Beyond the Terrors of Performativity: Teachers Developing at the Interface

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Thesis overview

- Exploring the lived experience of being a teacher in neoliberal times

- How are teachers portrayed in the literature?

- **Ball's 2003 paper**

- What stories do teachers tell?

- Figured world theoretical lens – What does it add?

- What does this mean?

Theoretical Framework
Figured Worlds

Builds on Foucault and Bourdieu but adds Bakhtin:

- Heteroglossia

- Authoritative Discourse

- Internally Persuasive Discourse (IPD)

- Agency is a result of IPD and heteroglossia

Methodology

Three Case Studies: Experienced Comprehensive School Teachers

Narratives

Identity through stories and self-understandings

Tools for Analysis

- Positionality
- Figurative and Positional identities
- History in person
- Voices – heteroglossia
- Authoritative discourse – performativity
- Internally Persuasive Discourse
- Self Authoring
- Boundaries and Interstices

Stephanie	Sarah	Jasmine
• 50s • Head of Maths • Trapped • Feels watched by all • Believes in right data • Looking for positive voices • Position becomes disposition • Resistance vs acceptance • Crab Bucket	• 30s • MFL teacher Assistant Head • Upward trajectory • Part of the gaze • Learning about dark data • Benefitting from voices • AD and IPD lead to a strong position • Appropriation • Lucky	• 40s • Art teacher UPS3 • Moving to primary sector • Gaze in the displays • Data ambivelance • Seeks out positive voices • Positions herself differently • Rejection • Data dyslexic

Stephanie

"I do think at times that the environment that I've been in, that it has been quite negative and quite draining... there are times when I actually don't think that I'm that good, Claire."

"I don't actually think that I'm that good and it's only when I go to other places and I make a point of going..."... and when I start to join in, and people are going 'ooh, that's a good point she's made' 'ooh that...' and I think, 'yeah, I am not that bad really, I do know what I'm talking about'."

"it's strange, because now I'm getting this opportunity to talk to you, here I am nurturing and supporting, but I actually don't feel nurtured myself. I don't feel supported myself"

"I would just like to have a period where I feel a little bit more in control and that I've got some answers, and that would give me security."

Sarah

"I understand that, if we all work as a team, and we all do the same thing, we can spend our time doing other things. So, I buy in to that, but I'm conscious of it. I'm conscious that there are some things there that are not, I know they are not important in themselves. I just know they're a part of what we do, and I know what we do is working."

"And it seems to be all very professional, and it's not overtly used in any way to, you know, as a stick to beat anyone with, but you can't escape the fact that the monitoring is there. And even though there is a high level of trust in people - you know, our books aren't scrutinised, we don't have book scrutiny, we don't have set agendas for department meetings, there's a high level of trust – there's a high level of monitoring as well."

"And I think, again, I'm quite lucky. I've got quite a bit of freedom and autonomy in how I do things, which is quite nice, and I'm being paid, and I've got a mortgage, which is quite nice."

"If I woke up tomorrow morning and decided I wasn't marking those books, then I wouldn't do it. It doesn't often happen, but I know I've got the choice."

Jasmine

"There were a few years that I remember thinking, 'I'm getting paid for this. This is brilliant. I'm getting paid for this job.'"

"So, you know, I almost feel a bit, like, 'I don't want to know your data. I just want to do my best for you, and I recognise in the way you are, as a person, and what your work's like, what I can do for you' Those numbers don't come into it as much."

"Yes. So, yes, so I'd got to the point, last year, I knew I needed out of Tree Hill…. thinking 'This is nothing like it used to be,' in the sense that I used to bound around thinking, 'I'm getting paid for it' and now the kids are walking out, and I'm going, 'Fucking hell. I need to get a new job.' (Laughter) Yes, and I think I'd done my time there; time for a fresh start."

"I went in thinking, 'I don't just want to be a cover teacher. I want to go in and do more.' Because the idea of, like, bringing the artist into the school, and taking the kids out on trips, and doing community art projects, and all that kind of thing, really excites me."

Strong Stories

- Push back against Ball's binary choices
- Values and market values meet at the interface
- Teachers do not have values schizophrenia, they are heteroglossic
- Heteroglossia means that teachers negotiate their positions and their identities within the specific context and their choices are not limited.
- Performativity has become an authoritative discourse, as has Ball's description of the teacher
- Teachers are nuanced, and resourceful.
- They make choices based on a continuum within the boundaries and the interstices of discourse and positions which they understand well.