



Dossier: TEACHER EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE - TIMES, TENSIONS AND INVENTIONS

## NEW TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE TRANSITION INTO TEACHING

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**ABSTRACT:** The transition from initial teacher education into teaching can be difficult. In Scotland a guaranteed induction year for those who meet the Standard for Provisional Registration helps the transfer from student to teacher with the provision of an induction supporter/mentor and a reduced teaching load. However, after the induction year the mentoring and reduction in teaching stops and there is no specific assistance organised for early career teachers at a national or local authority level. This paper reports on the issues that early career teachers face in the transition from induction year teacher to fully registered teacher in Scotland. During a two-year mixed methods study of induction year teachers in Scotland, four participants were interviewed after their first year of teaching which is their first year as a fully registered teacher. In semi-structured interviews the teachers were asked about their professional learning and support needs. The participants highlighted issues related to changing schools, working as a supply teacher, learning from observations, support from colleagues, relationships with pupils and their future career. The research shows how there is an ongoing need for support for early career teachers beyond their induction year.

**Keywords:** early career learning; teacher induction; teacher professional learning; teacher retention; supply teaching.

## EXPERIÊNCIAS DE NOVOS PROFESSORES NA TRANSIÇÃO PARA O ENSINO

**RESUMO:** Passar da formação inicial de professores para o ensino pode ser difícil. Na Escócia, garante-se um ano de indução àqueles que atendem ao Padrão para Registro Provisório de Professor, o que ajuda a passagem de aluno para professor oferecendo um orientador/mentor de indução e uma carga de ensino reduzida. No entanto, após o ano de indução, a tutoria e a redução do ensino cessa e não existe uma assistência específica organizada para professores em início de carreira a nível de autoridade nacional ou local. Este artigo relata os problemas que os professores em início de carreira enfrentam na transição de professores do ano de indução para professores totalmente registrados na Escócia. Durante um estudo de métodos mistos de dois anos com professores do ano de indução na Escócia, quatro participantes foram entrevistados após o primeiro ano de ensino (que é o primeiro ano como professor totalmente registrado). Em entrevistas semiestruturadas, os professores foram questionados sobre suas necessidades de aprendizagem e apoio profissional. Os participantes destacaram questões relacionadas à mudança de escola, ao trabalho como professor substituto, ao aprendizado com as observações, ao apoio dos colegas, ao relacionamento com os alunos e à carreira futura. A pesquisa mostra que há uma necessidade contínua de apoio para professores em início de carreira para além do ano de indução.

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**Palavras-chave:** aprendizagem no início da carreira; indução docente; aprendizagem profissional do professor; retenção de professores; suporte ao ensino.

## LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE LOS NUEVOS PROFESORES EN LA TRANSICIÓN A LA ENSEÑANZA

**RESÚMEN:** Pasar de la formación inicial del profesorado a la docencia puede resultar difícil. En Escocia, un año de inducción garantizado para aquellos que cumplen con el Estándar para el registro provisional ayuda a la transferencia de estudiante a maestro con la provisión de un mentor de inducción y una carga docente reducida. Sin embargo, después del año de iniciación, la tutoría y la reducción de la docencia se detiene y no se organiza una asistencia específica para los docentes en etapa inicial a nivel de autoridad nacional o local. Este documento informa sobre los problemas que enfrentan los maestros de carrera temprana en la transición de maestro de año de inducción a maestro completamente registrado en Escocia. Durante un estudio de dos años de métodos mixtos de profesores de año de iniciación en Escocia, se entrevistó a cuatro participantes después de su primer año de enseñanza, que es su primer año como profesor totalmente registrado. En entrevistas semiestructuradas se preguntó a los profesores sobre su aprendizaje profesional y sus necesidades de apoyo. Los participantes destacaron cuestiones relacionadas con el cambio de escuela, el trabajo como profesor suplente, el aprendizaje de las observaciones, el apoyo de los compañeros, las relaciones con los alumnos y su futura carrera. La investigación muestra cómo existe una necesidad constante de apoyo para los profesores de carrera temprana más allá de su año de inducción.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje profesional temprano; inducción de maestros; aprendizaje profesional docente; retención de maestros; apoyo de enseñanza.

## INTRODUCTION

Across the world the recruitment, retention and quality of schoolteachers are of major concern to governments, local authorities and school administrators (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Long et al., 2012). Difficulties for new teachers are a decades-long issue (Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018) and have led to studies on the recruitment of teachers, people's motivation to become a teacher, dissatisfaction with being a teacher (Madero, 2019), teacher attrition or dropout (Buchanan et al., 2013) and how teachers can be supported in their early career. The focus in this paper is the support for early career teachers in Scotland as they move from their first year of teaching, called the induction year, into and during their second year of teaching (also known as their first year as a fully registered teacher). Previous studies have found that teacher attrition can be reduced by providing professional learning opportunities and supportive work environments, for example professional learning communities (Buchanan et al., 2013; Simos, 2013) and that school culture and context are important (Long et al., 2012). National teacher induction schemes with elements such as regular observations and feedback, guaranteed non-teaching time, an expansive learning environment, and mentor support can improve both teacher retention rates and in the longer term, teacher satisfaction and motivation (Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Support for new teachers can lead to them feeling less isolated (Schuck et al., 2018) and help in their professional growth (McNally, 2016). Context has been found to be of key importance with calls for a residency period for early career teachers, similar to a medical residency, during which time new teachers could be supported while learning and experimenting (Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018). Teacher induction has been theorized as an ecosystem with different niches of activity and support (Olsen et al., 2020). During new teachers' first years of practice, mentoring, school environment and informal learning all play an important role and these can be understood as occurring on a continuum from expansive to restrictive (Unwin & Fuller, 2003; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Jurasaite-Harbison, 2009; McNally & Blake, 2010; Attard Tonna and Shanks, 2017; Shanks et al., 2020). This is similar in other professions where informal learning and workplace environment are key factors in early career learning (Eraut, 2007; Billett & Somerville, 2004) and to the teaching profession in all

career stages (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005). Practices that can support new teachers include collaborative working, recognition by and support from the headteacher, the provision of cross-school experiences, opportunities for personal development beyond local and national priorities and the professional learning framework of the school (Attard Tonna and Shanks, 2017).

Here these issues are explored in relation to the national context in Scotland which is detailed below. The objective of the research is to explore the experience of early career teachers in Scotland, to understand the best ways they can be supported in order to increase retention of new teachers. Moving from initial teacher education into teaching can be difficult (Flores, 2001; Eick, 2002) and in Scotland a guaranteed induction year for those who meet the Standard for Provisional Registration during their initial teacher education programme helps the transition from student to teacher with the provision of an induction supporter/mentor and a reduced teaching load. However, after the induction year the mentoring and reduction in teaching stops and there is no specific assistance organised for early career teachers at a national level. Therefore, this paper reports on the issues that early career teachers face in the transition from induction year teacher to fully registered teacher in Scotland. After the completion of a mixed methods study of two cohorts of induction year teachers in Scotland, four of the original interviewee participants were interviewed after their induction year. The teachers were asked about their professional learning and support needs. The participants highlighted issues related to changing schools, working as a supply teacher, learning from observations, support from colleagues, relationships with pupils and their future career. The research shows how there is an ongoing need for support for early career teachers beyond their induction year.

## NEW TEACHER RETENTION

New teacher retention and attrition rates, alongside exit patterns, have been studied in many countries (DeAngelis & Presley 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018). These studies have generated knowledge on why teachers leave, and what types of support can reduce attrition. Some factors are structural or at the school level, for example administrative support (Boyd et al., 2011), while other factors are at the individual level and are related to demographics or burnout (Borman & Dowling, 2008). In a study into the reasons people gave for leaving the teaching profession, the factors such as workload, level of support, working conditions, the status of being a teacher and salary were identified (Buchanan, 2010). Workplace conditions including the school's behavioural climate or classroom discipline are a reason for teachers to leave (Buchanan, 2010; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Buchanan (2010) also found that those under 30 or over 50 years old, and those with the higher qualifications, were more likely to leave teaching. It has been found that there is a high rate of attrition for new teachers (Tamir, 2010). It is possible that a lack of acknowledgement of the challenges that new teachers face may be exacerbating their problems (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Schools may also interpret in very different ways what support means or should consist of (Engvik & Emstad, 2017). There can also be positive situations where new teachers who are working in supportive environments are more likely to ask for help and more likely to overcome problems (Flores, 2001). The widespread use of induction programmes shows there is a consensus on the benefits of providing new entrants with support at the beginning of their teaching career (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010). Teacher induction has become an increasingly regulated area of government policy due to concern over teacher retention and attrition rates for newly qualified teachers. In France an induction period for schoolteachers was introduced in 2005 while in the United States of America and Canada there is a mixture of provision which differs at both state and local level (Sacilotto-Vasylenko, 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

## Scottish context

Unlike other parts of the United Kingdom, in Scotland there is only one route to qualify as a teacher for state schools, namely through a higher education programme of initial teacher education provided by eleven higher education institutions in Scotland. In the twentieth century there were concerns with the old system of teacher probation which did not guarantee any continuity of employment, in particular:

new teachers on broken employment learn a number of things. They learn to cope alone. They learn not to seek help. They learn that there is no infrastructure to support them. ... They learn that they have to be pro-active to make anything happen. They learn to see themselves as classroom fodder. ... [they may] become an unquestioning accommodator to the system in which they are employed. They learn, in short, how to survive in the short term within a rather technicist view of the job of teaching.... miss learning to manage the job in the long term and ... they therefore miss an important dimension of teaching as a professional task (Draper et al., 1997, 292-3).

After Draper et al.'s (1997) research, a joint development, the Teacher Induction Project, was set up by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and the General Teaching Council for Scotland to consider the arrangements for new teachers and to draft a standard for new teachers (Standard for Full Registration) to meet by the end of the probation or induction period (Christie & O'Brien, 2005). A report on the professional conditions for teachers led to a simplified career structure and a guaranteed induction year for all newly qualified teachers (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001). (For the history of teacher probation before 2002 see Shanks, 2020). More recently the Donaldson report (2011) provided a series of recommendations relating to whole lifespan of teacher education from initial teacher education to teacher induction and career long professional learning but after some initial work on the recommendations many have not been implemented. Hulme and Menter (2014) reported how the proportion of permanent contracts for new teachers had significantly decreased and further concerns led to a Scottish parliamentary report which noted that teacher retention levels were in need of improvement (Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee, 2017). In 2021 there have been increased calls to do more for newly qualified teachers in Scotland as many face unemployment after their induction year (Devlin, 2021).

From the 2002 introduction of the Teacher Induction Scheme, all newly qualified teachers in Scotland who are eligible to live and work in Scotland, have been guaranteed a one-year teaching contract. For posts beyond the induction year, teachers have to apply for temporary or permanent posts or apply to become a supply teacher with a local authority. During the induction year in Scotland new teachers are provided with a number of supports to help them in their transition from student teacher to fully registered teacher:

- a reduction in classroom teaching, namely 0.8 of a full-time teacher's contact hours
- remaining 0.2 time to be used for continuing professional development
- a supporter/ mentor to oversee, guide and assess the new teacher
- observations by the supporter/ mentor
- planned continuing professional development by the school and local authority
- personal continuing professional development
- extension if Standard for Full Registration (SFR) has not been reached in a year but there is the potential to attain it.

In the Scottish induction scheme, there is a combination of the features identified as beneficial by Bartlett and Johnson (2009) in their research: New teachers are provided with a mentor in their field, management communication, reduced teaching, and they may have common planning time, new teacher seminars and they may have an assistant but this will depend on the pupils' needs rather than the new teachers' needs.

Once a teacher in Scotland has successfully achieved the Standard for Full Registration, they are treated the same as all other registered teachers and do not receive any extra support as a new teacher. While the teacher induction phase has been well-researched (see Shanks, 2020) there is limited research in Scotland on the second year of teaching. While covering teachers' early careers, Fenwick's (2011) study concentrated on new teachers' professional learning in relation to the curriculum. The experience of early career teachers in the second year of teaching in Scotland is of particular interest to discover how the induction year helps in their transition from student teacher to qualified/ registered teacher and what extra support might help to reduce teacher attrition. This study will provide insights into how the teacher induction scheme and the early career teacher phase in Scotland could be improved. As teacher retention

is a worldwide problem the study findings can point towards support that could be useful in other national contexts. Kukla-Acevedo (2009) referred to the need for further qualitative research in this area. The study sought to answer the following research question: What are new teachers' experiences in their transition from teacher induction into their first year as a fully registered teacher in Scotland?

## METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework for this research is based on an interpretative methodology with the research participants' explanations of their understood social reality being accepted as providing insights into their lived experiences. A community of practice approach to learning was focused on in relation to their learning as new entrants to the field of teaching who were undertaking legitimate peripheral participation as they embarked on their teaching career (Lave and Wenger, 1991). While there are criticisms of the community of practice model for early career professional learning it still provides many benefits for understanding the experience of early career teachers (Shanks, 2014).

Participant recruitment in the initial study was done via requests for volunteers from students who were finishing their initial teacher education qualification and were about to begin their induction year in Scotland. For this study the interviewees in the initial induction year study were asked if they would take part in a further interview. Four of the eight interviewees agreed to be interviewed during their early career as a fully registered teacher. All four had an undergraduate degree and had then completed a one-year bridging programme (Professional Graduate Diploma in Education, see Shanks, 2020) at the researcher's institution. The researcher was not involved with their programme or any of their courses. One of the interviewees had done the qualification to become a primary school teacher and the other three interviewees had qualified to become secondary school teachers in a mixture of subjects. All the interviewees were female. No other demographic information is provided in order to ensure their anonymity. Ethical approval was granted through the researcher's institution and the interviewees signed consent forms, read information sheets about the research study and were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

The reason for using semi-structured interviews was so that while the same topics would be covered in each of the interviewees, the order of the topics and the detail that was provided would depend on what each particular interviewee spoke about (Cohen et al., 2018). This was to provide answers that were as spontaneous, rich and specific as possible (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In semi-structured interviews the teachers could tell their own stories in their own words but at the same time this tool ensured that each participant discussed the same issues, within a pre-defined framework through the interview guide. This semi-structured approach meant the interview could be more like a conversation for the interviewee (*ibid*). Issues of importance to an interview participant could be probed in greater depth and questions that were not relevant or might be insensitive to the interviewee were missed out.

Before each of the interviews the researcher re-read the interviewees' previous two interview transcripts so that an in-depth exploration of their particular transition from 1st to 2nd year of teaching could be ensured. The interviewees chose where they would like the interview to take place and they were conducted in one of the schools and different cafés. The secondary teachers did not work in the same school and none of the interviewees knew the identity of any of the others. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim and then imported into the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted line by line, identifying and categorizing similar expressions and ideas and finding certain recurring themes (Saldana, 2016). It is important that the data analysis is carried out in a thorough and transparent manner (Cohen et al, 2018). It was just as important to look for disconfirming as corroborating data while searching for patterns and explanations. Coding and codes were reviewed throughout the process of analysis. Each interview transcript was then read closely at least twice, and codes were created and applied to the text as it was read and re-read. The coding can be described as exploratory or inductive and a description of each code was written so that it was possible to return to the data and follow a consistent application of the codes (Saldana, 2016). This iterative process of coding and recoding continued until there were no new codes to create and the existing coding structure seemed robust (*ibid*). Multiple coding took place when an

interviewee gave a detailed explanation of something and either all or segments of the explanation were then put into more than one coding category, for example support from colleagues and learning from observation. By categorising and sorting the data it was possible to produce a list of key themes (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Although there is no guarantee that first impressions will be avoided altogether, easy access to the data meant that interview transcripts could be revisited easily and as everything is dated the data analysis can be checked, for example to see whether one particular code was used only at the beginning of the coding process. The coding descriptions were exported from NVivo to generate a codebook for the study. The software was used in order to code each interview transcript in the most efficient way. It also enables quick searches of all the interview data through the text search query tool, for example when looking to see when mentors or observation were mentioned to ensure that these references had all been appropriately coded (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The findings below are presented by code/theme.

## FINDINGS

The findings are presented in separate but interconnected sections; firstly, job security; support from colleagues during the second year of teaching; learning from observation; and lastly, learning from pupils. These were the codes/themes identified in the interviews as the teachers discussed their entry into the teaching profession and how supported they felt. In order to understand and improve teacher retention, it is important to consider this transition period.

### Job security

One of the interviewees mentioned that the difficulty of obtaining permanent employment after the induction year meant that ‘there is a feeling that they [induction year teachers] are cheap labour and then you get ditched after a year.’ A focus on their future career was found in the interview data during the analysis of the transcripts. While the interviewees had permanent, temporary or supply work they all mentioned future plans related to their teaching career. Teacher 1 said: ‘you do your year and you put everything into it and then there’s nothing at the end of it, is an issue at the moment.’ One teacher was already embarking on a course to be a Guidance Teacher (responsible for pupils’ pastoral care) which is a route to promotion in secondary (i.e., post-primary) schools while another teacher was enjoying being settled in one school with a permanent job so that they did not have ‘to learn a new school, new pupils as well’ (teacher 2). While teachers 1 and 2 had permanent posts in secondary schools, teachers 3 and 4 were working as supply teachers and one of them does not plan to stay as a supply teacher for much longer as they want to have a permanent position whether that is in teaching or another profession. She said: ‘I don’t want to be 30 and still looking for my first permanent full-time job’ (teacher 4) and was planning to look into other options if she hadn’t secured a permanent position by the end of that school year.

Teacher 2 had decided not to do a full-time job in her second year of teaching for family reasons. She said that because she was at one school doing supply work, she felt like a permanent teacher rather than a supply teacher. This teacher was surprised that ‘there’s no kind of formal showing you round, finding out where things are’, however she had decided to do this herself and was glad that she had done. She felt that as a supply teacher ‘you fall between two stools. You’re not ...., it’s quite a, you know, and there’s no one really to...you don’t really have a line manager.’ She saw how different schools could be, expressed as ‘chalk and cheese’ because ‘each school you go to is so different and I think the large schools have a lot going for them.’ She preferred larger schools because there were more people to go to for help than in a much smaller school.

Teacher 3 moved from their induction year school to another school with a similar catchment area, but her new department was larger than the previous one. The differences she mentioned between the induction year and the first year as a fully registered teacher related to teaching the highest school qualification in her subject and doing the full spread and teaching every year at secondary school rather than repeating classes and covering fewer years, so she had the full spectrum.

When speaking about supply teaching, teacher 4 said ‘it was a long 80 minutes when you were sitting there just, you know, babysitting really’ so it was much more enjoyable when she was able to teach part of what the pupils were doing, for example in an ICT class. She spoke of the uncertainty of being a supply teacher:

being in different schools, even going to different departments, it kind of felt like that whole process of, what am I doing, what does everyone think of me ... am I doing okay kind of thing, that kind of started up again for a while because, you know, you don't know the people that you're working with, you don't know what their expectations are, how they work ... what the school's like and so on. (teacher 4)

Teacher 4 mentioned that when starting as a supply teacher ‘first of all it seemed odd not going to the same place every day’. When asked if they found a difference in how schools treated her as a supply teacher, teacher 4 said:

... sometimes I was treated like a sort of alien species kind of thing, not by all staff ... It was certainly not the case at X but some of the schools that I was in less often, even when I was in a [subject] department, it was very much, like well, who are you?

... I think...I don't know, I mean I guess it must be kind of trying when you're getting new staff coming in all the time but at the end of the day we're all there to do the same job and I just felt sometimes people were being obstructive. ... it wasn't the case all the time ... and some people were very...you know, very welcoming and, you know, sort of saw supply staff as the sort of saviour kind of thing [laughs]... (teacher 4).

This teacher described the move to supply teaching as like being ‘in a million different places.’ While thinking back to her induction year experiences, she hoped to find a different experience with:

senior members of staff who impart the benefit of their knowledge without being patronising and without treating you like a second class citizen ... it was okay to be new and that actually it was quite beneficial to be new and fresh and, you know, just out of the packet kind of thing and that actually you had something to offer and that you weren't a...a burden to be borne. (teacher 4).

Teacher 1 spoke of how only when she was in a new school, did she realise that things were not so good where they first went as a new teacher:

then I came here and it's just completely different, you know, it's got a very strong head of department and a very strong PT [Principal Teacher] and the people that are in the department are very, everybody is happy and friendly and, you know, and they work really hard but they have, you know, they go out for dinner and we meet every lunch, I've never, I hardly went for a coffee in the staff room last year, I'm there every day and people meet at lunch time as well and it's much more sociable and I think that makes a huge difference to how you enjoy your working day.

This highlights the ‘hit and miss’ of the induction year process and the allocation lottery for new teachers. However, teacher 1 thought that the difficulties she had encountered had made her ‘more resilient and it made me believe in myself in spite of things rather than because of things and coming here that gives me the confidence to try different things and the fact that I’m in an environment that’s supportive makes all the difference.’

## Support from colleagues

Teacher 1 spoke of a better experience in their second year of teaching and receiving more feedback from her head of department:

and he was very, very positive about how it was all going, so I never had that last year and I think that's just made me much more comfortable in, in what I'm doing and just getting on with it, but it, and I've learned, I've learned a lot from, from the people around me, ..., the departmental meetings are a lot more structured ... and I think that approach sort of fits quite well with me because it's quite structured and organised and you don't spend hours going round in circles on things, you know. (teacher 1)

One of the teachers had received useful support from a teacher in their school during their second year as a teacher, for example 'I've discussed quite a lot with her, but more at an individual pupil level or sort of techniques for handling those that need more support'. This teacher had previous work experience and she recognised that this was advantageous:

it depends on what life experience you've had before, ..., and what, how confident you are in yourself as to what, how you go about getting the support you need and I, like I said, I tend to have found likeminded people within school that I would ... towards and they tend to be my age or older almost and I think that's because I've worked before and I've been the young one and, so you get used to finding these people that, and it just happens, you know. (teacher 1)

Teacher 3 referred to being able to learn from her job-share partner and to the open plan of the school she was in and how that helped to gain confidence and support from colleagues:

it's much easier to sort of get advice and ideas and to speak to other people because there's a lot of people around and they're all very willing to help and give you ideas, ... you can just network much more easily if you like and talk to people, but the fact that it's open plan is quite interesting because you can hear everything from the teachers, the fact that they are dealing with things as well whereas perhaps you wouldn't ... you might not tend to do it yourself but as I say it makes you feel that we're all kind of in the same boat rather than feeling very isolated. So, I think it's the lack of isolation that really nice about it. (teacher 3)

As in the initial study on the induction year, support from colleagues continued to be important into and throughout the first year as a fully registered teacher. The interviewees spoke of the help and support they received from their colleagues. One of the teachers had had a very difficult time in their induction year and when they went to courses with other induction year teachers, they had found it difficult:

I think the support networks are fine, it's just that I felt I was...I didn't feel able to make as much use of the meeting other people and the talking things out because I just felt that I was on a different planet to everyone else and so it wasn't very useful to me because I just thought if people were sort of busy and getting on with things and ... there was no one else in that situation. So, I think they just...they didn't understand where I was coming from and I'd say that I just felt really isolated even though I had...I mean it was nice to get out of the school to sort of...kind of an element of normality if you like, but when things were going very badly it did actually make you feel even worse about it at the time. (teacher 3)

## **Learning from observation**

For the professional learning of new teachers there is a marked difference between the first and second year after completing initial teacher education in Scotland. Induction year teachers have a reduced teaching load so that they can devote 20% of their time to professional learning, a mentor allocated to them and events organised for induction year teachers. Once the induction year is completed

there is no ongoing support, nor is there a gradual reduction in support or a transition period from the induction year to the first year as a fully registered teacher.

The interviewees had to seek out their own mentoring opportunities post-induction. The interviewees referred to learning from observations and the difference between staff observing them teaching over the year when they were a fully registered teacher as compared to during their induction year which they had to be assessed in. For teacher 1 the observations by the headteacher and deputy headteachers and their head of department put their mind at rest rather than causing them to worry in advance. She had also been to observe her head of department teaching and this had made a very positive impression on her and she was now emulating his practice as described below:

was a real eye opener that he just would sort of get up and start this and he started talking about what had happened in Haiti and the news and then it lead onto all these other things that were what they were doing in class, but ... I thought that was really clever to sort of structure it that way but it seemed completely unstructured, you know... (teacher 1).

The quotation above shows how useful observing colleagues during the early career phase of teaching can be. However, this is not as common a practice as might be expected. During the induction year with a reduced timetable of 80% teaching workload it is easier for the new teachers to find time to observe others. Teacher 2 had found it harder to find time to observe colleagues in their first year as a fully registered teacher with a full teaching workload:

I do think shadowing, observing classes is really good and I haven't done any of that here, ... [you] learn an awful lot from it I think ... through talking to other people as well that you learn quite a bit how people go about tackling certain topics but you do find that you know less of what's going on in the rest of the school. (teacher 2)

She had found a team-teaching session with a colleague very useful and said that she learnt from trial and error. She also found writing down things in a notebook very useful covering:

staff meetings, things when I've been talking with [the head of department] about how to teach certain things. ..., and I find that, yeah, a really useful way of just writing things down to remind myself about different things and it's a record in there so I can go back to it and just check the details as to what it was. So, ..., yeah there's a lot to be said for informal learning. (teacher 2)

One of the teachers understood that as well as learning from others they could also share their ideas with others:

I do think it is a kind of give and take, sometimes by, you know, sort of sharing your own ideas, you get ... ideas from others and sometimes by seeing something happen or doing something yourself and thinking, oh that worked really well and that didn't ... think it's kind of a building up and amending as you go process. ... You just kind of have to play it by ear ... because it's so changeable by the nature of the job as well, you know, you're working with people so people change so ... you know, the learning and teaching has to as well. (teacher 4)

In some primary schools in Scotland the school is open plan with no dividing walls between the classes and thus lends itself to teachers observing each other which teacher 2 found useful.

## **Learning from pupils**

For the new teachers, learning from pupils was important. This highlights how the new teachers had moved on from concerns about themselves and their teaching to concerns about their pupils (Fuller, 1969). This also suggests more learner-centred pedagogical thinking on the part of the teachers.

Teacher 1 said 'I think, I said last year that you almost learn from the pupils and every class is different' and teachers 3 and 4 had similar opinions:

I mean you learn from children because you sort of...you teach them something in a certain way and there's always the ones who don't get it and you have to think "Well okay what can I do to help this particular child" so you...all the time you're kind of thinking "What can I use, what can I say or how can I tweak this to make it more um useful to them or more interesting to them". (teacher 3)

changing schools, it's made you aware, even more acutely aware of the fact that every class is different and every class is different on every day you have them [both laugh], ..., you know, so you can learn from the pupils because, you know, not even so much the things they tell you but from things that they don't tell you and ... the way that they're being...sometimes even the way they come into the room ... indicates what the lesson is going to be like. Had a boy cartwheel into the room the other day which kind of indicated the way that that lesson was going to go. But it's positive, you know, can sometimes be positive as well that if you see the kids coming in excited about something (teacher 4).

As can be seen above, those with supply positions were concerned about their job situation and for all the new teachers support from colleagues was very important. In terms of their learning, they spoke of learning from observation and learning from pupils with the latter showing how they had progressed from focusing on themselves to focusing on the pupils.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored new teachers' experiences during the second year of teaching in Scotland and provides insights into how early career teachers understand their time as a new teacher and how they could be better supported in their transition into teaching. The findings differed with previous research on early career teachers as the teachers who had not secured permanent employment placed a great deal of emphasis on job security. This insecure employment after the induction year is a recurring feature in the Scottish teacher employment landscape and there are growing calls for action to address this (Devlin, 2021). The new teachers also referred to the lottery of school allocation in the induction year, the support they received from colleagues, how they learned from observation and how they learned from their pupils. The teachers' experiences show how there is an ongoing need for support for early career teachers beyond their induction year as noted by Schuck et al., (2018) and McNally (2016).

The guaranteed induction year post in Scotland is for one school year so during this time new teachers must look for work for the following year. This can cause anxiety during an already busy and stressful time as a new teacher who has to be assessed against the Standard for Full Registration by their mentor and head teacher (Shanks, 2014). The findings above show the difficulty in being a new teacher in Scotland with a very supportive induction year followed by difficulties in finding employment afterwards. Not all new teachers gain permanent employment as a teacher immediately after their induction year, for example some obtain work as supply teachers. The findings in this study concur with other research in that new teachers are looking for supportive school environments with opportunities to be mentored and to learn (Unwin & Fuller, 2003; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Jurasaite-Harbison, 2009; McNally & Blake, 2010). This has been found in relation to other early career professionals as well (Eraut, 2007; Billett & Somerville, 2004).

Rather than approach new teachers' experiences in a deficit way, Paniagua and Sánchez-Martí (2018) argue that an innovation-based frame of reference is required so that new teachers are not simply inducted into the existing ways of teaching. As shown by the teachers' accounts the level of support for new teachers seems to vary greatly between schools and therefore is harder to change through measures solely aimed at supporting new teachers. While the extra support in the teacher induction scheme helps in the first year of teaching it would appear that a more tapered approach over the first three or five years would provide more benefits, especially if greater job security could be provided so that new teachers are not experiencing the vulnerability of having to fit into their induction year school

in order to achieve the Standard for Full Registration and a good work reference (Shanks, 2014). The teacher who was working in supply and who did not want to wait for permanent teaching work much longer fitted into one of the categories that Buchanan (2010) identified as more likely to leave the profession.

Support from colleagues was important to the new teachers interviewed for this study and this echoes findings from Buchanan et al. (2013) who found that a supportive environment and opportunities for professional learning were the two key indicators for teacher retention. Similarly, Long et al.'s (2012) review of literature on induction and mentoring found that collaborative school cultures which value new teachers and see their support as everyone's responsibility are more likely to retain new teachers. A unique contribution from this research is the importance that the new teachers placed on learning from their pupils. This has not been highlighted in previous studies of teachers in the early years of their teaching career.

There are several limitations with this study, in particular the small number of self-selecting participants. The results are not generalisable but this was an exploratory study and what the teachers said was consistent with each other and what they had previously spoken about in earlier interviews in the preceding study. Their rich descriptions which have been quoted in detail and explanations of their thoughts and personal situations during their induction year and their second year of teaching provide useful evidence on the lived experience of being an early career teacher in Scotland in the twenty-first century. Common themes across the interviews which echoed findings from the wider study of induction year teachers in Scotland indicate the possibility that the interviewees' experiences are experienced in a similar way by other new teachers. What is worrying is that for those working as supply teachers their experiences echo what Draper et al. (1996) found under the previous system of teacher probation. Further research is necessary to uncover the extent of difficulties in finding permanent employment and the uneven level of support between schools for new teachers.

Implications for policymakers, academics and practitioners are related to the system of support for early career teachers and whether this should all take place in the first year of teaching or be spread across the first two, three or even the first five years of teaching. Implications for those in teacher education relate to ensuring that student teachers have a realistic understanding of what teaching entails. Buchanan et al. (2013) suggest that teacher educators ensure that as they enter the profession new teachers are resilient, reflective, resourceful, responsive to pupils and their school context and understand the importance of relationships. As the national teacher induction scheme in Scotland approaches twenty years in operation, it is an opportune moment to consider how it could be improved for its next twenty years. To date the only major change to the national teacher induction scheme has been the increase in class teaching time from 70% to 82% after the economic crash in 2008. In contrast to the lack of change to the induction scheme, the Standard for Full Registration has been reviewed and revised three times – in 2006, 2012 and 2021 (see <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards-2021-engagement.aspx>). From this study we can see that a one-year induction scheme may not be sufficient to successfully anchor new teachers into the teaching profession. A tapered system of support may be more useful over at least the first years of teaching. Learning to teach is an ongoing process and should certainly not be regarded as coming to an end after a one year induction period.

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