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MEDIATING 'SCHOOL DIRECT': THE ENACTMENT OF A REFORM POLICY BY UNIVERSITY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATORS IN ENGLAND

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Abstract

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'School Direct', a policy of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government after the 2010 general election, is generally regarded as one of the most significant reforms to ITE in England. A 'school-led' route to a teaching qualification, School Direct was founded on a partnership between a 'lead school' and an accredited training provider (DfE, 2014a). The policy emerged at the same time as a constellation of policies that entrenched the academisation of schools and re-asserted (in the words of the 2010 White Paper) 'The Importance of Teaching' (DfE, 2010a). School Direct can also be understood as the continuation of an older frustration among governments with the role of universities in ITE (Brown, 2018) and it was introduced simultaneously with fundamental reforms to higher education in England, including the tripling of student tuition fees and the withdrawal of direct state funding to arts and social sciences courses.

For many in teacher education, School Direct initially represented something of an existential threat to universities' place in teacher preparation (e.g. McIntyre, Youens and Stevenson, 2017) as it sought to shift control and resources from universities to schools. However, there has been relatively little research specifically about School Direct. We report here on one aspect of our ongoing study into the impact of Coalition and Conservative teacher education policies on universities and schools from 2010 – 2014. This paper analyses the mediations of the School Direct policy by university leaders of ITE – Directors of Teacher Education or

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their equivalent in university management hierarchies. Further, by showing how the leaders made sense of School Direct and how their enactment of the policy can be understood in the emotional context of turbulent change, the paper also contributes to the socio-cognitively informed literature on policy enactment by foregrounding the emotional-affective dimension of sense-making.

School Direct: policy and research

'School-led' policy in England after 2010

For decades, there has been restlessness amongst governments in England determined to reform ITE (Whitty, 2014), 'based on a combination of neo-liberal and neo-conservative approaches' (Childs and Menter, 2013). However, the period from 2010 onwards has been among the most accelerated periods of change in the sector (McNamara, Murray & Phillips, 2017), characterised by a rapid policy turn to a 'school-led system' of teacher preparation away from a legacy system dominated by universities and the one-year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) qualification.

Central to this turbulence was the 2010 Coalition government and, particularly, the policies of Education Secretary Michael Gove. Gove's intention was to change the balance of power *and* content of ITE programmes, advocating that the 'strongest schools will take the lead and trainees will be able to develop their skills, learning from our best teachers' (Gove, 2010 p.23). Gove's emphasis was on the 'craft' or practice of teaching in distinction to the 'theory' he saw promulgated by 'the Blob' and other 'enemies of promise' in universities (Gove, 2013).

The emergence of a 'school-led' direction in ITE policy can be traced to a 2008 paper by Gove's future special advisor, Sam Freedman. Freedman and colleagues proposed that:

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> Rather than remaining a marginal activity, we believe that school-run, employment-based routes in teaching should become the default option for new trainees and recommend the development of variations to suit different groups (Freedman et al., 2008, p.34).

Reforms announced in 'The Importance of Teaching' signalled a shift from ITE as a 'marginal activity' for schools, seeking to give 'outstanding schools a much greater role in teacher training' (DfE, 2010a, p. 3). The white paper was also distinctive for its presentation of educational policy problems as issues of equity and social justice, exemplifying the use of a 'crisis' or 'equity frame' that Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo (2016) identified as characteristic of reforming governments in England. This framing has been used to justify the extension of privatisation and marketisation policies to the public sector and, in this instance, justify the rapid pace of the Coalition's reforms:

> The importance of teaching cannot be over-stated. And that is why there is a fierce urgency to our plans for reform. (DfE, 2010a, p. 7)

The details of School Direct did not emerge fully until the publication of the strategy document 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers' (DfE, 2011a (June)) and the 'Implementation Plan' five months later (DfE, 2011b (November)).

To gain traction, School Direct relied on the political rhetoric targeted at influential headteachers in favour of a 'school-led', fully academised system as well as the emphasis on school-to-school support and the creation of chains of academy schools with instincts to 'grow their own' (DfE, 2010b). Another important factor in its emergence was its coordination with the policy that created a national network of 'Teaching Schools' (DfE,

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2010a), incentivising ambitious schools seeking Teaching School status to engage with School Direct.

In disrupting existing structures, School Direct was intended to challenge those with a 'vested interest in maintaining a university monopoly over teacher training' (Simmons 2013, np) whilst also satisfying headteachers who, it was claimed, thought universities were not producing enough good teachers. Indeed, according to Dominic Cummings (Gove's special adviser at the time), 'Gove's team was inundated (from 2007) by heads of good schools saying 'PGCE XYZ is rubbish, please do something about it, give us control of the money'' (Cummings, 2014, p.10). Despite this, according to the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, the inspection agency in England), the quality of universities' ITE provision remained high (Ofsted, 2013). Cummings, however, challenged Ofsted's judgements, claiming that the content of ITE courses had not been inspected and this was 'only reversed after we asked [Sir Michael] Wilshaw to do it when he first took up his job' (Cummings, 2014) as Ofsted Chief Inspector. Whatever the veracity of the criticism, headteachers' influence was critical, politically, in creating the conditions for mobilising School Direct as a policy idea.

The 'allocation model'

In 2013, the government announced changes to the methodology for allocating the number of places for student teachers at the various ITE providers. This new 'allocation model' adopted a 'hierarchy approach to allocating places' (Teaching Agency, 2013, p.7) for training teachers, which only guaranteed student numbers (i.e. funding) for providers rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. This change was followed by prioritising School Direct salaried applications (a fully employment-based training route), School Direct tuition fee applications

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(where the student was not employed by the school) and 'good school-led provision' (i.e. School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)) ahead of *any* provision owned by universities that was rated 'Good'. Universities rated 'Good' by Ofsted were therefore effectively placed fifth in order of priority for funding, with a consequent threat to their viability if they failed to include School Direct in their provision. Consequently, whilst inspection grades had previously been one element in the allocation of training places, during this period they became a significant lever for influencing universities' engagement with School Direct.

From an initial target of 500 in 2011, by 2014, in excess of 9000 (out of approximately 32000) student teachers were being prepared through the School Direct (Fee) and School Direct (Salaried) routes (DfE 2014b). Despite this rapid growth, School Direct has never been evaluated by the DfE nor has it been the specific focus of inspection by Ofsted.

The funding of ITE in England

The period during which School Direct emerged was a time of significant higher education funding reform. Tuition fees were introduced by the New Labour government in 1998 (Teaching and Higher Education Act, 1998). Following the 2010 election and the Coalition government, they were increased to a maximum of £9000 a year for undergraduate courses and the PGCE at the same time as direct funding from central government ended. From 2012 onwards, universities were entirely reliant on fees paid by ITE students. Although there was some limited price competition between providers, a university's income from ITE was effectively controlled by the government through the allocation model. If they wished to recruit above the government-allocated number for their 'core' provision, universities were

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obliged to enter into new arrangements for School Direct places that were more freely available.

One of the main costs to ITE providers in England historically has been the fees paid to schools for working with student teachers on placements, which are usually around £1000 to £1500 per student teacher. With the emergence of School Direct, however, these fee arrangements were to become the focus of a new kind of negotiation.

Researching an historically significant reform

Surprisingly little research exists specifically about School Direct. Whilst there has been increasing research interest in the work, roles and identities of teacher educators over the same period (e.g. Murray, Czerniawski & Kidd, 2017, Authors), including those based in schools (e.g. White, Dickerson & Weston, 2015), the majority of the available research about School Direct offers broadly policy-sociological analyses. For example, Jackson and Burch (2016) describe School Direct as 'the most far-reaching change in ITT [Initial Teacher Training] in England' for twenty years as it 'divert[ed] the flow of funding from universities to schools' (p. 513). McIntyre, Youens and Stevenson (2017) suggested that School Direct saw the 'disappearance of the university and the student teacher' from the discourses of teacher education, arguing that 'university voices have been systematically marginalised and, in some cases, silenced' (p. 154). Murray and Mutton (2016) and Whiting et al., (2016) endorse this point of view. Horden (2014) examined School Direct as a 'model' for ITE programmes against an existing European typology of partnerships with schools.

Both government and independent research organisations produced analyses of existing ITE data sets and neither offered any evidence of immediate benefits, as a consequence of School

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Direct, from a more diversified market for ITE. For the government's National Audit Office (NAO), the new landscape of multiple, often very small providers did not supply 'good enough information' to allow potential students to 'to make informed choices', noting that the situation had 'been widely described to us as confusing' (NAO, 2016, np). Allen et al., (2016), for the Institute of Fiscal Studies, whilst noting that the retention rate for both School Direct routes was slightly higher than the PGCE in the year following qualification, also noted that about a third of primary headteachers involved with the School Direct salaried route reported that 'the benefits were less than the costs'.

Of the two available studies that generated original qualitative data specifically concerning School Direct, George & Maguire (2019) focused on student choice in a diversified market by seeking 'to chart and explore the perceptions and experiences of trainee teachers' (p. 23) on three routes: the PGCE, School Direct salaried and School Direct unsalaried. Interviews with four 'trainees' from each route showed that students 'didn't have one single reason for their choice' (p. 27), suggesting their choices were multi-factorial.

In the second study, beginning in 2013, Brown (with Rowley and Smith) investigated the School Direct initiative from the perspective of university-based teacher educators, school-based mentors and 'trainees.' Brown and colleagues noted that 'local market conditions shape teacher education provision' (2018, p. 22). In an environment in which 'changes to trainee allocations had contributed to uncertainty and constant flux within university education departments' (ibid.), they suggested that an Ofsted 'Outstanding' grade gave some universities an advantage in being able to 'hold the line' and not work with schools who wanted to change the balance of the programme too much in schools' favour. Brown and colleagues interpreted this as the 'balance of power' moving away from universities (p. 26).

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Our study contributes to research on School Direct by examining the retrospective accounts of enacting the policy given by a sample of leaders of ITE based in universities. Our goal has been to understand how these leaders made sense of the policy with regard to their networks of relations with other institutions (including competitor universities and schools).

Studying accounts of enactment: design and methods

This study can be situated within a tradition of policy-enactment research (e.g. Braun et al., 2010), within which people are seen as 'creative and sophisticated' and whilst 'most are also very firmly embedded in the prevailing policies discourses', they are nonetheless agentic (Ball et al., 2011, p. 636).

Our interest was not to categorise the actions of individual 'policy actors' *within* a context as much as to examine institutional policy enactment *activities* - more or less creative, collective and social mediations of policy (e.g. Spillane et al., 2002). From this perspective, policy enactment activity *is* the context: the individual and the context being mutually constitutive. To this extent, our approach is therefore aligned with the activity-theoretical, socio-cognitive perspective of Spillane, whose research has shown how:

> Social agents' actions are situated in institutional sectors that provide norms, rules, and definitions of the environment that constrain and enable action. … although institutional arrangements structure human sense-making they do not obliterate human agency, which shapes these arrangements (Spillane et al., 2002, p. 734)

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From an activity-theoretical perspective, policy may be regarded (in an ideal sense) as an artefact or 'tool' with which participants (referred to as collective 'subjects') work together on change (Engeström, 1987). These subjects are drawn together by their volitional desire (again, in a prototypical sense) to work on an 'object' – an aspect of their shared social world. This collective endeavour can be mediated (in both enabling and constraining ways) by social norms, social structures (including the economic and technological) and a formal 'division of labour'. Activity-theoretical studies therefore often seek to understand how people 'construct the object' of their activity (Miettinen, 2005) by analysing their accounts of participation in that activity. More recent iterations of this analytic approach have placed greater emphasis on the emotional context for human activities such as work, invoking the concept of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1971). Indeed, Roth and Jornet (2016) identified an 'exponential increase of interest in the term' (p. 315) over the last thirty-five years.

Smagorinsky (2011) suggested that *perezhivanie* is 'a complex construct that roughly translates to "emotional experience"' (p. 320) while Blunden (2016) noted that, as a Russian word, *perezhivanie* is a 'countable noun' (p. 275) and so should be preceded by an article or given in the plural (*perezhivanya*) in the same way as the Deweyan concept of 'experience' (Dewey, 1939). The significance of *perezhivanya* in understanding how different people construct the object of their activity lies in its function as a 'refracting prism'(Veresov & Fleer, 2016, p. 325) of their individual perception: it is the unconscious emotional lens through which people perceive opportunities within their environment related to the activities in which they are participating. *Perezhivanie* is therefore a useful concept in understanding the 'emotional-intellectual organization' (Rey, 2016, p. 307) of individuals' sense-making: it provides insights into how emotional frames produce forms of consciousness that lead people to organize their work in particular ways.

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Studying the *perezhivanya* of university leaders of ITE can enhance Spillane's more socio-cognitive theoretical approach to policy enactment by foregrounding the emotional-affective dimension of mediation. Spillane's research is also critical in understanding the sense-making activity of *leaders* of ITE specifically, who are often positioned at a mid-point in institutional hierarchies and therefore subject to strong and potentially contradictory structural influences from above and below, representing a specific organisational political challenge (Spillane et al., 2002).

Data generation and analysis

To address the question '*How did university leaders of ITE make sense of the School Direct policy in England between 2010 and 2014?*', we designed a study based on semi-structured interviews with university leaders to elicit a reflective insight into their sense-making in institutional context and how they accounted for the construction of the object of their activity in enacting the policy. We did not include accounts of school leaders and so are not offering a third generation activity theory analysis (Engeström, 1999).

We identified the Directors of ITE (or equivalent, with responsibility for School Direct) during the period 2010 – 2014 at universities in two former Government Office regions in England, referred to as regions A and B. Three post-holders were untraceable having retired or resigned and 3 did not reply to invitations to interview or declined. Our sample therefore consisted of 10 Directors of ITE, 4 in region A and 6 in region B, with 6 universities categorised as 'new' (i.e. granted university title after 1992) and 4 categorised as 'old' (i.e. university title pre-dating 1992) and usually regarded as more research-intensive.

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These two regions represent, at the time of writing, more than 11,000 entrants to ITE, equivalent to approximately one third of all ITE activity in England (DfE, 2018). The balance in favour of respondents from the new universities in our sample reflects the overall balance of ITE provision, with the majority of teachers qualifying from post-1992 universities. Details of our sample are provided in Table 1. We are not claiming this is representative of the sector in England as a whole. Our purpose was to study how School Direct was made sense of as a policy within institutional contexts in the retrospective accounts of leaders in two regions that are significant in overall ITE provision.

TABLE 1 HERE

The average length of experience of university-based ITE work among those in our sample was 10.9 years (as of 2010). The actual years of experience varied from 5 to 23, with the majority having worked in universities for over a decade.

Recruitment and work with participants were conducted according to the British Educational Research Association's most recent ethical guidelines (2018), with all participants consenting on the basis of anonymity. Interviews were conducted by both researchers by telephone between September 2018 and January 2019 and audio-recorded. The recordings were transcribed by a research assistant and the transcriptions checked against the recordings by both researchers. All transcripts were subject to an initial, inductive thematic analysis by each researcher independently. Our approach was structured by the 'clearly demarcated' thematic method of Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82). We also drew on the work of Nowell et al., (2017) in following a process that would build trustworthiness.

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After this preliminary analysis and the identification of initial codes, both researchers shared their coding and evaluated the stretches of interview discourse in relation to individual codes and emerging themes. A subsequent re-coding of the data, informed by sensitising concepts from our theoretical perspective, led to further debriefing between researchers and what Nowell et al., (2017) refer to as 'triangulation', a consideration of the 'validity of individual themes … to determine whether the themes accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole' (p. 9). Having achieved consensus in relation to the data set, we defined the themes and began writing a report on our analysis. Table 2 summarises the stages in our data analysis and the relationships between initial codes and final themes.

TABLE 2 HERE

As academics working in teacher education in England, we need to acknowledge our positionality in the research. Universities are often felt to be subject to critique by policymakers regarding ITE and this can prompt researchers to take a defensive stance. We recognise that reform of teacher education has been a legitimate activity of successive governments in England for decades, and that changes in relationships between key partners (schools and universities) are inevitable. Further, following Ball's (1997) injunction to policy researchers, we have attempted to avoid using 'theory as finger pointing' (p. 269). Rather, our aim has been to study the enactment of School Direct by university leaders of ITE to reveal how they made sense of the policy. Our concern has not been with the direction of the policy itself which, in elevating the contribution of schools, is consistent with one strand of ITE reform internationally (Darling-Hammond, Burns & Campbell, 2017).

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Making sense of School Direct

We identified five themes across the data set: we are defining two as policy enactment activities and three as emotional frames for policy mediation. We understand an activity as goal-oriented, socially situated and mediated sense-making in the form of collective responses to School Direct. The first three themes were identified consistently across the data set. The final two were identified by fewer respondents; 'denial' was apparent in only one leader's account.

1. ***Fearing uncertainty: an emotional frame for mediating policy***

With two exceptions, all respondents used 'uncertainty' when discussing their initial feelings about School Direct's introduction. In all other cases, 'fear' and 'anxiety' were used frequently to describe the emotional context of institutional situations. According to Ann at Harbourside University:

> People felt that there was an absolute threat to the future viability of university ITE and people's own jobs. I think there was a lot of anxiety about what the future might hold.

David (Riverside University) recalled feeling that there was 'a possible danger of us ceasing to exist altogether'. Eric (Urban) said: 'I thought we didn't have long…. I felt that very quickly the rug was going to be pulled'. For Hannah (Woodside), 'it seemed like the death knell'. Even leaders such as Jill (Civic), who remembered feeling 'neutral', recalled that her colleagues were 'either upset or angry or saw it as a threat'.

Only Brian (County) and Chris (Lakeside) recalled feeling that, despite the 'fear', there were opportunities in the 'challenge' of School Direct. Of salience to Brian was School Direct's

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potential to recapture the lost momentum of the shift to school-based ITE in 1992 whereas Chris had a long-standing, personal interest in 'partnership working'.

In the two cases where 'fear' and 'anxiety' were not used, Frank (Parkside) and Geoff (Foundation) referred to influential 'senior management' (a dean or head of school) who were either 'very strong in building relationships with schools' (Frank) or advised 'try[ing] to embrace School Direct even if that meant to the detriment of our core provision' (Geoff). These senior managers were reported as having long experience and expertise in ITE; both were from 'new' universities.

2. *Bargaining for change: a policy enactment activity*

All ten respondents recounted the complexities of negotiating new financial arrangements for School Direct. Several recalled being positioned by schools in ways that reminded them of reality TV shows such as 'Dragon's Den': having to 'pitch'; being part of the 'football transfer [market]'; and getting into a 'bidding war' as 'bidding was about securing the business' (Frank). Some respondents recalled feeling the bargaining process was unnatural and inappropriate. David noted a lack of precedent and a matter of principle:

> we've not been proactive in selling ourselves for lots of reasons but mostly, I think partly there's a philosophical thing – we don't want to do it.

Brian recalled 'providers' being 'lined up in a room and the message was "pitch at me to see whether we want you"'. According to Ann, in these situations, some schools claimed '"oh, we can get that cheaper from X [university]"'.

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All respondents also recalled difficulties in calculating financial costs for the new ways of working. They needed, for the first time, to break down university and school contributions into units and put an economic value on those units using financial models not always fit for purpose within the context of competition with other providers. Geoff spoke about the rise of entrepreneurial headteachers emboldened by the 'school-led' rhetoric, recalling 'a huge fallout with one of our headteachers who actually said to us, she wants to make £100,000 and we said, this is just never going to happen'. In three cases, interviewees reported 'subsidising School Direct' (as Hannah put it) by giving more to schools than was financially sustainable. The 'subsidy' was regarded as politically necessary (to 'stay in the game').

Within our sample, variations existed in what universities were paying schools and there was a lack of clarity about what schools were being paid for. Whilst for typical PGCE placements, a school might be paid approximately £1200, under School Direct some schools were paid up to £4500 with (as Brian noted) no expectation of additional input or training. In other circumstances, schools were paid much less for placements but with additional sums available for working with larger numbers of student teachers or taking on extra responsibilities. Eric recalled saying to schools: 'you do the interviews and we'll give you more money . . . £2000 - £2500' (rather than £1500). Again, these sums appeared to be notional rather than reliable calculations.

3. Re-balancing the status quo: a policy enactment activity

Whilst nine respondents identified tensions in bargaining with schools, eight also recalled using negotiation of the financial aspects of School Direct agreements to re-negotiate existing partnerships. As Ann (Harbourside) put it, 'you realised it was really about money and they weren't really thinking about what they were getting for their money'.

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Eight respondents recalled identifying opportunities to maintain existing arrangements or address issues in their existing partnership practice. Chris (Lakeside) recalled:

> I felt that some very fuzzy lines that had been drawn in the past … perhaps had a chance at being tightened up now and things had a chance of being made a little bit clearer through the development of new partnership agreements.

The bargaining process also offered universities the opportunity to be more responsive to their School Direct partners by asking 'is there anything that you think ITE should be doing that, at the moment, we aren't agreed to and what is it?' (Hannah). For Hannah, this process resulted in agreeing that 'a lot of the things that they [the schools] wanted were entirely sensible and you know, we were happy to go along with'.

In eight cases, the brokering resulted in forms of School Direct that might be regarded as 'in name only' – where joint plans were so aligned with existing practice in the universities' provision that 'there was virtually no difference from the unsalaried route to our normal PGCE' (David). This approach was further illustrated by Jill who, despite initially trying to reshape existing provision, was advised by the university's external examiner to 'bring the whole thing together'.

4. Recognising lost potential for transformation: a retrospective emotional frame

Whilst a minor theme in terms of explicit references in interviews, a notable feature of all interviews was that the concept of 'partnership' between schools and universities was highly valued. Reflection emerged in five interviews along the lines that the university sector 'had

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been a bit trite' (Ann) regarding the extent of genuine collaboration within their partnerships with schools before School Direct. According to Brian, before 2010, some universities were still seeing schools 'as somewhere to place our students'. For Ann, School Direct had stimulated a 'respectful conversation' aimed at achieving deeper and 'more genuine' collaboration; Eric noted it had 'changed relationships for the better'. For the majority of respondents, though, the testing of relationships meant that, as Jill put it, 'We've still got the partners we had before School Direct'.

For seven respondents, School Direct had increased their awareness (at least retrospectively) of the potential of genuine collaboration between schools and universities to transform the work of ITE through re-configuring 'partnership', even if they had been re-brokering the same relationships. Some respondents remarked that conversations about making 'the relationship much more concrete' (Frank) had begun, particularly as School Direct partners had 'learned a huge amount about how complex ITE is' (Ann). Eric noted schools' heightened understanding about the challenges of selecting student teachers. However, these potential openings to conversations about reconceptualising programmes, changing their design or reconfiguring the division of labour between schools and universities did not lead anywhere in any respondent's account.

When asked how they felt about the School Direct reform five years on, Brian commented 'It had the potential to deliver a higher quality teacher education'; Eric noted that it had meant 'there were real opportunities to do exciting things with schools'. Four respondents articulated this lost opportunity explicitly; it was also an underlying sense in the other interviewees' accounts.

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5. *Denying School Direct: an (outlying) emotional frame*

All respondents gave the impression that they recalled making sense of School Direct 'pragmatically', believing that non-engagement would damage their institution's financial viability. Eric remarked: 'We just needed a huge allocation to save our business. It was nothing more than that'.

There was, however, one example of apparently deliberate disinclination to make sense of the policy – a form of denial. David moved to the 'old' Riverside University from a similar role at a 'new' university in order, he explained, to work somewhere that 'wasn't dependant on teacher training'. Nonetheless, he found that Riverside couldn't 'afford to take that risk' so he had to engage too. Moving jobs, at least in part to avoid making sense of School Direct, was unique in our sample.

Discussion: Emotion, marketisation and change

Our analysis of interviews with university leaders of ITE has led to the identification of three emotional frames and two policy enactment activities in relation to their mediation of School Direct. The strongest initial response was to *fear uncertainty*, often expressed as anxiety or even existential threat. This initial emotional frame for perceiving School Direct was followed by two related enactment activities – *bargaining for change* and *re-brokering the status quo* – in and through which financial negotiations appeared to lead to incremental adjustments to existing PGCEs. In four cases, we found an explicit, retrospective framing of *recognition of lost potential* for transforming ITE during the enactment of School Direct. In one case, we found a strong emotional frame of *denial*.

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This case of denial was interesting also in confirming that there were no apparent differences in making sense of School Direct related to whether the university was 'new' or 'old'. Often in England, assumptions are made about the most research-intensive universities responding to government policy in more critical or enlightened ways. These assumptions were not borne out in our sample. Indeed, even 'old' research universities with comparatively small ITE provision were reported as enacting the policy in very similar ways, as David (Riverside) found out. Additionally, contrary to Brown's (2018) research, we did not find that 'Outstanding' and 'Good' providers responded significantly differently. Although it is not possible to conclude from our data, the similarity of these universities' reported enactments of School Direct may be explained by factors including the scale of ITE provision at each university relative to the proportion of overall funding ITE contributed to the budget. It may also be that ideals about 'staying in the game' (of ITE), as several respondents put it, sustained universities' engagement.

From our sample, School Direct programmes designed during 2010 - 2014 seemed to exist in a close or even parallel relation to universities' core provision. In 2014, 9232 students were training through School Direct. Figures for entry to ITE in 2018 show almost one third (10270 of 29085) trained through School Direct (DfE, 2018). Our data and the national picture do not suggest the 'categorical redefinition' of ITE and teacher educators' work that Brown (2018, p. 28) identified nor the total 'disappearance' of the university that McIntyre et al., (2017) and others suggested. Rather, School Direct co-exists with other modes of ITE and remains heavily dependent upon universities; it appears to have been incorporated into the *status quo*.

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We now offer further analysis of the emotional frames and enactment activities in relation to the methodological and theoretical approaches we outlined earlier.

Emotion and institutional sense-making

Uncertainty was the overwhelming, initial emotional context of the enactment of School Direct for all respondents, with all but two also reporting their own and colleagues' fear and anxiety. The concept of *perezhivanie* foregrounds the 'emotional-intellectual organization' of these leaders' mediations, personally and institutionally (Rey, 2016, p. 307). According to Brennan (2014), *perezhivane*:

> unifies affect and intellect. The context or event changes as it is 'refracted' through emotion. Emotions act to orient and adjust each person's relationship to the environment' (p. 286)

From this perspective, the emotional lens through which the environment is perceived determines the individual's response to it. Perception of the environment – whether at the level of recognising opportunities to participate in a practice or work together– has long been regarded as a critically important dimension of learning and change at individual and organisational levels (Gibson 1979). Even from a more cognitive psychological perspective, anything above a notional 'optimum' level of occupational stress has increasingly significant detrimental consequences for decision-making (Lupien et al., 2007). From a cultural psychological perspective, however, our perception of these opportunities through the 'refracting prism' (Veresov & Fleer, 2016) of our *perezhivanya* can influence collective, institutional responses in that emotions are shared, social phenomena (Fleer at al., 2017). If a policy is perceived as a threat, it is likely to produce a different emotional response to one

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perceived as having potentially beneficial institutional consequences. The *perezhivanya* of leaders is therefore likely to affect organisational decision-making.

In our sample, we see leaders reporting superficial, institutional appropriations of School Direct as a policy artefact in an emotional context where it is perceived as a threat. In their accounts, we see School Direct displaced as a potential tool for 'expansive learning' (Engeström, 1987), collaboratively with school partners, to become a rule for participating in the new quasi-marketplace of ITE provision, their *perezhivanya* dominated by fear and uncertainty. School Direct was enacted by appropriating it primarily as a rule of 'the game' where the object of the policy enactment activities was the financial viability of programmes.

This does not mean that other potential constructions of the object were absent in the leaders' interview discourse. Some leaders perceived new opportunities for collaboration with schools and commented on the *lost potential* for transforming ITE retrospectively. The mediation of the policy was not only influenced by the environment (in terms of the policy and structural constraints) but also by leaders' evolving perception of that environment *and* their historical consciousness of possibilities for the future of ITE. By revealing the emotional-affective dimension of the work of policy enactment, the concept of *perezhivanie* enhances the more social and structural focus of the policy enactment research tradition, including the more socio-cognitive approach of Spillane.

Marketisation, complexity and change

Whilst the organising principle of School Direct was an extension of an already existing quasi-market (Bartlett et al., 1994), the creation of a true market of ITE providers based on price competition and quality was not the primary intention. The intention was to shift control

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and resources from universities to schools; to redefine teaching as a 'craft' and establish a new basis for its 'importance'. Creating what, according to the NAO (2016), was an almost unnavigable multitude of choices between providers was, we suggest, a side-effect of the primary intention. Increasing choice in a market – the functional logic of neoliberalism – was the most conventional justification for change and a means of achieving the desired outcome of shifting the basis of authority and control through the disruption of existing funding structures.

Wendy Brown's analysis of neoliberal rationality identifies 'the model of the market' as its standard operating procedure 'even when money is not at issue' (Brown, 2015, p. 31). Referring to 'the paradox of neoliberalism' (p. 48), she describes:

> An order replete with contradiction and disavowal, structuring markets it claims to liberate from structure, intensely governing subjects it claims to free from government, strengthening and retaining states it claims to abjure. In the economic realm, neoliberalism aims simultaneously at deregulation and control (p. 49)

School Direct is a paradigmatic example of the neoliberal policy paradox of appearing to deregulate and open up a public sector quasi-market while simultaneously strengthening state control. The proliferation of choice, as the NAO noted, did not offer benefits to the consumer (the prospective student teacher); their capacity to make informed choices was hindered by the increased complexity (NAO, 2016, p. 16). The benefits have rather been political in initially presenting a picture of growth in numbers of students following 'school-led' ITE routes.

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Concluding comments

The period of our research involved unprecedented, disruptive and rapid change for ITE in England. Long-standing frustrations by successive governments with the role of universities in teacher education met a distinctive neo-conservative focus on 'the importance of teaching' channelled through 'school-led' rhetoric directed at an increasingly entrepreneurial class of headteacher. Within a university sector coping with a new funding regime for undergraduate and PGCE courses, providers were compelled to engage in negotiations likely to reduce their ITE income while having to assume even greater accountability risks for the work of schools. Given little choice but to engage with School Direct, it is perhaps unsurprising that many universities' engagement predominantly sought to mitigate the risks they perceived. Within the sample, the result has been the sometimes uneasy coexistence of School Direct programmes alongside universities' core provision, often with minimal differences. For these universities, greater 'competition' has not led to significant re-conceptualisations of university-partnered, school-based ITE; often, the minimal changes are a consequence of bargaining to reduce costs for universities and increase income for schools. Although School Direct may have initially felt like a 'death knell', some ITE leaders retrospectively have considered it a lost opportunity for positive change.

Stuart Hall argued that the 2010 UK Coalition government's policy was 'arguably the best prepared, most wide-ranging, radical and ambitious of the three regimes which since the 1970s have been maturing the neoliberal project' (Hall, 2011, p. 22), despite the apparent complexity and confusion introduced through marketisation. Nonetheless, from respondents' accounts concerning the period 2010 – 2014, other than giving the appearance of a shift in the balance of ITE provision, there has been little if any fundamental change. Schools, if they choose to participate in School Direct, seem to have acquired more influence (if they choose

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to exercise it) and marginally more funding. At a time of crisis in teacher recruitment and retention (historically, often a reason schools have chosen to take part), however, it is likely they are still struggling to fill vacancies. School Direct may have been designed to be wide-ranging and ambitious – and may have achieved its intention of temporarily disrupting business-as-usual – but its effects have hardly been radical. As a policy for the reform of ITE, it has instead been re-appropriated to serve existing institutional interests, albeit with the appearance of greater competition and choice, and through that re-appropriation, has sustained both the state's ideological agenda of influencing the nature of public education and the universities' critically important structural position in the preparation of teachers.

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#	*Region*	*HEI (pseudonym) and type*	*Interviewee (pseudonym)*
1	A	Harbourside University (new)	Ann
2	A	County University (old)	Brian
3	A	Lakeside University (new)	Chris
4	A	Civic University (new)	Jill
5	B	Riverside University (old)	David
6	B	Urban University (old)	Eric
7	B	Parkside University (new)	Frank
8	B	Foundation University (new)	Geoff
9	B	Woodside University (new)	Hannah
10	B	Central University (old)	Ian

Table 1: The sample of participants by region and university type in 2014

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Initial, independent coding	Second, joint coding and emerging theme	Agreed theme and analytic category
• Threatening • Uncertainty • Burden of responsibility • Future of university • Stress/health	• Threatening • Uncertainty • Burden of responsibility • Future of university *(Fearing)*	*Fearing uncertainty*: an emotional frame for mediating policy
• Brokering and negotiating • Financial discussions • HEI Competition	• Brokering and negotiating • Financial discussions • HEI Competition *(Bargaining)*	*Bargaining for change*: a policy enactment activity
• Negotiating the shifting balance of power • Division of labour • Convenient/inconvenient • Relationship negotiations	• Negotiating the shifting balance of power • Division of labour • Relationship negotiations • Negative relationships *(Re-balancing)*	*Re-balancing the status quo:* a policy enactment activity
• Partnership relationships • Unintended consequences • Joint conceptual negotiation	• Partnership relationships • Unintended consequences • Joint conceptual negotiation • Pseudo engagement *(Collaborating)*	*Recognising lost potential for reconfiguration*: a retrospective emotional frame
• Avoiding engagement • Pseudo engagement • Negative relationships	• Avoiding engagement *(Denying)*	*Denying School Direct:* an (outlying) emotional frame

Table 2: The relationships between initial coding and final agreed themes and categories

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