself. And within minutes I can pretty much know my way around, and *(starts to talk more quickly and use hand gestures)* I can go somewhere by car once, and go back there and pretty much find my way round*. (Pauses)* Whereas other people I know can go again and again, and almost don't seem to absorb any of that information at all, and you think *(pausing and looking perplexed)* "how can you not know whether it's left or right, because you've been here before?"

Millie: *(In a no-nonsense matter of fact tone)* People don't realise that everything that they do comes under the umbrella of geography. If you don't come from, *(pauses)* you know, that sort of a background yourself, and don't have an interest in it yourself, I think it's even more difficult for you to access and teach enthusiastically. I think that's the barrier, you know, *(pauses)* if you're not interested in it, it's difficult to get that enthusiasm.

Hilary: We've always had people in our school who maybe have geography in the heart. I think I'll go that one stage more to make it a bit more interesting or broader and spread it out a bit towards other subjects. I'll say what's the best geography we can get out of it?" *(stands up and walks over to pick up her bag and coat, puts the coat on and walks towards the table remaining standing)*

Wendy: *(Taking out her car keys from her jacket pocket and fiddling with them while talking*) I think I just want to pass on that sort of feeling of awe and wonder, and geography is just everything; it's all about us. Geography has been the high *(pauses)* and kept me going. *(she speaks these last few words rather mournfully)*

Grace: I think wider… *(stands up)* from a geography point of view. But you know, everybody needs a forum like this (*opens arms to indicate the group)*, to just talk, just to let go and talk about a subject. *(the others nod in agreement)*

Millie: *(Pushing her chair back and picking up the National Curriculum document before she stands up)* Elements of the subject feature strongly within my own life *(pauses)* the way I do things, what I'm interested in, what drives me, considerations I might have.

(Tabitha and Wendy stand up and the whole group move towards the door of the staff room. Millie puts the National Curriculum in her pigeonhole and follows the group out into the corridor turning the light off as she leaves the staff room. The group walk towards reception.)

Tabitha: *(Stopping in reception to look at the group)* It seemed such an instinctive thing for me, to connect with the environment around. *(The group nod in agreement)* I feel I've got an innate interest in the elements of the subject. It's so ingrained and part of my personality, everything, that it feels like a natural fit really *(the group listen intently and look knowingly at each other, each deep in thought but with contented expressions on their faces)*. When I look at my professional development and my career, geography has helped define me as a person and as a teacher. *(Tabitha, Wendy, Grace and Hilary leave the school and Millie heads back down the corridor)*

6.4 The essence of the lived experience: A Fused Identity

The following description outlines the ultimate essence of the experience uncovered through the application of a phenomenologically-inspired research approach and already introduced to the reader in Act 3 of the play script in Section 6.3 of this thesis. This essence of the experience described here is not exhaustive (Moustakas, 1994). But it does represent the essence of the experience of geography for these primary teachers at a point in time and from the 'vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon' (Moustakas, 1994:100). This is a description of the main research findings.

A Fused Identity

These teachers' subject identity fuses with their identity as primary teachers. The way in which they perceive geography should be taught using enquiry-based activities, founded on well-grounded subject knowledge, blends with what they believe is good generic primary practice. Being an effective teacher of primary geography complements and harmonizes with the essence of what they believe to be good primary teaching.

Being a geographer is effortless and an innate part of these individual's core identity. They have an intuitive desire to think geographically, asking questions about the world in which they live whilst also making spontaneous connections between people and places. They are positive about the benefits of the subject for primary pupils and suggest that everyone is a geographer already. For these primary teachers, geography is intrinsic and it is not possible to detach their identities as teachers of geography from their identities as primary teachers.

Geography permeates everything that these primary teachers do. It is an inherent part of both their personal and professional identities and as a result there is an integration between the two identities. These identities have been influenced by significant individuals and also by different communities of practice. The two identities: the subject identity and the general teacher identity also influence each other. The teachers' personal interests, likes and dislikes synthesise with what they perceive to be the nature and purpose of the subject. They have an interest not only in the physical world, but also in the way that humans interact with their environment. They live the subject, albeit often intuitively, in the way that they carry out their daily pursuits. At the same time being a geographer provides them with a professional identity.

6.5 Chapter Summary

Husserl (1931) conceived of phenomenology as an attitude, the adoption of which would lead to the objects of study appearing. The presentation tools used in this thesis are designed to introduce and then disclose to the reader the experience that each of these individuals has of being a geographer but also the essence of their collective experience. A creative approach to the presentation of the findings was employed in the writing of the play script using the words spoken by the research participants during the research interviews. The ultimate intention of presenting the findings in this way is to facilitate the reader with an opportunity to encounter the phenomenon, to bring them closer to it, so that the text speaks to the reader (van Manen, 2014) and enables them to recognise its significance (Nielson, 2000).

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION

Section 7.1 introduces the chapter. In Section 7.2 the concept of a fused identity is explored before the research findings are discussed in relation to the phenomenological presuppositions underpinning the research and the literature reviewed. Section 7.3 reviews the phenomenological approach and processes employed in this research and the chapter is summarised in Section 7.4.

7.1 Introduction to the chapter

This phenomenologically-inspired research has uncovered that the participants' lived experience of geography manifests itself in a fused identity, whereby the individual's subject identity synthesises with, and complements, their professional identity as a primary teacher. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is concerned with discussing the research findings. The section begins with a narrative for the concept of a fused identity described in Chapter 6. Following this, further insight is provided by analysing the findings in relation to some of the phenomenological presuppositions outlined in the methodology, and then the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Some opportunities for extending the research are identified, and the ideas presented provide a foreword to a discussion of the significance and contribution of the research findings outlined in Chapter 8.

The second section of the chapter discusses and reviews the use of a phenomenologically-inspired methodology. Consideration is given to how the use of this approach facilitated the aims of the research being achieved and its practical application; limitations of the research are discussed. The focus of a phenomenological inquiry is on individual's experience in relation to a chosen phenomenon, with the aim of gaining insight into an individual's perceptions and understandings. Because the central question to be answered in a phenomenological study is 'what is it like to experience this?', I have chosen to conclude the chapter with a reflection of my own lived experience of undertaking the research.

7.2 The concept of a fused identity

The concept of a fused identity emerged from undertaking an empirical investigation which involved asking a range of questions of the participants about their experiences with geography (RQ1), the influences on the relationship that they have with this subject (RQ2) and how this relationship impacts on, and relates to these individuals' identities as primary school teachers (RQ3).

In order for participants to answer my questions about their subject identity, they needed to reflect on their professional identity and give meaning to their individual narratives about 'being in the world'. There is a correlation here between the concept of a fused identity and the notion of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962). *Dasein* is central to the notion of interpretative phenomenology, as introduced in Chapter 3, and which contends that an individual cannot detach themselves from the world in which they live. Phenomenological research involves exploring the ontic qualities of the existence of *Dasein* through empirical investigation. *Dasein* does not describe how someone is, nor is it something that an individual has, rather it is something that continual lived experiences create (Langdridge, 2007). Geography is significant to each of these participants and is apparent in these teachers' personal lives: Millie talked about the way she has chosen holiday destinations based on the geography that she has been teaching. Another example is given by Tabitha, who describes using her geographical thinking to help her orientate herself when arriving in a new place. Tabitha also talks about being a geographer and the way this influences practical decisions such as choices about routes to travel along. For Wendy, there is connection between her enthusiasm and passion for geography and the way that this connection invokes in her feelings of awe and wonder about the world in which she lives; her appreciation of being in the world is connected to her relationship with geography.

The concept of a fused identity is evidence of the result of the process of identity developing from the process of social experience, the relationship that an individual has to that process, and to other individuals within the process (Mead, 1934). The teachers surveyed in this research 'live' their experience of geography. Geography forms part of their social experiences beyond their work as primary teachers. They enjoy interacting with the physical environment around them. Grace talks about taking notice of the world around her when walking and Hilary talks about the way that being outdoors has featured in her family life, both in the past and the present. This research observes that the layers to an individual's identity, which Taylor (1989) suggests involves the experiencing of events, the taking part in events and the reflecting on events and experiences are not separate in these teachers. Not only do these different elements inform each other as advocated by Taylor (1989), they also meld and marry together into a fused identity.

The enactment of the participant's relationships with geography, connects with the general theories of identity posited in Chapter 2. Millie talks extensively about the external awards that her school has been awarded for geography under her leadership, evidencing the theory

put forward by Garfinkel (1967) which aligns identity with practical achievement and Giddens' theory about what individuals make of themselves (1991). Millie perceives the achievement of these awards as affirming her status of being a geographer. Wendy is another participant who identifies with being a geographer because of the external recognition that she has received through working with a geography subject association.

The fused identity observed in these primary teachers is not measureable in the same way that aspects of a teacher's practice are measured by, for example the Teachers' Standards used in English schools (DfE, 2012). Nevertheless, the evidence from this research suggests that it is a significant and beneficial feature of the participants' overall identity as teachers, and that it is important to share this notion with the education community.

The fusing together of different aspects of their identities as primary class teachers and geography subject enthusiasts occurs intuitively in the participants. They see geography as more than a subject on the curriculum to be taught; they see it as a part of their individual and professional teacher identity. For Hilary, Millie, and Tabitha, the depth of this connection to the subject is deeply rooted in their childhood experiences, in their daily lives, and as a result of their training in the subject. Grace and Wendy also demonstrate a fused identity and have a strong connection to geography; this developed at a later stage in their careers as a result of encounters with colleagues who were advocates and enthusiasts for the subject. These differences and concurrences between the participants are an example of how the concept of a fused identity is one which can develop within teachers who do not start with strong connections to individual subjects; this would be beneficial to recognise as part of initial and on-going teacher training.

The three identified shared essential elements: a fusion of personal and professional life, a personal belief and commitment to geography with strong subject pedagogy, and a clear articulation of individual primary pedagogy, interact and complement each other as illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Personal beliefs and
commitment to geography
and primary geography pedagogy

The essence of
Primary Teacher
Geography Identity:
A Fused Identity

Articulation of
primary pedagogy

Fusion of personal and
professional life
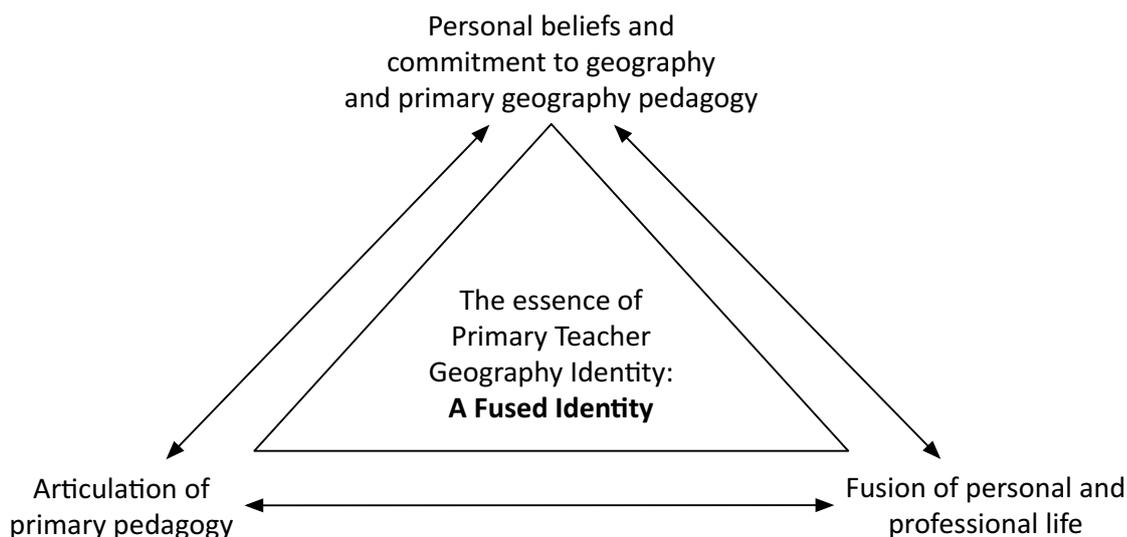
Figure 7.1: The essence of primary geography teacher identity: a fused identity.

At the start of Chapter 2, an observation by Lawler was referenced, that 'more or less everyone knows more or less what it [identity] means and yet its precise definition proves slippery' (Lawler, 2008:1). The concept of a fused identity was not obvious to me, either when meeting the participants initially or when considering my place as the researcher and a participant at the start of the research process; the concept only came to be uncovered after a lengthy interview and analysis process. Whilst it could be argued that because the notion was so embedded within the identities of the participants, that it is irrelevant or of little significance, the opposite view can also be argued. Drawing on elements of their subject identity instinctively enables these primary teachers to synthesise this subject identity with, and augment their identity as primary teachers. The teachers surveyed indicated that they use aspects of their subject identity such as a learning through enquiry and using the outdoors, to steer how they teach other curriculum subjects. The enthusiasm the participants show for geography imbues their work in other areas, sometimes providing inspiration. Millie gives an example of teaching an English lesson using a text about dinosaurs and how when the subject of continents came up, she immediately got out her globe and "ended up having half a geography lesson". There is no tension between these teacher's belief that geography should be taught as a discrete subject on the primary curriculum but also that it can be used as a vehicle to teach and enhance understanding in other subject areas and may sometimes be taught as un unintentional part of another lesson.

The concept of a fused identity is notional and there are parallels with the concept of 'presence in the classroom' and what Faber (2008) calls, the condition of 'being present.'

> Without presence, teachers are like guides in a theme park who tell the same joke a
> dozen times a day. We're there, but we're not there. With presence, teaching lives; it
> may or may not be good teaching, but its alive. (Faber, 2008:215)

Teachers who have classroom presence are confident and able to hold the attention of pupils,
engage them in tasks and manage the many demands that classroom teaching involves.
However, in the same way that the concept of a fused identity cannot be ticked off against a
list of required standards, neither can the attribute of classroom presence. This observation
suggests that there is more to teaching than those requirements which are inspected and
judged against external prescribed criteria. This is significant because in the same way that
teacher trainers will talk to trainees about the importance of classroom presence, the concept
of a fused identity could be used as a cue for teachers to prompt reflection on their own
identities for each of their taught subjects. Furthermore, links between the two notions of a
fused identity and classroom presence can be made apparent. Some would argue that you
cannot create classroom presence, you can only refine it (Oxtoby, 2016). It may be the case
that the same applies to the notion of a fused identity; some teachers will have strong
connections to subjects, either from childhood or those which develop later in their career;
some primary teachers may never make strong connections to each of the subjects that they
teach, but this does not negate an awareness of such connections.

Whilst there seem then to be benefits of exploring the idea of a fused identity with teachers, a
complication identified in relation to classroom presence by Faber (2008) should be noted.
Faber highlights that 'if we start trying too hard, mightn't we end up with something
equivalent to that spray-on enthusiasm that some teachers rely on and that is so very far from
the real thing' (Faber, 2008:218). The fused identity identified in this research was neither
overt nor obvious: it was intuitive and innate. The participants talked with ease about their
geographical experiences, the influences on these and how their subject identity entwined and
merged with their identity as primary teachers. Each of them described the sense of purpose
that they had for their geography teaching, outlining how the subject contributed to and
enhanced their pupils' overall education. Participants talked about the way in which they
carefully plan creative geography lessons, using their pedagogical insight, but also how they
improvise and take available opportunities.

The participants in this research exuded confidence and were secure in their knowledge and
pedagogy; they were also determined to teach geography despite increasing pressures on
their time in the classroom and the increased requirements for them to teach elements of the

English and mathematics curriculum. Faber (2008) suggests that some teachers may at times be lacking in classroom presence simply because they are overworked. It could be argued that primary teachers who are not as confident or enthusiastic about geography as the participants in this research will be less likely to make that extra effort with the subject, bringing it to life for their pupils and leading them towards lived experience of the subject. However, if teachers are made aware of the significance of their relationships as primary practitioners to different curriculum areas, and how they can bring their enthusiasm for different subjects to the teaching of other curriculum areas, they may learn to use their subject enthusiasm to enhance their overall teaching. Classroom presence requires confidence, and the participants in this research are confident in their subject identity. It may be that the notions of classroom presence and fused identity are connected, rather than just similar, as the participants' subject identity is one of the influences on their identity as confident classroom teachers.

The remainder of this section of the chapter discusses the findings in relation to the presuppositions of the methodology and aspects of the literature reviewed; the significance and contribution of the concept of a fused identity discussed here are further explored in Chapter 8.

7.2.1 Connections from the research findings to the presuppositions of phenomenology

Chapter 3 expounded the presuppositions of phenomenology and drew attention to the importance of essence and intentionality as phenomenological concepts. This section of the thesis considers the research findings in relation to these concepts.

Phenomenology aims to uncover the essence of the phenomenon being investigated. It 'can be described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of that phenomenon' (van Manen, 1990:10). The on-going process of eidetic intuition that phenomenologists engage in as they reduce the data to uncover the internal meaning is, van Manen (1990) suggests, about the researcher uncovering the essence of the experience rather than an accurate description. This research has uncovered that collectively, the participants: have a broad understanding of the nature and purpose of geography as a school curriculum subject, value outdoor learning and see this as a vital part of geography, and use geography as vehicle to teach other subjects. However, from the perspective of a researcher employing a phenomenologically-inspired methodology, these are not the most significant discoveries.

Phenomenological theorists posit there are certain essential features of the lifeworld or experience (Finlay, 2012). The task of the phenomenological researcher is to bring out these dimensions through their analysis of the data. This research identifies the essence of the experience with geography and its relationship to the formation of participants' subject identity. The essence of the collective experience is that participants are *enthusiastic* about geography and *confident* in being termed geographers within their respective contexts. They are *determined* to teach the subject to a high standard despite increasing pressures on their time; each of them is *creative* and *resourceful* in the way that they bring their subject pedagogy to their primary teacher pedagogy, and then amalgamate these. Each of the participants has a clearly defined pedagogy with children at the centre of the learning process. They also have a stipulated subject pedagogy for geography based on children learning about people and places through enquiry and from experience. The participant teachers *fuse* these two pedagogies: this *fusion* is the ultimate essence of the experience investigated. Van Manen suggests that 'the essence of an experience has been adequately described in language if the description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner' (van Manen, 1990:10).

The phenomenological concept of intentionality is underpinned by noematic and noetic correlations: it is the interrelatedness of these correlations that is examined by phenomenologists. The research examined each participant's intentional relationship with geography. Whilst each participant is a primary teacher, they are also enthusiastic about geography: they were recruited to the study because they have been identified as having a positive relationship with the subject. This positive relationship is the noematic correlate that they each share: it is the starting point for the research. The individual identity portraits describe the noetic correlates for each participant: it is the way participants experience this positive relationship with geography. Features of this correlation, extracted from the data include: subject confidence, a belief that geography should be taught as a vital part of the education that all children should receive, a consensus that geography should sometimes be taught as a discrete subject, and a determination to teach the subject according to personal subject-specific and generic pedagogical beliefs. The essential elements extricated from the data are the noetic correlates shared by participants. Whilst the positive relationship with geography (the noema) and the way in which this relationship is experienced (the noesis) are distinct concepts, they are inseparable: together they provide the phenomenological intentionality of the experience. 'The noetic is possible only through the possibilities provided by the noema, but the noetic provides the figuration of such possibilities' (Langdridge,

2007:17). In the case of this research, the phenomenological intentionality of the experience is characterised by the participants being clear about the nature and purpose of the subject, determined to teach it, using it as the starting or development point for teaching other subject areas and ultimately *fusing* their generic and subject pedagogy.

7.2.2 Connections from the research findings to the literature on teachers' subject identity

This research is concerned with investigating the under-researched area of primary teachers' geography subject identity. In this section of the thesis, some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is used to further develop meaning around themes that have emerged, and to provide a preliminary indication of how the research is significant and contributes to the existing body of knowledge. Highlighting parallels and considering similarities and differences between these and previous research findings provides a basis for considering the implications arising from this study and any limitations. The three shared essential elements that were identified from the lived experiences of the participants, and which underpin the concept of a fused identity are used to frame the discussion.

7.2.2.1 A fusion of personal and professional life

The first shared essential element identified was that of a fusion of personal and professional life. There are links here to the idea of primary and secondary socialization factors and the extent to which these are components of the participants' subject identities (Woodford, 2002; Kraay, 2012). There is evidence that the participants were exposed to and impacted on by several specifically geographical primary socialisation factors in their formative years. Some of the participants talked about relatives who shared stories of their travels and encouraged curiosity about the wider world. They also talked about concrete experiences with the outdoors as children, using these to illustrate their personal enjoyment of geography as a subject. These subject-orientated primary socialisation factors are augmented with secondary socialisation factors. These factors include seeking out additional subject instruction through attendance at CPD events, engagement with the LEA subject advisory service and personal involvement with subject associations. The contexts and communities of practice in which the participants work have influenced their subject identities (Wenger, 1998). Except for the school where Wendy was working at the time of the research, these contexts are described as supportive, with school senior management teams valuing geography and the work that the participants do to promote geography in their schools and institutions.

Kraay (2012) found that non-specialist teachers surveyed relied on primary socialisation factors when teaching music. By contrast, the teachers interviewed in this research are influenced by a combination of primary and secondary factors. Woodford (2002) suggests that if non-specialist teachers do not adopt an open and critical approach to the on-going development of their professional identity, then primary socialisation factors override secondary factors. The participants in this research value geography and have an open and critical approach to the development of their geographical subject identity. An example of this occurred during one of the interviews conducted with Wendy, who reflected on how her perception of geography has changed from when she was at school. She recalls that all she remembers from learning geography at school is "just horrible textbooks and charts". When asked about this experience compared to her current relationship with the subject, she comments that "I think I was just seeing geography in a completely different light and not realising that it just permeates everything we do".

The House of Commons Education Committee (2017) report indicates that the retention of new teachers entering the profession remains a significant challenge; notably, none of the participants in this research had less than ten years teaching experience: they had all followed a university or college based route into teaching. Having found evidence of the significance of subject identity to these individuals, it would be beneficial to conduct further research to explore how the age and experience of primary teachers relates to the presence and relative influence of primary and secondary socialisation factors in their relationships with different subjects. Another area for consideration is the increase in school-based initial teacher training routes, as highlighted by UCET (Nunn, 2016) and Brooks (2017). These reports express concern that these routes into teaching do not provide new teachers with opportunities to associate with peers and reflect on and compare aspects of pedagogy and practice. Results from research exploring the impact of primary and secondary socialisation factors for individuals who have selected one of these routes into teaching could be compared with these findings: it could be argued that individuals who select a school-based route will be more influenced by primary socialisation factors as they have fewer opportunities to be influenced by secondary factors such as input from Higher Education tutors.

The manifestation of the participants' identity as a fusion of personal and professional life, also links to the findings of the research conducted by Hargreaves and Marshall (2003). The focus of that research, undertaken within the field of music education, was on how teachers see themselves in relation to a subject. Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) make a distinction

between what they call 'identities in music' (IIM) and 'music in identity' (MII). The IIM definition describes the way in which individuals view themselves in relation to music in general terms, so as composer or performer and also in more specific terms, such as percussion player or jazz musician. Within the field of geography, the 'identity in geography' (IIG) definition could refer to identities such as academic geographer or primary or secondary geography teacher. More specific identities might relate to specific subject genre such as historical or physical geographers.

The MII definition describes how music as a subject forms part of an individual's self-image; Hargreaves and Marshall assert that 'the importance of the domain of music will vary considerably in the self-identities of different individuals according to their level of specialist interest or professional training' (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003:264). This research focused on the extent to which geography forms part of participants' overall identities and found that many aspects of the participant's lives linked to geography. The findings indicate that for the individual teachers surveyed, geography is a significant part of their lives. While these teachers might not be perceived by the wider geography community to have as strong a 'geography in identity' (GII) as perhaps academic geographers or fulltime geographers employed in jobs such as river or coastal management, they do have a strong subject identity which they use to further the development of the subject in the school context. Further research with larger numbers of primary teachers with connections to different subject areas, could provide evidence against which to compare the findings and draw conclusion as to how widespread these characteristics are amongst primary teachers.

7.2.3.2 Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher

The second theme to emerge from the research was that participants had clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy, including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher. Each of the participants is a confident primary teacher. Their practice, which they easily describe, exemplifies the complexity and breadth of their role (Eaude, 2012). They each use their understanding of child development and interpretations of educational theories of how children learn, combined with how they view the role of a teacher in terms of scaffolding and guiding pupils' learning. Millie details how she works with the teachers in her school, using her geographical subject knowledge and pedagogy, offering different levels of support depending on the needs of the individual teacher. She plans each of the geography units to be taught across the school, specifying lesson objectives, resources and ideas for assessment. She

then spends time with each colleague discussing how the units of work will be translated into individual lessons, and offers to team-teach geography lessons with less confident colleagues if they request it. This finding highlights the importance of having where possible an individual within a school who can provide this level of subject-specific support or at least access to an individual through a cluster grouping or connections to local secondary schools. For the individuals in this research, geography provides a conduit for employing their wider beliefs and views about primary pedagogy. These findings substantiate the claims by Tambayah (2006), that specific subjects can provide teachers with an avenue for developing a professional identity. There is also evidence that the primary teachers surveyed here use their subject identity as a professional compass (Brooks, 2016), but also that their identity as primary teachers, helps them navigate their journey as teachers. These teachers could be deemed to have a pedagogical compass which they use when teaching geography. The two aspects of their identity combine together to provide direction for their teaching and helps them to see opportunities for teaching geography in different contexts.

Each of the participants in this research took the view that it is important for primary teachers to be knowledgeable about what they were teaching, and that subject knowledge is an important part of what children are taught in primary school. The participants refer to this knowledge to different degrees and use different terminology to describe it. Hilary, Millie and Tabitha emphasise subject knowledge in their interview responses and use phrases like "core knowledge", referring to the importance of knowledge being "meaningful" and "contextualised". They give subject-specific examples of children being able to locate places and understand the processes at work in both the physical and human environment. Grace and Wendy acknowledge the place of subject knowledge in the primary curriculum, but give prominence to the "relevance" of geographical knowledge for children and its relationship to other subject area. Collectively, there was evidence that participants viewed the geographical knowledge that children brought with them to school as important, aligning with the argument proposed by Catling and Martin (2011).

7.2.3.3 Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject-pedagogy
The third theme to emerge from the data was a personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject pedagogy. Chapter 1 refers to the problems that besets the teaching of geography in primary schools and which have been referred to by Ofsted (2008, 2011) as well as prominent figures within this subject

community (Martin, 2013; Catling, 2015). The participants in this research presented themselves as confident in, and comfortable with their understanding of geography as a school subject. These findings contrast with the concerns highlighted by Martin (2013) that many teachers working in primary schools today are confused about the nature and purpose of school geography and do not understand its relevance. The primary teachers surveyed here use their confidence in the subject to make connections between geography and other areas of the primary curriculum. Hilary talks about how her timetable might say 'literacy' on it, but what she actually does in practice teach a geography lesson and then teach her literacy lesson through the geography, so for example the children might write poetry about observations they have made in and around the local area of the school. This way of working illustrates the type of approach which Catling (2017a) identifies as one of the characteristics of high-quality practice in geography and other humanities subjects in primary schools, noted by UK school inspectorates. These findings contrast with the inspection evidence cited by Bell (2005) and Ofsted (2008; 2011); they express concerns about primary teachers' insecurities relating to teaching the subject, indicating that this contributes to geography's poor status relative to other curriculum subjects. The 2016 Ofsted annual report highlights a concern that with the introduction of the new national curriculum in England in 2014, there has been an increased emphasis on literacy, which in some schools has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum. Geography, as one of the non-core subjects, is likely to have been negatively impacted by these changes.

Given that the criteria for participants' selection was that they were enthusiastic and positive about primary geography, it is unsurprising that these teachers are confident with the subject, but it is important to note that they do not all have an academic background in the subject. Wendy developed a love and enthusiasm for the subject after attending a CPD course and Grace openly admits that she hated geography at school but was drawn to the subject by an enthusiastic LEA advisor. The significance of these findings is that whilst it might be considered that having a positive personal experience of a subject at school might be an advantage, it is not a prerequisite to becoming a positive advocate and enthusiastic teacher of the subject. Teachers can come to understand, enjoy and ultimately become enthusiastic promoters of subjects if they are exposed to positive influences either during their initial teacher training or when qualified and as they develop in their teaching career.

The specific subject pedagogy that the participants describe as characterising their practice values active learning which involves pupils furthering their subject knowledge through

immersion in their immediate environment. Hilary exemplifies the concept of a fused identity when she chronicles how children "learn more through experiencing", and then goes on to describe how getting visitors in to talk to the children about aspects of the geography curriculum is useful, but how "it's not quite the same as getting the wellies out and going down to the brook". This hands-on approach to learning that each of the participants' advocates is tempered by an acknowledgement that there must be a purpose to the learning opportunities afforded to pupils. Grace illustrates this point when she cautions against teachers losing sight of the learning objectives saying, "you can make something exciting and whizzy and fab, and at the end of the day nobody really knew why they were doing it". This is indicative of the exacting approach the participants adopt when planning geographical experiences for pupils. Whilst they are adamant that primary-aged children should find learning fun, they are careful to stress the relevance and substance of the geography taught in primary schools, and how it can contribute to their pupils' overall development.

7.2.3 Connections from the research findings to theories of identity

This section of the thesis considers how the findings from this research relate to and build on the theories of identity posited in Chapter 2 (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Tajfel, 1978). It also compares and contrasts the research findings, to theories concerning identity formation (Beijard *et al.,* 2000; Gee, 2000-2001).

Wendy and Tabitha both use their geography subject identity to build their general teacher confidence. The recognition that each of these participants has received from external agencies for their subject-specific work has contributed to their individual self-image and confidence; Wendy described how her consultancy work has provided her with reassurance that she is doing a good job. Similarly, Tabitha describes geography as giving her a sought-after niche and confidence. These findings have parallels with the findings of Tajfel (1978) who explored the way in which individual's membership of specific groups contributes to their personal identity. Comparison with Tajfel's work (1978), conducted, within the field of psychology demonstrates how it can be valuable for those working within the field of education to be aware of, and to apply theories developed in other disciplines in order to inform educational theory and practice. The *group identity* that Wendy and Tabitha have experienced through being recognised by external agencies as geographers has complemented and strengthened their individual primary teacher identities.

Another point relating to the Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel (1978), concerns the hypothesis that those in certain groups (an in-group) may attempt to find negative aspects of

other groups (out groups) which they are not part of. Millie was particularly negative about history throughout the interviews, especially when comparing it to geography. Whilst she is not specifically disparaging about historians or those who have a strong interest in history, she unquestionably has little time for history as a subject. Most primary teachers in England are responsible for teaching all their pupils, all the subjects in the primary curriculum: this raises a question about Millie's teaching of history in comparison to geography. In an extension of the hypothesis proposed by Tajfel (1978), it might be argued that if Millie is as negative as she infers about history as a subject, she will not be able to teach it as effectively. In future research, it would be beneficial asking both qualified and trainee primary teachers, questions such as 'how do you perceive a primary geographer or scientist or historian?' This would enable an examination of how these teachers perceive their own different subject identities and a comparison of this across subject areas.

The evidence from this and similar research will contribute to any future debate about the place of specialists and generalists within primary schools (Alexander, 2010). It is possible that the pupils in the school where Millie works would benefit from a more flexible system, whereby Millie teaches more geography and a colleague with a more positive connection to history, teaches more of the history within and across the school. These ideas connect with the findings from research conducted into which teachers teach music in primary schools (Holden & Button, 2006). However, there are disadvantages to such a system including the potential de-skilling of primary teachers in certain subject areas and the curtailing of individual teacher development; furthermore, it may not always be practically possible because of primary school sizes, and the system's reliance on the presence of enthusiasts for different subjects in one school. A contrasting view is that all primary teachers should be prepared to teach all curriculum subjects effectively. The report into the preparation of pre-service teachers in primary physical education (Randall *et al.*, 2016), suggests that primary teachers in the ITE phase were willing to teach P.E. when on placement in school, but had little opportunity to do so. These findings were at odds with current government policy which currently favours the training of specialist teachers to teach primary P.E. alongside outsourced providers in the form of sports coaches (Randall *et al.*, 2016). Within the field of geography education, Catling (2017b) has identified in England that not all primary trainee teachers have opportunities to teach geography during school placements. The evidence from this research with primary teachers who profess an enthusiasm for geography, indicates that they are able to fuse their subject pedagogy with their general primary pedagogy. The question needs to be asked as to how can those primary teachers who do not have the same background and/or confidence to

teach geography be enthused to teach the subject. Further research might examine if these teachers would be as willing to teach geography as the trainees were to teach P.E. (Randall *et al.*, 2016), if they were given the opportunity to do so. If not, there should be investigation into what can be done to change this situation. The findings from this research indicate that the debate about specialists and generalists, and what appears to be a lack of flexibility in the current system (Alexander, 2010), should be revisited, particularly in light of shifts to a more knowledge-based curriculum.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978), focuses on the attachment relationship that individuals have to different groups, while Identity Theory (Stryker 1968; McCall & Simmons, 1978) discusses the salience of different identities that individuals hold and how these relate to one another. The focus in this theory is on the individual and how they perceive their identity. It is evident from this research that participants consider geography in primary schools to be as important as the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which are allocated more than half the teaching time in primary schools (Catling, 2017b). Each of them suggests that geography is a vehicle through which these subjects can be taught and often use geography as the starting point for their delivery of other subjects in their classrooms. This research sought to uncover individual teachers' experiences of geography and then reflect on how individuals construct their subject identities and how this relates to overall teacher identity. Each participant in this research identifies as a primary geography teacher and has a broad conception of geography. This subject-specific identity is not viewed as being separate to the individual's primary teacher identity; rather these identities are closely interwoven and each of the participants conceives of their subject identity being fused with their overall teacher identity. The idea that individual teachers have a fused identity contrasts with the notion of hierarchy in relation to identified salient roles (Bouji, 1978), and which is encapsulated in Identity Theory (Stryker, 1968; McCall & Simmons, 1978). The identities of the teachers surveyed here were complementary rather than hierarchical. This is the nature of their fused identity, which needs to be recognised and reflected on by those working in primary classrooms.

When considering the research findings in relation to the theory of teacher identity formation (Gee, 2000-2001) which allocates one of four types of identity to individuals: The Nature (N-identity), the Institutional Identity (I-Identity), the Discourse Identity (D-identity) and the Affinity Identity (A-Identity), as was surmised would be the case, the individuals in this research demonstrated a strong A-identity in the form of an affinity for geography. Wendy

describes geography as a "brilliant" subject and enthuses about how the subject "nurtures all those skills" that primary-aged pupils need to develop. Meanwhile, Tabitha describes a very personal connection to geography and how the school subject known as geography gave meaning to her interest in exploring the world from a young age, evidencing her fused identity. Additionally, the participants in this research, manifest a D-Identity demonstrating how they perceive they are viewed by colleagues and the LEA advisor to be geographers. This factor is evidenced by the individual's recruitment to the study, but also by the fact that for example, Hilary and Millie were appointed to their current positions by headteachers who were looking to strengthen their geography provision and knew these candidates were geography enthusiasts. Whilst Grace and Hilary's D-Identities are limited to immediate colleagues, Millie, Wendy and Tabitha all have a stronger D-Identity because of involvement with the subject association and the wider geographer community. Evidence from Grace's identity portrait, suggests that her D-Identity became stronger during the research, as she took time to reflect on her subject identity. As noted in Chapter 2, that there is sometimes a difference between the identity that a teacher thinks they are projecting and the identity that others perceive them to have. Grace is viewed by colleagues in the school where she coordinates foundation subjects as the geographer, and became more confident in perceiving herself in this role as the research progressed. If, as stated in Chapter 1, it is assumed that the result of a teacher having a positive relationship with a curriculum subject is that they can convey the subject content in such a way that is more meaningful to pupils and colleagues, then developing these subject-specific teacher identities would appear to be benefit both pupils and practitioners.

The research's findings support and make Beijaard et al.,'s (2000) ideas relevant to primary school teachers. Beijaard et al., (2000) posit that within the classroom, teachers combine their subject, pedagogical and didactical expertise. They found that many of the secondary teachers they surveyed, originally saw themselves as subject experts; however, as they became more experienced, they shifted their professional identities towards being experts who balanced subject, didactical and pedagogical expertise: the fused identity identified in these primary teachers is similar. The teachers surveyed in the research were all experienced primary teachers. None had taught in secondary schools, but they still had a strong subject identity and fused this with their other areas of expertise. This confirms Brooks' (2007) proposal that individual teachers recognise that their subject expertise fits synoptically into a broader conception of teaching. It is particularly significant that these findings are the same for the primary teachers. It could have been speculated, that due to differences in initial training and time spent teaching a specific subject in the classroom, that the differences between primary

and secondary school teachers would have been more distinct. Further research in this area with larger groups of teachers would provide more information about this issue.

Notwithstanding these interpretations of the findings, a note of caution must be expressed as to how indicative of the current teaching primary teaching population they are. Each of the participants was an experienced teacher and communicated considerable concern about new entrants to the profession. They cited changes to training routes and increased time pressures in school as reasons for new teachers not seeming to have passion or enthusiasm for any one curriculum subject. They saw them as becoming general primary practitioners who delivered what was required without personal investment in the content. These concerns are illustrated by comments made by Hilary who, when asked about the subject identities of teachers coming into the profession, replied "it sounds awfully old fashioned, but you don't see the passion for it, you just see the delivery and everything is slotted into boxes". Having established the importance of the concept of a fused identity, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with recently qualified teachers in order to compare the results, but also to conduct a longitudinal enquiry with larger numbers of teachers, exploring how primary teachers' subject identities change in relation to their overall teacher identity, in order to investigate in more detail the findings of Beijard *et al*., (2000) who suggest that, over time, subject identities are less significant for school teachers.

7.2.4 Section Summary

This research had two main purposes. Firstly, to explore, compare and analyse critically the constructs of geography held by a sample of primary teachers by examining their experiences of the subject; this was achieved by employing a phenomenologically-inspired methodology in an investigation framed by the three research questions. The second aim of the research was to use a methodological approach in order to undertake a critical evaluation of the relationships between subject knowledge, aspects of pedagogy and teacher's subject identity, with a view to identifying and evaluating a theoretical framework that may be applied to other subjects and or aspects of teacher's identity. The theoretical framework identified in the research is the concept of a fused identity; this section of the thesis has expanded on the notion of a fused identity and has drawn comparisons with the idea of classroom presence. Similar to the concept of classroom presence which is difficult to define (Hufford, 2014), the concept of a fused identity cannot be measured like a teacher's ability to manage behaviour or differentiate learning. It is a theoretical concept which emerged from the uncovering the following in each of the participants: a fusion of personal and professional life, a personal

belief and commitment to geography with strong subject pedagogy, and a clear articulation of individual primary pedagogy. These inter-relate and merge to produce the fused identity, whereby the individual teacher's subject and primary teacher identities augment each other. It is contended that a characteristic of a fused identity is subject and pedagogical confidence, both of which are characteristics of classroom presence, indicating that there are possibly more than just similarities between the two concepts and that they may be linked.

The three essential elements identified have also been discussed in relation to some of the presuppositions of phenomenology, with the elements and the concept of a fused identity emanating from an exploration of the intentional relationship that each participant has with geography.

Some suggestions for future research which would build on the ideas outlined are identified in this section. These include a consideration of how the increasing number of school-based routes into teaching, which involve less subject-specific elements, impact on the relationships that primary teachers have with different subject areas and how these relationships then relate to the teacher's overall identity. Other research suggested, includes examining primary teacher's relationships with a variety of subjects including those in which they have a range of experience and revisiting the place of specialist and non-specialist teachers in primary schools. The remainder of this chapter discusses and reviews the use of a phenomenologically-inspired methodology for the research, building on some of the points introduced in Chapter 3.

7.3 A review of employing a phenomenologically-inspired research methodology

Chapter 1 outlined how when choosing which approach to adopt for this research, consideration was given to previous research conducted using participants' autobiographies and subsequent narrative analysis. The focus on narrative analysis is on how and why individuals choose specific language and symbols to represent something about themselves. Researchers, undertaking research using narratives are concerned with the chain of experiences that an individual has and how these are then woven into a narrative. The focus is on the manner in which people make sense of their experience by encoding it within a narrative. In contrast, phenomenology is concerned with examining and uncovering the meaning of experience. Individuals are instrumental to uncovering the meaning of experience but through the process of phenomenological reduction, the person is detached from the experience so the experience is the focal point. This research used a series of interview

questions to elicit information from each of the participants to uncover their lived experiences of geography. The research aimed to 'get under the skin' of each individual's relationship with geography, so a phenomenologically-inspired methodology was chosen over a narrative approach: it would provide the necessary depth of information about each individual. However, it should be noted that there are overlaps between the two methodologies; Smith *et al*., (2009) draw on narratives when using the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach.

Whilst phenomenology has been used within an educational context by researchers such as van Manen (1990; 2014) and Finlay (2009; 2012), it is more widely associated with psychology and health care. This research demonstrates that where the aim of research is to acquire in-depth understanding of an educational experience, phenomenology possibly provides a nuanced approach to exposing the meaning behind everyday teacher practice. Henriksson and Friesen (2012) claim that the increased interest shown by education scholars in the late 20th century, in using phenomenology as a research approach, accompanies a greater appreciation for inductive research and with this, everyday concerns in the spheres of public and professional practice.

> Phenomenology can be said to have evolved into a relatively mature empirical science, capable of being attuned to the methodological needs associated with each specific discipline in question. These individual disciplinary domains provide fertile soil for methodological variations associated with phenomenology and hermeneutics (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012:3).

From my own perspective as a researcher, using a phenomenologically-inspired methodology provided both limitations and rewards. My position as a participant, discussed in Chapter 3, was an additional consideration, although I would support Finlay's view, that 'it is precisely the realization of the intersubjective interconnectedness between researcher and researched that characterises phenomenology' (Finlay, 2012:24). Beyond the practical decisions made, which are outlined in Chapter 3, I found it useful to follow Finlay's advice to 'shift back and forth, focusing on the personal assumptions and then returning to looking at participants' experiences in a fresh way' (Finlay, 2012:25). By adopting this attitude throughout the research process, I was able to exploit my own preunderstandings of being a geographer and use them reflexively as a source of insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Finlay, 2012). My experience of teaching geography in a primary school and having a working knowledge of the different perceptions that colleagues have of the subject, the often-limited

training colleagues have had, and the status of the subject relative to core subjects, helped me consider the participants' experiences.

The theory of phenomenology, proposed by Husserl (1931), is complex and this is compounded by the many derivations of the original ideas. These include those promoted by Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Ricoeur (1981). Moustakas (1994) significantly translates the theories of phenomenology into a practical process: it provides a framework for research in the field. In the case of this research, the translating of the phenomenological process into a series of charts, (Figures 1.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3) mapped the practical steps of the research process against the stages in the phenomenological process, facilitating the synthesis of the theory and practice and guiding the research. Beyond these general reflections on the research process, it is beneficial to reflect on some of the specific aspects of the process. These include: the research questions, the research sample, the experience of interviewing, and the process of analysis and subsequent presentation of findings. As outlined in Chapter 3, the use of personal journals and the construction of mind maps was made optional for the participants; although they provided supplementary data for some of the participants and were used to construct their individual identity portraits because they were not compulsory, they are not evaluated here. The review is intended to provide future researchers considering the adoption of a phenomenological approach, with points for consideration.

7.3.1 The research questions

Each stage of this research was framed by the three research questions, introduced in Chapter 1, and referred to throughout the thesis. These were formulated in-line with the principles of phenomenology.

1 What are these participants' experiences with and of geography?
2 What constructs of geography do these primary geography teachers hold and what influences these constructs?
3 How do these subject-specific constructs relate to the overall identity of each of these primary teachers?

The research questions were a core component of the research providing for a dual level of investigation, first exploring the individual's experiences of geography (RQ1), then further probing the influences on these experiences (RQ2), and finally the relationship between these subject-specific experiences and these individual's teacher identities (RQ3). Collectively, the

use of the questions enabled the collection of data which provided the foundations for the individual and combined descriptions of the experience presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

The open-endedness of the questions used, utilising exploratory verbs, followed Cresswell's advice (2009), that research questions should align with the parameters with the overall research approach adopted. The research did not seek the provision of straightforward answers, but provided the basis from which to extract clarity of meaning for the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon explored (Hycner, 1985). They were used as a starting point when developing the interview questions to enable the participants to give answers which aided in understanding of the investigation's focus. Thomas (2013) notes that the most common problems with research questions is that they are too broad, that there is no clear way to answer them or that they do not enable you to get the required information. Phenomenology is a process of discovery with no defined end point which negates the challenge of the research questions not enabling the researcher to get the information required. The research questions used in phenomenological studies are deliberately broad because they look to determine the lived experiences of participants in relation to a specific phenomenon. In this regard, the research questions used in this study appeared to be suitable in that they enabled participants to describe and reflect upon their experiences of geography in and beyond their working environment, to express their sense of geography and what influences their understanding of the subject, and to show how their sense of geography affects their identity as primary teachers and how it inter-relates with their perspectives on pedagogy for effective primary education.

7.3.2 The research sample

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of working with a small homogenous sample were explored in Chapter 3, but in evaluating the use of a phenomenological methodology, it is useful to further consider this aspect of the research. Whilst the small purposeful sample provided in-depth information, one of the challenges associated with this type of research is that in seeking to gain an insight into the individual, there can be a lack of reproducibility and applicability.

The very select and specific sample recruited to this research needs to be acknowledged as a limitation. The participants of this study were considered by the LEA advisor/subject-specific inspector to be effective teachers and enthusiastic advocates of geography. This research is therefore not inclusive of those primary teachers who are not enthusiasts for the subject or those who are enthusiasts but have not been identified as good teachers by the LEA advisor. It

does not give voice to less experienced teachers. This research sample is limited to a small geographical area in Southern England, where teachers working in school still benefit from the services of a subject-specific advisor, unlike many other parts of the UK. Primary teachers working in other parts of the country or with fewer years teaching experience might have a different experience. However, while the sample for this research was purposely homogenous, there were differences in terms of the participant's background, length of service in teaching and position held at the time of the data collection. So, while the participants were selected because they were perceived to share a common experience, there were clear differences in the way in which these participants had arrived at their current position. While the findings apply directly to those participants surveyed, they highlight significant aspects of the lifeworlds of these teachers of primary geography and this is noteworthy. Building on the observation made in Chapter 1, the intention of a phenomenological study is to present current understanding about a phenomenon and to increase awareness but also to prompt further discussion, foster personal reflection, and provide insights for additional research (van Manen, 1990). The research has facilitated an opportunity to provide an insider's perspective into how these participants experience geography and to explore the influences, contexts and meanings associated with these with a view to informing those working in the field of geography education and primary education. The findings provide information about the under-researched phenomenon of primary teachers' subject experience and contribute to the existing body of evidence about primary teachers' subject identity. They complement a related small-scale study with secondary geography teachers (Brooks, 2007, 2016). Additionally, they confirm Nielson's observation (2000), that one of the aims of phenomenological studies is to clarify phenomena and provide descriptions and explanations.

7.3.3 The research interviews

There is a particular balance to be achieved in phenomenological research interviews. Van Manen (1990) posits that, due to the emergent nature of phenomenological studies, it is difficult to prewrite a set list if questions that prompt participants to reflect on why they have done what they have done. To negate this challenge, van Manen (1990) suggests that researchers ask questions of participants that are reflective in nature and drive participants to think of their experiences with the phenomenon.

Furthermore, van Manen (2014), states that it is important that phenomenological researchers ensure that once phenomenological questions are formulated, they remain at the centre of the enquiry from beginning to end. As outlined in Section 7.3.1, the research questions

ensured consistency for this research. These questions were used to frame each stage of the phenomenological process (Moustakas, 1994). When planning each of the interview schedules (Appendix 2), I returned to the research questions, to ensure that each of the questions posed in the interviews was contributing to answering these questions.

During each interview, I used a variety of techniques to elicit information from the participants about their experiences (van Manen, 1990). These included: an introductory question such as the first question in interview 1, additional questions such as those recorded in red (Appendix 2) alongside the main questions, pausing during the interviews while participants collected their thoughts and repeating questions both within interviews and across the different interview rounds. On the subject of pausing, van Manen (1990) comments that patience and silence can often elicit more detail whilst repeating questions can allow interviewees to think more deeply. This view is supported by Moustakas (1994) who advises that the interviewer can control the extent that they influence or lead interviewees during the interview process by speaking less and listening more.

I increased my own expertise in using phenomenological methods during the research process, particularly with regards to what was being asked during the interviews about experience and perception of experience. I was initially anxious that, as the interviewer, I was straying away from probing the participants' lived experience and digressing into their perceptions. However, over the course of the research process, I came to recognise that the perceptions that the participants had of their lived experiences of geography was part of the of the composite portrait of their subject identity that the research was seeking to expose. Any digressions were subsequently negated by considering all the answers from each of the interviews together and reducing the data to find the essence of the experiences. The experience described here demonstrates the adoption of a phenomenological attitude (van Manen, 1990; Finlay, 2012), whereby the researcher is open to the phenomenon as it is revealed to them.

7.3.4 Research Analysis and presentation of findings

The process of analysing data used the principles of phenomenology. When looking at the original transcripts, it was sometimes challenging to select and isolate the statements for analysis. This was only possible by continually revisiting the data in between returning to the question "What are these participants' experiences of geography?" and, in this case, being a part-time researcher was advantageous. The nature of my work schedule meant that I would look at the data for an intensive period, then have to leave it before returning to it at a later date. These enforced breaks sometimes acted as a 'refresher' and I was able to gain additional

and new insight into the data when I returned to it. However, this sometimes meant that I had to spend time when I returned to the data re-immersing myself in the emerging findings to ensure continuity.

As each participant's data was examined and a picture of each individual was formed, it was necessary to return to the original data to check that no statements were excluded: this helped build the picture of experience. Once themes started to emerge from the data, it was tempting to start to fit the statements being analysed into previously identified themes rather than consider if these were evidence of the same or additional themes. In order to prevent this from happening, only a small amount of data was analysed at any one time. This replicates the ideas posited in Chapter 3 of the 'the to and fro' […] in which like dance one is carried away to another realm' (Langdridge, 2007:49). Over time, in the same way that you peel back the layers of an onion to reveal the core, the process of reducing the data to the essence of the phenomenon was successful. The horizons that make up each participant's experience were not obvious when conducting the interviews. It was only through the methodical process of reducing the data that these themes emerged and the essential elements shared between participants were revealed. The ultimate essence of experience uncovered in this research, that of a fused identity, only became clear to me during the latter stages of the process.

As with other types of qualitative research, limitations are present when the researcher is central to the interpretative process (Flick, 2009) and, while the process of peer-checking outlined in Chapter 3 facilitated the reduction of these limitations, there are default fundamental limitations to the exacting interpretations of the participants' lived experiences and perceptions in phenomenological studies. Although my own experience of geography may have strengthened the interpretation process by providing me with prior knowledge about some aspects of the discussion, my commitment to geography education and to primary education meant that despite my best efforts, it was not always possible to bracket my pre-understandings. My own experience of geography may have affected the interpretation and analysis of findings in this study. I feel that the potential challenges in terms of researcher bias were negated by using the highly-prescribed steps in the phenomenological process outlined in Chapter 3.

In terms of presenting the findings from this research, I would conclude that researchers undertaking phenomenological research need to adopt a binary approach. On the one hand, there is the structured nature of the process, which facilitates academic rigour, and which is suited to researchers who are methodical. This is at odds with phenomenology requiring the

researcher to be creative, particularly with regards to the presentation of findings (van Manen, 2014). The opportunity to think imaginatively about the presentation of the findings was unexpected and not something that I planned at the start of the research process. Having collected the data and started to analyse it, I looked for a format for presenting the findings, beyond straightforward descriptions of the experiences examined; I aimed to draw the reader closer to the experiences being described, whilst giving faithful accounts of the experiences of the phenomenon. I considered writing each of the descriptions in the form of poetry but ultimately, I wanted to bring the participants' experiences to life. In wanting to privilege academic rigour, I determined to use the participants' actual words and this led me to present the findings as a play script. Additionally, this enabled me to give the reader a sense of each participant through the development of each of the characters by the adding detailed stage directions and also a sense of the collective lived experience of the sample. For example, my experience of Hilary through the course of the interviews was that she visibly projected her enthusiasm for geography through the use of extensive hand gestures so these were incorporated into the stage directions given.

In light of undertaking a dual role in this research, as participant and researcher, the next section of this chapter considers my lived experience of each of these roles.

7.3.5 The researcher's lived experience

Conducting this phenomenologically-inspired research has enabled me to further explore my own relationship with geography. The use of the prescribed methods associated with the approach, whereby the data I provided via my interviews was reduced to the essential meanings, provided me with the opportunity to unpeel the layers of my own subject identity. I have come to realise that, like my fellow participants, my identity as a geographer is fused with my identity as a primary teacher and now as a teacher educator. Some of my personal traits, such as a love of landscapes which inspire in me a sense of awe and wonder and an interest in how people are connected to the world, are fused with geography as a subject. 'Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills provide the framework and approaches that explain how the Earth's features at different scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time' (DfE, 2013b). I view geography as being about both the stage (the Earth) on which we as humans perform, but also the interactions that take place on that stage. I have also come to realise that I implicitly use aspects of my geography identity fused with my general identity as a teacher. I have a real interest in and passion for geography as a subject and I now recognise that this enthusiasm and belief in the subject has underpinned much of the other work that I

did latterly as a primary teacher and that I do now as a primary teacher educator. There are elements of my identity as a geographer such as a positive connection to the outdoors, an interest in physical processes, which fuse with elements of my teacher identity such as a firm belief that all knowledge needs to be contextualised and made relevant to pupils. Before undertaking this research, I was not aware of how entwined my different identities were: rather, I saw them as being compartmentalised. This fusion of my identities was not initially obvious to me. I believe I have classroom presence, but during the course of this research I have come to realise that I use my different identities to enhance each other and provide me with specific subject confidence. This then contributes to my presence in the classroom when I am teaching. For subjects that I am less confident in teaching, I draw on my geographical subject confidence to augment my confidence in other subject areas. For example, I find it easy to devise and ask geographical questions and provide relevant examples when explaining geographical concepts. I have identified that I draw on these techniques when trying to explain concepts in other curriculum subjects such as mathematics so I might use laying turf or patio slabs as an example when teaching about the concept of area.

Through exploring, analysing and reflecting on the identities of the other participants who share my interest in geography, I have come to better understand my own relationship with the subject. As a primary teacher who taught all subjects on the primary curriculum, and now as a teacher educator preparing new primary teachers to enter the profession, I am left with questions about my connection to other subjects, particularly those which I am not so confident in teaching. In the future, I would like to understand more about these relationships as I believe that this would make me a better teacher. Understanding the relationships that we have with different subjects would seem to be vitally important to those working in the field of primary education. Having a penchant for a subject should not be a problem, improving understanding and awareness of why primary teachers feel differently about different subjects, I contend, could improve an individual teacher's personal and professional development and inform their practice.

As a participant, I took time out from my schedule as a teacher, and became a student on those occasions when I was interviewed by my colleague and on one occasion, by one of my supervisors. At times, I found it difficult to step outside of my role as researcher, but it became easier as over the course of the interviews, my study of the phenomenological process evolved and I came to understand the necessity of putting aside my own thoughts and preconceptions about geography. I relaxed into the process and saw the value of articulating my thoughts in

order to be able to position myself more objectively when considering the other participant's responses to my questions. The disadvantage to being so involved in the study, was that such a personal investment of time and emotion was at times overwhelming. Initially I found it uncomfortable to realise how entwined my identities were and felt a sense of growing concern at how interlinked aspects of my identity were. I questioned whether or not it was appropriate for me as a primary teacher, responsible for teaching all areas of the curriculum, to have felt such a strong connection to one subject. As I detached myself from my own data and set about analysing the other participant's data, I came to feel reassured that other primary teachers had similar identity profiles to my own and that having a strong connection to one subject was beneficial; like my fellow participants, I use my enthusiasm for this one area of the curriculum to ameliorate my teaching of other areas. Again, I benefited in this instance from being a part-time student and being able to take time out from the research for reflection. This could be seen as a disadvantage to including oneself as a subject in empirical research; nevertheless, I would conclude that my inclusion in the research was beneficial to me personally and professionally, and that it serves as an illustration for future researchers to consider of the potential advantages and disadvantages of taking both these roles. Ultimately, the undertaking of the research enabled me to reflect on my current identity as a teacher educator and how my professional identity has evolved throughout my career. The process of and product of this personal reflection, combined with reflecting on the collective findings has influenced my current practice and is outlined in Chapter 8.

As a researcher, I felt that I benefited professionally from the experience of working with the participant teachers, because of the value that they placed on the research, and because of my own growing confidence in the significance of the work being undertaken. The participants were very happy to talk to me and welcomed each stage of the research process. I viewed the experience as a series of professional conversations with colleagues who had mutual interests. Although, it was sometimes the case that I arrived in school to talk to these teachers when they were obviously busy, none of them cancelled any of the interviews and I never felt that I was imposing on their time. Rather I felt that I was facilitating a welcomed distraction from other aspects of their work, and providing an opportunity for them to talk about a subject that they were passionate about and committed to. While sometimes I had to, as indicated, repeat interview questions or use supplementary questions in order to probe the nature of their experiences with geography, none of these professional conversations felt forced. This observation suggests that the research process was one of mutual discovery (Moustakas, 1994). We enjoyed each other's company and discovered shared beliefs and philosophies; I

valued the participants' humility in relation to their own practice. Additionally, I was inspired by their genuine desire to keep trying to improve their own practice and that of their colleagues. We shared a journey together, with the result that we came to know not only ourselves but also each other in a professional context in the process.

In conclusion, at the outset I found it challenging that the findings from this research could not be measured in the same way that other aspects of teaching can. There was no numerical scale or tick list against which to record the findings. There were times when I wanted to be able to provide definite answers to the questions that I had posed, despite being aware that this is not what is expected of phenomenological research. It took me a while to 'let go' of this desire and realise that it was valid and appropriate to have concluded that my research had uncovered the abstract and slightly fuzzy (Bassey, 2001), but nonetheless significant notion of a fused identity.

7.3.6 Section Summary

Phenomenology is a complex and time-consuming research approach, but ultimately it provides a way of researching the unique lifeworlds of individuals and uncovering some of the deep-seated meanings behind these experiences. Despite these complications, the advantage of phenomenology is that it can be adapted so that the unique ontological and epistemological underpinnings of any one piece of research can be incorporated. Notwithstanding the limitations, the use of phenomenology as a methodology enabled me to explore and further my understanding of the participants' experiences of geography and consider this in relation to these individuals' overall identities as primary teachers. It also provided me, as the researcher and a participant in the research, with an opportunity to explore my own experiences of the chosen phenomenon which informed my own personal and professional development.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the research findings in relation to the literature reviewed and some of the presuppositions of the methodological approach adopted. This discussion has foregrounded the discussion in Chapter 8 which considers the significance and contribution of the research and details the implications for practice that have arisen. Additionally, a review of the phenomenological methodology employed for the research has highlighted some of its associated advantages and challenges associated with this approach. Through conducting the research, I have come to appreciate the contributions and value of phenomenological research in the field of geography education and education more widely. 'Phenomenology is primarily a philosophic *method for questioning*, not a method for answering or discovering or drawing

determinate conclusions' (van Manen, 2014:29). As such, phenomenology provides a valuable way of exploring and accessing the world as we experience it and understanding the possible meaning structures of each of our lived experiences. The act of teaching is a lived experience, making it a particularly appropriate focus for phenomenologists because 'Phenomenology attempts to explicate meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld' (van Manen,1990:11).

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

Section 8.1 introduces the chapter. In Section 8.2 the research is summarised before the significance of the research and its contribution to existing literature are outlined in Section 8.3. Implications for practice arising from the research are presented in Section 8.4 and final conclusions are drawn in Section 8.5.

8.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter summarises the research and then considers the significance and contribution of the findings to work in the field of geography education and the general preparation and practice of primary teachers. Implications for my own and my fellow educators' practice that arise from the research are also discussed, with reference to the current working context of primary teachers working in England.

8.2 Research Summary

This phenomenologically-inspired research explored how a sample of primary school teachers construct their geographical subject identity by conducting a detailed examination of their lived experiences of the subject. I was interested in discovering how these teachers experience geography and how this experience relates to their overall identity as primary school teachers. As a primary school teacher with a strong interest in and enthusiasm for geography, but now working in H.E. as a primary teacher educator, I was a participant in the research seeking to understand my own lived experiences with geography with a view to informing and developing my own practice. I wanted the findings from this research to augment the body of knowledge surrounding primary teacher subject identity with a view to informing future practice in geography education and wider primary education.

In order to contextualise the research, a review of relevant literature was undertaken and presented. This literature review exposed gaps in research undertaken previously, and acted as a frame of reference for a discussion of the findings. Interpretative phenomenology was selected as a research approach and the research was designed using phenomenological principles in order to attempt to get to the essence of the primary teachers' subject experience of geography and its value to them in their primary class teaching. It involved collecting data from five participants primarily through a series of semi-structured interviews over one academic year. Each participant's data was reduced to a series of horizons, which were used to construct individual identity portraits. These portraits were examined for similarities: three

shared essential elements were identified and then amalgamated to produce a composite portrait of the experience of geography as manifested by the participants. The synthesis of the shared elements was shown to be a fusion of subject-specific and generic pedagogy. Further analysis led to the presentation of these findings in the form of a play script and the revealing of the phenomenological essence of the experience investigated. Having facilitated an opportunity to examine the participants' subject identities, the conclusion from the findings is that, in the case of these teachers surveyed, their subject and general primary teacher identities are combined and appear as a fused identity.

8.3 Significance and contribution

I started this thesis by stating that, like many of my fellow educators, I have multiple professional identities and roles. I consider myself to be a primary school teacher, a teacher educator and a geographer. It is significant that this research draws from these different strands of my identity and merges together areas, which are either under-researched or not previously explored.

This research is significant because it provides evidence from an under-researched area of primary teacher subject identity. Chapter 2 reviewed research which had examined both teacher identity and specifically teachers' subject identity. Much of the research reviewed was undertaken with secondary school teachers, although some of it addresses primary teachers' identity (Troman, 2008; Woods & Jeffrey, 2010). Although research into primary teachers' identities tends to be generic, there is some research which focuses on primary teacher subject identity (Tambyah, 2006; Trainou, 2007). Subjects including music, maths and science have been used to explore teachers' subject identity, but geography has not. The reasons why only certain subjects have been used as the basis for these studies are not completely clear but maths and science are both core subjects in English primary schools, as such, they are afforded more time on the curriculum. As was discussed in Chapter 2, music is often taught by specialist teachers both in England and throughout the world. Some of this research into primary teacher subject identity has been conducted outside of the UK. Chapter 1 highlights that many of the pressures currently being experienced by teachers working in English primary schools are also features of international education systems, but there is a gap in the research which examines the subject identity of primary teachers working in England.

The findings from this research contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of geography education. Work which looks at the role that geography plays in relation to overall teacher identity (Brooks, 2007; 2016) has previously been conducted with secondary school

teachers working in England. In light of the suggestion put forward in Chapter 7 that the differences between primary and secondary school teachers in terms of how they use their subject identity is not as wide as it might be assumed, this research provides evidence for its use by colleagues working within these different phases of geography education and could inform and improve geography teaching to both primary and secondary pupils. The findings may also be of interest to those working with geography undergraduates in Higher Education who may wish to ask their students to reflect on their identities as geographers and how these individual's overall and specific developing geographical identities impact on their studies and on them as individuals. Undergraduate geography courses often contain different subject strands such as global climate change and cultural geographies; the findings from this research suggest that these students would benefit from examining their relationships and identities in relation to these subject strands.

This research draws attention to the lived experience of teachers. The participants demonstrated enthusiasm and passion for one subject area. They described doing more than delivering the subject: they lived the experience of teaching geography. Although the participants bring their geography to the other subjects and the boundaries between the subjects that they teach appear to be flexible; the lived experience of geography uncovered by the research appears different to their practice in other subject areas. There is a sense that to them, unlike other subjects, geography really matters and that these teachers have a special relationship with the subject. It is manifested by excitement and enthusiasm, and is then used by these teachers to complement and supplement their teaching across the curriculum. The findings may well be helpful when appraising how new teachers are prepared to teach, and how their subject-specific preparation is planned and delivered alongside their generic preparation for teaching. In light of the comments made about the place of subject specialists versus generalists made in Chapters 2 and 7, to which Catling draws attention (Catling, 2017b), an understanding of how the participants in this research, as experienced primary teachers, interweave and fuse their subject-specific identity with their generic identity may be helpful to share with existing and future primary teachers. Although it will not address some of the issues that Catling (ibid) highlights in terms of the amount of preparation that new primary teachers are given for teaching geography and other non-core subjects, this research provides evidence for the geography education community in the UK and further afield to reflect on when considering these challenges. The concept of a fused identity was identified from working with individual teachers who were all deemed to have a passion for the subject. Notwithstanding the limitation identified in Chapter 7 that not every primary teacher will show the same

enthusiasm for every subject, the notion of a fused identity indicates that having a passion and enthusiasm in teaching can be harnessed to enhance teaching in other curriculum areas. It could be argued that this passion and enthusiasm does not have to be for a curriculum subject: it might be for gardening or playing chess. However, what is significant is that understanding these connections and different identities that individuals have and how they influence overall teacher identity may provide a way to enhance a teacher's practice more generally. An example of this is given in Section 8.4 where reference is made to ITE students with whom I am currently working. New and experienced primary teachers need input on subject knowledge and pedagogy, and need to address their feelings about the subjects they are teaching. They need to be encouraged to reflect on their existing subject identities in order to further develop these, and learn how to use them to complement and support their teaching in all areas of the primary curriculum.

This research gives prominence and draws attention to the abstract qualities that the teachers surveyed possess. Qualities such as confidence and determination were found to be embedded within a relationship and connection to one particular subject that each of the teachers held. In turn, the strong relationships that the participants have with geography enabled these teachers to live the subject in their classrooms. While these qualities cannot be measured using the recognised Teaching Standards (DfE, 2012) used in English schools, they are important components of who these teachers are and how they practice as primary teachers. The concept of a fused identity identified provides a configuration against which individuals training to teach and those already teaching in primary schools can consider and reflect on their own subject identity with a view to informing and developing their practice.

8.4 Implications for practice

The current educational landscape in England is characterised by continuous reform and a focus on standards, attainment and accountability particularly in the core subjects of English and maths. This has resulted in the marginalisation of foundations subjects such as geography (Catling, 2016). The following reflections on my experience working in one H.E. institution are an example of how the findings from this research might be put into practice.

Feedback from final year undergraduate and postgraduate trainees and recently qualified primary teachers with whom I work in my current role as an H.E. tutor, suggests that new entrants to the profession experience an increasingly pressured environment: the emphasis is not just on pupil progress but is also on the way that curriculum content is taught. They talk about increased prescription regarding what they have to teach in their lessons, as well as

being increasingly told how they should teach curriculum content. Some of those spoken to report being given lesson plans and being allowed no room to use creativity and imagination in their teaching. This is something that these enthusiastic and eager educators find challenging, leading to some of them questioning their decision to enter the profession, often before they start. This argument is supported by Bracher, a practising primary teacher, who suggests that the rigid and sterile culture of many schools in England is driving educators out of schools (Bracher, 2017). Cremin, in the forward to a book which specifically focuses on creativity in geography (Scoffham, 2016) but which forms part of a series of books which look at creativity across a range of primary curriculum subjects, notes that 'at times the relentless quest for higher standards has obscured the personal and affective dimensions of teaching and learning, fostering a mind-set characterised more by compliance and conformity than curiosity and creativity' (Cremin, 2016:xv). My own experience of working with final year trainee teachers, evidences that it is challenging for individual teachers to rise above the performativity culture which pervades schooling today (Ball, 2003; Griffiths, 2011), and that teacher educators need to continue to find ways to relieve these pressures. It is contended that making new teachers aware of how they can use their different teacher identities to complement other areas of their work is beneficial.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, reference was made to the observation that 'teachers are caught in a tug of war between what they are supposed to be and who they are trying to become' (Janzen, 2015:117). Through conducting this research and reflecting on the findings, I have been able to consider how I might refine my own practice, in order to support new entrants to the profession as they endeavour to conform to what is required of them in the current climate, whilst retaining and developing their own teacher identity. The concept of a fused identity is one I have started to use as part of a module for 4th year trainee undergraduate student teachers, asking them to reflect specifically on their own teacher identity as they prepare to embark on their career. I ask students to consider their relationship with each of the different subjects that they will teach in the primary classroom and consider the reasons for each of these relationships and any influences on them. They are given a series of readings (Ball, 2003; Clarke, 2013) and asked to consider how they can reconcile their own vision for teaching, alongside what they have experienced in school and how they envisage they will enact their own teacher identity and vision for primary education in the classroom. This idea builds on Clarke's contention that:

They [student teachers] should be given the opportunity to consider alternative viewpoints and to decide where they stand on […] important issues. If they become teachers who are not capable of taking a resolute and reasonable stand on these matters, they may find it difficult to assert professional agency and without this, may find it increasingly difficult to claim that they are professionals at all. (Clarke, 2013:37)

As the students have prepared to embark on their final school placement, I have invited them to contribute to a group blog, debating what they have read, reflecting on their experiences in school and considering how they might respond to the challenges they will face in the classroom. The following quote is indicative of the feedback received on this process:

I think my identity has shaped my professional agency and I think as long as our professional agency is secure then we should be able to keep our values and conform to the pressures by making a 'resolute and reasonable' stand. […] by uncovering my values, I am preparing for when I am employed. (Student Blog, 2016)

Students entering undergraduate ITE courses in England are generally required to have studied three subjects to advanced level or undertaken an equivalent qualification. Many of these students who will ultimately be teaching all areas of the primary curriculum, finish their school studies of some of the foundation subjects that they will be teaching, at the age of 14 and the subsequent input they have on these subjects during their training courses can be a little as two hours (Catling, 2006; 2016; 2017b). The process of considering how as an individual primary trainee teacher you might fuse areas of strength with generic pedagogy and then use this as a basis for enhancing teaching in other areas where one is less confident, has been one that the students I have worked with have been positive about. This quote from a final year undergraduate student suggests that some students when prompted to reflect on their different subject identities can appreciate how their different identities might fuse and enhance their practice:

My identity includes being a mathematics specialist and I've found that my beliefs (formed by the specialist modules) on how maths should be taught has seeped into how I believe all subjects could be taught, suggesting that this identity has impacted on my professional agency. My main non-negotiable is experiential learning which stems from constructivist ideas. I believe that all learning begins with some form of practical exploration and it's my role as the teacher to guide children to connect these experiences with subject knowledge. (Student Blog, 2016)

Not all primary teacher training courses contain a non-core subject specialism element, and finding time within already over-filled ITE courses to adequately prepare ITE students to teach all primary subjects, especially considering the proposed core content of an ITE course (Munday, 2016), which is likely to impact on how much time is given to different subjects, will not be any easier than it is currently (Catling, 2016; 2017b). Using the concept of a fused identity identified in this research is one way forward.

In my current role, I am responsible for ensuring that all undergraduate and postgraduate initial teacher trainee students receive adequate generic pedagogical input, in preparation for their work in school. These professional studies courses are delivered separately to specific subject modules. All tutors are encouraged to refer to subject-specific and generic pedagogy, but this is not currently a formal part of any module. The concept of a fused identity suggests that explicit links between subject and generic pedagogical studies need to be made not just occasionally but throughout teacher education courses. Whilst subject tutors do give examples of subject-specific lesson plans, assessment, and strategies for differentiation, tutors engaged in delivering generic pedagogical content, such as information about tracking pupil progress and personalising learning, should do so with reference to what this *looks like* in all primary curriculum subjects. The findings from this research would suggest that trainees would benefit from being prompted to make the links between subject-specific and generic pedagogy in order to become more confident practitioners. This should also apply in school-based ITT courses.

Connected to this lived experience of teaching are the emotional relationships held by individuals about subjects highlighted in this research. For some of the participants in this research who had a negative experience of being taught geography in school and who were ambivalent about the subject when they entered the profession, connecting with an individual early in their career, who was a passionate geographer, affected their relationship positively with the subject. This suggests that there is a place for subject communities, academy trusts and clusters of schools to use individual teachers who do have strong positive connections to particular subjects as advocates for each of the primary curriculum areas.

8.5 Final Conclusions

Unlike previous work in the area of teachers' subject identity, this research specifically looks at primary teachers' subject identity using geography as a focus. It provides an example of how phenomenology as a methodology can be used as a means for exploring aspects of education and in particular teachers' experiences. This research was based on a belief that teaching is a

living act and cannot be reduced to a set of tick boxes. The focus for the research is on the lived experience of teaching, rather than the qualities of teaching which are examined and measured against prescribed criteria set by agencies such as Ofsted or sets of standards such as those set for teachers working in schools in England (DfE, 2012). Each of the participants was recruited to the study because they had a strong interest in and enthusiasm for geography and they had been recognised by either Ofsted and/or the LEA advisor for geography as being good primary geography teachers. Rather than focusing on how the teachers taught geography lessons, this research examined how they experienced and lived the subject.

This attention to the lived experience of these teachers uncovered shared characteristics of determination, confidence and belief in and/or passion for a subject. The participants' strong subject identities were not separate from their general primary teacher identity but they were fused and used as a basis for teaching other curriculum subjects. By undertaking the research, I have also come to a better understanding of my own relationship with geography and how my subject identity and being a geographer has impacted on my overall teacher identity. These findings augment the observation made by Nias:

> Teaching, like learning, has a perceptual basis. The minute-by-minute decisions made within the shifting, unpredictable, capricious world of the classroom and the judgements teachers reach when they are reflecting on their work depend upon how they perceive particular events, behaviours, materials and persons. (Nias, 1989:13)

The findings from this research indicate that the relationships that primary teachers have with the different subjects that they teach are additional variables that need to be considered when appraising what it is primary teachers do in the classroom, and how might they best prepare for and develop the role (Eaude, 2012).

The participants in this research who were all enthusiasts for geography, do not see geography as separate and in a box which they open once a week when they must deliver a lesson. They appear to evidence the view put forward by Scoffham and Owens, who contend that 'Geography helps us explore our identity and how we relate to others. It is a fundamental part of our psyche (Scoffham & Owens, 2017:3).

This research has considered primary geography education within the wider educational landscape in which teachers are working, finding that these primary teachers use geography and being geographers as a cornerstone from which to view and make sense of the world around them. Scoffham and Owens (2017) echo the view put forward by Biddulph (2017) cited

in Chapter 1, that giving all students access to geography is more important than ever in the current political climate. Scoffham and Owens advocate that geography as a subject is the perfect conduit through which to explore big issues:

> Our Earth is changing rapidly, faster than at any other time in recorded history … Perhaps more than ever before, we are educating our children at a time when there is great uncertainty about what the future holds. However, geography is a subject with enduring purpose and a range of skills and knowledge that draws on and unites other disciplines. Through its contemporary relevance and synergy, geographers are particularly well placed to understand the holistic nature of big issues of the day and their possible solutions. (Scoffham & Owens, 2017:3)

This point is reinforced by geographers Dorling and Lee (2016) in their discussion of the significance of geography for all of us in the modern world. The findings from this research suggest that the primary teachers surveyed, who profess an interest and enthusiasm for geography and who manifest a fused identity, are well placed to contend with the considerable challenges of the current educational climate. They use their geographical perspectives to make links between subjects, to prioritise knowledge and skills and use the subject to complement their generic primary practice. Not every primary teacher will share the participants' passion for geography, but by sharing the findings of this research with colleagues, both within the field of geography education and further afield; it is envisaged that by encouraging individual teachers to use their curriculum strengths, interests and passions, that the teaching of geography and the preparation of new teachers to teach across the primary curriculum can be developed and improved.

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Appendix 1: Research Administration

July 2012

Dear

Re: MPhil / PhD Research:

Being a geographer: Primary geography and teacher identity

I am writing to request your permission to undertake some research in your school. The focus on my MPhil / PhD is on how teachers in schools where the teaching of geography has been judged to be 'outstanding' perceive the subject, the factors that have affected and continue to affect this perception and how these perceptions influence individual teacher's interpretations and delivery of the geography curriculum.

I have approached [Case Teachers" name] and he/she has expressed an interest in taking part in the research. Participation would involve visiting the school and interviewing [case teacher] on three occasions during the next 12 months. [The case teacher] will also be offered an opportunity to validate the data and participate in discussion of the data as part of the research process. [The case teacher] and yourself will also be welcome to view the final research report. In the final report the name of the school and teachers will be changed and the location of the school described only in broad terms, in order to retain anonymity for all participants. All material collected during the research process will be kept as confidential and only accessed by myself.

Please feel free to contact me (emma.morley@winchester.ac.uk / 01962 827584) if you require any further information about my research, or if you have any reservations about granting me permission to conduct the research in your school.

Yours sincerely

Emma

Emma Morley, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education

University of Winchester

Enclosed: Project Information sheet

Project Information Sheet

Study Title: Being a geographer: Primary geography and teacher identity

Invitation:

I am one of the tutors in the Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care at the University of Winchester. I am also a student studying for an MPhil / Ph D and I am currently researching how teachers in a sample of primary schools where geography has been judged to be 'outstanding' perceive the subject, the factors that have affected and continue to affect this perception and how these perceptions influence individual teachers' interpretations and delivery of the geography curriculum. I invite you to participate in the research project by agreeing to be interviewed by me at a time and in a venue that is convenient for you on no more than three occasions during the next 12 months. **In preparation for these interviews I may send you a short questionnaire to fill in which we will then discuss in the interview. I am also going to give you the opportunity to complete an optional journal during the project.** Before you decide to provide consent, it is important that you understand what the project involves and what you will have to do. Please take time to read the following information and ask if anything is unclear.

Participation:

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving reason and without penalty.

Procedure:

I will arrange to meet with you at a mutually convenient time and venue. I will interview you asking you a number of questions. The interviews will take no longer than one hour. Each interview will be recorded and subscribed and I will forward you a full copy of the transcripts. **You will also be free to view any of the subsequent analysis that I undertake of the questionnaires, the interviews and the final research report. I will copy the contents of the journal and again these will be transcribed and you will be forwarded a full copy of the transcripts and any subsequent analysis.**

Confidentiality:

All material collected during the research process will be kept confidential and only accessed by myself. The name of the school will be changed and locations of school described only in broad terms so that you will not be able to be identified should the work be published.

Contact for Further Information:

If you have any questions about the study please contact me, Emma Morley via email, emma,morley@winchester.ac.uk

Who has approved the study?

The study has been subject to ethical approval by the University Research Degree Quality Committee.

If you are willing to participate in this study please complete and return the attached consent form.

September 2012

Consent Slip

I wish to participate in the research project:

Being a geographer: Primary geography and teacher identity

I confirm that I understand the nature of my participation in the project and that anonymity and confidentiality are safeguarded.

I understand that my participation in this project is completely voluntary and that I may with draw at any time during the project.

On this basis, I consent to participate in this project.

Name: **Signature:**   **Date:**

Appendix 2: Interview Administration

Preparation for Interview 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

September 2012

Dear

I hope that you had a good summer holiday and that the new term has started well.

I am just writing to confirm that I will be coming in to see you to conduct the first of my PhD interviews with you on Tuesday 9th October at 3.45pm.

In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to fill out the attached questionnaire, which asks a few questions about your current role and your qualifications. If there is anything that you are unsure of then we can discuss this when I come in. All the information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence and you are not obliged to divulge any information that you would prefer not to. I will bring with me an amended ethics form when I come in to see you for you to sign.

When I come in to conduct the interviews I will come with a number of pre-prepared questions which will cover in essence your individual and personal understanding, thoughts and beliefs about the nature and purpose of geography.

I will record the interviews and if at any time during the interview there is a question that you would rather not answer then please just let me know – you are under no obligation to answer the questions although obviously I hope that there won't be anything that you feel either unable or uncomfortable to answer.

I shall look forward to seeing you on the 9th and in the meantime I wish you all the best.

If you need to contact me before that date please just either e-mail me emma.morley@wincherster.ac.uk or call me on my mobile 07578064571.

Emma

Emma Morley, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education

University of Winchester

PRE-INTERVIEW 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION –*with supplementary questions asked in one-to-one interviews about the information noted in red.*

Name	
School	
Current Role(s)e.g. management roles, curriculum and teaching responsibilities	How long have you been at the school?
Please indicate how long you have been in your current role as geography coordinator	Were you appointed to the role or asked to take it on once you had been in the post? Is this part of a larger role e.g. humanities coordinator What balance of time do you give geography if you coordinate more than one subject?
Please give details of any previous post that you have held where you were responsible for coordinating geography or related subjects	
Please list any formal geography qualifications that you hold e.g. O-Level, GCSE AS-Level, A Level, degree and when you gained them. Please include your teaching qualifications (e.g. BA (QTS), B.Ed., PGCE) and any additional qualifications (if these were gained outside the UK please state where you gained them)	What age phase did you train for?
Please list any informal qualifications that you have that you consider relevant e.g. Duke of Edinburgh awards, outdoor learning certificates, forest schools training	

Please give details of any specific geography CPD course that you have attended e.g. 20 day geography courses, LEA or Subject Association Events	Have you done any integrated humanities courses? How long ago did you do these courses?
Please give details of any personal subject association memberships that you have and consider relevant to your role as geography coordinator e.g. RGS, GA	
Please give details of any school subject association that you are aware of that you consider are related to geography	
Please give details of any awards that the school you currently work in had obtained that you consider relevant to geography e.g. primary geography quality mark, Ofsted citation	

And you personally a member of any organisation that you consider related to geography outside work e.g. the National Trust, RSPB

Do you have any personal commitments to for example buying Fair Trade Goods?

WARM UP ACTIVITY

➢ Show pictures drawn by trainee primary teachers of a) geography teachers and b) teachers teaching geography
➢ Discuss the pictures
➢ Collect, check and clarify the answers given on the pre-interview questionnaire

Interview 1 Schedule: The nature and purpose of geography (RS Question 1 and 2)

1. What does geography mean to you? What is this subject we call geography?
2. Tell me about your own experience of being taught geography… has this influenced you in anyway… how? And were there any influences from out of school?
3. How confident do you feel about teaching geography… why is this? is this different to how you feel about other primary curriculum subjects?

4. In your job as coordinator when you talk to parents and others about the nature of geography and purpose of geography what do you say? Is it different when you talk to colleagues or even the children?

5. What is it that you really feel children need to know from learning geography in school?

6. How important is subject knowledge to you for understanding geography… why is this? and is this the same other subjects?

7. In some countries such as the USA geography is not taught as a discrete subject but as part of a social studies curriculum – why do you think this is and what do you think about the moves by some schools in this country to develop a more integrated curriculum?

8. Would you consider yourself a geographer or not? What do you mean by this? Does this make a difference to your role? In the 2011 Ofsted report it was noted that ' Most of the teachers surveyed did not consider themselves to be geographers and few had received any subject-specific training in recent years to help them to teach geography more effectively ' – what is your view about this?

Preparation for Interview 2 – Reflective Task

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

Dear

A belated Happy New Year – I hope that the term is going well?

I am just writing to confirm that I will be coming in to see you to conduct the second of my PhD interviews with you on Wednesday 13th March at 9.30 am.

I am attaching a copy of the draft proposals for geography in the new primary national curriculum, which you may or may not have seen. In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would cast an eye over these and just jot down some general thoughts either in the journal I gave you on my last visit or on a separate piece of paper or even as annotations on the attachment. I will record the interviews again and then as before send the transcripts for you to look at. It's proving to be an interesting project so far! I shall look forward to seeing you on the 13th and in the meantime I wish you all the best.

If you need to contact me before that date please just either e-mail me emma.morley@winchester.ac.uk or call me on my mobile 07578064571.

Apologies for the 'belt & braces' approach again, but I have also sent you a copy of this letter and the questionnaire in the post just in case for one reason or another the e-mail does not reach you. Have a great half term when it comes.

Emma

Emma Morley, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education

University of Winchester

PhD Interviews –February / March 2013 2nd Round of Interviews

THE CURRICULUM

- What are your thoughts that they have about the proposed new curriculum?
- Was it what you expected? Were there any surprises?
- How do you feel about the changes that are implicit in this curriculum?
- Is there a tension between the geography teacher that you see yourself as and what this requires you to be? VALUES (RS Question 3)
- What do you need to implement / ENACT this new curriculum? (RS Question 1)
- Are there any challenges OR OPPORTUNITIES for teachers that come with this curriculum?

- What will you change / how will you change your curriculum in light of this document? How do you feel about making these changes
- What good practice will you try and maintain as you implement this new curriculum?
- What is your best lesson / topic / visit – what makes it good and will the new curriculum allow you to continue to deliver this?
- How do you envisage you will enact this new curriculum? (RS Question 1)
- This is the core curriculum, what is going to be distinctive about your school's curriculum?
- What do you need to implement this new curriculum?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges for non–specialist primary geography teachers with this curriculum?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges for non–specialist primary geography teachers with this curriculum?

GENERAL SECTION

- How do you see 'the curriculum'? What influence does it have on your work? How do you use 'the curriculum'? How do you enact the curriculum? What values underpin your curriculum? (RS Question 1-2)
- PRESTIGE / STATUS – SUBJECT IDENTITY – PROFESSIONAL
- IDENTITY-MARGINALITY

Preparation for Interview 3 – Reflective Task

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

April 2013

Dear

A belated Happy Easter- I do hope that you managed a little 'R and R' over the break?

I am just writing to confirm that I will be coming in to see you to conduct the third of my PhD interviews with you on Tuesday 23rd April at 3.45pm.

Ahead of the interview, I would like if possible for you to draw me a 'mind map' or other visual representation, which shows the following:

a) Your perception of geography as a subject
b) Your personal relationship with the subject- how it contributes to your overall professional identity as a teacher and finally
c) The different influences on your practice as a teacher of geography indicating their relative importance e.g. support form head teacher

I must stress that this is NOT a test and please only do as little or as much as you are able and want to do ahead of the interview. There are no right answers. You can always finish the map while we are talking when I come in. If you would prefer to draw a series of mind maps rather than just one then please feel free, and as indicated if you would rather show your thoughts in a different sort of diagram then please do. As always I have had a go at this task myself and have been recorded talking about my drawings. Please feel free also to record your thoughts- you could use the journal that I gave you at the start of the project or you could simply use sheets of paper-no limit to the size!

I will record the interviews again and then as before send the transcripts for you to look at. The transcripts form the previous set of interviews have only just been returned to me so I shall send them on in the nest few days. I shall look forward to seeing you on the 23rd and in the meantime I wish you all the best.

If you need to contact me before that date please just either e-mail me emma.morley@winchester.ac.uk or call me on my mobile 07578064571.

As always, I have also sent you a copy of this letter in the post just in case for one reason or another the e-mail does not reach you.

Best wishes

Emma

Emma Morley, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education

University of Winchester

Look at the visual representations and ask each interviewee to talk to each part:

a) *Your perception of geography as a subject (RS Question 1-2)*
b) *Your personal relationship with the subject- how it contributes to your overall professional identity as a teacher and finally (RS Question 3)*
c) *The different influences on your practice as a teacher of geography indicating their relative importance e.g. support form head teacher (RS Question 2)*

Supplementary questions

d) *How do you see excellence in geography? (RS Question 1)*
e) *What good practice do you try and exemplify in geography? RS Question 1)*
f) *What is the best element of the geography being undertaken here and what had been your role in bringing this about? RS Question 1)*
g) *Beyond the core curriculum, what is distinctive about the geography taught in your school?*
h) *What is the place of expertise in a particular subject area in primary schools? RS Question 1)*
i) *Is enthusiasm and passion for a subject enough? (Relate to knowledge turn) RS Question 1)*

Preparation for Interview 4 – Reflective Task

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

May 2013

Dear

I hope that the summer term is going well?

I am just writing to confirm that I will be coming in to see you to conduct my final PhD interview with you on Wednesday 12th June at 4pm.

In advance of the interview I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to reflect on the conversations that we have had this year and jot down in your journal any reflections that you have on the process and the research that you have participated in. In particular I am interested in how useful or not you have found the process of taking time to discuss in detail your experience of one curriculum subject. The interview will also afford you the opportunity to tell me anything else that you wish to that you feel not have not already had the opportunity to do so. In advance of the interview, I intend to read through your interview transcripts and draw together the threads of our conversations and ask you a few additional questions based on the responses that you have given me over the year.

I will record the interviews again and then as before send the transcripts for you to look at. It's proving to be an interesting project so far! I shall look forward to seeing you on the 12th and in the meantime I wish you all the best.

If you need to contact me before that date please just either e-mail me emma.morley@winchester.ac.uk or call me on my mobile 07578064571.

As always, I have also sent you a copy of this letter in the post just in case for one reason or another the e-mail does not reach you.

Best wishes

Emma

Emma Morley, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education

University of Winchester

Preparation for Interview 4 – June 2013 - TM Notes

You talk a lot about your experiences of being outdoors impacting on your interest in geography – do you think this is the same for teachers coming in to the profession today?

You also talk a lot about thinking geographically and making links- do all teachers do this or is this unique to you?

You imply that because you are a geographer that you look at things differently – that you almost have an inbuilt magnetic pull to the subject – can you explain how not being a geographer might have impacted on your career?

You imply that geography is difficult to teach compared to other subject such as history – what do you think the effect of this is? And you suggest that teachers are afraid of the subject and that the solution is to offer more CPD for teachers – do you have anything to add to this?

You suggested that geography is less constraining than other subjects in that the boundaries can be blurred more easily- is this a good thing? Could it be considered a negative?

You talk about your passion for the subject and that seems to be a significant element of your overall professional identity- it seems to almost enable you to almost bend the rules – would you agree?

You talk about successful experience leading to confidence leading to enthusiasm for the subject- can you just clarify the role of subject knowledge in the teaching of primary geography?

You make a distinction between being a geographer and being a specialist-can you expand on this point?

And finally can I ask you just to reflect on the year during which I have been in to see you and talk to you about your relationship with the subject. Have any of the conversations that we have had impacted on any of the work you have done with the children or with your colleagues or simply on your own work?

Appendix 3: Examples of peer reviewed selected statements

you've got any comments about them at all. It's quite interesting to see what they've drawn – they've literally started in the last ten days.	
WL: I like that one, the world.	*Highlight?*
I: I just wondered what you thought about them.	
WL: I love the wellies and the raincoat, but how much that actually happens, I don't know. It does in Reception. One thing we were picked up on in our gold award was the local really, the local. And I think we tend to do local and Salisbury, and I think we need to bring it even closer.	*Ryt p 30* ✓ ✓
I: I just thought they're quite interesting really, they're…	
WL: I mean, if you say geography teacher to me, I immediately think of secondary, my girls' secondary school teacher, who is a bit eccentric. I do work closely with him, and his enthusiasm is…	*!✓*
I: Oh, now, the current one?	
WL: Yeah. But he's mad, but they've got a new teacher, and it's just lost all the love they had for it, sadly.	✓
I: So that individual was quite significant then?	
WL: Yeah, definitely.	*Highlight response to your Q?*
I: See, I find that quite interesting, his identity was quite…	

Appendix 4: Extract from participant journal
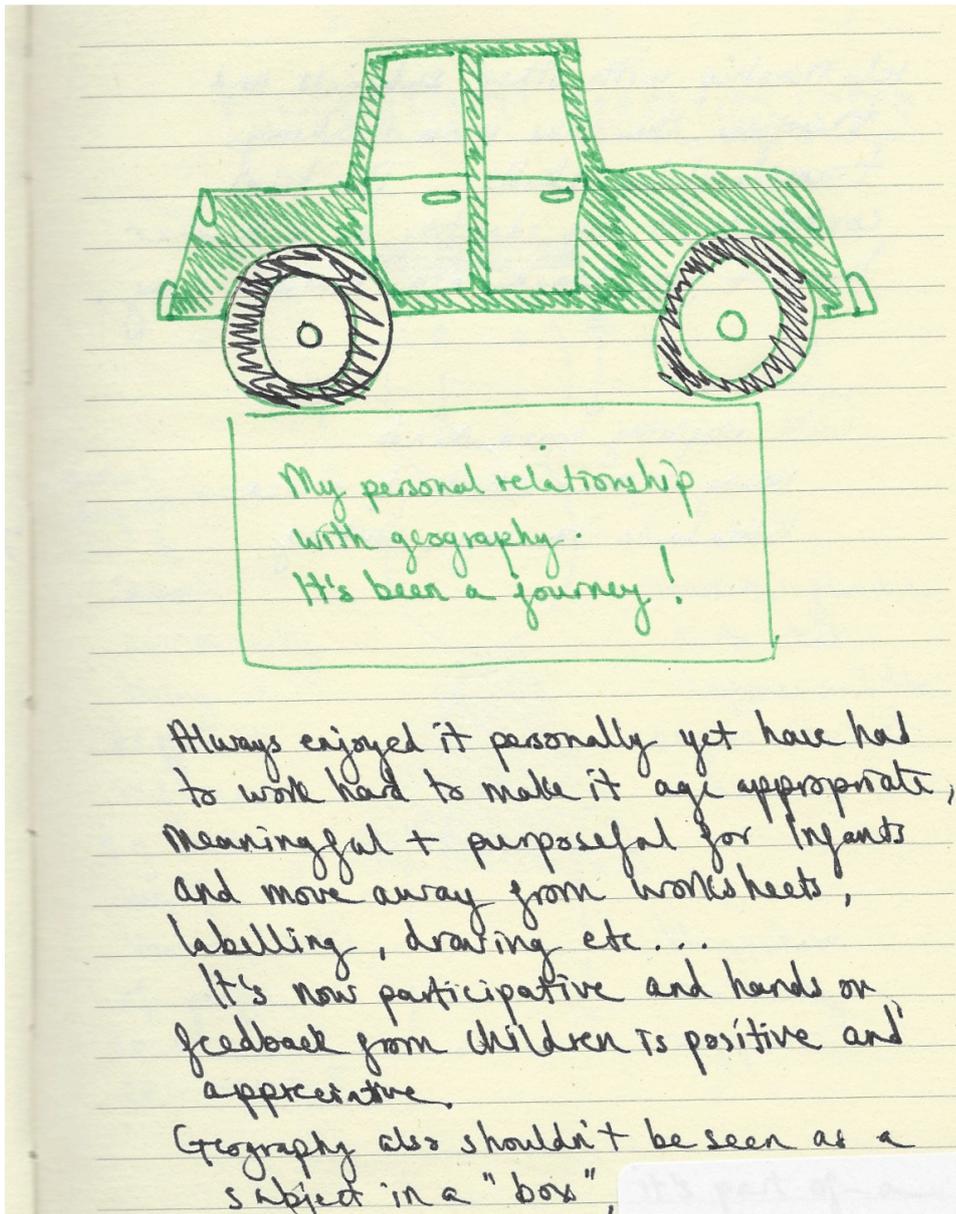
My personal relationship
with geography.
It's been a journey!

Always enjoyed it personally yet have had
to work hard to make it age appropriate,
meaningful + purposeful for Infants
and move away from worksheets,
labelling, drawing etc...
It's now participative and hands on
feedback from children is positive and
appreciative.
Geography also shouldn't be seen as a
subject in a "box",

Grace's drawing from her reflective journal showing her personal journey through the research project

Appendix 5: Tabitha's Mind Map
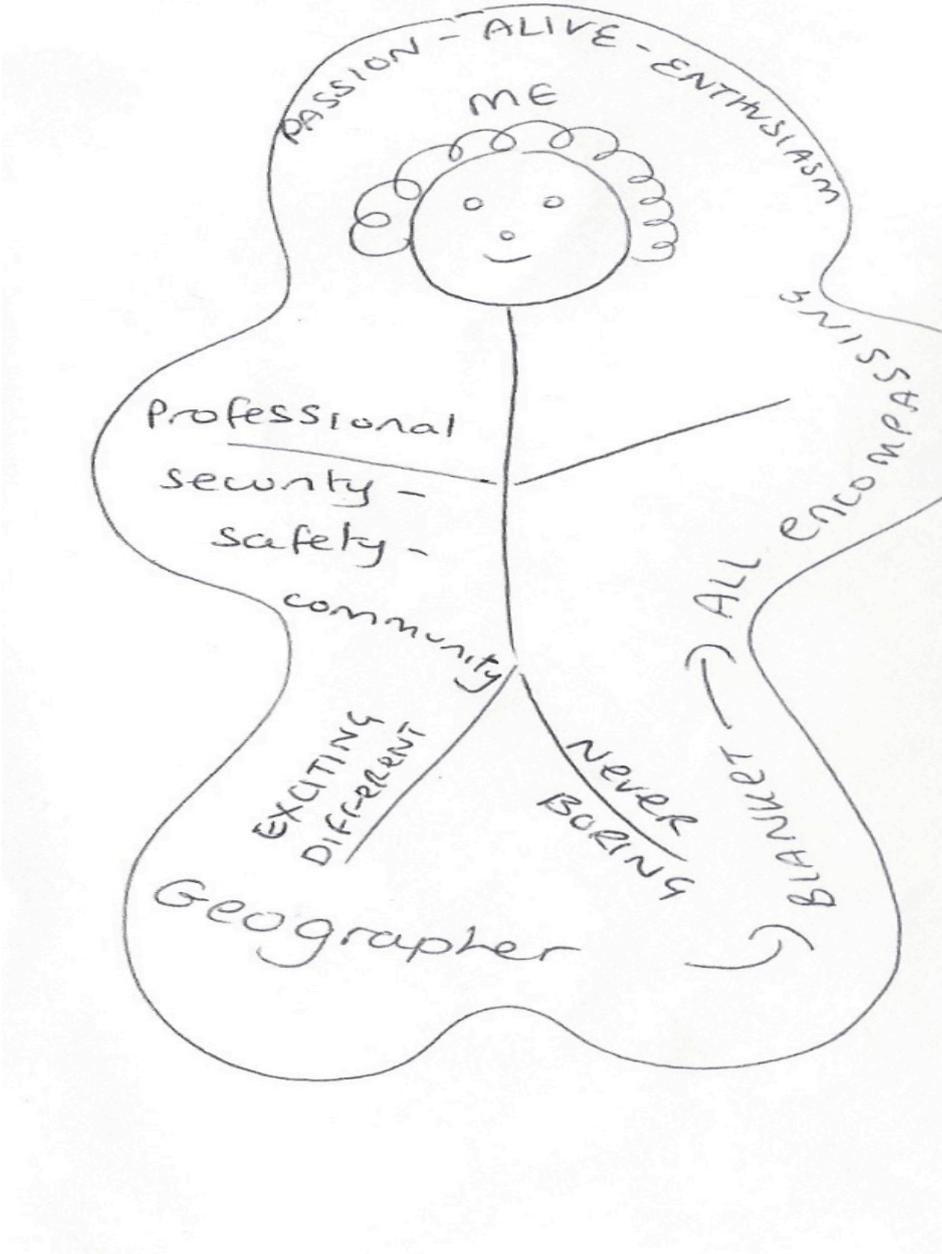
Tabitha's pictorial representation of her subject identity

Appendix 6: Complete table of essential elements

Complete table of essential elements (cross checked with Imaginative Variation) Table A

	WENDY		TABITHA		GRACE		HILARY		MILLY
1	**Influence of / significant people –** including SMT in a school	1	**Fusion of personal and professional life (LINKS TO 12)**	1	**Qualifications**	1	**Clear identity**	1.	**Qualifications**
2	**Personal enjoyment of the outdoors-** relating back to own childhood	2	**Clear personal perception of the subject**	2	**Clear general pedagogy (LINKS TO 4)**	2	**Background / qualifications**	2	**Concern for the subject-** includes lack of time that teachers today have to take projects forward, lack of specialism, lack of time to deliver new curriculum and that knowledge and skills in new curriculum are too difficult for younger children, concern that children to do not look at their own area, lack of levels, training of teachers, changes to regulations so teachers need

								outdoor leader certificate, lack of money, lack of CPD SPLIT
3	**Personal responsibility for the subject-** including concern if not involved it might not remain successful	3	**Influence of / significant people-** with indication that feelings about subject could be over-ridden by feelings about individuals, importance of SMT	3	**Specific view of geography as a subject- and also view of what geography** **is actually about** based on own experience of being taught, nature of the subject leads to it being taught in a particular way and the purpose of geography	3	**Possessive / Territorial of the subject**	3	**Personal enjoyment of the outdoors-** includes being in the TA and previously owning a guest house
4	**Fusion of personal and professional life**	4	**Innate curiosity and connection about the world**	4	**Clear subject pedagogy (fused with general pedagogy) (LINKS TO 2)**	4	**Need for teachers to have a connection to subjects**	4	**Fusion of personal and professional life**

5	**Specific subject pedagogy –** including belief that the subject should be taught discreetly that children should start by being taught about the local, not using textbooks, disagreement with the way the curriculum is currently taught	5	**Subject confidence –** with link to amount of time spent teaching subject (LINKS TO 6 and 7) LINKs to 10- views on expertise	5	**Personal enjoyment of the outdoors-** relating back to own childhood	5	**Influence of / significant people and organisations and importance of these people**- includes subject association, school environment, subject specialism (LINKS TO ROLE OF TEACHER) importance of teacher confidence	5	**Specific subject pedagogy –** including geography as a vehicle to teach other subjects, teaching geography discreetly
6	**Concern for changes to childhood**	6	**Subject qualifications**	6	**View about knowledge and skills (LINKS TO 14)**	6	**Subject pedagogy-** includes relevance, going outside, a vehicle for other subjects (some links to generic pedagogy)-	6	**The perception of geography-** including what has helped -
7	**Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy-** and belief that this is the right thing to	7	**Clear subject-specific pedagogy –**		**The status of geography**	-	**Concern for future of subject**- includes new curriculum, time in school for geography, subject specialism, new	-	- **Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy (LINKS WITH 5 AND 20)**

	do- geography as a vehicle for teaching other subjects						teachers, CPD, subject status, teacher training, childhood changes		
8	Personally excited by the subject	8	Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy- geography as a vehicle for teaching other subjects, extends to fusion of learning as a pupil	8	Clear view of PRIMARY pedagogy (LINKS to 2)	8	Clear personal perception of the subject	8	Clear personal perception of the subject – including geography as an emotional subject
9	Confident in the subject and the way individual teaches it and leads it (LINKS to 5)	9	Clear subject identity	9	Importance of School Leadership and the school community	9	Personally excited by the subject and connected to the subject	9	Challenges of teaching geography
10	Impact/importance of external validation	10	Views on expertise	10	Concern for the future of the subject- includes new curriculum will lead to geography being taught in a less exciting way, teacher	10	Innate Feelings about the subject	10	Personally excited by the subject and possibly an innate connection which may not be there for everyone

					experience being needed to interpret new curriculum				
11	Sense of altruism (Links to 5)	11	Sense of altruism	11	The importance of the role of the teacher	11	Personal love of going outdoors	11	Confidence in teaching the subject and leading it LINKS TO 19
12	Clear personal perception of the subject	12	Subject identity as reassuring and personally reaffirming	12	Recommendations	12	Subject confidence	12	Views on promoting the subject? Recommendations
13	Changing identity	13	Puzzled at other people not liking / getting geography	13	Innate sense of subject pedagogy	13	Fusion between subject pedagogy and generic pedagogy and practice	13	Impact/importance of external validation (links to 22)
14	Relation between subject and general identity	14	Views about knowledge (LINKS TO 7)	14	Views on the concept of expertise	14	Sense of altruism / wanting to promote the subject	14	Geography compared to history
15	Concern for the future of the subject- includes teacher confidence,	15	Fusion of subject pedagogy and personal	15	Views about how the nature of teaching has changed	15	Changes to the nature of childhood	15	The importance of having a personal connection to the subject / interest in/ background – linked to

	lack of time, for new teachers, in terms of their commitment to the subject and the support that they are or are not given lack of guidance in new curriculum for new teachers, apparent loss of geographical enquiry, marginalisation of eth subject **SPLIT SECTION**		**learning style and interests**					teaching the new curriculum (LINKS TO 2)
16	**View about knowledge**	16	**Concern for the future of the subject-** for new teachers, in terms of their understanding and their	16	**Considers geography to be more difficult than history**	16	**Generic pedagogic beliefs-** includes importance of role of the teacher, experiential learning	16	**Innate linking of subjects**

			ability to fuse subject and general pedagogy, ability to curriculum make						
17	Personal belief in and commitment to the subject	17	Personally excited by the subject	17	Value of taking time to reflect on aspects of practice	17	Desire for geography to be enjoyed by children	17	View that geography covers much of what is put into other subjects
18	Recommendations for the future / evaluations	18	The role of the teacher in learning	18	Significant individuals	18	Subject-specific pedagogy	18	Influence of / significant people – including SMT in a school
19	Desire to improve the subject			20	The changing nature of geography in schools and perception of the subject	19	Convinced people are actually interested in geography	19	Determination- including evidence of being prepared to rebel, also a sense f being a maverick (seems to come from confidence)
20	Confident in general pedagogical beliefs			21	Role in encouraging colleagues	20	Personal determination	20	Confident in general pedagogical beliefs

21	Innate / Personal connection to the subject- including that some people have these (LINKS TO 2)			22	Determination	21	Characteristics of new teachers	21	Commitment to foundation subjects
22	Concern at the changing nature of individuals entering the profession and the way the profession itself is changing			23	Geography with the same challenges as other subjects	22	Subject knowledge	22	Clear Identity LINKS TO VIEWS ON EXPERTISE
23	Determination- including evidence of being prepared to rebel					23	Personal commitment to the subject	23	Views on expertise
24	Evidence of living the subject					24	Changes to childhood	24	Changing nature of teaching and those that are employed
25.	Using subject as a means to furthering career					25	Importance of the school community	25	Clear commitment to importance of geography

26	Importance of subject community				26	Changes to primary education	26	Influence of / manifestation of own leadership
27	The status of geography and how this might impact on a teachers career						27	The role of the teacher (LINKS TO VIEWS ON PRIMARY EXPERTISE)
							28	The status of the subject
							29	Concern for the changing nature of childhood
							30	Wanting to personally take subject forward? Altruism
							31	The nature of geography
							32	Views on knowledge
							33	Views about new teachers
							34	Connection between promotion and curriculum time
							35	Recommendations

(*) Names have been changed

Appendix 7: Table of essential elements with imaginative variation organised into shared themes

	WENDY		TABITHA		GRACE		HILARY		MILLY
				**What are the shared constructs of subject-specific identity?**					
		**Theme 1: Fusion of personal and professional life**							
4	Fusion of personal and professional life	1	Fusion of personal and professional life (LINKS TO 12)	5	Personal enjoyment of the outdoors- relating back to own childhood	9	Personally excited by the subject and connected to the subject	4	Fusion of personal and professional life
2	Personal enjoyment of the outdoors- relating back to own childhood	4	Innate curiosity and connection about the world	13	Innate sense of subject pedagogy	10	Innate Feelings about the subject	3	Personal enjoyment of the outdoors- includes being in the TA and previously owning a guest house
14	Relation between subject and general identity	12	Subject identity as reassuring and personally reaffirming			11	Personal love of going outdoors	10	Personally excited by the subject and possibly an innate connection which may not be there for everyone
8	Personally excited by the subject	17	Personally excited by the subject			1	Clear identity		

21	Innate / Personal connection to the subject- including that some people have these (LINKS TO 2)								
24	Evidence of living the subject								
Theme 2: Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject									
12	Clear personal perception of the subject	2	Clear personal perception of the subject	3	Specific view of geography as a subject- and also view of what geography is actually about based on own experience of being taught, nature of the subject leads to it being taught in a particular way and the purpose of geography	8	Clear personal perception of the subject	8 & 31	Clear personal perception of the subject – including geography as an emotional subject
17	Personal belief in and commitment to the subject	9	Clear subject identity			23	Personal commitment to the subject	25	Clear commitment to importance of geography

9	Confident in the subject and the way individual teaches it and leads it (LINKS to 5)	5	Subject confidence – with link to amount of time spent teaching subject (LINKS TO 6 and 7) LINKs to 10- views on expertise	22	Determination	12	Subject confidence	11	Confidence in teaching the subject and leading it LINKS TO 19
19	Desire to improve the subject	11	Sense of altruism	21	Role in encouraging colleagues	14	Sense of altruism / wanting to promote the subject	19	Determination- including evidence of being prepared to rebel, also a sense f being a maverick (seems to come from confidence)
11	Sense of altruism (Links to 5)					20	Personal determination	30	Wanting to personally take subject forward? Altruism
23	Determination- including evidence of being prepared to rebel					17	Desire for geography to be enjoyed by children		
Theme 3: Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise and knowledge									
20	Confident in general pedagogical beliefs	15	Fusion of subject pedagogy and personal learning style and interests	2	Clear general pedagogy (LINKS TO 4)	16	Generic pedagogic beliefs- includes importance of role of	20	Confident in general pedagogical beliefs

							the teacher, experiential learning		
			18	The role of the teacher in learning	8	Clear view of PRIMARY pedagogy (LINKS to 2)			15	The importance of having a personal connection to the subject / interest in/ background – linked to teaching the new curriculum (LINKS TO 2)
										27	The role of the teacher (LINKS TO VIEWS ON PRIMARY EXPERTISE)
					11	The importance of the role of the teacher			21	Commitment to foundation subjects
16	View about knowledge	14	Views about knowledge (LINKS TO 7)	6	View about knowledge and skills (LINKS TO 14)	22	Subject knowledge	32	Views on knowledge
		10	Views on expertise	14	Views on the concept of expertise			23	Views on expertise
									22	Clear Identity LINKS TO VIEWS ON EXPERTISE
	Theme 4: Clearly articulated views on primary geography subject pedagogy								

5	Specific subject pedagogy – including belief that the subject should be taught discreetly that children should start by being taught about the local, not using textbooks, disagreement with the way the curriculum is currently taught	7	Clear subject-specific pedagogy –	4	Clear subject pedagogy (fused with general pedagogy) (LINKS TO 2)	6 18	Subject pedagogy- includes relevance, going outside, a vehicle for other subjects (some links to generic pedagogy)-	5	Specific subject pedagogy – including geography as a vehicle to teach other subjects, teaching geography discreetly

	Theme 5: Fusion between subject pedagogy, generic pedagogy and practice

7	Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy- and belief that this is the right thing to do- geography as a vehicle for teaching other subjects	8	Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy- geography as a vehicle for teaching other subjects, extends to fusion of learning as a pupil			13	Fusion between subject pedagogy and generic pedagogy and practice		Fusion of subject and generic pedagogy (LINKS WITH 5 AND 20)

	What are the influences on these constructs of subject-specific identity?
	Group 1: Significant individuals and communities of practice

1	Influence of / significant people – including SMT in a school	3	Influence of / significant people- with indication that feelings about subject could be over-ridden by feelings about individuals, importance of SMT	18	Significant individuals	5	Influence of / significant people and organisations and importance of these people- includes subject association, school environment, subject specialism (LINKS TO ROLE OF TEACHER) importance of teacher confidence	18	Influence of / significant people – including SMT in a school
3	Personal responsibility for the subject- including concern if not involved it might not remain successful			9	Importance of School Leadership and the school community	3	Possessive / Territorial of the subject	26	Influence of / manifestation of own leadership
10	Impact/importance of external validation					25	Importance of the school community	13	Impact/importance of external validation (links to 22)
Shared concerns by participants									
15	Concern for the future of the subject- includes teacher confidence, lack of time, for new	16	Concern for the future of the subject- for new teachers, in terms of their	10	Concern for the future of the subject- includes new curriculum will lead to geography being	7	Concern for future of subject- includes new curriculum, time in school for geography,	2	Concern for the subject- includes lack of time that teachers today have to take projects forward, lack

	teachers, in terms of their commitment to the subject and the support that they are or are not given lack of guidance in new curriculum for new teachers, apparent loss of geographical enquiry, marginalisation of the subject		understanding and their ability to fuse subject and general pedagogy, ability to curriculum make		taught in a less exciting way, teacher experience being needed to interpret new curriculum		subject specialism, new teachers, CPD, subject status, teacher training, childhood changes		of specialism, lack of time to deliver new curriculum and that knowledge and skills in new curriculum are too difficult for younger children, concern that children to do not look at their own area, lack of levels, training of teachers, changes to regulations so teachers need outdoor leader certificate, lack of money, lack of CPD
6	Concern for changes to childhood			15	Views about how the nature of teaching has changed	21	Characteristics of new teachers	33	Views about new teachers
22	Concern at the changing nature of individuals entering the profession and the way the profession itself is changing			20	The changing nature of geography in schools and perception of the subject	15 & 24	Changes to the nature of childhood	29	Concern for the changing nature of childhood
					The status of geography	26	Changes to primary education	28	The status of the subject

27	The status of geography and how this might impact on a teachers career							24	Changing nature of teaching and those that are employed
								34	Connection between promotion and curriculum time
								9	Challenges of teaching geography
	Codes for participants recommendations / conclusions								
18	Recommendations for the future / evaluations			12	Recommendations	4	*Need for teachers to have a connection to subjects*	12	Views on promoting the subject? Recommendations (35)
26	Importance of subject community			17	*Value of taking time to reflect on aspects of practice*			6	The perception of geography- including what has helped
	Miscellaneous codes								

25.	Using subject as a means to furthering career	6	Subject qualifications	23	Geography with the same challenges as other subjects	19	Convinced people are actually interested in geography	14	Geography compared to history
13	Changing identity	13	Puzzled at other people not liking / getting geography	16	Considers geography to be more difficult than history	2	Background / qualifications	16	Innate linking of subjects
								17	View that geography covers much of what is put into other subjects