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'The ability to understand, in perception, the archetypal and intelligible forms that define perception itself'
– Robert Grosseteste



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Foreword

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Credits

Particular thanks go to James Duke and Dr Claire Thomson from the Centre for Enhancement in Learning and Teaching, and Stephen Macdonald from BGU Library Services, for their support in the production of this publication.

Welcome to the second edition of *Solertia*, BGU's academic journal which publishes a range of work submitted from postgraduate and undergraduate degree students from across the Faculty. This Spring edition foregrounds the colour orange from the prism in the *Solertia* logo. The multiple colours in the prism are a visual representation of the heteroglossial approach of the journal that seeks to capture different disciplinary approaches to research and ways of thinking across the University.

This edition includes two postgraduate articles from MA in Education and MA in Social and Cultural History programmes. The undergraduate submissions are from students on programmes within the Education, Health and Lifelong Learning, and Arts and Humanities portfolios. This edition also includes a co-authored article (Cragg & Dunn) written collaboratively by a Psychology student and an academic from the Psychology team. As editors, we would like to thank the students and Faculty for their support with submitting articles for publication and to the reviewers in assisting us with the selection process.

Thank you to the Centre for Enhancement in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and specifically to James Duke in Digital Learning for his publishing skills and support.



Dr Sacha Mason
Associate Dean for Research
Head of Programmes for Education,
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April 2022

Editorial Policy

Articles Submitted for consideration in *Solertia* originated as research projects undertaken by honours graduates in their final year of study at Bishop Grosseteste University. The original submissions achieved a first class honours award. Enquiries relating to submissions in future editions of *Solertia* should be directed to a member of the editorial team.

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Nicola Cragg & Thomas J. Dunn

This study aimed to determine the presence of imposter phenomenon (IP) within teacher training students, as well as compare the levels of IP between training courses. It also sought to determine links between social anxiety, self-handicapping, self-efficacy, and competitiveness with IP, as well as whether self-handicapping mediated the relationship between social anxiety and IP. Participants were recruited from two training courses (n=79), based at a UK HE institution and responded to a battery of psychometric scales. Results indicated that a number of character traits were related to IP and also that self-handicapping played a mediatory role in the relationship between social anxiety and IP

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How do ability grouping practices affect students' experiences of mathematics lessons in secondary schools in England?

Author

Emily Winfield

This small-scale literature review explores the impact of ability grouping practices in England on secondary school students' experiences of mathematics lessons, focusing on 'grouped' (e.g., according to ability) and mixed-ability classes. Previous research into ability grouping has primarily examined the impact of grouping practices on attainment and progress, however students' experiences are now being prioritised in school inspections above outcomes, meaning that a change of direction in research is required. Mathematics is frequently cited as a subject in which students have poor experiences, and therefore this is a focal point of the review. A systematic approach was taken to search for literature: a search protocol was created to outline the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and all studies that were considered for inclusion were rigorously assessed for relevancy and reliability. As a result of this, 9 pieces of literature were selected, and thematic analysis was implemented in order to analyse the data they presented. Overall, three broad themes were identified as having a bearing on students' experiences in mathematics lessons: teaching and learning practices, pupils' enjoyment of lessons, and pupils' belief in their ability. It was found that the ability grouping strategies adopted did have an effect on these three areas, and some commonalities were found in the experiences of different students as a result. However, it was also clear that every student experienced lessons slightly differently, and therefore some alternative perspectives were demonstrated.

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What are practitioners' and parents' perspectives on the influence of digital technology on children's development and learning in early years?

Author

Libby Smith

Children today are exposed to and surrounded by digital technology in their everyday lives. Research has demonstrated that the debate has shifted from whether children should use technology to how it can best benefit them due to their immersion in the digital world. Therefore, children need to be supported in learning appropriate skills to prepare them for their future living and working environments. However, there appears to be a dichotomy between children's experiences at home and those in educational settings. This is a small-scale qualitative study in which 14 practitioners and 16 parents completed an online questionnaire centred on key questions that would allow an insight into children's use of digital technology. A thematic method to analyse and evaluate data collection was used. The key findings demonstrated a strong correlation between; a balanced curriculum, mediation of digital technology use, effective collaboration between practitioners and parent, with influencing children's development and learning. If these issues are not managed successfully, barriers to successfully integrating digital technology into the classroom will be created. It is recommended that more research is undertaken, leading to a clarification of the impact of screen time on young children, and practitioners are given appropriate training and support for more effective integration of digital technology use in the classroom.

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MA chance to be better: how does ideology impact on academy freedoms to form curriculum policy?

Author

Elaine Crane

Curriculum and ideology are inherently linked, illustrated by the part they play in concurrent government agendas to improve educational outcomes for all pupils and compete in education and business on the global stage. A Neoliberal, market economy, ideology has been conceived as resulting in increased freedoms for schools so they can compete in a market and has meant that schools are encouraged to have a curriculum underpinned by the National Curriculum, developed to reflect educational research and local contextual needs. This contrasts however with government need to have ideological control over the emphasis of school policy and accurate measures with which to hold schools accountable. Using CDA methodology proposed by Fairclough (1989) and Appraisal Theory developed by Martin and White (2005) to scrutinise the National Curriculum and Education Inspection frameworks alongside two speeches espousing government ideology through curriculum, this study reveals that school freedom to create policy is powerfully impacted by neoliberalism, inevitably steering a course between reflecting its unique values and aims for the curriculum and complying with the demands made upon it in order to achieve a good OFSTED rating – arguably the most influential of factors in the educational market-place.

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A Historiographical Study of the Soldiers' Experience of the First World War

Author

Janet Taylor

Much has been written about the First World War, but the experience of the soldier was often excluded from traditional military histories. Interpretation of the soldiers' experience developed from traditional history where it was considered of no importance, through social history which uncovered and interpreted their stories, to cultural history which aimed to understand their experience in depth and place it in a wider cultural context. Research into the soldiers' experience continues to evolve. Recent historical studies have incorporated digital technologies and moved away from a national to a trans-national perspective. Historians have generally used very similar sources (such as letters, diaries and official documents) from archives and personal collections to extract evidence for their research, but the soldiers' experience has also been told by non-academics in war poetry, literature and memoirs. This historiographical study examines how interdisciplinary approaches have been used to reveal the soldiers' voice; why these changes came about; the impact of the methodology used by the historian, and how approaches from other disciplines helped to produce a richer understanding of the soldier experience of the First World War.

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To what extent did the draining of the Fens during the 17th century affect the local inhabitants?

Author

Michael Grummit

The Fenland drainage schemes of the 17th century have tended to be perceived as a triumph over nature; the sea-drenched terrain was transformed into essential arable land, while the number of catastrophic flooding events were terminated or reduced. However, previous research has neglected the consequences for the local inhabitants and underrepresented the involvement of venture capitalists and the State. By examining contemporary primary sources from lords to locals, this study modifies prior perceptions, repositions the motives for the reclamation schemes and questions their success. The study argues that the State and venture capitalists were resolute in increasing their revenue by securing the newly-drained lands, comparing its procurement with that of the acquisition of Colonial territories. Further, it contends that the establishment strengthened the case for drainage by employing negative propaganda; pictures and poems were used to mock the inhabitants and represented their wetlands as worthless. The study finds that although the Fenlanders had some high-level support and fought back with riots, poems, and ballads, the momentum was not in their favour. As the wetlands became increasingly desiccated, the ecology changed forever, causing numerous inhabitants to lose their livelihoods. Their rights to common land vanished as the schemes acted as a form of enclosure, replacing egalitarianism with private capital that still exists today.

Imposter phenomenon in trainee teachers

Abstract:

This study aimed to determine the presence of imposter phenomenon (IP) within teacher training students, as well as compare the levels of IP between training courses. It also sought to determine links between social anxiety, self-handicapping, self-efficacy, and competitiveness with IP, as well as whether self-handicapping mediated the relationship between social anxiety and IP. Participants were recruited from two training courses ($n=79$), based at a UK HE institution and responded to a battery of psychometric scales. Results indicated that a number of character traits were related to IP and also that self-handicapping played a mediatory role in the relationship between social anxiety and IP.

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Introduction

Imposter phenomenon (IP) is a widespread construct experienced by approximately 70% of the world's population at least once in their life (Harvey & Katz, 1985). IP characterised by feelings of self-doubt, intellectual inadequacy and anticipated failure (Clance & Imes, 1978). Imposters tend to attribute their success to external factors such as luck and help from others rather than their abilities. They develop a belief that they are not intelligent, capable, or creative and consequently experience a feeling of phoniness (Clance & Imes, 1978; Hoang, 2013). IP was a term first coined by Clance and Imes (1978) when investigating the experiences of high achieving women. Since then, IP has been documented within a large range of the population including those working in health care, accountancy, marketing, education and law (Parkman, 2016).

IP has been linked with a number of psychological and emotional difficulties including maladaptive behaviours, anxiety, depression, self-criticism, neuroticism and emotional exhaustion (Bernard, Dollinger & Ramaniah, 2002; McGregor, Gee & Posey, 2008; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011; Clark et

al., 2014; Sonnak & Towell, 2001). It has also been shown to affect academic and job performance, job satisfaction, and can lead to higher levels of burnout (De Vries, 2005; Hutchins, 2015; Sims, 2017). Regarding education, students' assessment of teachers who experience IP is generally lower than teachers who do not experience IP, suggesting IP can impact an educator's ability to teach (Brems, Baldwin, Davis & Namyniuk, 1994). IP may also inhibit professional development through reduced voluntary undertaking of training and educational courses (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2002). It has been argued that this is because imposters believe they are not worthy of further training or that participation increases their chances of being 'found out' by peers, a concept which appears especially common in women (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2002).

Teacher training students

IP has been well documented in students across a range of higher education courses including, psychology, nursing and doctoral programmes (Ferrari & Thompson, 2006; Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008; Parkman, 2016; Craddock, Birnbaun, Rodriguez, Cobb & Zeeh, 2011). Within higher education, research has shown that IP can be

experienced by faculty members as well as students, most prominently by non-tenured staff (Hutchins, 2015). This suggests that development and experience of IP may be affected by job security. Research has also shown that IP is experienced by educators working with younger students such as within primary and secondary schools.

IP has been explored within both teachers and students independently (Hutchins & Rainbolt, 2017), however there is minimal literature exploring the experiences of students currently undertaking the transition from student to teacher, performing in both roles simultaneously. A large proportion of teacher training students have a strong notion of teacher identity (Malderez, Hobson, Tracey & Kerr, 2007) and research shows that the majority of trainee teachers believe that they must undergo a transition from 'non-teacher' to 'teacher' at some point during their training course (Malderez et al., 2007). This suggests that trainee teachers, especially towards the start of their course, may have a pre-occupation with their status as 'student' and/or 'teacher', resulting in an awareness of fulfilling a role they may not feel 'entitled' to (Malderez et al., 2007). Trainee teachers are surrounded by more experienced colleagues which may emphasise the disparity across roles as 'learner' and 'teacher' (Polach, 2004; Lane, 2015). Entering unfamiliar environments in which trainee teachers' expectation is uncertain, has been suggested to increase feelings of being an 'imposter' (Polach, 2004; Lane, 2015). Furthermore, increasing time in school-based placement and training has been suggested to result in less contact with students' social network, which have been shown to exacerbate IP-related feelings such as isolation, depression and self-doubt (Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig & Platt, 2010; Lane, 2015). In general, the literature suggests that trainee teachers may be highly susceptible to experiencing IP owing to the nature of the transition from 'student' to 'teacher'. Additionally, the switching of such roles, and therefore feelings of IP, may

be magnified during a period of placement, where a trainee teacher is faced with fulfilling both roles concurrently and may have reduced access to their typical social network.

Training course

There are several routes that students can take in order to earn Qualified Teacher Status in the UK (QTS). The two main routes include completing an undergraduate primary education degree with QTS or a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). There is no research currently comparing experiences of IP across these two routes into teaching. Both courses involve extended school-based placements, with a minimum of 120 days required to qualify, although this is undertaken in more concentrated doses by those on the PGCE course (Prospects, 2018; Bishop Grosseteste University, 2019a; Bishop Grosseteste University, 2019b). Those undertaking a PGCE may be particularly vulnerable to IP for a number of additional reasons. A PGCE is a short one-year course (Prospects, 2018; Bishop Grosseteste University, 2019c) and students are given little time to adjust and therefore for IP to decrease. Additionally, experiencing a role change quickly may impact the 'quality' of transition and lead to low self-regulation and consequently high IP (Sims, 2017). Alternatively, the undergraduate primary education degree is a longer course, spanning three years (Bishop Grosseteste University, 2019c), which allows for a more gradual increase in responsibilities and experience. This could potentially lead to lower instances of experiencing IP compared with the PGCE training course (Bertram, Mthiyane & Mukeredzi, 2013).

Character traits

The extant literature within education has focused on exploring the diversity and prevalence of IP (Hutchins & Rainbolt, 2017), however it is important to determine the potential links between IP and character traits. Identification of predictive traits can be used to inform intervention and

support strategies and reduce dropout rates within training programmes and in school development (Parkman, 2016). There are several traits that have as yet not been directly examined as predictors of IP, but ones which have a theoretical basis for being investigated. In particular, the interrelations between traits (such as the role of mediator variables) should be assessed to provide a more multifaceted understanding of the mechanisms behind experiencing IP as a trainee teacher.

Research shows that imposters believe they cannot fulfill the expectations of their peers or ideal image of a friend, partner or family member and so avoid social time due to fear of being 'found out' (Hoang, 2013). Social anxiety may feed into such beliefs, as it is characterised through an excessive fear of negative judgement by peers, fear of making a mistake and social avoidance and distress (Crome, Grove, Baillie, Sunderland, Teesson & Slade, 2015; Pabian & Vandebosch, 2016). Imposters feel as if they put on a false front socially, deceiving the world into believing they are good people, while they believe themselves to be selfish, hostile and mean (Hoang, 2013). Thus, an increase in fear of negative judgement (i.e., social anxiety) may feed into IP in three ways: i) by reducing engagement with growth and development, thus failing to overcome feelings of self-doubt and intellectual inadequacy, ii) increasing the anticipation of failure and thus enhancing feelings of being an imposter, and iii) avoiding work-based social contexts due to anxiety and thus reducing exposure to potentially disconfirmatory imposter-upholding information.

Research also points to the potential mediatory role of self-handicapping between social anxiety and IP. Self-handicapping is a cognitive strategy employed to help protect an individual's self-esteem by creating barriers to limit performance which can deflect attention away from an individual's ability, should performance be deemed as inadequate (Midgley & Urdan, 2001;

Schwinger, Wirthwein, Lemmer & Steinmayr, 2014). Methods of self-handicapping include procrastination, reduced effort, little or no practise/revision, fatigue and physical symptoms (Martin, Marsh & Debus, 2001; Urdan & Midgley, 2001). Self-handicapping has been shown to be used by individuals to modulate social anxiety (Snyder, Smith, Augelli, & Ingram, 1985). Snyder and Smith (1982) argue it may aid in reducing social anxiety by way of:

- (1) controlling attributions (made by oneself or others) concerning performance so as to discount the self-relevant implication of poor performance and augment the self-relevant implications of success, (2) avoiding the threatening evaluative situation entirely, or (3) maintaining existing environmental conditions that maximize positive self-relevant feedback and minimize negative self-relevant feedback (p.107).

The employment of self-handicapping behaviours to lessen social anxiety may have subsequent effects for feelings of being an imposter. Self-handicapping may limit performance for fear of failure, thus protecting potential self-esteem threat and reducing social anxiety, and in doing so could limit addressing feelings of inadequacy and ultimately maintain (or at least prolong) feelings related to IP. Furthermore, research has shown that there is a significant connection between self-handicapping and self-esteem (a construct linked to IP) in which individuals with higher self-esteem display lower levels of self-handicapping (Pulford, Johnson & Awaida, 2005; Clark et al., 2014; Topping & Kimmel, 1985). Evidence suggests moderate to high handicapping (e.g., procrastination) can be found in 50% of trainee teachers (Balkis & Duru, 2009). Thus, it may be the case that engaging in self-handicapping behaviours may increase the chances of experiencing feelings of being an 'imposter'.

Owing to the core role of self-related beliefs concerning performance in IP, it is important to examine related traits. For example, self-efficacy regards an individual's perception of their ability to complete a task or reach a goal successfully (Ng, Ang & Chan, 2008; Jansen, Scherer & Schroeders, 2015). Therefore, individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy may experience feelings

related to IP less frequently. Self-efficacy also correlates with several characteristics related to IP including neuroticism, self-confidence and self-esteem (Bernard et al., 2002; Clark et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2008).

Multiple authors highlight that environments where IP is frequently observed tend to be highly competitive, such as education and academia (Clark et al., 2014; Zorn, 2005; Hutchins, 2015; Hutchins & Rainbolt, 2017). Parkman (2016) points out that there has been much anecdotal evidence in the form of blogs and commentary from faculty (Bahn, 2014; Gravois, 2007; Kasper, 2013; Webb, 2013) to support the notion that highly competitive working environments 'create a setting conducive to feelings of self-doubt and fraudulence' (Hutchins, 2015, p.4). There is also existing indirect evidence which shows competitiveness-related traits such as Type A Behaviour Pattern (TABP), impatience, hostility, being work-orientated (Hayes & Davies, 1993), and the continuous endeavour to exceed previous performances (Schubert, 2013) are related to IP.

The current study

Thus, the aims for this study are as follows:

To determine the extent to which trainee teachers experience IP during the school-based placement component of their training.

To compare the experiences of IP within trainee teachers undertaking different training routes, primarily the undergraduate primary education degree with QTS and the PGCE.

To determine how well the experience of IP within teacher training students can be predicted by self-efficacy, self-handicapping, social anxiety and competitiveness.

To determine the mediatory role of self-handicapping in the relationship between social anxiety and IP.

Method Design

A cross-section design was used incorporating a battery of psychometric scales to measure self-efficacy, social anxiety, self-handicapping and competitiveness, and the dependent variable IP. Questions

regarding the demographics of the participants were also included (e.g. age, gender, and which qualification the participant was currently undertaking).

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to recruit the participants ($n=79$; female = 81%; mean age = 25.24 [$SD=3.56$]). Inclusion criteria required that participants were currently undertaking a teacher training course (PGCE, Primary education BA (Hons)) at the time of data collection and undertaking a school-based placement.

Materials

IP was measured using a short form of the Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS; Clance, 1985). This is a 10 item, 5-point Likert scale ('not at all true' to 'very true') in which a higher total score indicates higher experience of IP, with scores ranging from 10-50 (Clance, 1985). The CIPS has been validated by numerous studies ($\alpha=.96$) and has been shown to be highly correlated with IP-related constructs (Holmes, Kertay, Adamson, Holland & Clance, 1993; Chrisman, Pieper, Clance, Holland & Glickauf-Hughes, 1995).

Self-efficacy was measured using the General Self Efficacy Scale (GSES; Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). This is a 10 item, 4-point Likert scale in which higher scores indicate a higher level of self-efficacy. Each item is scored from 1-not at all true to 4-exactly true, the total score ranges from 10-40. The scale has been shown to produce reliable results across a range of cultures and languages including in Germany ($.89 \leq \alpha \leq .94$), Poland ($.86 \leq \alpha \leq .90$) and South Korea ($\alpha=.86$) (Luszczynska, Scholz & Schwarzer, 2005). GSES has also been shown to be reliable in terms of construct, convergent, and discriminant validity (Schwarzer et al., 1999).

Social anxiety was measured using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale – self report (LSAS-SR; Liebowitz, 1987; Rytwinski, Fresco, Heimberg, Coles, Liebowitz, Cissell & Hofmann, 2009). LSAS-SR uses 24 items to assess fear and avoidance which are measured from one to four (1-no fear to 4-severe fear; 1-no avoidance to 4-severe avoidance). When both fear and avoidance scores are combined, they can range from 48 to 192, with a higher score indicating higher levels of social anxiety

	α	Mean	SD	IP	SE	SH	SA	C
Imposter phenomenon	.82	33.68	7.50	-				
Self-efficacy (SE)	.85	28.70	4.29	-.345**	-			
Self-handicapping (SH)	.80	35.41	9.36	.427**	-.331**	-		
Social anxiety (SA)	.97	99.04	30.64	.469**	-.399**	.376**	-	
Competitiveness (C)	.93	34.24	9.61	-.304**	.221*	-.247*	-.567**	-

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, scale reliability, and correlation matrix between the variables of imposter phenomenon, self-efficacy, self-handicapping, social anxiety and competitiveness. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

(Rytwinski et al., 2009). LSAS-SR consists of two subscales, measuring responses to social interaction situations (11 items) and performance situations (13 items) (Heimberg, Horner, Juster, Safren, Brown, Schneier & Liebowitz, 1999). Test-retest reliability for the scale is good for both the fear and avoidance measures individually ($r = 0.79$; $r = 0.83$ respectively) as well as the scale as a whole ($r = 0.83$) (Baker, Heinrichs, Kim & Hofmann, 2002).

Self-handicapping was measured using the short form of the Self Handicapping Scale-Shortened (SHS-S; Strube, 1986). The shortened version consists of only 10 items and has a high recorded internal consistency ($\alpha = .7$) (Strube, 1986). Each item is scored using a 6-point Likert scale, from 1-disagree a lot to 6-agree a lot. Total scores range from 10 to 60, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-handicapping.

Competitiveness was measured using the Revised Competitiveness Index (RCI; Houston, Harris, McIntire & Francis, 2002). This is a 14-item scale which comprises of 2 subscales. The first subscale contains 9 items and measures an individual's enjoyment of competition (Houston et al., 2002). The second subscale consists of 5 items and measures contentiousness. Both subscales possess high levels of validity ($\alpha = .93$, $\alpha = .82$ respectively) and have acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = .85$, $r = .78$; Harris & Houston, 2010). The RCI is measured using a 4-point Likert scale, with each item marked from 1-very false to 4-very true. Scores range from 14 to 56, with higher scores indicating higher levels of competitiveness. The validity of this scale is

supported by a number of previous studies (Krägeloh, Medvedev, Webster, Henning, Hill & Booth, 2019; Luchner, Houston, Walker, & Houston, 2011).

Procedure

The survey was distributed in 2019 to teacher training students through an online university portal. During the period in which the questionnaire was available for completion, 79 trainee teachers responded from both PGCE and undergraduate courses. SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data.

Results

Please see Table 1 for descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations for each variable as well as all intercorrelations. Significant but weak correlations were indicated between each variable (see Table 1). In terms of level of agreement to the series of statements that relate to IP (Clance,

1985), 22% of teacher trainees' average score equated to 'very true'/ 'often true', 48% equated to 'often true'/ 'sometimes true', 26% equated to 'sometimes true'/ 'rarely true', and 4% equated to 'rarely true'/ 'not at all true'.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether IP was predicted by self-efficacy, self-handicapping, social anxiety, competitiveness, and training course, whilst controlling for age and gender. A significant regression was found ($F(7,70) = 6.13$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .38$), suggesting that the model explained 38% of variance within IP. Self-handicapping, social anxiety and training course were significant predictors of IP, while competitiveness, self-efficacy, gender and age were non-significant predictors (see Table 2).

Using Baron and Kenny's (1986) recommended criteria for mediation, a

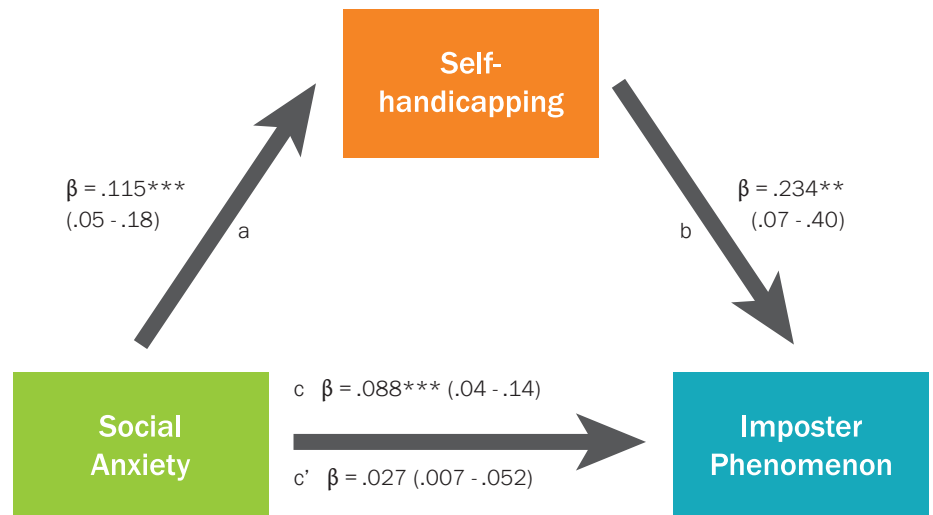
	β	SE	Beta	t	p
Intercept	28.79	12.41		2.32	
Self-efficacy	-.19	.19	-.11	-1.01	.32
Self-handicapping	.20	.10	.34	2.64	.01*
Social anxiety	.08	.03	.25	2.23	.03*
Competitiveness	-.00	.09	-.00	-.04	.97
Training course	-4.88	2.01	-.26	-2.43	.02*
Gender	1.16	1.98	.06	.59	.56
Age	-.05	.13	.13	-.35	.73

Table 2: Parameter estimates of all predictors regressed onto IP. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

further model was specified to test whether self-handicapping had an indirect effect on experiencing IP. The results showed a significant relationship between social anxiety and self-handicapping (path a), self-handicapping and IP (whilst controlling for social anxiety, path b), and between social anxiety and IP (whilst controlling for self-handicapping, path c) (see Figure 1). Importantly the model also shows a significant indirect effect of social anxiety, via self-handicapping, on IP (path c'). The model indicates that 29% of the variation in IP is accounted for by an individual's level of social anxiety directly and the manner with which social anxiety impacts self-handicapping behaviours.

Discussion

The current research sought to expand the literature on the psychological construct termed IP. It aimed to develop the conceptual understanding of this emerging multifaceted construct within the context of teacher training environments, as well as empirically testing theoretically derived traits that may account for variation in the experiencing of feelings associated with IP.



$F(16, 76) = 15.77^{***}$; $R^2 = .29$

Note: 95% CIs are in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1: Mediation model with unstandardized path coefficients and 95% CIs

Experiences thought to comprise IP (Clance, 1985) were considered 'sometimes true' to 'very true' by 70% of the teacher trainee sample. This is in line with previous research which suggests most people in the general population will experience feelings associated

with IP at least once in their lifetime (Harvey & Katz, 1985). Importantly, the results show that 22% of teacher trainees reported IP-related statements to be 'very true' of their experience, which suggests nearly a quarter of individuals training to become teachers

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encounter high levels of IP and therefore may be more susceptible to drop out and lower student assessments of their future teaching ability (Brems, Baldwin, Davis & Namyniuk, 1994; Parkman, 2016). This is in line with previous research that found 29% of newly qualified librarians (equitable to training levels) reported high levels of IP (Clark et al., 2014).

The current study also tested the hypothesis that students on training courses where they have longer to adapt and 'transition' from 'student' to 'teacher' will be less likely to experience IP, compared to students on shorter courses. This hypothesis was supported with the current findings whereby higher levels of IP were observed by individuals enrolled in the PGCE course compared with the QTS-aligned degree (e.g., BA in Primary Education). This finding has important implications as it suggests shorter teacher training courses might do well to focus an element of training on discussing the importance of combating feelings of self-doubt, intellectual inadequacy and anticipated failure. The mere fact of acknowledging the potential to experience self-perceived fraudulence during training may help reduce their persistence.

The findings related to teacher trainee character traits showed social anxiety and self-handicapping to be significant predictors of IP. This is partially in line with previous work that shows social anxiety to be related to IP (Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991). It has been argued that social anxiety may feed into such beliefs, as it is characterised through an excessive fear of negative judgement by peers, fear of making a mistake and social avoidance and distress (Crome, Grove, Baillie, Sunderland, Teesson & Slade, 2015; Pabian & Vandebosch, 2016). Thus, an increase in fear of negative judgement, core to social anxiety, may increase a trainee teacher's experience of IP. Additionally, it was hypothesised that social anxiety may contribute to IP via an indirect route by way of increasing the use of self-handicapping behaviours. The findings provide evidence to support this and suggest behaviours employed to modulate feelings of social anxiety (e.g., procrastination, reduced effort) may inadvertently increase feelings associated with IP (e.g., self-doubt, phoniness, and intellectual inadequacy). This is an important contribution to the field as it provides a basic model for beginning to understand the interrelated nature, and

thus potential explanatory mechanisms, of constructs that underpin IP.

Prior anecdotal evidence in the form of blogs and commentary from faculty (Bahn, 2014; Gravois, 2007; Kasper, 2013; Webb, 2013), support the notion that highly competitive working environments 'create a setting conducive to feelings of self-doubt and fraudulence' (Hutchins, 2015, p.4). This hypothesis was tested by examining the relationship between competitiveness and IP. The findings of the current study suggest that for individuals in the process of training at least, there is no association between competitiveness and IP. This could potentially be accounted for by the fact that both pathways (PGCE and QTS-aligned degrees) although offering placements, do not induce the same feelings of competition as might be present in a work-placed setting. It is also possible that an individual's self-perceived level of competitiveness may need to interact with a certain working environment to impact IP. In other words, the competitive nature of the individual and the competitive nature of the environment may work together to produce experiences common to IP. ■

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How do ability grouping practices affect students' experiences of mathematics lessons in secondary schools in England?

Abstract:

This small-scale literature review explores the impact of ability grouping practices in England on secondary school students' experiences of mathematics lessons, focusing on 'grouped' (e.g., according to ability) and mixed-ability classes. Previous research into ability grouping has primarily examined the impact of grouping practices on attainment and progress, however students' experiences are now being prioritised in school inspections above outcomes, meaning that a change of direction in research is required. Mathematics is frequently cited as a subject in which students have poor experiences, and therefore this is a focal point of the review. A systematic approach was taken to search for literature: a search protocol was created to outline the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and all studies that were considered for inclusion were rigorously assessed for relevancy and reliability. As a result of this, 9 pieces of literature were selected, and thematic analysis was implemented in order to analyse the data they presented. Overall, three broad themes were identified as having a bearing on students' experiences in mathematics lessons: teaching and learning practices, pupils' enjoyment of lessons, and pupils' belief in their ability. It was found that the ability grouping strategies adopted did have an effect on these three areas, and some commonalities were found in the experiences of different students as a result. However, it was also clear that every student experienced lessons slightly differently, and therefore some alternative perspectives were demonstrated.

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Introduction

Ability grouping refers to the practice of organising pupils based on their academic ability, commonly determined by test scores (Lleras, 2013). However, assessing ability in this way is problematic; therefore, 'attainment grouping' is used interchangeably with 'ability grouping', as some deem it to be a better descriptor (Adey & Dillon, 2012). This literature review will explore the effects of ability grouping practices on students' overall experiences in secondary mathematics lessons, with a focus on 'setting' and 'mixed-ability grouping'. A renewed interest for students' experiences was driven by the changes made to the Education Inspection

Framework (Ofsted, 2019), and with many students ranking mathematics, one of the most rigidly grouped subjects, as their least favourite, an opportunity for research was presented (Noyes, 2012).

It should be emphasised that this is a small-scale research project, and therefore there were constraints on the timescale for completion and on the resources available. This inevitably meant that an exhaustive search for literature was unable to be conducted, indicating a potential for bias. As the majority of studies into ability grouping have focused on the impact of attainment, however, the small scale of this research project may suggest avenues for further research in this

area, which is important given the current emphasis on students' experiences.

Context of Study

Ability grouping practices have been the subject of fierce debate since the 20th century. The strategies adopted in educational settings vary dramatically around the world and are frequently tied to the country's ideology of education (Ireson & Hallam, 2001). For example, mixed-attainment grouping practices are the norm in Finland, where child-centred ideologies are held in high regard (Mazenod, 2017). However, in England, where a focus on knowledge is emphasised, students are separated more strictly by ability. In primary schools, within-class ability grouping is favoured, along with mixed-ability grouping. As pupils enter secondary school, however, methods of grouping become more rigorous. By the time students enter Year 11, they are typically organised into sets for the majority of their classes (Taylor et al., 2020). This involves grouping students by ability within their year groups for specific subjects. It should be noted that this differs to 'streaming', where pupils are grouped with other students of similar ability and stay with the same group for all subjects (Adey & Dillon, 2012).

Much of the previous research into ability grouping has concentrated on the effects that different practices have on students' attainment and progress (Adey & Dillon, 2012). Given the previous emphasis on pupil outcomes in official inspections of schools, this research was pertinent. However, the Ofsted chief inspector announced in 2019 that this would no longer be a standalone item for scrutiny, and that exam scores would instead be used to complement a more general focus on the quality of education (Department for Education [DfE], 2018). Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are a point of assessment within the new inspection framework, including students' motivation and attitudes to learning (Ofsted,

2019). It is clear, therefore, that promoting a positive in-school experience for all pupils is now a priority in England. Ireson and Hallam (2001) highlight the importance of researching into the effects of ability grouping practices on students beyond their academic achievement, and it is now relevant to bring back this focus once again.

The literature surrounding ability grouping highlights the wide array of impacts that different practices can have on students and their experiences in school, as stated by Ireson and Hallam (2001). For example, Boaler (2013) discusses the effects that ability grouping practices can have on pupils' mindsets. This is not only important for personal development, but it can also impact on students' attitudes to learning, therefore drawing on two aspects of the new Ofsted inspection framework. Teachers' mindsets, and therefore the perception of their students, can also be influenced by the grouping practices used in the classroom (Adey & Dillon, 2012). Moreover, the literature signals that the methods of grouping can dictate the teaching practices adopted and the quality of the teacher assigned to the class (Adey & Dillon, 2012). These factors can have a considerable impact on the quality of education that a child receives, and also on students' enjoyment of the subject and belief in their ability.

In England, mathematics is a subject which applies rigorous setting, particularly in secondary school. Not only is this method of ability grouping advocated by the government as a means of raising academic standards (Boylan & Povey, 2013; Jackson, 2018), but it is also widely considered to be easier to teach mathematics to students of a similar ability (Adey & Dillon, 2012). Despite this, it has been indicated that there is very little difference in outcomes in mathematics when comparing sets and mixed-ability classes (Rycroft-Smith, 2017). Mathematics

is a key area of concern when considering pupils' experiences, however. This is due to the prevalence of maths anxiety, which Norman (2006) indicates could be linked to ability grouping practices. In 2020, 88% of secondary schools implemented setting in mathematics classes (Taylor et al., 2020), despite the research suggesting that this method of grouping could be detrimental to students' motivation and self-esteem in mathematics across all levels of attainment (Rycroft-Smith, 2017; Boylan & Povey, 2013). Whilst some would argue, therefore, that mixed-ability grouping is the natural way forward, this strategy also has its challenges: the literature indicates that it may be linked to increased behavioural issues in the classroom, which can impact on students' enjoyment (Rycroft-Smith, 2017). Mathematics is vital and can open many doors for all students, making it crucial that pupils have a positive experience of mathematics, in order to get the most out of their lessons.

Research Question

How do ability grouping practices affect students' experiences of mathematics lessons in secondary schools in England?

Methodology (Protocol)

To ensure that an appropriate review type was selected, Grant and Booth's *Typology of Reviews* (2009) was considered. Due to the small scale of the project, it was critical that comprehensive searching was not a requirement. Furthermore, it became clear from the context of study that a thematic analysis would be appropriate for answering the research question. As a result of this, it was decided that a literature review would be conducted (Grant & Booth, 2009). However, aspects of the systematic review research type (Grant & Booth, 2009) were also drawn upon, as it calls for rigorous and transparent methods of data collection (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020), improving the quality of the research. The structure of this review was

inspired by Okoli's (2015) systematic guide to literature review development.

A protocol was created to adhere to when searching for data. A set of inclusion criteria was devised, in order to narrow down the scope and ensure that the studies were relevant to the focus of the literature review and were of a reasonable quality (Smith, 2012). This drew on the six broad questions suggested by Stewart and Kamins (1993).

Firstly, the literature must be relevant to the research question. This can be established through the use of appropriate search terms, so that only relevant literature is produced in the searches. The PICO method (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020) was applied in order to develop the search terms: the 'population' of the study produced "secondary school", "student", "pupil*" and "England". The 'intervention' related to "ability grouping" and "attainment grouping". The 'comparison' aspect of the PICO structure was "mixed ability grouping". The 'outcome' was "student experience" and "enjoyment". The search term "math*" was included, encompassing "math", "maths" and "mathematics". "Maths" was also used as a standalone search term. The Boolean search terms "AND" and "OR" were also to be applied, in order to frame the searches (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

Secondly, it was decided that only academic journal articles would be included for analysis. Three sources were searched in to obtain these articles: The Bishop Grosseteste University Worldcat database, Google Scholar, and the Taylor and Francis Journals: Social Sciences and Humanities Collection.

To maintain the relevancy of this literature review, only studies published between 2000 and 2020 were considered for inclusion. Many changes in educational practice have occurred during this time frame, meaning that students' overall experiences in schools differ to those of 20 years ago, which could impact the results of earlier data in this time frame, presenting a potential limitation. However, as Oliver (2012) acknowledges, it is important to not limit the scope of literature to just include the most recent studies, in order to produce

a wider variety of insights. The data must also have been obtained from England, and the participants have been of secondary school age (11-16).

Mixed-methods research was primarily considered for this project. As acknowledged by Newby (2010), research issues in education frequently require an analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, in order to get a thorough understanding of a topic. In relation to students' experiences in different ability grouping practices, it is crucial to get a deeper insight into students' feelings through qualitative means, and then use quantitative data to back these up.

With regards to exclusion criteria, any sources which referenced attainment, impacts on academic ability or progress in the title or description were automatically excluded. Furthermore, any studies relating to an educational setting other than secondary school, such as primary school or early years, were automatically excluded.

Steps were taken to minimise any potential biases being presented in this literature review, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the findings of the study (Smith & Noble, 2014). Firstly, reporting bias was considered, and was reduced by strictly adhering to the research protocol outlined in this chapter, to ensure that the data presented were not selective (Drucker et al., 2016). Whilst only peer-reviewed studies were originally to be considered for inclusion, this decision was reversed, as it could have led to evidence selection bias, arising from publication bias (Drucker et al., 2016). Therefore, steps were taken to amend the search protocol to include all articles, to reduce this potential for bias. It should be noted that some degree of evidence selection bias via publication bias was present in this study, due to the timescale and small scope of the research project. Moving onto the risk of bias from competing interests, all studies were examined for any indication of a 'spin' on the findings (Drucker et al., 2016). If a 'spin' was presented, the study was excluded. Every article considered for inclusion was also inspected for bias statements, and judgements were made regarding the article's inclusion based on the steps made to reduce this.

Data Extraction & Analysis

Data Extraction

The Bishop Grosseteste University Worldcat database was searched using the terms "(ability grouping' OR 'attainment grouping') AND 'England' AND 'math*.'" This produced 182 results. Filters were then applied to the search, in accordance with the inclusion criteria, refining the content type to articles only and the publication year between 2000-2020. This reduced the number of results to 171 and, after reading the titles and descriptions of the articles, 11 were considered for inclusion and the rest were excluded. A CRAAP test was then conducted for each of the remaining studies, in order to decide which were reliable and relevant enough to include (Rowan University, 2020). All 11 articles passed the 'currency' aspect of the test. Only four of the articles provided relevant information for answering the research question, and therefore seven articles were excluded. Two of the four studies were taken from a current large-scale research project, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation. The remaining studies were conducted by experts in the field, and all four of the studies were deemed to be authoritative. All four articles had been peer-reviewed, indicating their accuracy. Three of the articles demonstrated no bias; however, some issues were raised with the remaining article. The authors noted difficulties when conducting the research, due to the limited number of secondary schools in England adopting mixed-attainment teaching practices in mathematics, meaning that there were differences between the schools being compared that could have impacted the results. Additionally, it was acknowledged that one of the authors was the Head of Mathematics at one of the schools taking part in the research, which could lead to a risk of bias in the data. However, the researcher decided to still include this study for analysis, having considered the steps taken by the authors to minimise this. Therefore, all four studies passed this part of the CRAAP test, and none were excluded. With regards to the purpose of each article, the author's intentions were clearly stated. In total, four articles from this search passed the CRAAP test and were selected for inclusion.

The Bishop Grosseteste University Worldcat

database was searched again, this time using the search terms “(‘ability grouping’ OR ‘attainment grouping’ OR ‘mixed ability grouping’) AND ‘math*’ AND ‘secondary school’.” This produced 276 hits. After applying the filters used previously, 245 results were produced. Only three studies were considered for inclusion, as there were repeats from the previous search results. To obtain the most relevant and reliable information for this project, a CRAAP test was carried out (Rowan University, 2020). Firstly, the articles were examined for currency, and none were excluded. The relevancy of the articles to the research question was then investigated. One article passed this stage of the test, and two were excluded, as they focused on teachers’ experiences and practices rather than students’ experiences. Whilst the article was co-authored by a previously unpublished researcher, it was also written by an expert in educational research and was therefore still included. No evidence of bias was displayed in the study and was taken from a journal that conducts a rigorous peer-review process on all articles before publication, signalling its accuracy. With regards to the article’s purpose, the authors of the study stated the aims clearly, and demonstrated their objectivity and impartiality, therefore passing this stage of the test. In total, one article from this search was selected for inclusion.

Google Scholar was searched using the search terms “‘grouping’ AND ‘maths’ AND ‘England’ AND ‘secondary school’”, which produced 6,120 results. The search was then filtered by date to only show sources published between 2000-2020. This narrowed the number of results down to 4,840, five of which were considered for inclusion. Once again, a CRAAP test was conducted to filter these articles further, beginning with their currency (Rowan University, 2020). Four of the sources passed this stage of the test, and the other excluded as it had actually been published in 1999. Secondly, the relevance of each article was scrutinised. This led to another source being excluded, as it had little focus on mathematics. The three remaining articles, however, passed this stage of the test. Regarding the authority of the sources, one article formed part of a large-scale research project led by researchers at the University College London’s Institute

of Education. Therefore, the study was conducted by a highly authoritative team, and was kept for inclusion. The second article was also deemed to be authoritative, as the author has a long-standing career in research in mathematics education. The remaining study was a doctoral thesis, which was supervised by a number of people, including two experts in educational research. No studies were excluded. Two of the articles were peer-reviewed, indicating their accuracy. One may have been subject to some degree of bias, as the students selected for interview were chosen by the head of mathematics and whilst the author does state that this was done at random, it was not acknowledged how this was conducted. However, the language used in the article did not demonstrate any bias, and therefore it was not excluded. The doctoral thesis demonstrated an acknowledgement of, and steps taken to mitigate, any bias. No articles were excluded. Lastly, the authors of both articles clearly stated their intentions, and therefore passed the test for purpose. In total, three articles from this search were selected for inclusion.

Google Scholar was searched again, using the search terms “‘grouping’ AND ‘maths’ AND ‘enjoyment’”, which produced 4,880 hits. The search was filtered by date to only show results from 2000-2020, which reduced the number of hits to 4,270. Only one article was selected to be considered for inclusion and a CRAAP test was conducted (Rowan University, 2020). Starting with the currency of the article, the study was conducted and published within the timeframe noted in the inclusion criteria and all links were fully functioning. Moving onto the article’s relevancy to the research question, whilst there was less of a focus on ability grouping, its emphasis on factors that influence students’ enjoyment of mathematics meant that the study was not excluded. The source was deemed to be authoritative, as the author has considerable background in mathematics education research, therefore passing this aspect of the CRAAP test. The article had been peer-reviewed and was deemed to be accurate. With regards to bias, however, some concerns were raised by the author regarding survey responses; they were administered by teachers during classes, which could have caused some interference

in the data. However, the author also noted that steps were taken to acknowledge any potential patterns of bias in the findings, and therefore the study was not excluded. Finally, the purpose of the research was clearly stated by the author and raised no concerns. Therefore, this mixed-methods study passed the CRAAP test, and was included for analysis.

Other searches for literature were conducted but were unsuccessful. For example, the Taylor and Francis Online Library was searched using the terms “‘England’ AND (‘ability grouping’ OR ‘mixed ability grouping’) AND ‘student experience’”, however no sources from this search were considered for inclusion, as they had already been a result in previous searches.

Data Analysis

A thematic synthesis method of analysis was implemented (Lucas et al., 2007). Three broad themes were developed based on the research question:

- Teaching and learning practices;
- Enjoyment of lessons;
- Belief of ability.

These themes were used to form deductive codes, which were then applied in a line-by-line coding of the selected literature. This process was used to form Appendix A, which presents all of the excerpts which fit the codes. The data was then analysed further, and Table 1 indicates which of the derived sub-themes are discussed in each source.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The Effect of Teaching and Learning Strategies Type of Work

The evidence suggests that the type of work that students are set can be influential on their experiences in the lesson. Survey responses indicate that 75% of students in setted classes “follow textbooks and worksheets closely” (Francome & Hewitt, 2020, p.485). Many students indicated a dislike for this method of teaching and learning; a year 9 student even expressed that mathematics lessons were now “Rubbish” because of it (Boaler et al.,

	Theme				
	Teaching and Learning		Students' enjoyment		Belief in Ability
	Type of Work	Level of Work	Pace & Pressure	Working with others	
Hallam, S. & Ireson, J. (2007). Secondary school pupils' satisfaction with their ability grouping placements. <i>British Educational Research Journal</i> , 33(1), 27-45.		✓	✓		✓
Boaler, J., William, D., & Brown, M. (2000). Students' experiences of ability grouping – disaffection, polarisation and the construction of failure. <i>British Educational Research Journal</i> , 26(5), 631-648.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Tereshchenko, A., Francis, B., Archer, L., Hodgen, J., Mazenod, A., Taylor, B. Pepper, D. & Travers, M-C. (2019). Learners' attitudes to mixed-attainment grouping: Examining the views of students of high, middle and low attainment. <i>Research Papers in Education</i> , 34(4), 425-444.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Francome, T. & Hewitt, D. (2020). "My maths lessons are all about learning from your mistakes": How mixed-attainment mathematics grouping affects the way students experience mathematics. <i>Educational Review</i> , 72(4), 475-494.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Francis, B., Connolly, P., Archer, L., Hodgen, J., Mazenod, A., Pepper, D., Sloan, S., Taylor, B., & Tereschenko, A. (2017). Attainment grouping as self-fulfilling prophesy?: A mixed methods exploration of self confidence and set level among Year 7 students. <i>International Journal of Educational Research</i> , 86(1), 96-108.					✓
Hallam, S. & Deathe, K. (2002). Ability grouping: Year group differences in self-concept and attitudes of secondary school pupils. <i>Westminster Studies in Education</i> , 25(1), 7-17					✓
Noyes, A. (2012). It matters which class you are in: Student-centred teaching and the enjoyment of learning mathematics. <i>Research in Mathematics Education</i> , 14(3), 273-290.			✓		
Row, M. (2016). An investigation into the experiences of pupils in ability and mixed-ability grouping in an independent secondary girls' school [Doctoral thesis, Brunel University]. Google Scholar.			✓	✓	✓
Solomon, Y. (2007). Experiencing mathematics classes: Ability grouping, gender and the selective development of participative identities. <i>International Journal of Educational Research</i> , 46(1-2), 8-19.	✓	✓			

Table 1: Sub-themes identified within each source

2000, p.642). At the school that this pupil attended, students are taught in mixed-ability groups in years 7 and 8, therefore providing a direct point of comparison. The student also commented that they did more "fun" (Boaler et al., 2000, p.642) work in mixed-ability classes and another pupil elaborated, stating that "In year 8, sir [the teacher] did a lot more investigations" (p.642). This suggests that in mixed-ability classes, students are exposed to a wider variety of teaching and learning methods, in comparison to those in setted classes. This is particularly the case for students in top sets, where lessons are highly procedural (Boaler et al., 2000). Furthermore, whilst one student in a lower set acknowledged the importance of doing simple exercises

to check for understanding, they also expressed a desire for different methods of teaching to be implemented, such as investigations (Solomon, 2007). The use of more hands-on teaching and learning strategies can have a positive impact on students' experiences in the classes, as they create more memorable experiences (Vallori, 2014), which can boost motivation and engagement in lessons

However, Francome and Hewitt's study (2020) also revealed that 54% of students in mixed-ability classes agreed that they do a lot of work from textbooks or worksheets. Whilst this statistic is significantly lower than the one for pupils in setted classes, it does indicate that traditional teaching

methods are still frequently implemented in mixed-ability classes. When asked how mathematics classes could be improved, however, a year 7 student from a mixed-ability group commented that "I think maybe just occasionally we could have work set out of the textbook" (Francome & Hewitt, 2020, p.484). It could be implied that the 'fun' teaching and learning strategies experienced by students in the lower years in Boaler, William and Brown's study (2000) are adopted because of their year group, and the fact that formal examinations are not imminent. This suggests that ability grouping practices may not, in fact, affect students' experiences of secondary mathematics classes in this aspect.

Level of Work

Hallam and Ireson (2007) identified that the main reasons that pupils expressed for wanting to change which set they are in for mathematics was related to the level of difficulty of the work that they are given. In setted classes, all pupils are typically required to work at the same level. Some enjoy this, with one student in Row's (2016) investigation commenting that "...in your sets it's really nice because you are with people who are at the same level as you..." (p.81). This suggests that some students find comfort in the fact that everyone is doing the same tasks at the same time, as there is less comparison between the difficulty of tasks that others are completing, making them feel more at ease. However, other students expressed a clear dislike for this strategy. Whilst giving a whole class the same work may be beneficial for teachers, it operates on the assumption that all learners in the set are nearly identical to each other in terms of ability, which can negatively affect their experience, as this is not the reality (Adey & Dillon, 2012; Hallam & Ireson, 2001). This was reflected in pupils' comments: "They [the teachers] could stop giving you as many questions that you are already good at" (Francome & Hewitt, 2020, p.488). As acknowledged by Boylan and Povey (2013), students in lower ability groups are particularly restricted by this strategy; pupils recalled that when they told their teacher that they had done the work being set before, "...he says 'Well you can do it again.' He's nothing like 'Oh I'll set you with some harder work or nothing'" (Boaler et al., 2000, p.639). This suggests that students in these groups are being limited in the difficulty of the work that they are 'allowed' to do, which can have a negative impact on their experiences in the class, as they may not be challenged enough to sustain motivation and enjoyment.

In mixed-ability classes, teachers are required to set work that caters to a variety of needs. Boaler, William and Brown (2000) observed that this can be achieved in two ways, 'differentiation by task' or 'differentiation by outcome'. Students, both in mixed-ability classes and setted classes, expressed their particular liking for the former, where different tasks are provided for different students (Boaler et al., 2000): one high-attaining student stated that "I

think it's nice because you can always start off with an easier bit of work and then build up" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.432). Furthermore, a middle-attaining student commented that in their previous mixed-ability class "when we finished our work or anything miss would give us harder work to do" (Boaler, William & Brown, 2000, p.640). It could be surmised that by allowing students some element of choice over the level of work that they complete, their experiences could be improved, providing a more individualised experience that does not assume that 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to learning (Adey & Dillon, 2012).

Factors Affecting Pupils' Enjoyment of Lessons

Pace & Pressure

Questionnaire data from Boaler, William and Brown's study (2000) revealed that students in the top sets of six schools presented the most negative attitudes towards their enjoyment of mathematics, in comparison to those in other sets and in mixed ability grouping. A variety of pupils in Set 1 for mathematics indicated that they wished to move down a set, as this would allow them to continue to do the same work but at a different pace (Boaler et al., 2000; Row, 2016). Pressure is placed on students in higher ability groups to "get it [the content] into our head the first time" (Boaler et al., 2000, p.636) and to "do really well and work at a fast pace" (Row, 2016, p.144) all of the time. Whilst some thrive from the pressure and competitiveness of this learning environment (Row, 2016), for many it can be detrimental to their experience in the lesson (Adey & Dillon, 2012), as they are unable to enjoy the process of learning and discovery. Some students in the top sets expressed that they preferred the mixed-ability classes in previous year groups as some of the pressure and demands to maintain a fast pace were alleviated (Row, 2016). In contrast, others conveyed their frustrations regarding the pace of mixed-ability classes. One higher ability student commented that "It is quite annoying because we've already learnt that stuff and we're just going over it...we want to learn more, we don't just want to carry on going over the same thing" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.433). This indicates that students want to be engaged with mathematics, but as a result of being in a class where all levels of learning have

to be adhered to, their enjoyment is being diminished and replaced with frustration.

Working with others

The research suggests that mathematics learning in the mixed-ability classroom is a collaborative effort. One student highlighted that they enjoyed "discussing my answers with other classmates" (Francome & Hewitt, 2020, p.484), and another remarked that "since there's different abilities, you can help some people and some other people can help you in return" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.435). This provides a stark contrast to the depiction of a typical mathematics lesson from one student in a setted class: "I sit alone and get on with my work" (Francome & Hewitt, 2020, p.486). Encouraging students to talk to and support each other in lessons can promote the development of positive relationships, which Hallam and Ireson (2001) indicates is one of the benefits of mixed ability grouping. This can help to enhance the student experience, as pupils are able to "make friends" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.434) with a wider variety of people. It has been suggested that factors such as pupils' race and socio-economic backgrounds, and the stereotypes which accompany these, can in some cases influence their set placement (Adey & Dillon, 2012; Leslie & Mendick, 2013; Hallam & Ireson, 2001). Therefore, it could be argued that the use of mixed-ability grouping could transform pupils' experiences of mathematics lessons by promoting feelings of inclusion and equality of opportunity for all. This can also enhance pupils' motivation to learn, as their love and belongingness needs may be met (Aubrey & Riley, 2017), which can help to improve the student experience further.

Despite this, the opportunities for working with peers of varying abilities are not enjoyed by all students. One high-ability pupil stated that it was annoying when lower ability students ask "loads of questions... when you just want to get it [the work] done" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.438). Whilst some students view being able to learn from others as a chance to "learn something new" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.432), it could be surmised that some feel that it restricts them from getting the most out of their learning, as they cannot focus on their own task. Additionally, another student reported

that it was “humiliating” (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.438) when pupils who had already completed a task were asked to go and help others who had not yet finished. It could be argued that whilst being able to ask peers questions when required is helpful, having the help forced onto students could be detrimental to students’ experiences.

Factors Influencing Pupils’ Beliefs about their Ability

The labelling nature of setting can have significant impact on pupils’ beliefs surrounding it. One student in a lower set referenced this in an interview, stating that “We can try to hide it, but it is blatantly saying, ‘You are less intelligent than this person’” (Francis et al., 2017, p.14). Additionally, another student commented that “I’m in the lower group...I’m stupid” (Francis et al., 2017, p.14), signalling the detrimental effects that set placement can have on students’ beliefs about their ability. It also indicates that the student may have a fixed

mindset because of it, which Francome and Hewitt (2020) suggest is more common in students in setted classes. A fixed mindset is defined as the belief that a person is either smart or not, and that intelligence cannot be changed; the link between these views and homogeneous ability grouping is evident (Boaler, 2013). For pupils placed in lower sets, these beliefs could have a significant impact on their motivation if they feel that they are never going to improve in mathematics, negatively affecting their experience.

Additionally, the evidence suggests that these views can be reinforced by teachers, with one student reporting that their teacher told them “‘You’re in the bottom group, you’re not going to learn anything’” (Boaler et al., 2000, p.639). Such comments can not only be highly damaging for pupils’ self-esteem, but can also decrease motivation and enjoyment, creating a more negative experience. However, one pupil commented

that being in a lower set “doesn’t affect me, how I feel about myself” (Francis et al., 2017, p.23). Whilst this was an anomaly in the findings, it does indicate that not all pupils’ experiences are negatively affected by setting.

Despite this, the evidence suggests that the beliefs of ability presented by students in other sets can also be affected. One pupil in a higher ability set reported that “if you are...a bit slow and everyone else is going faster you start to worry about whether you should be in this set” (Row, 2016, p.145). This indicates that the high expectations of being in the ‘top set’ that are consistently placed on students can have a negative impact on their beliefs about their ability and can be of detriment to their experience in the lesson if they feel like they do not belong there.

In mixed-ability classes, it is suggested that students’ belief in their ability can also be

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negatively impacted. A student commented that "...there is always someone who is better than you and you don't like feeling that you are worse than someone" (Row, 2016, p.150). It could be surmised that students have greater opportunities for comparison to their peers in mixed-ability classes, and that this can negatively affect students' beliefs in their own ability, despite the differences in learning style, strengths and weaknesses that each student presents. However, this comparison may be beneficial for some students of middle and lower ability, as it helps them to "see things that I am able to do" (Tereshchenko et al., 2019, p.434), which can boost their motivation and promote a growth mindset, which stems from the belief that a person's intelligence can 'grow' as the result of effort and practice (Boaler, 2013). This can create improved experiences in mathematics by encouraging a positive 'can-do' attitude and boosting pupils' aspirations.

Conclusions and Implications

The following conclusion is drawn from the findings of the evidence generated from the literature review. It is apparent that ability grouping practices do affect students' experiences in mathematics lessons in secondary school, specifically when comparing setted and mixed-ability classes. Synthesising the evidence gathered for this review indicated that there are differences in teaching and learning, in the factors influencing students' enjoyment of lessons and how these grouping strategies effected students' beliefs regarding their ability. However, the evidence did not point to one method of ability grouping being 'better' for students' experiences than the other: in all three areas, both benefits and challenges were suggested by students for mixed-ability grouping and setted classes. The findings presented in this literature review could be useful for guiding future practice in all secondary mathematics classrooms, no matter the grouping strategy, as they provide

an insight into students' experiences, preferences and views.

One of the limitations of this study was that only three sources were searched for evidence, due to the limited timescale for the research to be conducted in. This study could be improved by searching a wider variety of databases, in order to obtain a better picture of the ways in which ability grouping practices affect students' experiences.

Given the attention now being given to students' experiences (Ofsted, 2019) and the continuing prevalence of ability grouping in education in England, it is clear that more research needs to be done in this area. The effects of other grouping strategies could be considered, for example, such as within-class ability grouping. Alternatively, methods of grouping in other subjects could be examined with regards to students' experiences. ■

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What are practitioners' and parents' perspectives on the influence of digital technology on children's development and learning in early years?

Abstract:

Children today are exposed to and surrounded by digital technology in their everyday lives. Research has demonstrated that the debate has shifted from whether children should use technology to how it can best benefit them due to their immersion in the digital world. Therefore, children need to be supported in learning appropriate skills to prepare them for their future living and working environments. However, there appears to be a dichotomy between children's experiences at home and those in educational settings. This is a small-scale qualitative study in which 14 practitioners and 16 parents completed an online questionnaire centred on key questions that would allow an insight into children's use of digital technology. A thematic method to analyse and evaluate data collection was used. The key findings demonstrated a strong correlation between; a balanced curriculum, mediation of digital technology use, effective collaboration between practitioners and parent, with influencing children's development and learning. If these issues are not managed successfully, barriers to successfully integrating digital technology into the classroom will be created. It is recommended that more research is undertaken, leading to a clarification of the impact of screen time on young children, and practitioners are given appropriate training and support for more effective integration of digital technology use in the classroom.

Introduction

Children today are introduced to digital technology (DT), starting their first digital encounters from as early as birth (O'Connor, 2017; Chaudron et al., 2015). Their parents are 'digital natives', defined as parents who have mostly grown up with DT themselves (Prensky, 2001, p. 1) and who are largely permissive and proficient digital participants, comfortable interacting with DT (Brito et al., 2017). Research argues that because children have access to DT at an early age, practitioners and parents have to help children learn appropriate skills to prepare them for the world they will live and work in (Aldhafeeri et al., 2016). However, there appears to be a dichotomy between what children are experiencing at home and their experience in early childhood education (ECE) (Plowman, 2015; UNICEF, 2020).

For this research project, DT (alternatively digital devices) refers to the following; internet, learning apps, mobile phones, tablets, iPads and computers.

The following report will take account of available literature relating to the research question. This will include a history of DT in education and factors, including; screen time, mediation, home and school collaboration, and practitioners' views, aptitudes, and attitudes, all of which appear integral to the successful integration of DT into children's everyday lives. The second section of the report will be about the methods used to help collect the data and the ethical considerations that guided the data collection process. The report will finalise the discussion by analysing and evaluating the findings to attempt to answer the research question; what are

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practitioners' and parents' perspectives on the influence of digital technology on children's development and learning in the early years?

Literature Review

Children engage with technology and develop the necessary skills to access emerging DT due to being absorbed in the digital world (Arnott et al., 2019). The debate about using DT in education has shifted away from whether children should access it toward how it can enhance their learning (Palaologou, 2016). Therefore, instead of having distinct methods for digital and non-digital devices, they need to be understood as one and the same, as most children see them today. Childhoods should be thought about as multimodal (Yelland, 2018). However, pedagogy and practice must consider the multimodal context created by agentic beings, such as practitioners, parents, and children, whose attitudes and inclination toward DT shape its inclusion into early childhood education (ECE) (Arnott, 2017).

History of DT in education

The digital age, which started to develop between 1950 and 1970, is a phase in human history during which interactive means of communication and mass storage, distribution, processing, and exploitation of information became available due to the evolution of technology (Stephen & Edwards, 2017). According to Passey (2014), in the 1970s and early 1980s, an increasing concern emerged in the United Kingdom (UK) for increased understanding of and alignment between education and industry. Education was motivated by the perception that job skills and expertise were evolving. There was a decline in the demand for unskilled manual labour and an increase in the demand for employees who could think critically and problem solve in this evolving technological world (Passey, 2014).

Although computers were more readily accessible in schools during the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, their adoption and usage in teaching and learning remained minimal (Howard & Mozejko, 2015). As Gibbons (1986) points out, computers were often inefficient. They were not easy to navigate and negotiate with wider groups

of students, and much of the material was not built with educational outcomes in mind. Practitioners lacked confidence in their ability to use technology.

The late 1980s saw an increase in software products to meet subject curriculum demands (Passey, 2014). According to Smith (2015), by 2000, due to increased government funding, schools in the UK had many computers and whiteboards, several of them in dedicated computer suites, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was a feature of the National Curriculum (Department for Education and Employment, 1999).

The internet became dynamic in the early 2000s, allowing online interaction and the creation of online content, followed by the laptop, which could be tailored to an individual student's needs or working styles (Howard & Mozejko, 2015). Since 2007, the strength and portability of smartphones and tablet computers have fundamentally altered how web services and information are viewed and experienced (Howard & Mozejko, 2015). According to Stephen and Edwards (2017), research often discusses the introduction of the Apple iPad and associated applications in 2010 as the critical point for increasing young children's DT participation. Today, technology comes under the 'Understanding the World' specific areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (Department for Education, 2021).

Screen time

The time spent looking at a screen, such as; televisions, mobile phones, tablets, or computers, is defined as screen time, and one of the most often asked questions is whether screen time is beneficial or harmful to children's health and well-being (The Open University, 2020). However, there appears to be very little information relating to whether a certain amount of screen time results in or is associated with negative impacts on children's health and well-being (Viner et al., 2019; Davies et al., 2019).

According to research mainly undertaken in home environments, children devote a significant amount of time to DT. For example, pre-schoolers in the UK and the United States spend more than two hours per day

with digital devices (Ofcom, 2021; Rideout, 2017), and in China, more than 40% of three- to six-year-olds spend greater than two hours per day on screens (Wu et al., 2017).

The increase in DT use has risen even though numerous health authorities have issued warnings about the potential negative consequences of increased screen time (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2016; Viner et al., 2019; World Health Organisation, 2019). Many guidelines recommend that children's recreational screen time be limited to less than two hours per day. In the UK, there have been no statutory guidelines until recently. The main recommendation being that families determine screen time limits for their children depending on the child's interests, the contexts in which screens are used, and the extent to which screen usage continues to substitute (or not) for physical and social interactions and sleep (Lawler, 2019).

There appears to be a gap in the literature, and further research should be done on understanding the use and amount of time children spend on DT within educational settings.

Mediation

Parents employ various strategies to mediate their child's access to and use of online information and resources (Ofcom, 2021). Mediation is defined by Warren (2001) as 'any strategy parents use to control, supervise, or interpret media content' (p. 212). Some studies have been presented to explain this. Chaudron et al.'s (2018a) study findings showed that, with varying degrees of effectiveness, parents seek to protect their children regarding their digital interactions by building their own mediation techniques, ranging from restricting and monitoring access to providing assistance and collaboration. Similarly, according to Brito et al.'s (2017) research on 'parental mediation in young children's digital practices around 14 European Countries' (p. 271), parents play a critical role in their children's introduction to and the use of DT, not just as mentors but as facilitators of access to devices and information.

Furthermore, research has found that parents with positive views and attitudes toward DT facilitate supportive digital participation. In contrast, parents with

a more negative attitude to the digital world tend to enact a more constraining approach to supervision and mediation (Brito et al., 2018). Additionally, Dias et al.'s (2016) study focusing on the parent-child relationship within the home, found that parents with a higher degree of education and income who are avid DT users often offer a more optimistic outlook regarding their children using digital devices.

However, not all research shows methods of mediation are consistent, which was evident in Chaudron et al.'s (2018a) qualitative study of young children and DT use across Europe; findings in the UK showed that parents' methods for mediating their children's internet usage inconsistent. The majority of parents within the study appeared to rely on informal observation or the need only to become involved due to a child's lack of ability. Notably, many parents involved in the study felt that involvement and planning are not required until a child is older. However, this can be misleading, as according to Chaudron et al. (2018b), young children can exhibit a broad range of technical skills, some being in a position to access the internet without their parents' close oversight. The consequence of this is that children are possibly accessing the internet without appropriate mediation.

There appears to be a gap in the current literature; in how children used DT at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for what reason, which applications (apps) they used, and whether a parent was involved in helping scaffold the activity. Closing this gap would enable better practices and experiences to be developed.

Home/school collaboration

Digital devices used at home and school can seem to be identical, but they can have widely varied uses between both environments (Gillen & Kucirkova, 2018). One of the issues seen in ECE is what Edwards et al. (2017) define as 'digital disconnect'; the two distinct experiences children have of DT at home; flexible, explorative, experimental and within a school; organised, planned, or even non-existent (p. 1).

The importance of having an understanding of the two experiences is demonstrated in Gillen and Kucirkova's (2018) case

study, which observed how children's home lives, along with their experiences with DT, influence classroom practices and how the practitioner's experience and comprehension of these influences make practices more effective (Gillen & Kucirkova's, 2018). Similarly, according to Petersen (2015), children's agency with DT, their constructive engagement and independent activities focused on their own preferences and familiarity, must be carefully regarded and taken into account at the EY stage, enabling better support and practices to be considered for each child.

Research has shown that when schools embrace DT effectively, children appear to broaden their digital capabilities and become more mindful of consequences, developing digital literacy (Chaudron et al., 2018a), a concept established by Ofcom (2004) to explain how children access, interpret and communicate with DT. According to Chaudron et al.'s (2018a) study of 234 family interviews in 21 countries, most parents agreed that integrating DT and learning digital skills are essential for their children's education. Parents involved in the study anticipated that schools would play a critical role in children's understanding and acceptance of a digital world.

However, not all parents appeared to have adequate DT capabilities requiring support from settings. This is evident in Kumpulainen and Gillen's (2017) 'review of research literature on young children's (aged 0-8 years old) digital literacy practices in the home' (p. 3). Parents involved in the research would like to have seen more profound and inclusive collaborations with settings, including knowledge sharing and the exchanging of best practices for using DT in the home to facilitate and improve development and learning. However, Edwards et al. (2017) argue that implying that ECE environments can replicate the child's home environment assumes that all settings have equal access to training and development while also disregarding individual practitioners' perspectives on using technology in ECE.

There appears to be a gap within the literature beyond the collaboration of practitioners and parents, in understanding

better the practitioner/parent and child collaboration and what benefits to children's development and learning this may have.

Practitioners' views, aptitudes and attitudes

Research suggests that practitioners' ability to use DT for personal use does not immediately translate into professional confidence or appropriate ECE methods; their attitudes and aptitudes can influence how children's experiences with DT are interpreted (Palaiologou, 2016). Several studies have been presented to explain this. Aldhafeeri et al.'s (2016) study of 195 practitioners' views, attitudes, and aptitudes revealed a disconnect in practitioners' digital aptitudes and attitudes between their personal lives and setting practices. Similarly, Hatzigianni and Kalaitzidis' (2018) study findings around practitioners' attitudes and beliefs indicated that practitioners' perspectives are changing. Practitioners involved in the study were more positive in their use of technology for personal reasons but less confident in using technology with very young children. However, it was found that the overall confidence and time spent using technology by practitioners within the study correlated with a more positive perception toward technology integration. Notably, Hatzigianni and Kalaitzidis' (2018) study was based on children under three years of age, which may explain why practitioners were less confident as perhaps they did not have the confidence to support DT use with very young children. This is supported by Dunn and Sweeney (2018), who argue that although many practitioners know the possible advantages of technology use with young children, they lack the necessary pedagogical and technological skills.

Furthermore, Palaiologou's (2016) study of practitioners' attitudes and aptitudes toward digital devices in five countries, including England, found that practitioners raised concerns about whether DT promotes active or passive learning. Practitioners involved in the study perceived DT as a secondary practice in which children spend most of their time seeing the world through a screen rather than experiencing actual objects, limiting physical experience and actions (Palaiologou's, 2016).

These findings are recognised in ECE practices today and highlight the need for practitioners to receive adequate training and support to improve the integration of DT into teaching and learning. This is supported by research which argues that central to all of these issues is the degree to which practitioners are trained, confident, and knowledgeable to incorporate DT into their everyday work with children (Alhafeeri et al., 2016; Chaudron et al., 2018a). However, Spiteri and Rundgren (2020) argue that to do this, practitioners must recognise the value of DT to make effective use of it in their everyday practices.

To conclude, the literature presented has shown that the role of both practitioners and parents appears to influence children's use of DT. Parents play a significant part in their children's use of DT; their parenting attitudes toward technology determine techniques and strategies for effective mediation and support when using DT. However, as seen, parents' attitudes toward DT appear to usually be contingent upon their own digital competencies and confidence level in DT use.

Practitioners' attitudes and aptitudes towards DT use are essential to children's engagement with DT in the classroom (Palaiologou, 2016). Practitioners' views and attitudes may significantly impact how young children use DT effectively; merely incorporating DT into the classroom does not guarantee improved learning outcomes (The Open University, 2020). However, training and support of DT are required in order for it to be effective. It can also be seen that practitioners and parents working collaboratively could improve the digital disconnect between the consistency of home and school.

Therefore, as DT has become the way of the world and part of ECE, I would like to focus my research on understanding both practitioners' and parents' perspectives on the influence of digital technology on children's development and learning in early years.

Research methods

Study design

This project took place in a primary school with a nursery attached, situated in a town. Given the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, collecting qualitative data

supported by an interpretivist paradigm was the most appropriate way of obtaining data to address the research question, allowing exploration of participants' viewpoints (Bell & Waters, 2018) and gaining different opinions and depth from participants (Aubrey et al., 2000; Walker & Solvason, 2014). However, researchers must be mindful when conducting qualitative research of how people portray their perceptions and how their experiences affect them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) define it as 'the subjective world of human experience' (p. 33). Interpretivist researchers should aim to grasp the many ways of seeing and interpreting the world through various contexts and practices and minimise biases in their observations of events and individuals interpreted personally (Pham, 2018).

Although there are alternative methods of accessing data, such as observations, this approach could not be relied upon because of the risk the country might have gone into a further national lockdown. Therefore, a questionnaire was used with open-ended questions for the sample group to complete. According to Gillham (2007), there are advantages and disadvantages when using questionnaires to gather data. For example, advantages of using online questionnaires include enabling researchers to access thousands of people who share similar characteristics in a limited period, despite being separated by large geographical distances (Taylor, 2000). Questionnaires can also save time by encouraging researchers to gather data while working on other parts of the project (Ilieva et al., 2002). However, there are disadvantages, such as; potentially being hastily completed, participants' misinterpretations cannot be explained, and poor response rates (Pattern, 2017). Before sending out the questionnaire, a pilot test to a sample group was conducted to ensure questions were understood and relevant to the research question (Bell & Waters, 2018). Any misinterpretation was adapted and made more suitable, relating specifically to either practitioners or parents. The questionnaire was sent to 40 participants, giving them two weeks to complete. 14 responses were received from practitioners and 16 responses from parents, an overall 75% return rate.

There are several methods of interpreting qualitative data, such as; grounded theory, ethnography, discourse analysis and thematic analysis (Bell & Waters, 2018). However, the thematic analysis method was used for this research project, using open coding, allowing themes to be identified, resulting in alternative conclusions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). However, though thematic analysis is adaptable, it can result in uncertainty and a lack of clarity when constructing themes from collected data (Holloway & Todres, 2003).

Participant sample

Participants were selected using a convenience sample as it is one of the most realistic and accessible ways to gather data and information for research (Etikan et al., 2016). Convenience sampling is a group of 'convenient' research participants that meet criteria that make them more accessible, such as; being in the general location, willing to participate, or available at a particular time (Dornyei, 2007). According to Jager et al. (2017), advantages of convenience sampling include performance and ease of implementation with very few rules. Conversely, there are negatives when using convenience samples, such as; high levels of sampling error, subject to bias, and other factors over which the researcher has little control (Vehovar et al., 2016). The sample group included 20 EY practitioners from my setting, with a range of qualifications, experience, and abilities in the field, and 20 parents of children aged one-to-six years of age. Parents were recruited by putting a post on social media to target the sample group.

Ethical considerations

Over the past 25 years, ethical research recommendations and laws applied in several countries were significant in establishing a modern, more ethically aware community within research (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017). Therefore, assuring that the research project is ethical is a critical part of the process and requires ultimate care and consideration throughout (Walker & Solvason, 2014). All documents provided by Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) (2019) on ethical frameworks were read and understood, along with the EECERA ethical code, which 'sets out the expectations of ethical conduct expected of early childhood researchers' (EECERA, 2021). Ethical consent from BGU was given to complete the project.

Prior to data collection, the research supervisor at BGU approved all questions, aligned with BGU ethics clearance processes (BGU, 2019). Consent was then given by my setting, allowing approved questionnaires to be sent out to practitioners. Informed consent was requested from all participants by making the first question about consent. Additionally, the start of the questionnaire explained what was required when taking part in the research. This included; the aims and objectives of the research and how participants would be involved, enabling comprehension of the research's meaning and the researcher's duties, and ethical considerations (EECERA, 2015; Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003). As EECERA (2015) states, researchers must guide all of those involved, giving complete and honest information about the research material, intent and methods, giving the option to agree or disagree to participate in light of this information.

According to the Data Protection Act (2018), strict requirements known as 'data protection principles' must be adhered to when using personal data. Therefore, participants were informed that their anonymity, such as their names or contact information, and confidentiality would always be respected, and they had the right to withhold consent (Denscombe, 2012). However, participants were informed that once the questionnaire was submitted, they could not withdraw their data from that point (Smith et al., 2009). To ensure confidentiality, the researcher would not know which participants had completed the questionnaire (Bell & Waters, 2018).

Participants would be known as either practitioner one to fourteen, or parent one to sixteen. In addition, participants were informed that BGU, the module leader and supervisor would have access to the final report. The participants' data from the questionnaire were saved in different locations so that they were not identified and were located in my BGU one drive cloud and personal iCloud. Additionally, upon receipt of the final result, all data collected was destroyed.

Research outcomes, analysis and evaluation

The research question asks: What are practitioners' and parents' perspectives on the influence of digital technology on children's

development and learning in early years?

Questionnaires were returned from fourteen practitioners and sixteen parents. Pseudonyms were allocated to each participant to protect their anonymity. Practitioners were known as practitioner one to fourteen and parents will be known as parent one to sixteen. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions, and practitioners' and parents' responses were analysed and interpreted initially on a question-by-question basis, with open coding applied, allowing themes to be created. Following this, the number of times the theme reoccurred was counted to understand the most common theme. Each theme was cross-analysed between participant groups.

Balance between digital and non-digital activities

The data suggest that participants within this study viewed the balance between digital and non-digital activities as influential to children's learning and development. Overall, this was the theme most mentioned throughout the questionnaire, a total of forty-two times, with twenty-two parents' and twenty practitioners' responses incorporating 'balance' in some form.

When asked whether children should be using DT in school, all sixteen parents agreed; however, eight believed that there should be a balance between digital and non-digital activity. Parent seven said, "...with the right balance of different styles of teaching to work alongside digital technology. Also children should be allowed to be children and learn through play, outside learning etc". Ten out of fourteen practitioners believed it should be included in the EY curriculum but did not suggest having a balance. Practitioner thirteen said, "Yes I believe it should but think it should be thought about deeply on how it's included". These findings could suggest practitioners may not have mentioned balance because the question was ambiguous, as practitioners were asked specifically whether DT should be included in the EY curriculum. Practitioners may have recognised that the curriculum is a balance of areas of learning, so they would not need to think about this as it is already something they do.

When asked about the disadvantages to

children's learning and development when using DT, only six practitioners commented on having a balance. Practitioner six said, "Some children have lots of time on devices at home and need time to expand their learning through other means". It is important to remember that not all children's experiences at home are the same. According to Chaudron et al. (2018a), the environments that promote digital skills development in young children differ significantly between families, as does the form and extent of digital abilities acquired. Therefore, on reflection, practitioner six' response appears to be a little presumptuous, since they may be unaware of the circumstances surrounding the child's time spent on devices at home. Some parents may not have enough time on their hands to ensure their children are getting a balance of activities; for example, they may be single-parent families or having to work unsociable hours. Furthermore, it could be possible that practitioner six' response correlates to a small percentage of parents in Chaudron et al.'s (2018a) study who opt for a 'laissez-faire' attitude; allowing their children to do what they want due to lack of time, or skills, freeing up time for jobs, household chores, or more personal time (p. 14).

When participants were asked about children's physical activity levels when using DT, five practitioners and six parents said that there should be a balance between digital and non-digital activities. Practitioner two said, "There needs to be a balance of physical activity and digital technology to enable the child to keep physically fit". With parent seven commenting, "I feel that it limits them physically - boundaries have to be set that you get the balance right between both digital technology and being active". Although a small number of participants in this study, it still shows that practitioners and parents are concerned about getting the balance right between digital and non-digital practices, particularly where physical activity is concerned. The responses from this study appear to correlate with practitioners included in Palaologou's (2016) research, that had concerns on whether DT had an active or passive impact on children's learning. Practitioners within the study believed that children were using DT to view the world as it is from a screen rather than interact with it. This highlights the importance of practitioner training, which should equip

them with confidence and skills necessary to deliver effective pedagogical and technological practices that can be used across all areas of learning (Dunn & Sweeney, 2018; Chaudron et al., 2018a; Spiteri & Rundgren, 2020). Furthermore, perhaps if DT had more emphasis in the EYFS curriculum, practitioners would see this as part of everyday life in the classroom and incorporate it effectively throughout the curriculum.

However, from my perspective, not all children in my setting are motivated to spend time doing physical activity. Therefore, an assumption should not automatically be made that there would be an increase in children's physical activity by reducing DT. Alternatively, practitioners could use children's love of DT to promote and increase their physical activity using apps and YouTube that promote fitness.

Screen time

Overall, this was the second most reoccurring theme mentioned throughout the questionnaire; a total of thirty-seven times, with nineteen parents' and eighteen practitioners' responses incorporating 'screen time'. This appears to demonstrate that both practitioners and parents were concerned about the amount of time children spent on screens. Notably, participant responses seemed to crossover between screen time and mediation which possibly meant that questions were perhaps ambiguous and needed more precise explanation. In addition, by using thematic analysis, it can be difficult to categorise some complex responses into themes. In future, this could be done through interviews as I could have asked more searching questions and received fuller responses.

When asking participants what they thought were the disadvantages to children's development and learning when using DT, seven practitioners and seven parents responded with too much screen time. Practitioner two commented, "Excess screen time has been scientifically proven to over stimulate the brains of young children", and practitioner nine said, "...lead to prolonged screen time and may lose time exploring the world". Whereas parent eleven said, "screen time can impact on a child's mental and physical health. It is important to limit this time

at a young age". As highlighted in the literature (Viner et al., 2019; Davies et al., 2019), there appears to be no proven evidence that screen time can negatively impact children's health and well-being. However, parents appear to be continually advised, with varying recommendations on managing screen time at home, which can cause uncertainty and unnecessary views and concerns toward screen time. Therefore, in future, I would like to understand better what participants' views and understandings are on the guidelines and how they manage them at home. If interviews had been used as a method, I could add a further question by asking how long children are allowed to use DT at home and school to understand if this is a problem or not.

Mediation

When cross-analysing practitioners' and parents' responses, the findings suggested that parents within this study viewed mediating, the monitoring, managing, or viewing techniques of children's digital use, differently from those of practitioners. Parents mentioned mediating in some form seventeen times, with practitioners only mentioning it five times across all questions. These findings may reflect practitioners' use of DT in the classroom, which is restricted as they adhere to structured and planned routines; therefore, mediating may not need to be considered as much. From a personal perspective, I support this view as in my setting weekly planning outlines how children can use DT and for how long. Similarly, previous research carried out by Chaudron et al. (2018a), Brito et al. (2017) and Dias et al. (2016) tended to primarily focus on parents' mediation of children's DT use rather than that of practitioners. It might be assumed that in a setting, there would be safeguarding measures already in place as schools have strict safeguard rules; therefore, practitioners would not have to think about it as it is already in place. In comparison, it may be more important to understand how parents safeguard their children at home.

When participants in this study were asked how they would support children's activities and learning during DT use, three practitioners suggested that this could be supported by mediating their use, pointing out how adult support and parental guidance

could be considered. Practitioner four stated, "*parental guidance should be a big thing and also parental locks on devices so children can't access things they shouldn't*". Whereas for the same question, seven out of the sixteen parents suggested they would mediate children's use. Parent eight commented, "*I think the key is to know what your child is doing on a screen*". This response aligns with Chaudron et al.'s (2018a) study's findings that parents attempt to safeguard their children's digital experiences by developing mediation methods and techniques. Furthermore, whether they are more participating and cooperative or more conservative and controlling is determined by their own opinions and behaviours toward DT. Similar research carried out on practitioners (Palaiologou, 2016; Hatzigianni & Kalaitzidis, 2018) also showed positive aptitudes and attitudes towards DT could influence children's experiences.

When participants were asked about children's physical activity levels when using DT, four parents commented that it needed to be mediated to allow physical activity to happen. However, only two practitioners mentioned it, with practitioner four commenting, "*I feel a lot of parents encourage it because they find it easier for their child to sit quietly with different digital technology rather than take them somewhere to be physical or even for them to be physical at home as it takes the parents to monitor them more*". Although reflecting on this response, this appears to be a little judgemental on behalf of the practitioner. It could be a practitioner of an older generation who may struggle with the idea of using DT. However, within the study, participants ages were not asked. In future, I might ask this, which may provide more scope for analysis.

Collaboration

When the participants in this study were asked how practitioners and parents can work together to help children continue their digital experiences, consistent with home and school environments, ten out of fourteen practitioners responded with varying points, consistency between home and school coming up four times. Practitioner six commented, "*I believe that practitioners and parents working together is really important. Being consistent with what children are allowed to use/play on will help their learning*". In addition, two

practitioners commented that parents should be educated on how best to use DT with young children. Practitioner eleven said, "... I think that schools and parents could work together through workshops that assist in how to access appropriate sites and how to submit and check on their child's progress". Similarly, this aligns with Kumpulainen and Gillen's (2017) findings that parents in the study wanted more collaborative partnerships between settings and the home. These findings, along with those from this study, appear to suggest that parent/practitioner collaboration ensuring consistent use of DT between the home and setting can influence children's learning and development. However, when reflecting on the responses, it could be possible that because practitioners included in my study come from one setting, they may already have a good system in place with effective collaboration between practitioners and parents, so have a positive view on this. In future, I might distribute questionnaires to a more diverse group of practitioners working in a variety of settings and geographical locations, which may give a little more opportunity for analysis.

In addition, four parents responded in support of parent and practitioner collaboration, with parent seven commenting, "*schools to understand what the child would have access to at home in comparison to school*". This response appears to correlate with Petersen's (2015) view, which emphasised the need for practitioners to take account of children's agency with DT. Similarly, some researchers (Edwards et al., 2017; Gillen & Kucirkova, 2018) argued that recognising the digital disconnect between children's use and abilities at home and at school allows practitioners to consider particular children's needs and experiences when planning DT use in the classroom. The response from parent seven could possibly be related to the COVID-19 pandemic where both practitioners and parents found themselves embracing new ways of working. Not all households had adequate DT to support home schooling, so practitioners needed to be aware of what every child had, to ensure their rights to education were not impacted. In future, I could possibly ask parents, what DT they had at home during the lockdown and how practitioners effectively (or not) communicated best practices to see if that

would give scope for more analysis.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

By exploring the different perceptions of participants, this study established a strong correlation between the balance of digital and non-digital activities, amount of screen time, mediation of DT use, and effective collaboration between practitioners and parents with children's development and learning.

Findings from this study demonstrated that although at times views from participants and parents were similar or the same, there was also divided opinion between them, supporting existing literature that shows an apparent dichotomy between home and school environments (Plowman, 2015; UNICEF, 2020; Gillen & Kucirkova's, 2018; Chaudron et al., 2018a).

It was evident from findings that achieving the right balance and range of digital and non-digital activities resonated with participants in the study. Findings showed the importance in understanding what is going on in each child's home. Through active collaboration, practitioners and parents can work together to ensure children's needs are considered in the classroom. In addition, findings highlighted the need for training so that all practitioners have the ability and skills to deliver a balanced curriculum, incorporating DT throughout.

Findings also demonstrated that participants in the study were concerned about the amount of time children spent looking at screens, along with mediation of DT use.

Considering both screen time and mediation, parents found this important, which demonstrated that their concerns might be exacerbated by ambiguous guidelines and recommendations leading to individual interpretations, which can cause uncertainty (Viner et al., 2019; Davies et al., 2019). In contrast, mediation did not come up as much of a concern with practitioners, as adequate systems appear to already be in place. However, findings demonstrated that the digital disconnect between the two environments (Edwards et al., 2017) could

be improved through effective collaboration of practitioners and parents, including information sharing and communication of best practices for using DT in the home to facilitate and improve development and learning (Kumpulainen & Gillen's, 2017).

Overall, if not managed effectively, these study findings could create barriers, preventing effective integration of DT into the classroom, which may influence children's development and learning. Therefore, as DT becomes more widespread and integrated into the lives of young children (O'Connor, 2017; Chaudron et al., 2015), it is essential to rethink learning and teaching in the digital age and better consider the influences that DT can have on children's development and learning.

Recommendations

In light of the study findings, I would make the following three recommendations:

- Practitioners get sufficient training and support. Better understanding, knowledge and training on how to integrate DT into the classroom and home will benefit children's lives now and in the future.
- The government and health organisations need to clarify their understanding of exactly what (if any) impact screen time has on children's health and well-being. That way, guidelines and regulations can be reinforced and clearly communicated, giving added confidence to practitioners and parents.

A recommendation for personal practice would be:

- To find effective ways to incorporate DT into all areas of learning within the EYFS curriculum.

Although the data provided insight, it did not fully address the research question in the way that I had hoped. Therefore, if I was going to do a follow-on study, I would like to explore the influence (if any) of time spent using DT on children's physical activity. I would look at doing interviews, as in that way, I would be able to better understand participants' perceptions by asking further questions. ■

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A chance to be better: how does ideology impact on academy freedoms to form curriculum policy?

Abstract:

Curriculum and ideology are inherently linked, illustrated by the part they play in concurrent government agendas to improve educational outcomes for all pupils and compete in education and business on the global stage. A Neoliberal, market economy, ideology has been conceived as resulting in increased freedoms for schools so they can compete in a market and has meant that schools are encouraged to have a curriculum underpinned by the National Curriculum, developed to reflect educational research and local contextual needs. This contrasts however with government need to have ideological control over the emphasis of school policy and accurate measures with which to hold schools accountable. Using a Critical Discourse Analysis CDA methodology proposed by Fairclough (1989) and Appraisal Theory developed by Martin and White (2005) to scrutinise the National Curriculum and Education Inspection frameworks alongside two speeches espousing government ideology through curriculum, this study reveals that school freedom to create policy is powerfully impacted by neoliberalism, inevitably steering a course between reflecting its unique values and aims for the curriculum and complying with the demands made upon it in order to achieve a good OFSTED rating – arguably the most influential of factors in the educational market-place.

Professional Provocation

Curriculum policy defines the core function of every school. Its construction process is as important as its final wording, involving interpretation of national directives and personalisation to school context – the dichotomy of political rhetoric and school autonomy. ‘Policy is about both the identification of political objectives, and the power to transform values into practice through organisational principles and operational practices’ (Bell & Stevenson, 2006, p. 18), it is a powerful imperative for both government and individual schools and a subject worthy of analysis.

As the framework for curriculum policy, a revised National Curriculum in England for Key stages 1 and 2 took effect from September 2014, under the Conservative/Lib Dem coalition government - the culmination of Michael Gove’s role as education secretary. Prior to this was growing concern in the education department that the previous

curriculum review (arising from the Rose review, 2007) enabled freedoms for schools to be ‘less prescriptive about knowledge content’ and more involved in ‘promoting understanding and skills’ (James, 2018), leading to what Gove called ‘play-based pedagogy which infantilises children, teachers and our culture’ and a culture of ‘denying children access to the best that has been thought and written, because Nemo and the Mister Men are more relevant’ (Gove, 2013). The new Framework of the National Curriculum included instead the ‘outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills’ (Department for Education, [DFE] 2013, p. 6).

To reduce curriculum to the bare essentials of what to teach is however to oversimplify its goals and the goals of policy reform in this area. Priestly and Biesta (2013) provide the following model of commonalities in national curricula developments.

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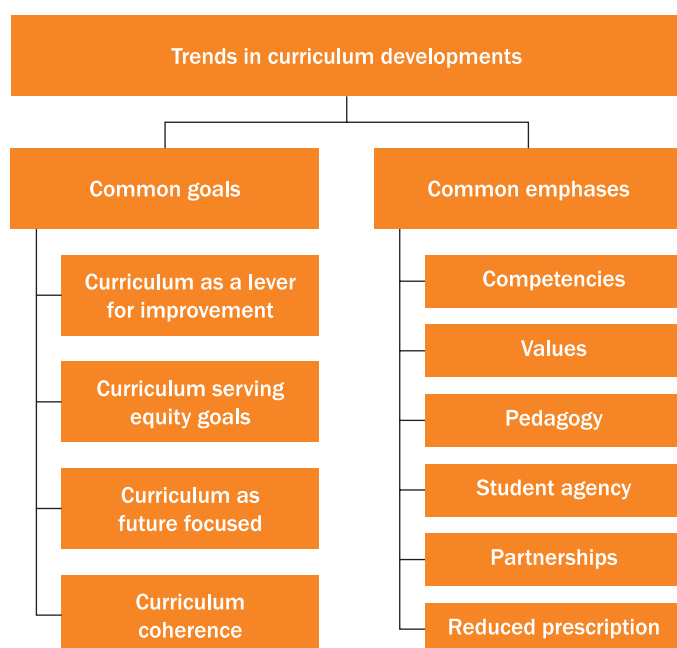


Figure 1. Commonalities in national curricula developments, (Priestly & Biesta, 2013, p. 142)

These commonalities were spoken of at length in speeches by Gove at the time, ensuring that curriculum policy review at school level encompassed them, almost as quality assurance indicators. Hence, the 2014 National Curriculum and rhetoric around it illustrated the fact that ‘policymakers are increasingly focused on curriculum as an influence on the influential - the teachers’ (Priestly & Biesta, 2013, p. 142).

In his 2011 speech on the moral purpose of education, Gove set out his agenda for sharing best practice. He stated, ‘we have created the opportunity on a much larger scale for great leaders to expand their vision across a group of schools’ (Gove, 2011). This played out in the rise of Amanda Spielman from a trustee at Ark Schools, through her position as chair of OFQUAL and in 2017 as OFSTED chief inspector. Spielman’s career prior to education was in finance, nimbly illustrating governmental desire for an ‘increasingly close-knit relationship between the processes of education and the requirements of the economy’ (Ball, 2013, p. 3) and its want to provide ‘world-class education’ and ‘educational excellence everywhere’ (DfE, 2016 pp. 3 & 7).

The introduction of the National Curriculum alongside freedoms given to schools in

its implementation served to place it as a Unique Selling Point of each school - a direct link to the market forces brought into education by Neoliberalism, where ‘competition is the only legitimate organising principle for human activity’ (Metcalfe, 2017). Alongside accountability and the inspection regime, schools’ own curriculum policies are a clear determining factor in parental choice - we can legitimately ask, ‘Whose curriculum is the best?’ or ‘Whose is the most ambitious?’, these questions being answered by an OFSTED judgment.

Spielman’s tenure focused initially on review of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), resulting in a Quality of Education judgement. In her speech to the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), Spielman states, ‘We will look at how schools are interpreting the national curriculum or using their academy freedoms to build new curricula of their own and what this means for children’s school experience. We will look at what makes a really good curriculum’ (Spielman, 2017). The research review published as part of the formation of the new EIF set the tone for further ‘influence on the influential’ by signalling specific research and best practice, inevitably impacting upon school curriculum policy.

The rhetoric that runs alongside curriculum policy makes the high stakes for schools in creating their curriculum policy clear. In this discourse analysis I will focus on patterns of language within the discourse around the primary National Curriculum in England and their impact on the content and focus of the curriculum in one primary academy. The key documents will be the National Curriculum in England (2014) and the EIF (2019) alongside contemporary discourse - speeches made by Gove in 2013 and Spielman in 2019.

I will answer the questions:

- How is ideology conveyed by political speeches surrounding the national curriculum framework and the education inspection framework?
- How does ideology impact upon academy freedoms relating to curriculum policy?

Literature Review

This critical discourse analysis (CDA) is underpinned by the work of Bahktin and Viloshinov, with philosophies largely linked to the Marxist theory of ideology that connects power relationships to social, political and economic theory. That these elements link so closely with policy is unsurprising. ‘Policy is political. It is about power to determine what is done’ (Ball, 2013, p. 9) and is therefore underpinned by the communication of ideology. Ideology is most effective when its workings are least ‘visible’ (Fairclough, 1989, p. 85) therefore CDA will enable this ideology to become visible. The ideology of the state and individuals, their ‘models of how the world is ‘supposed to be’ (Jones, 2012, p.11) and their use of the powers they either perceive to have or indeed do have, are fundamental in the writing of education policy.

Curriculum policy is the focus of this study, a policy which is ‘about progress...about moving from the inadequacies of the present and some future state of perfection where everything works well and works, as it should.’ (Ball, 2013, p. 9); it is policy driven by government and subsequently developed and formed within individual schools. This illustrates Ball’s assertion that ‘policy making is an ever-evolving pattern of

relationships' (Ball, 2013, p. 4) as schools seek to use their freedoms to improve the quality of education they provide. Curriculum policy is however impacted by the discourse within and around the National Curriculum and OFSTED judgments: they are ordered and structured to reflect or reinforce relationships of power and work ideologically as the 'prime means of manufacturing consent' (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 31, 65 and 4). These relationships include asymmetrical power relationships between government and teachers as well as relationships within the school as an organisation – once again, 'influence on the influential' (Priestly & Biesta, 2013, p. 142).

Power relationships inevitably impact on policy, especially in this instance where 'social conditions for manipulative control' (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 362) exist, reinforced by interaction through text and talk about the curriculum. The genres here – frameworks and speeches – are dominated by government which can result in dominance through social power (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 360). Bureaucratic texts like the National Curriculum may include manipulation where the 'recipients being in a passive role...are unable to... see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator' (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 361). Additionally, the explicit control of access to discourse, who speaks, accessibility of the language used and 'entry conditions' to speak in that forum (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 58-68), enable the 'systematic matching of means to the ends' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 212). Finally, the government's ideological power 'to project one's practices as universal and 'common sense' ...is exercised in discourse' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 33), possibly creating hegemony which 'depends upon power relations existing in society' (Laclau, 1983, p. 116). Analysis needs to reveal how the backgrounded and foregrounded information conveyed in discourse impacts upon policy decisions made in schools.

The context of language, through text and talk, is also fundamental to its meaning – as Voloshinov's work on language illustrates, 'meanings emerge in society and society is not a homogenous mass but is itself divided by such factors as social class' (Dentith, 1996, p. 24). So, the meaning taken from political

speeches will depend upon the time and place, and importantly the speaker and audience, their viewpoints and experiences. Voloshinov also recognises that, 'language and linguistic interaction are the very means by which society... is realised.' (Dentith, 1996, p. 27), so the content of the political speech itself will convey the cognition and response required for it to have impact upon actions, thus manifesting the speaker's wants. The socialist philosopher, Habermas found that this inculcation leads to, 'the system [taking] over the process of ideology planning' (Escobar, 1985, p. 382). The choice of language used to manipulate or persuade must then be analysed. Bakhtin's centripetal discourse, authoritative and fixed can be compared and contrasted with centrifugal discourse, the interpretation and use of language by individuals and groups within society (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001, p. 65). For example, in terms of curriculum 'the best that has been thought and written' (Gove, 2013) is subject to interpretation depending upon context.

Finally, the intertextuality of the frameworks and speeches should be considered – 'the idea that any text is explicitly or implicitly 'in dialogue with' other texts' (Kristeva (1986), quoted by Fairclough in Yates, Taylor and Wetherell, 2001, p. 233); the chronology of speeches, publication of frameworks and formation of school policy being significant. Foucault viewed this as studying discourse 'archaeologically, i.e. by identifying the different elements of which they are composed and the system of relations by which these elements form wholes' (Escobar, 1985, p. 379). This should be placed alongside heteroglossia – Bakhtin's 'belief that the individual and the society come together in discourse' (Chatterjee-Padmanabhan, 2014, p. A102); each writer or speaker using and interpreting language, impacting each other. To view the corpus as a whole in this way after dissecting the dialogue in its component parts will give, in the final analysis, a holistic understanding of how genres and actors dictated how the school employed its freedoms to develop curriculum policy.

Corpus

The corpus consists of: the speech given in 2013 by then education secretary, Michael Gove to teachers at Brighton College (Gove,

2011); the 'Aims' and 'purpose of study' for each subject in the primary National Curriculum for England (DfE, 2014); the speech given in 2019 by the chair of OFSTED, Amanda Spelman at the Wonder Years Knowledge Curriculum Conference (Spielman, 2019); the Quality of Education section of the Education Inspection framework (OFSTED, 2019, pp. 9 & 10).

To fully understand the impact of the corpus on how Albert Academy used its freedoms to form curriculum policy, the aims and subject statements of its curriculum policy, reviewed in January 2020, were analysed in relation to each of the speeches and frameworks. The academy is anonymised for ethical purposes.

Methodology

To answer the question of this study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used as the research approach. CDA is text and speech analysis which aims to contribute to 'our understanding of power relations and ideological process in discourse' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109), involving a process of three stages, '*description* of the text, '*interpretation* of the relationship between text and interaction, and '*explanation* of the relationship between interaction and social context'. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109). This framework was used to understand the impact of discourse on policy in this instance, the aim being to uncover the 'ideas, absences and taken-for-granted assumptions in texts' to 'allow us to reveal the kinds of power interests buried in these texts.' (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 5).

The theoretical framework for analysing language and ideology was informed by the work of Bakhtin through the Appraisal Theory taxonomy of Martin and White (2005) shown in Figure 2, enabling analysis of language through each text. I interrogated the taxonomy through 'The Language of Evaluation' (Martin & White's, 2005), forming a mind map of each area: engagement, attitude and graduation, to aid language analysis in the genres studied. The data analysis software, Nvivo was used to store data when coding the speeches, using Martin and White's appraisal resources, as it enabled analysis and comparison between these lengthy, nuanced texts.

Texts and speeches were analysed chronologically to ensure that intertextuality could be assessed in a logical way. This acknowledges the 'notion that a text contains traces of prior texts and inescapably carries potential future texts within it' (Chaterjee-Padmanabhan, 2014, p. A-101) and is fundamental to the 'story' of the creation of the policy to be studied in the final analysis.

There is a risk when focusing on each genre separately that the relationships between text and interactions are not explored. To avoid this, and to pursue 'plurality and the articulation of multiple perspectives' (Chaterjee-Padmanabhan, 2014, p. A-101), discussion and findings took place concurrently. Speeches and frameworks were described using Appraisal Theory, the social context of discourse was interpreted taking into account backgrounded and foregrounded information, and finally their impact on school policy was explained.

The other risks in this study involve the self-consciousness of the researcher and the possible encroachment of ethnographics on the process, due to the fact that the policy to be analysed was largely written by me. My own position, what Fairclough (1989) calls

my 'members' resources (MR)' may make unbiased interpretation difficult. Given that manipulation is most beneficial when subjects do not know they are being manipulated, it may prove impossible for this to be completely negated. The risk of the study verging on ethnographic CDA may be mitigated by the facts that 'ethnographers are usually more concerned with what the discourse is being used to do' (Hammerley, 2005, p. 8), which aligns with the purpose of the study and the fact that the methodology is thoroughly underpinned by a clear focus on CDA.

Findings and discussion Speech – Michael Gove, 9th May 2013, to teachers at Brighton College

This speech, by Gove, Secretary of State for Education was made to teachers at Brighton College, an independent school named as 'England's School of the Decade' by The Times (Leonard, 2019). It came to be known as 'the Mr Men speech' (Skidmore, 2013), due to a carefully selected example of dumbing down of the curriculum, in which Mr Men characters were used in teaching history. It closely followed the conclusion of the draft curriculum and public consultation period between February and April 2013

(DfE, 2013) preceding the final publication of the National Curriculum by 4 months. The immediate audience was reflected in books, authors and quotes chosen (Dr Johnson and George Elliot) and references to classical education ('Ciceronian rhetorical tricks'); the wider audience of parents - 'We all harbour high hopes for our own children' and teachers who 'believe in the nobility of their vocation' was acknowledged.

The speech is heteroglossic, referring frequently to other voices, to show endorsement of the new curriculum and concurrence with Gove: 'reform-minded teachers want change', or to deny and distance Gove from the thoughts of others: 'the unions - and their allies'. Alternatives are used as non-examples: 'one in seven children still can't read and write properly', stressing the superiority of the stance of the new curriculum and of Coalition policy. The chart in Figure 3 shows the percentages of each coded element of the speech, which makes this endorsement and concurrence, distancing and denial clear.

Compliance and agreement are portrayed with endorsements of the new curriculum from the 'majority of teachers' and parents - 'this is what parents want', emphasised by use of exemplar schools, already aligned to the curriculum (an independent school, one from Ark Multi-Academy Trust and two high-performing London primary schools from Richmond and Notting Hill). Examples of curriculum content align to that expected in private schools, indicating Gove's view of private sector superiority. Endorsement also comes from 15 historians, all but one of whom attended Oxford or Cambridge University, all but one of whom are men, who commend the curriculum - Gove adds this to refute negative assertions about the curriculum made by university academics in a letter to The Independent and The Daily Telegraph (Chitty, 2014). Gove's choice to pitch two polarised opinions against each other reflects feedback from the public consultation: notably relevant was concern from respondents, including Michael Rosen, about the demand and prescriptiveness of the English grammar and punctuation curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the response from the National Union of Teachers, arguing for a more cross-curricular, inclusive curriculum (NUT, 2013). The unions,

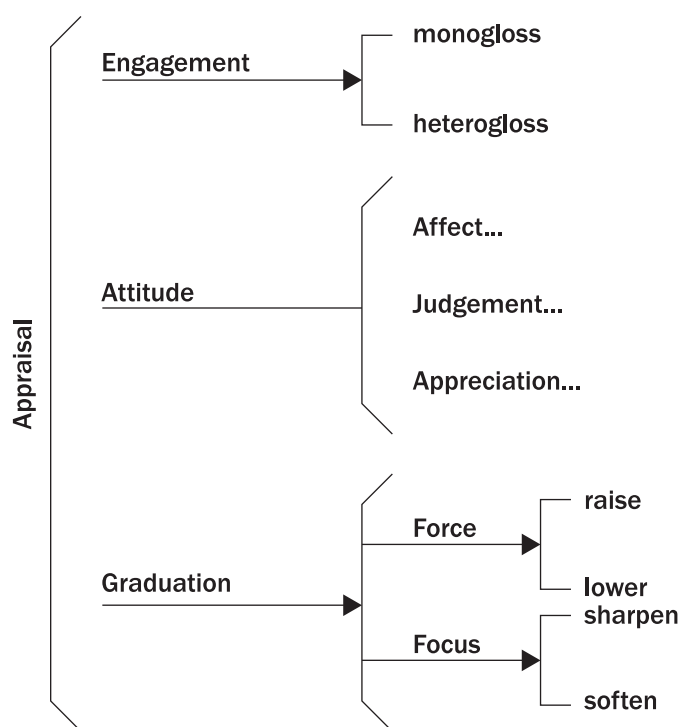


Figure 2: An overview of Appraisal Resources (Martin & White, 2005, p.38)

Guardian Education and Rosen, all aligned to Labour policies, are named ‘the usual suspects’ and portrayed as (predictably) supporting ‘play-based pedagogy which infantilises children, teachers and our culture’. So, while numerous voices are acknowledged in the speech, there is a lack of diversity in those that align and in those that contest: the conservative/liberal elite (‘correct’) who are in power are pitched against the labour proletariat (‘incorrect’) who are not.

Gove’s speech makes government intent clear, indicating expectations as non-negotiable. Counter-arguments are discredited, dissenting voices silenced and allegiances made to exemplify what is now required of schools. The clear indication that previous expectations of the curriculum were too low, with blame for this resting with existing government policy, low exam standards and play-based teaching methods demonstrate ways in which schools need to change their curriculum and pedagogy, setting the scene for the National Curriculum document to follow. The speech had lasting impact, presenting extremes of education as though they were central, castigating anything that had gone before as too progressive and equally not progressive enough. The clear message was that while schools were expected to use their freedoms there was an expectation of how this would manifest.

The National Curriculum for England – Aims and purpose of study for each subject

The ‘aims’ section of the National Curriculum conveys government ideology and clearly sets out the expectations of schools in its interpretation. It is direct in that it does not use coordination or subordination. Verbs used are active and durative: ‘introduces’, ‘provides’, ‘engender’, ‘promotes’, indicating decisive action that will have longevity and adjectives are positive: ‘essential’, ‘educated’, ‘exciting’ and ‘stimulating’. Although it refers to the wider world in lexical labels such as, ‘educated citizens’ and ‘the best that has been thought and said’, it is monoglossic in that these are implicitly subjective statements with no explanation of what it is to be an ‘educated citizen’ or what ‘the best’ is, simply taken-for-granted understandings that are already agreed. There are allusions to the high expectations

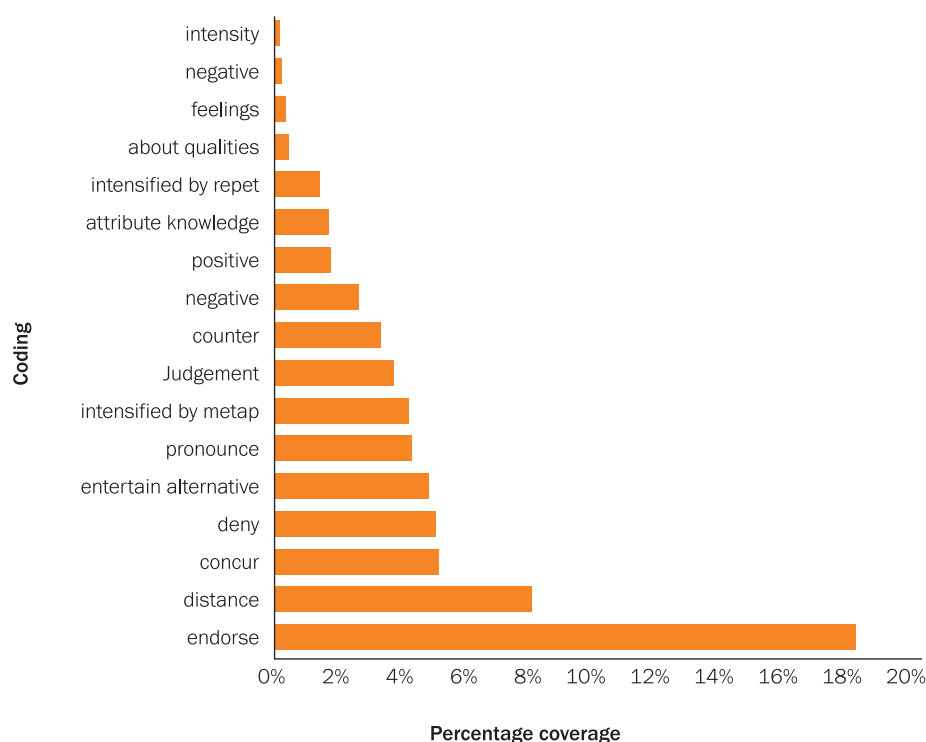


Figure 3: Chart showing the results of coding Michael Gove’s speech at Brighton College, 2013

of schools in phrases such as, ‘just one element’ and ‘There is time and space...to range beyond the...specifications.’ which put force behind the likelihood that more will be done than is about to be outlined.

The purpose of study statements convey the underpinning rationale behind each separate subject in the framework. They include many proclamations: ‘opportunities to compete in sport...build character’, but without any qualification, rendering them monoglossic in that they assume an agreement. They include positive adjectives: ‘intriguing’, ‘rigorous’, ‘inspiring’, and repetition of phrases to emphasise intent: ‘high-quality’ and ‘as pupils progress’. Statements begin with a scene-setting description of what each subject is: ‘an inspiring, rigorous and practical subject’ or does: ‘embodies one of the highest forms of creativity’. Use of the present tense assumes compliance: ‘pupils are equipped to use’, and use of modality assumes obligation: ‘they should be able to think critically’. Ideology is conveyed through numerous explicit references to employment and the place of the nation in the world alongside those of the characteristics that are preferred in citizens: be ‘financially literate’ and ‘physically confident’; have ‘curiosity’ and ‘fascination’.

The English subject statement uses denial to add weight to its necessity: ‘pupils... who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised’. This, added to the use of modal verbs throughout, shows the relationship between the framework and the reader, as one where the reader needs to be both convinced either of the merits for pupils of compliance and the impact on schools of non-compliance. This statement could also refer to the relationship between this framework and its predecessors and may be added to counter the opposing voices to the English curriculum which were addressed in the Gove’s Brighton College speech. This is the only acknowledgment of other voices or texts in the document.

Speech – Amanda Spielman, 26th January 2019, to ‘The Wonder Years’ Knowledge Curriculum Conference

Spielman’s speech was made at the Wonder Years Curriculum Conference, organised by Parents and Teachers for Excellence (PTE), an organisation consisting many of the key authors and educationalists at the time and parents and governors of schools: delegates would have probably included people in

these roles and members of institutions such as Policy Exchange and ResearchEd. The organisation states that ‘children should have ‘a curriculum jam-packed full of the very best that has been thought, said and done’, (Parents and Teachers for Excellence, 2020), concurring with the aims of the National Curriculum. It took place during the consultation period for the new EIF and begins with a request to delegates to be involved in this – Spielman asserting a stance that is ‘genuine’ and acknowledges the ‘wisdom’ of the audience.

In the opening two paragraphs, every subject in the primary curriculum is mentioned aligning with PTE and OFSTED’s stance on a broad curriculum and with the National Curriculum framework itself, contrasting with Gove’s speech which focused mainly on English and History in a curriculum criticised at the time as ‘extremely narrow’ (The Independent, 2013). The ideology behind curriculum inspection is made clear by references to ‘social justice’ and reducing ‘economic and social inequality’ brought about by curriculum narrowing.

While Gove’s speech relied heavily on endorsements of the curriculum, distancing it from dissenting voices, Spielman’s foregrounds pronouncements about the aims of the new EIF: ‘for me, the new framework really is about making sure that children’s time in education are their wonder years’, backed up with attributions of the knowledge used in its review: ‘we have used the definition from cognitive psychology’. Denial is used to clarify the aims: ‘no school will be criticised for’ and ‘this draft framework is absolutely not about trying to put a straightjacket on innovation in schools’ curriculum’, seeking to reassure the audience, contrasting with Gove’s speech where denial is used to discredit those with opposing views. Figure 4 shows the main strategies used in Spielman’s speech.

Contentious issues are accompanied by acknowledgement and reassurance: ‘I know this can be a contested phrase.’ Criticism while present is qualified: ‘I understand why it happens.’ Assertions are softened with ‘I believe’, and ‘I am fairly sure’ showing that other voices are entertained. Modality is used to show what schools are compelled to do,

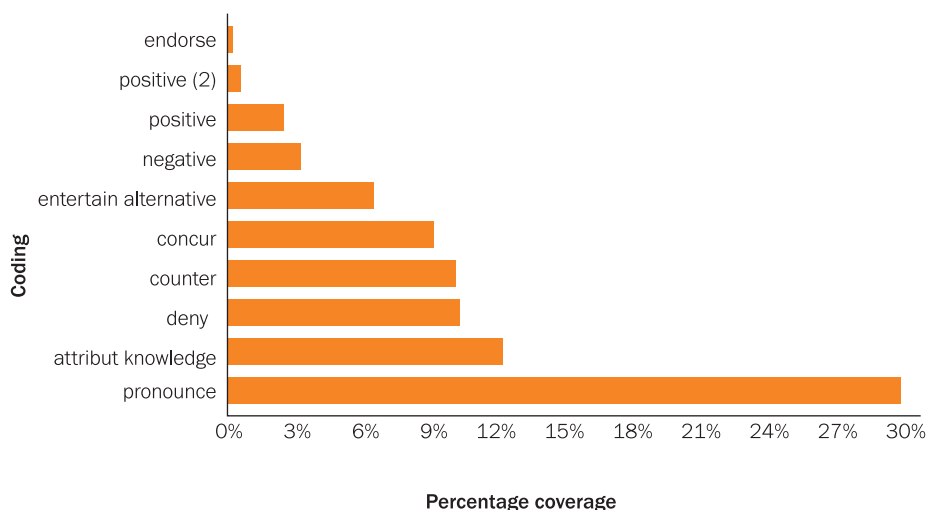


Figure 4: Chart showing the results of coding Amanda Spielman’s speech at The Wonder Years Conference, 2019

occasionally backed up with emotive language indicating feelings associated with non-compliance: ‘it really pains me’ and ‘most would be shocked’. Spielman takes little for granted in the speech, using words and phrases such as ‘hope’ and ‘hopefully’, softening ideological messages in acknowledgement of the asymmetric power relationships at play.

The Education Inspection Framework, section 26, Quality of Education (pp.9 and 10) 14th May 2019

The EIF states how schools will be judged in an OFSTED inspection. The statements around quality of education are separated into sections describing its intent (what is planned), implementation (how it is provided) and impact (what it achieves). It is written in the present tense, assuming compliance. The key ideological aspects are shared in the intent and impact sections, largely relating to equity, access to ‘cultural capital’ and readiness for ‘future learning and employment’ with all learners achieving well and studying the ‘full curriculum ‘specialising’ only when necessary’, this last statement referring to previous narrowing in the curriculum resulting from accountability measures focused around certain subjects.

The implementation section speaks of pedagogy related to ‘knowledge’, ‘understanding’ and ‘concepts’ along with ‘ambitious intentions for...a coherently planned curriculum’. Workload is referred to in relation to feedback, assessment and

resourcing – a reflection of the government’s ‘Workload Challenge’ which stated that ‘too many teachers are spending too much of their time on overly detailed, duplicating or bureaucratic work which can take them away from what matters most – improving teaching and learning’ (DfE, 2015, p. 3).

As a framework it is heteroglossic reflecting the workload challenge, social and cognitive science. Its reference to ‘the provider’s curriculum’ reflects school freedoms to tailor it to their specific context, also indicated in the National Curriculum statements and Gove’s speech. This level of interaction seeks to encourage contextualisation and reward schools that provide a ‘genuinely good curriculum, implemented well across a school’ (Spielman, 2019).

Albert Academy Curriculum Policy

The documents and speeches analysed impact on the school policy studied to varying degrees. The National Curriculum framework of 2014 and its intentions as espoused by Gove in his speech at the time, impacted on the pedagogy, with the central inclusion of knowledge and skills to every subject and the curriculum values of aspiration, progress and learning attitude. The ambition required is referred to frequently in Albert Academy policy; ‘just one element in the education of every child’ becomes ‘It more than fulfils the requirements...being ambitious for all pupils’ and when personalised to the school context; ‘The best that has been thought and said’ becomes ‘children should explore the ‘big

ideas' or concepts involved in the story of our world'. Each subject statement reflects this ambition too, including operational as well as ideological statements, illustrating how these subjects will be taught as well as to what end.

Albert Academy curriculum policy most closely resembles the EIF in its wording - the school's interpretation of intent, implementation and impact are explained in detail. There are direct links from the EIF's 'knowledge and cultural capital to succeed in life' and the policy's 'vital key to improving the quality of life...now and in the future'. The pedagogy referred to in the EIF is also repeatedly referenced in policy: coherently planned curriculum; integrating new knowledge into larger concepts; cumulative knowledge and skills; a curriculum made meaningful, manageable and motivating for pupils and teachers - in fact the policy is largely underpinned by the 'implementation' section of the EIF. Spielman's speech and the renewed EIF signalled permission for schools to develop curricula that were broader and more relevant. The policy, the result of a process of curriculum review, resulted in the core of the National Curriculum being surrounded by contextualisation enabled by academy freedoms. While knowledge, skills and understanding are stated frequently, underpinning concepts are also described - power, democracy, systems, change, identity and diversity with contextualised aims to 'raise educational achievement and attainment equitably' enabling pupils to 'make meaning, debate and innovate' while developing 'communication, resilience and independence', giving energy to life, learning and the environment through all curriculum subjects. These are a departure from framework documents but still directly linked to EIF criteria.

Conclusions

Through CDA, I have analysed the key speeches and frameworks influencing curriculum policy in schools and answered the following questions:

How is ideology conveyed by political speeches surrounding the national curriculum framework and the education inspection framework?

How does ideology impact upon academy

freedoms relating to curriculum policy?

Ideology inevitably runs through the corpus of this study - 'curriculum is a canvas on which political parties paint their aspirations for society' (Bangs, Galton, Mcbeath & Macbeath, 2010, p. 84). Analysis shows government's agenda to give schools freedom to contextualise curriculum policy while securing rigour. Inherent to this is the neoliberal ideology surrounding education, made clear by referencing the superiority of the private sector, the demands of the economy and the need for schools to be marketised. Gove's speech employed power explicitly to assert this ideology - manipulation is absent as the agenda is made clear (Lukes, 1974, pp. 16-19) however we hear force, by choice being stripped away; influence, by reminders of accountability; authority, as schools are made to see the reasonableness of the demands. Spielman also asserts authority and influence, demonstrating that 'while there has been an apparent acknowledgement of the need for diversity in the curriculum...this does not allow [schools] to escape the demands of the machinery of accountability' and using social science, 'as a weapon to be used in ideological battles' (Brown & Wisby, 2020, pp. 186 & 179). The tools of power used by Spielman, encourage hegemony, resulting in shared values around curriculum, demonstrating that 'the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place' (Lukes, 1974, p. 23). Gove anticipates rebellion but Spielman gives little to rebel against.

The response in school policy is to mirror the demands of the policy frameworks in language and ambition while using the local context to add detail - the impact of every document in the corpus is evident. 'Freedom is not made up principally of privileges; it is made up especially of duties.' (Camus & O'Brien, 1995, p. 96) - any amount of freedom would inevitably operate within curriculum models such as that of Priestly and Biesta (2013, p. 142) and although contextualised, these central aims ensure that curriculum will always conform to certain criteria. School freedoms are a defining factor in enabling market forces to improve education and differentiate between schools however there is a dichotomy between the existence of these freedoms and

the government's need to both hail successes as part of its own legacy and to quality assure its achievements. 'Rhetorical claims are easy to make but the enactment of policy is complex and difficult especially when it faces in different directions at one and the same time.' (Ball, 2013, p. 218). Contemporary ideology has led to Albert Academy seeking a balance between innovation and conforming to government's curricula aims, the criteria that it will ultimately be judged against and the demands of the market-place in which it finds itself.

Albert Academy policy acknowledges the curriculum as a vehicle through which values and aims are 'communicated and lived', its values reflecting the centripetal discourse of the DfE and the centrifugal discourse of the school community. This reflects the process of policy-writing, and the collective voice of the school as its freedom is enacted. 'The ability of schools to improve is fostered, not inhibited, by the confidence to innovate.' (Bangs, MacBeath & Galton, 2010, p. 84); in this instance, the influence of OFSTED and the renewed EIF, as conveyed by Spielman, led to the academy using its freedoms to be more innovative in developing its policy but for this to be taken further would 'require a change in political culture in which the grand gestures and concern about legacies... would have to be replaced by the humble work of developing educational policies that work for all.' (Brown & Wisby, 2020, p 194).

Additional to the corpus studied here, extensive discourse surrounding other educational issues will have impacted curriculum policy over the last 7 years; analysis of wider educational discourse would give deeper understanding of these factors and additional members' resources influencing curriculum policy. Policy reforms education incrementally and many agendas impact on school freedoms - plotting the influence of funding, accountability, teacher recruitment and retention, workload and wellbeing, among others would convey the entirety of the influencing factors on curriculum policy, further developing and validating the study - they are 'part of a causal nexus of physical and social events which shapes how we think and act, and what we are able to accomplish' (Hammersley, 2003, p. 773), all influencing Albert Academy's decisions on how they enact their freedoms for the betterment of education. ■

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A Historiographical Study of the Soldiers' Experience of the First World War

Abstract:

Much has been written about the First World War, but the experience of the soldier was often excluded from traditional military histories. Interpretation of the soldiers' experience developed from traditional history where it was considered of no importance, through social history which uncovered and interpreted their stories, to cultural history which aimed to understand their experience in depth and place it in a wider cultural context. Research into the soldiers' experience continues to evolve. Recent historical studies have incorporated digital technologies and moved away from a national to a trans-national perspective. Historians have generally used very similar sources (such as letters, diaries and official documents) from archives and personal collections to extract evidence for their research, but the soldiers' experience has also been told by non-academics in war poetry, literature and memoirs. This historiographical study examines how interdisciplinary approaches have been used to reveal the soldiers' voice; why these changes came about; the impact of the methodology used by the historian, and how approaches from other disciplines helped to produce a richer understanding of the soldier experience of the First World War.

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Much has been written about the First World War. This essay will focus on the experience of British soldiers on the Western Front during the First World War. It examines how that experience has been investigated and represented by historians and how the historiography has changed over time. Consideration will also be given to why these changes came about and the impact of the approach and methodology used by the historian. It will trace how the soldier experience was excluded from traditional military histories and how the development of social and cultural history has enabled historians to research and analyse the soldier experience, incorporating approaches from other disciplines for a richer understanding. Following Winter and Prost (2005, p. 2) this examination of the historiography is not limited to that of professional historians and will include literature and the work of non-academics, such as the soldiers themselves.

The soldier experience excluded – traditional history

In the period following the First World War historians focused on the origins of the war and military operations. This was a period when nations attempted to justify actions and decisions and official war histories were written which recorded events as they had occurred. The British official history covers twenty-nine volumes and was written by a small number of military historians between 1919 and 1948. Official documents and records were the main sources used, alongside memoirs written by generals, politicians and diplomats (Green, 2005, p. 1). Captain Liddell Hart's *The Real War* published in 1930 continued to focus more on the war 'than the warriors' experience (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 15). History at this time was traditional and represented the view of the war 'from above' and generally focused on national interests. The experience of the front line soldiers did not feature in these histories,

they were not considered relevant to the analysis of operational activity (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 13). According to French historian Pierre Renouvin, who wrote extensively about the French experience of the First World War in the 1920s and 1930s, 'the soldiers' accounts ... can hardly give any information on the conduct of operations, since the horizon of these witnesses was too narrow' (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 14).

However, it is important to note that although the day-to-day reality of the war did not feature in the official histories, the war veterans and general public were interested in how soldiers experienced the war. Poetry had been written by soldiers (mainly junior officers such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon) during and after the war, which provided vivid descriptions of their experience. The 1920s and 1930s saw the publication of a large volume of war literature which brought the experience of the soldiers to public view (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 85). War correspondent Philip Gibbs published *The Realities of War* in 1920, which was one of the first books to include the experience from the soldiers' perspective (Green, 2005, p. 2), although it has been criticised for not providing full details of the 'suffering and dangers' (Finn, 2002). Other work included: Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* (1926-28); Erich Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), which was also released as a film in 1930; Robert Graves' autobiography *Goodbye to All That* (1929); Charles Edmond's *Subaltern's War* (1929); and Siegfried Sassoon's fictional account of his own life *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 86). The late 1920s and early 1930s was a period of economic depression and there was a general sense of disillusionment, which may have influenced the nature of the literature produced at this time. The reason the non-academic literature is

important is that it laid the foundations for the common understanding of the front line soldiers' experience and the idea of the soldier as a hero fighting a futile war has become embedded in social memory. This body of work was used by later historians, but at the time it was largely ignored, and academic and non-academic accounts of the war continued in parallel.

The 1960s form an important turning point in the historiography of the soldiers' experience. The fiftieth anniversary in 1964 fostered a renewed interest and saw the BBC broadcast *The Great War* series and A.J.P Taylor published *The First World War: an Illustrated History* (1964). Both showed images of the soldier experience and the perspective changed showing the war through the eyes of the soldiers (Winter & Prost, 2005, pp. 20-21); visual evidence was more widely used and reached a much wider audience. Historians, though, continued to exclude the soldier experience from their work, for example Alan Clark's *Donkeys* (1961) focused on the behaviour of the generals and Arthur Marwick's *The Deluge* (1965) focused on the home front. Winter and Prost note that even the *Annales* school, which was at the forefront of social history at this time, considered it to be 'mere events' (2005, p. 88). The 1970s saw an increase in the publication of memoirs from front line soldiers. By this time most of the soldiers were retired and it was an opportunity for those who wanted to tell their story of the war. W.H.I. Groom wrote *Poor Bloody Infantry* (1976) to counter the 'war histories that are more concerned with strategies of war than the impact of the fighting on the common soldier' (Groom, 1976, p. 16) He wanted to show what it was really like, in contrast to some of the accounts from officers which portrayed the heroic attitude to war (p. 20). His personal memoir of the First World War describes the conditions

soldiers endured in the trenches, the songs they sang and the impact of problems such as food shortages. In places it is in a diary format, is illustrated with maps and photographs and also includes letters from senior officials, which he critically reviews in the light of his experience.

The soldier experience – social history

The 1960s and 1970s was a time of considerable change in society. There had been an increase in levels of education and an expansion of universities, which led to more academic historians and an increase in history journals and conferences (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 204) which enabled ideas to be shared and developed. Many of these historians were influenced by the sociological and anthropological developments in social history in the 1950s and 1960s, and the focus on 'history from below' was associated with developments by Marxist historians such as E.P. Thompson (Hobsbawm, 1971). Alongside this, in 1968, the Imperial War Museum and Public Records Office made war documents available, which provided historians with access to new source material, including letters and accounts from soldiers (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 91). This began to have an impact on the way historians examined the First World War and they started to include the experience of the front line soldiers in their research.

Martin Middlebrook was one of the first to use the personal accounts of the soldiers. He was not an academic historian at the time and was inspired to write *The First Day on the Somme* in 1971 following a visit to the French battlefields in 1967. He wanted to tell the story of the battle 'through the eyes of the ordinary soldiers'. He drew on 400 personal accounts that

had just been released by the Public Records Office and advertised in the press for veterans to contact him. He collected personal memories of the battle using questionnaires and face-to-face interviews and used direct quotations to illustrate the story (Middlebrook, 2004). This appears to be an important milestone in the historiography of the soldiers' experience, although French historians Ducasse, Meyer and Perreux included eye-witness accounts in *Vie et mort des Français* in 1959 (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 88) and this method of using direct quotations to illustrate war histories was a model followed by later historians up to the present time. 'Writing the war's history became conditioned by the need to reflect the experience of the war's participants' (Trudell, 2014).

In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, published in 1975, Paul Fussell used the poetry, literature and correspondence written by soldiers in the 1920s and 1930s to examine the language they used to describe to their experience of the First World War. Fussell was influenced by his experience as an infantry officer in the Second World War, identifying himself with the likes of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon (Fussell, 2013, p. 363), and the atrocities of the Vietnam War (Fussell, 2013, p. xi), reflecting the anti-war sentiment of the 1970s (Gregory, 2014, p. 191). He has been criticized for his selection of material as it mainly represents the officers rather than ordinary soldiers (Fussell, 2013, p. xii), but his focus on cultural material as well as personal documents was very different to the narrative histories that had been written about the war; for the first time the focus was the soldiers' emotional experience. His textual analysis reflected the linguistic turn that was taking place in academic history. This approach also paved the way for other historians, such as Samuel Hynes' *A War Imagined* (1990), to use literature and other cultural material to research the experience of the soldier. American Professor of History Eric Leed also explored the emotional experience of war in *No Man's Land* (Leed, 1979) and, although his study was primarily based on first-hand accounts, he also

included war literature. His focus was the traumatic experience of combat and how modern industrialized war affected the identity of front line soldiers and is clearly influenced by psychological, sociological and anthropological approaches. This interdisciplinary approach was a key feature of social history and enabled historians to research from a different perspective. Leed's very narrow focus allowed him to mine the archive material in a different way to Fussell, resulting in an analysis of an experience beyond accepted levels of endurance.

John Keegan, a military historian and teacher at the Royal Military Academy, also considered the emotional experience of soldiers, but his focus was on why soldiers were prepared to fight and *The Face of Battle* (1976) was considered to be ground-breaking at the time it was published. The use of 'face' in the title suggests the importance he placed on thinking of the soldier as a human being, and not just part of a battalion. He used printed sources for his research (including memoirs), which may have excluded the voice of the front line soldier as it was mainly officers who published, but his work has been recognised for reorienting military history and identifying that the study of battle should include the human response to battle (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 92). Tony Ashford, a sociologist, examined how soldiers endured life in the trenches, using their diaries, letters and accounts, including battalion histories. *Trench Warfare 1914-1918* (1980) examines the relationships between the front line soldiers and the staff officers in the rear. With his sociology background, he identified the importance of regimental tradition, the masculine code of behaviour, cultural values and the primary social group in maintaining soldier motivation (Ashford, 1980, pp. 204-206). Keegan and Ashford's work laid the foundations for further studies on the motivations of soldiers to continue fighting in adversity, such as J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (1991); Gary Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches* (2000) and Alexander Watson *Enduring the Great War* (2008).

These four examples illustrate how the historiography of the soldiers' experience of the war changed during the 1970s and laid the foundations for future research. The soldiers' accounts had become one of the main sources of evidence used by historians and it was the impact of the war on their experience that was central to the research. They demonstrate how the approaches of historians moved away from its traditional 'view from above', to a concern for the history of society. John Tosh, Professor of History at Roehampton University, suggests that this *history from below* 'concentrates on the unorganized and the marginal who have been least visible in the historical record' (Tosh, 2010, p. 71). As the ordinary soldiers did not usually appear in the official war records, using social history methods enabled historians to examine the experience through the eyes of the soldiers, who were previously on the margins. The *Annales school* introduced methods drawn from the social sciences into historical research (Evans, 2008) and this is evident in the approaches of the historians above.

At this point it is helpful to reflect on the use of diaries, memoirs and literature. Social historians recognised that the history of 'ordinary' people could not be discovered in the official sources and turned to the documents that they produced themselves. Without them historians would not have been able to identify the soldier experience, but the use of subjective sources has been a matter of debate among historians. One of the issues is that memoirs and autobiographies are written several years after the event and could be subject to distortion over a period of time. Traditional empirical historians such as Richard Holmes, Professor of Military and Security Studies at Cranfield University, used personal papers, trench newspapers and army manuals and pamphlets to illustrate his analysis of the First World War and considered it important to refer to contemporary documents (i.e. written at the time) rather than material produced many years after the event (Holmes, 2004, p. xxiii). Tosh views them as providing a

'human face to a story' (2010, p. 104), but is also mindful that the historian has to understand the context in which they were written (pp. 126-132). The letters, diaries and memoirs that have been used as evidence for the experience of the soldiers all have a context – for example there were restrictions in what could be written in letters, which were censored, and the author may have exaggerated or toned down his experience according to who he was writing for.

Michael Roper, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Essex, uses psychoanalysis techniques to examine the letters to uncover the 'unconscious impact of the war'. The contents of the letters often reflect the culture of the time, for example the 'stiff upper lip' mentality could affect what the soldiers were prepared to admit to family members. He also suggests that some experiences were too disturbing to write about at the time and 'retrospective accounts are generally more reflective about the emotional experience' (Roper, 2009, pp. 20-21). Janet Watson, Associate Professor of History at Connecticut University who has researched British representations of the First World War, uses poetry and novels as well as diaries and letters to examine how the soldiers experienced the war at the time and how it changed over time, and her bibliography in *Fighting Different Wars* lists sources according to whether they were written during or after the war (Watson, 2004, p. 10).

In order to capture details of experience that are not recorded in documentary sources, historians have also turned to the methodology of oral history, which also developed in the 1960s and 1970s, to capture 'impressions and recollections' of everyday life (Tosh, 2010, p. 315). The Imperial War Museum created a 'sound archive' in 1972 which contains publicly available recordings of interviews with war veterans (Coll, 2014) and Lyn MacDonald has interviewed veterans of the First World War to obtain eye-witness accounts. *1914-1918 Voices and Images of the Great War* (MacDonald, 1988) provides a narrative account using the interviews to describe events from the perspective of the soldiers. Winter

and Prost (2005, p. 94) comment on the 'richness of this working class culture' that is probably only obtainable through oral history. The idea of memory is central to research about the First World War. Starting with war poetry, post-war literature and later film and television (the BBC sitcom *Blackadder* from the 1980s is often cited as an example), the 'myths' of the futility of war and the image of the soldier as a hero and victim have become part of the nation's collective memory and as such may influence the memories of individuals (Watson, 2004, pp. 1-2). Oral history has been criticized for being subjective and influenced by nostalgia and collective memory (Tosh, 2010, pp. 321-323), but as first-hand testimony it does provide historians with a wealth of evidence of what soldiers remember of their experiences.

Understanding the soldier experience – cultural history

The personal testimony of soldiers was used to illustrate histories of the war and new lines of research focused on their experience. Social historians, working with other disciplines such as sociology and psychology, uncovered new sources which brought the soldiers' experience into focus and provided a different perspective on the military history of the war. Historians such as Fussell, Keegan and Leed, discussed previously, tended to be quite wide ranging, and asked questions about how soldiers endured the conditions and combat and what motivated them. The next stage in the historical interpretation was the development of a deeper understanding of the soldiers' experience and the investigation of 'new' areas, which came about following the development of cultural history in the 1980s and 1990s. Historians started to consider the influence of cultural traditions on events, focusing on 'shared meanings, attitudes and values' (Tosh, 2010, pp. 246-248). Psychology, literary theory and anthropology became increasingly used as methodologies for historical research (Tosh, 2010, pp. 259-267). The difference between the approaches of social and cultural history can be considered as a 'difference in emphasis', with social historians creating

a 'social narrative' and cultural historians producing 'contextual understandings' (Tosh, 2010, p. 270). This pattern is reflected in the history of the soldiers' experience, specific aspects have been researched in depth and many sub-fields have developed.

Morale has featured in many studies and it is interesting to compare the social and cultural history approaches. In 1967 (republished in 1988) John Baynes, an army officer, published *Morale. A Study of Men and Courage* which he wrote to fill a gap as there had been little written about this in histories about the First World War. He researched the experience of 'one battalion in one battle' (Baynes, 1988, p. 7) and identified five aspects of morale: regimental loyalty; the relationship between the officers and other ranks; discipline; a sense of duty; and the provision of 'the necessities of war such as rations and ammunition' (pp. 253-254). Baynes' findings may well have been influenced by his military background and probably reflected his training and, although he uses the same sources, it lacks the rigour of an academic historian and he does not consider the issues or the evidence in great detail. In *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (1991), Dr. J.G. Fuller, a senior lecturer at the Civil Service College in London, researches soldiers' morale through diaries, letters and memoirs, but also looks at the trench magazines, and he covers a wide range of units to provide a wider context for his research. In addition to the experience in the trenches, which had been the focus of much previous research, he also examines activity behind the front line and the importance of aspects of working class culture, such as canteens, excursions, sport, and concert parties, on the morale of the men (Fuller, 1991, pp. 176-177). Through this research we see the soldiers' experience from a different perspective and in a different context. Fuller's work is an example of how cultural history helps to provide a deeper, more rounded understanding of how soldiers endured the war. Since 2000, historians have taken Baynes' and Fuller's research further by utilising methodologies from psychology,

sociology and anthropology.

Alexander Watson, Professor of History at Goldsmith's University, researched combat and morale in British and German armies during the First World War, making extensive use of personal papers, war diaries and official documents from British and German archives. He focused on psychology to understand 'fears, motivations, mental defence mechanisms and coping strategies' to understand how soldiers coped with battle and why they were willing to fight. He uses a comparative approach to eliminate cultural bias and understand the psychological factors involved (Watson A. , 2008 , p. 7). Joanna Bourke, a Professor in Economic and Social History at Birkbeck College, examines how First World War impacted Edwardian concepts of manliness and one of the issues she focuses on is the treatment of shell shock. She highlights the differences in the way officers and other ranks were treated, with officers classed as suffering from neurasthenia and the ranks hysteria. She discusses the class differences and the issues around the gendering of shell shock as hysteria was considered a complaint of the 'weak' and 'female' (Bourke, 1996, pp. 107-123). Jessica Meyer discusses the gender implications further and considers the debate not just to be 'masculine versus feminine', but also an issue of manliness, referring back to the stereotypes from Victorian and Edwardian eras. Many men saw the war as an opportunity to 'prove their manhood' and those who suffered shell shock were considered 'childish' or immature. She examines four cases of 'regression' published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* in 1920 (Meyer, 2009). In contrast, Tracey Loughran, Senior Lecturer in Medical History at Cardiff University compares historical and literary approaches to shell shock and considers medical opinion, identifying the different ways this experience can be studied and the importance of understanding the contemporary interpretations (Loughran, 2012). Another approach is taken by Fiona Reid, University of South Wales, has researched the shell shock using a trans-national approach, comparing how it was considered and treated in Britain,

Germany, France and Italy, exploring the language of cowardice and how men would avoid seeking treatment because of the negative 'labels' applied to the condition (Reid, 2014). These examples identify how the study of the experience of shell shock through a psychology 'lens' has fragmented the historiography into a range of other disciplines, including the history of medicine, trans-national history and gender history.

Another 'lens' that historians have utilised in the study of how soldiers endured the front line experience is that of sociology. Michael Roper has researched how young soldiers coped with the separation from their families and how letters and parcels helped them cope emotionally. He considers the maternal influence of the mothers, the substitute 'mother' role of the subalterns and the domestic 'duties', such as cleaning and cooking (Roper, 2009, pp. 130-134), that are important to the morale of the young men. A shortcoming of his analysis is that he has only researched correspondence between single men and their mothers; it would be interesting to compare this with that between husband and wife. Rachel Duffett has focused on the role food plays in the morale of the soldier; Michael Roper was her PhD supervisor, so it is not surprising that she has taken a sociological approach, she was also influenced by a symposium on food and war in 2009 (Duffett, 2012, p. xiii). Having researched factors affecting morale, she identified that food had not been covered in any depth (p. 5). Her research includes what the men ate and their reactions to rations, the parcels of food sent from home and the food they could obtain from French locals (pp. 215-219). These examples demonstrate how historians have used interdisciplinary approaches in the study of the experience of front line soldiers. It is clear that cultural history has enabled new areas of research to develop, with the history of emotions and senses adding to research into social and cultural histories of the war.

Conclusion

Historians' interpretation of the soldiers' experience of the First World War has

developed from traditional history where their individual experience was considered of no importance, through social history which uncovered and interpreted their stories to cultural history which seeks to understand their experience in depth and place it in a wider cultural context. It has been noted that historians have deconstructed the experience of the war and the studies have fragmented into specialist areas which often overlap. Historians have generally used very similar sources from archive and personal collections, but mined them in different ways, using interdisciplinary approaches, to extract evidence for their research and identify new areas. There is a danger that historians could be selective in the evidence they use, making it fit their subjective position. The history of the soldiers' experience has also been told by non-academics in war poetry, literature and memoirs, and these have been used as source material alongside letters, diaries and official documents. Historians have developed methodologies to use subjective personal testimony and memories which may be distorted by time or social memories. The centenary in 2014 generated increased interest in the First World War and many new books have been published, but there appears to be a tendency for research to develop existing themes rather than developing new areas. What is new, however, is the use of digital technology to share the historical research. Websites are being used to represent the experience of soldiers, digitise records for independent research and present case studies for education. *Europeana 1914-1918* is a trans-national online project to transcribe handwritten testimonies and virtual exhibitions are available of 'untold stories' (Europeana, 2016). The British Library (British Library, 2016) and the Imperial War Museum (Imperial War Museum, 2016) both have extensive collections of documents, photographs and articles. Recent historical studies appear to have moved away from a national to a trans-national perspective and this will help to put research into a wider global context. Research into the soldiers' experience continues to evolve ... ■

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To what extent did the draining of the Fens during the 17th century affect the local inhabitants?

Abstract:

The Fenland drainage schemes of the 17th century have tended to be perceived as a triumph over nature; the sea-drenched terrain was transformed into essential arable land, while the number of catastrophic flooding events were terminated or reduced. However, previous research has neglected the consequences for the local inhabitants and underrepresented the involvement of venture capitalists and the State. By examining contemporary primary sources from lords to locals, this study modifies prior perceptions, repositions the motives for the reclamation schemes and questions their success. The study argues that the State and venture capitalists were resolute in increasing their revenue by securing the newly-drained lands, comparing its procurement with that of the acquisition of Colonial territories. Further, it contends that the establishment strengthened the case for drainage by employing negative propaganda; pictures and poems were used to mock the inhabitants and represented their wetlands as worthless. The study finds that although the Fenlanders had some high-level support and fought back with riots, poems, and ballads, the momentum was not in their favour. As the wetlands became increasingly desiccated, the ecology changed forever, causing numerous inhabitants to lose their livelihoods. Their rights to common land vanished as the schemes acted as a form of enclosure, replacing egalitarianism with private capital that still exists today.

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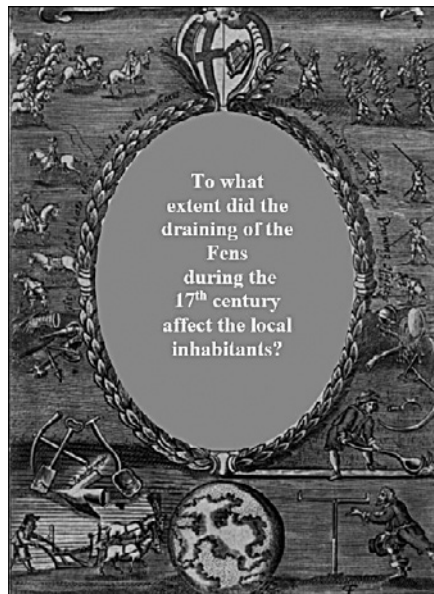


Figure 1: Title page showing drainage and other improvement works (adapted from Blith, 1652, as cited in Willmoth, 1998, p. 298, figure 3).

Introduction

Ever since Roman times, the low-lying Fenlands have provided their inhabitants with pastoral and water-based livelihoods, supported by the fertile attributes of the sea to the east and the rivers flowing in from the west. The Fenlanders made a living from the paludal environment and their rights to Common land, living by the egalitarian Fen by-laws. However, they were acutely aware of the balance between sustenance and saturation, as marine incursions and overflowing rivers could swiftly wipe out lives and livelihoods. During the 17th century, there was a concerted State effort to drain significant areas of the Fenland Levels. King James I declared his intention to prevent the hurtful inundations: 'for the Honour of his kingdome, would not any longer suffer the Countries to be abandoned to the will of the waters.....' (Darby, 1940, p. 38). Nevertheless, his words masked his real

motives, and few of the inhabitants would celebrate the results.

Despite the numerous primary sources, the research into the extent that the Fenlanders were affected by the drainage schemes is minimal. This study aims to address the deficiency and debates the motives of the State and its backers, drawing comparisons with the exploitation of Colonial lands. To achieve these aims, the study critiques a range of primary sources in addition to secondary literature. Two core primary sources were Sir John Maynard's 1690 *The picklock of the old Fenne project* and Sir William Dugdale's 1662 *History of imbanking and drying*. Maynard was a Whig MP for the south of England, nevertheless, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Fen people's cause and against any Crown extravagancies (Hayton, 2020). His book contains a voluminous amount of speeches that he gave in the Exchequer Chamber, where he made scathing attacks on the motives and methods of the Crown, their backers, and the drainers. Dugdale was an established antiquary of the time, however, his book documenting the drainage projects was commissioned by a Lord who owned a drainage company (Willmoth, 1998, p. 281). Consequently, the study views his accounts with heightened scepticism; however, they help determine the prejudices against the Fenland inhabitants. A significant proportion of the secondary literature is dated and concentrates on the practicalities of the schemes. Keith Lindley (1982) provides detailed accounts of the riots, but his focus on the civil war is prioritised over any social aspects. Although he quotes a contemporary poem that connects the Colonies with Fen drainage, he makes little of its importance. Kate Mulray (2021) is the only one to recognise the poem's significance, a point that highlights the lack of debate in this area. Henry Darby's *The Changing Fenland* (1983) and *The draining of the Fens* (1940) also deliver sound documentary accounts and

provide good footnotes for the sources he used; however, these too shine little light on the personal consequences of the removal of the wetlands. Joan Thirsk was a renowned agricultural historian (Dyer & Slack, 2015), and three of her works; *The Isle of Axholme before Vermuyden* (1953), *English peasant farming* (1957) and *Fenland farming in the sixteenth century* (1965), provide some indications into the experiences of the Fen people, and she moves away from the descriptive, although her works now appear dated. In contrast, Eric Ash (2017) provides a modern viewpoint and concentrates on the political motivations of the State and the consequences of the schemes. Individually, the literature would not carry much weight, but together they help tell the story of the Fen people and of their struggles.

The drainage works had a set terminology; the schemes were often referred to as projects with the planners becoming the 'Projectors', drains were a form of artificial waterways, 'sewers' was the general term for all the various cuts that carried the drained water away, 'undertakers' were those who undertook the work, whilst 'Adventurers' were the financial investors in the projects.

To encompass the aspects of the question effectively, the study is broken down into four distinct areas. The pre-drainage lives of the Fenlanders are reviewed first to establish a baseline. The study then examines the inception of the schemes and their rationale, before exploring the turmoil during the actual works. Finally, the essay critiques the use of propaganda and the profiteering by the State and investors. It concludes that the Fenland inhabitants were viewed as inconsequential to the ventures and ultimately paid the price for what was essentially a land grab for State and private gains.

Fenland livelihoods before the drainage schemes

Before the drainage projects, the livelihoods

of the Fenlanders was conditional on the amount of water that resided in the Fenland Levels that they occupied. The inhabitants of the marshy areas, located nearer to the Wash, rivers, or lower lands, were accustomed to the wet conditions and constant inundations. They tended to be poorer, as the environment necessitated that they held less animal stock and had to subsidise their income from waterborne produce (Thirsk, 1965, pp. 14-26). Others, located in the intermediate areas, maintained a pastoral livelihood, with graziers driving their animals to drier areas in the winter months or at times of flooding; for them, occasional flooding was a risk and a fact of life (Bevis, 2006, pp. 22-27). Indeed, some Fenmen were pleased with the infrequent inundations; in the parish of Over, they noticed that the winter floods increased the growth of the summer grass required for grazing (Bowring, 2011, p. 240). In the salt-marshes, the experienced locals knew when the tides were due and

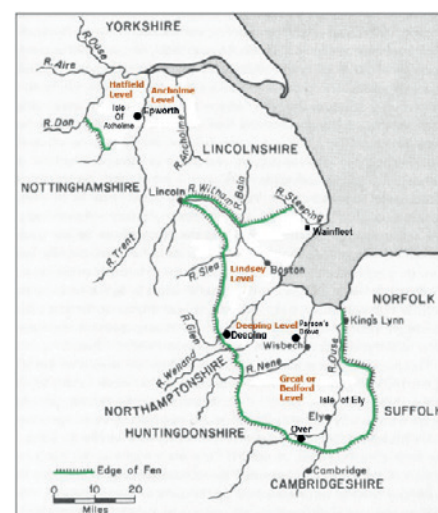


Figure 2: Showing a map of the Fenland Levels and locations mentioned in the text. The Deeping

Level was eventually joined with the Bedford level and drained together (Adapted from Lindley, 1982, p. 25, map 1 & Knitti, 2007, p. 26, figure 1).

waited until the rain had washed the salt away before using them to pasture sheep (Thirsk, 1957, pp. 17). For these Fenmen, the cheaper acreage was worth the perils and inconvenience; however, the Crown extracted one-fifth of the overall area and used its appointees to select the best land (Thirsk, 1957, p. 20), illustrating the Crown's attitude towards its poorest subjects. Figure 2 shows the locations of the Fenland Levels and places mentioned in the text.

The wetlands offered all the resources the inhabitants required. Reeds were used for thatching and ropes, peat would be used as building bricks and burned as fuel, whilst sea-salt afforded a means of food preservation (Darby, 1932, pp. 427-430). The waters were furnished with fish and encouraged a wide variety of wildfowl and were aside from their Common grazing rights for cattle, sheep, and oxen (Darby, 1932, pp. 427-430). Neilson (1920) pens that the right to pasture was an ancient custom that some villages charged a small rent for, with a portion of the 'fennefaye' being used for the upkeep of the dykes and drains (pp. 16-96). The fennefaye also incurred fines for Commoners who abused the system and charged a fee for every household that burned fuel (Neilson, 1920, p. 80), preventing over-consumption of the local peat. Pointedly, Neilson (1920) remarks that the Common rights were controlled via by-laws and were more important in the Fens than anywhere else in England (pp. 16-96). The 67 Fen bye-laws were written in 1591, and failure to abide by them would also incur a fine; examples of the laws are shown below:

That none shall fell any more Reeds Eldins Sallows or Rushes But such as they save gather up & carry Home By such time & time as the ffengreevs shall think convenient....And for them they do the contrary to fforfeit the same Reeds & Sallows (Davis, 1994, p. 18).

That every person between Midsomer and Michaelmas roade Scower and cleanse as often as need shall require their Labours as well in common Sewers & petty watercourses to the mayne Draines within the said ffen's & in the said Mayne draines upon payne to

fforfeit according to the Laws of Sewers (Davis, 1994, p. 18).

The first bye-law displays a fair method to control the Fen provisions, ensuring that nobody took more than they needed. The second one demonstrates that the drainage system was managed by allotting tasks equally to the residents. The responsibility for maintenance was organised at a community level, the Crown granted resident commissions of sewers and local Customs rights to act when required (Darby, 1983, p. 55). Despite the inhabitants in the wetter locations such as Cowbit enduring conditions that caused rheumatism, malaria and a complaint called the 'ague', they wanted to continue with their lives the way they knew and remained aggressively opposed to any changes. Their lives appeared miserable, but they had a wild autonomy where nature catered for their needs (Wheeler, 1990, p. 35-36). Unfortunately, as they made a substantial portion of their living from fish and fowl (Thirsk, 1957, pp. 19-27), they were more susceptible to any drainage schemes.

The aspiration and inception of new and drier lands

Ash (2017) notes that the intensity and frequency of flooding increased at the close of the 16th century. The consequences could be harsh, in 1570 Holinshed (as cited in Darby, 1983) penned:

'this Yeere the fift of October chanced a terrible tempest of wind and raine ... the sea brake in betwixt Wisbech and Walsoken, and at the crosse keies drowning many villages in Norfolk Marshland. In one place, a ship was driven upon an house. Corn and cattle were lost and salt-works were flooded to the utter undoing of manie a man' (p. 46).

The increased flooding caused rifts between Fenmen from differing paludal zones, all of whom had diverse agronomic requirements and conflicting ideas of achieving them (Darby, 1940, pp. 48-51). Unable to reach a settlement, the local sewers commission asked the Crown to intervene; however, they saw an opportunity to instigate State jurisdiction and a chance to increase their

revenue (Ash, 2017). A drainage scheme proffered by the Royal Counsel was swiftly accepted by the Crown and entailed draining large swaths of the Fenland Levels. The projects were outsourced to elites and Adventurers at a regional level, and local governance was removed (Ash, 2017). However, during the drainage process, private enclosures were introduced that encroached on the inhabitant's Common land (Lindley, 1982, p. 1), boosting the livelihoods of the rich privateers and the Monarchy at the expense of the inhabitants. Nevertheless, the Crown insisted that the improvements would be of 'immediate benefit of the public', as it replaced 'waste' land with fertile earth ripe for arable crops (Thirsk, 1957, p. 21).

Towards the end of her reign, Queen Elizabeth I was presented with a 'Petition to Parliament' from several villages in South Holland that requested that the Deeping Fens should be drained; however, they were unaware of the extent of the proposed schemes and their consequences (Davis, 1994, p. 23). Subsequently, in 1597 Thomas Lovell, who held the favour of Lord Burghley (Lindley, 1982, p. 33), was granted one-third of the Fens in recompense for undertaking the works. His payment amounted to a generous 10,000 acres (The National Archives, 1602). England came under a new Drainage Act in 1600 that laid out advantageous remunerations for the undertakers, and three years later, under the new King James I, the Crown taxed the Deeping villages for the ongoing project (Davis, 1994, p. 23). However, the King's lack of funds called for expediency (Thirsk, 1957, p. 19), and in 1621, he declared that 'for the honour of this kingdom' he would undertake the drainage of the salt-marshes for a fee of 12,000 acres (Darby, 1940, pp. 37-38). The move was undoubtedly an effort to advance State control and gain more significant capital at the expense of the locals, nevertheless, his death in 1625 stalled any progress (Holmes, 1980, p. 123). Despite Darby (1940) remarking that King Charles I favoured that his subjects should manage the projects (p. 39), Ash (2017) and Holmes (1980) claim that he was an interventionist and keen to progress the schemes. Indeed, less than a year into his accession, he contracted a Dutch

entrepreneur and experienced engineer Cornelius Vermuyden to drain the 60,000 acres at the Isle of Axholme, with half of the land and profits going to the Crown (Holmes, 1980, p. 123).

Uprisings upheavals, and upshots

The schemes caused riots, especially in Epworth, where any alterations to their Common lands were barred by a 14th-century deed and resulted in legal battles that lasted a century (Holmes, 1987, p. 192). The drainage was a disaster for the inhabitants; half of the Common ground was lost, some areas were too wet whilst others were so dry that the Fenmen had to carry the water in (Thirsk, 1953, pp. 22-26). The wetlands dried up, resulting in the wildfowling and fishermen losing their livelihoods, whilst the parched land became less productive. When the fertile inducing floods were stopped, the Fenmen commented that the 'thick, fat water' was replaced with 'thin, hungry, starveing water' (Thirsk, 1953, p. 26). It was so bad that even the Exchequer Commissioners commented that significant mistakes were made, however, they added that the residents would have to pay to divert water back onto the Commons (Thirsk, 1953, pp. 22-26). Those in the wetter areas of the Deeping Fens, like Cowbit, stood to lose their Common rights to fish and fowl and were deeply opposed to the drainage projects and questioned how they could pay their taxes, especially when their wetlands were being taken away (Davis, 1994, p. 24). Ash (2017) states that their inability to pay tax was planned for, as they would lose their rights to the Commons, allowing the Crown to seize the land. Others joined the opposition when they realised that the schemes would result in the Enclosure and privatisation of their Commons. Heightened tensions in the Deeping Levels resulted in riots as the locals demolished the embankments (Lindley, 1982, pp. 33-34). The National Archives (1603) shows that in June 1603, ten men were held accountable at the Star Courts for 'sedition; assault; conspiracy; deformation; destruction of property and unlawful assembly'. The alleged ringleader Thomas Wells was placed in the stocks by William Lacy, the local justice, who appears to have shown some allegiance to the protesters (Lindley, 1982, p. 34). The

demolition of the embankments continued, and Lovell's attempts were abandoned due to 'unreasonableness of the times and riotous lets and disturbance of lewd people casting down its banks' (Davis, 1994, p. 24). Subsequently, Thomas, Earl of Exeter, sought to capitalise on the project, however, his endeavours resulted in flooding downstream, leading one resident to quip, 'so they drown us to drain us' (Lindley, 1982, p. 15). Ultimately, the project failed as the ruptured embankments were wrecked further by the inhabitants, and in 1631 the contract was granted to another entrepreneur, Francis, Earl of Bedford, who enlarged the scheme and established the 'Bedford Level Corporation' (Lindley, 1982, p. 35).

However, not all elites agreed with the projects; Sir John Maynard, the Fenmen's legal counsel, passionately argued their case in the Exchequer Chamber (Holmes, 1980, p. 121). In 1650 he stated that the King's other method of raising capital, via 'ship money' had been considered treasonous, and yet the Fen projects took far more from the estates (Maynard, 1690, p. 5). Further, he accused the undertakers of bribing the King and declaring lands as 'hurtfully surrounded' (flooded) when they were not:

The Commissioners, many being Undertakers got upon Boston Steeple, and adjudged all they saw was hurtfully surrounded. They might, as well have got upon Pauls Steeple, and adjudged all the rich Meadows and Marshes on both sides the Thames to be hurtfully surrounded.... The Undertakers gave the King 3000 acres by way of bribe; and the King gave them 14000 acres, for being Judges and Parties; they might be their own carvers (Maynard, 1690, pp. 2-3).

Holmes (1987) comments that yeomen and the 'middling sort' acted as leaders for the Fenmen, raising petitions and establishing common funds (pp. 183-184). Keith Wrightson (2003) substantiates the assessment, stating that the yeoman formed 'a sort of informal oligarchy' that ran the country (pp. 44-45). Holmes (1987)

also notes that a Lady Dymock and Robert Cawdron Esquire were suspected of inciting raids on enclosures in the Isle of Axholme in 1640 (pp. 183-184). The involvement of the higher classes diminishes the notion that class was a determining factor in opposing the schemes. To counter opposition from the likes of Maynard and to bolster support for the projects, the State and their elites employed defamation and misinformation tactics, denigrating the Fenlanders and downgrading the worth of the land (Mulry, 2021, p. 78).

Propaganda, poems, and profits

The negative representations of the Fen inhabitants were promoted by Sir William Dugdale, a respected antiquary who officially documented the drainage works (Willmoth, 1998, p. 281). An example of his disparaging works is illustrated in figure 3, where he demeans the local inhabitants and disregards their livelihoods, favouring the Realm. However, he later acknowledged that his writings were commissioned by Lord Gorges, one of the elites who ran the drainage company and who was an apologist for the restored Monarchy (Willmoth, 1998, p. 301).

Such mocking was commonplace; the Fen people were also described as being 'according to the nature of the place where they dwell rude, uncivil, and envious to all others whom they call Upland-men: who stalking on high stilts, apply their minds, to grassing, fishing and fowling' (Britannia, 1610, as cited in Darby, 1940). Whilst Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay described the inhabitants in his *History of*

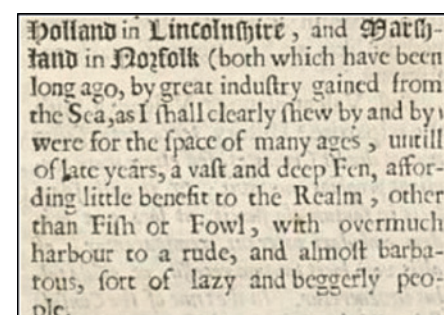


Figure 3: Excerpt from Dugdale's Imbanking and Drayning That clearly shows his disdain of the Fenland inhabitants (Dugdale, 1662, p. 171).

England as ‘a half savage-people, leading an amphibious life, sometimes rowing, sometimes wading from one firm mound to another, and known as Breedlings’ (Macaulay, as cited in Wheeler, 1990, p. 33). When the renowned diarist Samuel Pepys visited relatives in Parson’s Drove on the 17th of September 1663, he penned:

a heathen place, where I found my uncle and aunt Perkins, and their daughters, poor wretches! in a sad, poor thatched cottage, like a poor barn, or stable, ... we took leave of our beggarly company, though they seem good people, too; and over most sad Fenns, all the way observing the sad life which the people of the place which if they be born there, they do call the Breedlings (Pepys, 1665).

Although Pepys sympathised with the Fen folk, it appears as though he maintained the judgemental and moralistic attitude prevalent at the time. The undrained lands that the Fen people inhabited were not immune from condemnation, they were considered ‘waste’ and characterised as unhealthy, diseased, and worthless (Ash, 2017). In one example, the Fens were compared to an ill man’s faltering kidneys, ‘the stopping of the urine...it first filleth up all the veins of the body...and then drowns the patient in his own water’ (Ash, 2017). All the negative campaigning was undertaken for one purpose, to allow the lands of the Fen people to be taken from them for entrepreneurial gain.

The Adventurers saw investment opportunities in the drainage and were predominantly outsiders, such as London merchants or the ‘landed gentry’ (Darby, 1940, p. 21). They could be described as a version of the ‘gentlemanly capitalists’ noted by Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins (Cain & Hopkins, 1992, pp. 150-181). Although Cain and Hopkins placed their concept of gentlemanly capitalism from circa 1688 to 1850, with interests in overseas investments and expansion (Cain & Hopkins, 1992, pp. 150-181), such enterprises were apparent earlier and on home soil. Indeed, the ‘Bedford Level Corporation’ may be compared to other Crown backed capital ventures, including

the ‘Royal Adventurers into Africa’, the forerunner of the ‘Royal African Company’. These were also predominately backed by profiteering London merchants (Bernstein, 2012, p. 207). Irvine (2017b) notes that such Adventurers would typically get 4000 acres for an investment of 500 pounds, whilst King Charles I would receive 12,000 acres per contract (p. 25), showing the profits to be made and the disparity between the Crown and other investors. The comparison between Fenland drainage and overseas colonisation is manifest in a 17th-century pro-drainer’s poem that encourages investment in the local schemes:

And Ye, whom hopes of sudden Wealth allure,
Or wants into Virginia, force to fly,
Ev’n spare your pains; heres Florida hard by,
All Ye that Treasures either want, or love,
And who is he, whom Profit will not move?
Would you repair your fortunes, would you make,
To this most fruitful land yourselves betake
(Fortrey, 1685, as cited in Lindley, 1982, p. 4).

However, Samuel Fortrey was prejudiced, as he was a mercantilist who served in the Privy Council (Fonseca, 2017). As an Adventurer in the drainage projects, Fortrey dismissed the plight of the inhabitants, stating that they ‘were little better than animals with dull wits and were led only by unthinking, bestial sensation, or passion, not by civilised reason’ (Mulry, 2021, p. 87). This is another example of how those who were pro-drainage used negative propaganda to enhance their profit-making schemes. Figure 4 from 1607 could be viewed as visual propaganda; the image illustrates the suffering and damage the floods caused to people, livestock, and homes (Ash, 2017). However, it may have been used to promote the pro-drainers cause; there is nothing more evocative than a baby in distress.

A literary war emerged between the pro and anti-drainage lobbyists, with satirical poems scribed by both sides. Another moralistic ode penned by Fortrey in 1685 indicates that the removal of the wetlands would instil good manners and work ethics into the Fenlanders. It insinuates that it would make them into honourable men that would cease thieving and become loyal churchgoers instead:

When with the change of Elements,
suddenly’
There shall a change of men and
Manners be;
Hearts, thick and tough as Hydes, shall
feel Remorse,
And Souls of Sedge shall understand
Discourse,
New hands shall learn to work, forget to
Steal,
New legs shall go to Church, new knees
shall kneel
(Fortrey, 1685, as cited in Irvine 2017a,
p. 6).



Figure 4: Showing a drawing that displays the extent of the flooding. Note the image of the baby in the cradle (The Huntington Library, as cited in Ash, 2017).

For their part, the Fen people penned material such as *The Anti-Projector: or, the History of the Fen Project* produced in 1646. Figure 5 is an excerpt that describes how the undertakers have continually maligned the Fens and have deceived Parliament by stating that they were a ‘quagmire’. They list how they live off the land that supports poor cottagers, stating that they provide food for

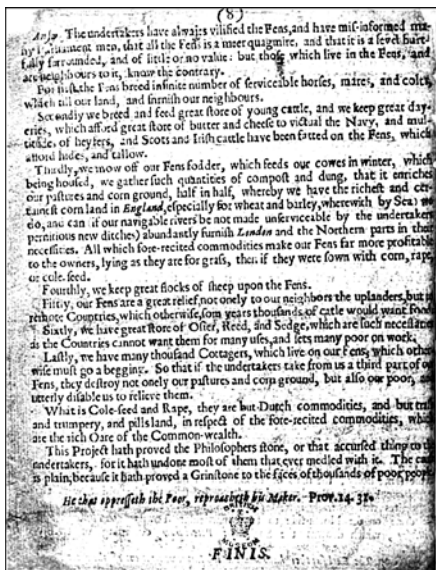


Figure 5: showing an excerpt from an anti-drainer booklet that describes how the Fenlanders needed the Fens that were being destroyed by the drainers (The Anti-Projector: Or, the History of the Fen Project, 1646, p. 8).

the Navy and bemoan how the drainers are destroying their lands.

The Fenlanders also scribed verses of protest, a ballad named 'The Powte's Complaint' from circa 1619 is shown in figure 6 and summarises their plight (Darby, 1983, p. 60). It predicted how their wetlands of fish, fowl and reeds will be replaced by livestock and cereals in a near premonitory manner and how they wished that the 'ancient waters' would drain the Adventurers purses. The last three verses cite battles, inferring their determination to fight the drainers, whilst stating that 'Captain Floud' will come to help them. The excerpt is from a book of Dugdale's, who included it as an example of the 'libellous songs' used by the Fenmen to impede the efforts of the Adventurers and drainers (Borlik & Egan, 2018, p. 1).

Ultimately, 'Captain Floud' did not come to save the inhabitants of the Fens, and although rioting continued into the next century with legal disputes taking even longer, the Fenlands became dry (Lindley, 1982, pp. 253-259).

After draining, the once moist and fertile peat topsoil disappeared, leaving the less fruitful clay behind on a lowered landscape. Ironically, this led to more

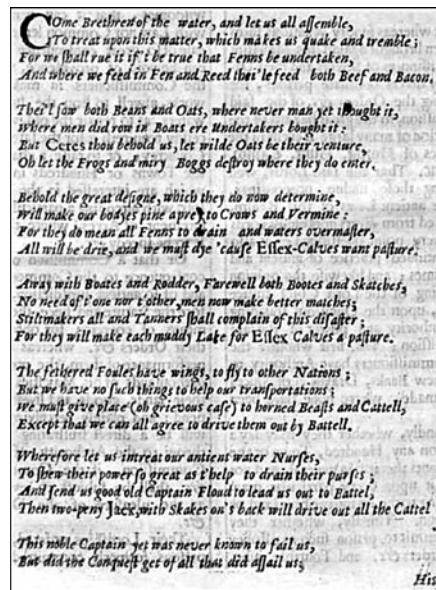


Figure 6: Showing a protest ballad named 'The Powte's Complaint'. The excerpt was cited in Dugdale's pro-drainage writings (Dugdale, 1662, p. 391).

flooding, and the inhabitants would see numerous wind-driven pumps materialise to propel the water up into the drains (Hills, 2003, pp. 62-65). Thirsk (1953) remarks that the prophecies in *The Powte's Complaint* became a reality as the Fenmen's traditional wetland and pastoral produce was replaced by that of cereals and arable crops. However, she argues that Cornelius Vermuyden's design was to replace one form of economy for another, not to escalate State profits (p. 17). Nevertheless, there seems little point in undertaking all that work and investment for neutral gains and appears to be a failed theory. The 17th century State was aware that its population was increasing rapidly and that victuals had to match the growth (Miller, 2017, pp. 144-145). Indeed, the inhabitants of the pastoral areas of the Fenlands doubled from 1563 to 1670 as unskilled workers hoped to use the ever-shrinking Common lands to raise animals or scrape a living from the wetlands (Wrightson, 2003, pp. 130-135). It is perceivable that the authorities merely wanted to recover what it perceived as wastelands to produce more staple crops such as cereals. However, there seems to be little evidence for this and leaves the incentive for wrecking the livelihoods of the Fen folk as a land grab for personal and State gain.

Conclusion

The effects of drainage on the Fenland inhabitants during the 17th century have been effectively chronicled in various areas. Their traces in the historical record is unusual, as it is often the poorer members of society that become invisible. Notwithstanding this visibility, the inhabitants of the Fens have still been overlooked, their accounts being under-researched and underrepresented. Even though their troubles led to the largest riots of the century in England (Lindley, 1982, p. 62), they often play 'second fiddle' to other upheavals such as those of the Enclosures and the antics of the Levellers (Wood, 2001, pp. 82-111).

The indigenous Fenland inhabitants lost their Common grounds and their paludal and pastoral livelihoods to the State. Their customs were cast aside whilst the Crown and the Adventurers gained more land and profits. The similarities with the occupation of the New Americas and search for new lands is palpable and was evident at the time, as shown in Fortrey's poem. However, few academics have explored this connection, tending instead to concentrate on the overseas cultures. The negative portrayal of the Fen folk by the authorities aimed to render the Fenlanders as worthless 'Breedlings' who inhabited a wasteland, making the removal of their livelihoods less controversial. However, the Fenland communities often had the backing of the 'middling sort' and validates the theory that it was little to do with class, whilst the Fenlanders use of literature illustrates their aspirations and exasperations in countering the negative propaganda. The eventual outcomes of the drainage schemes would also see a less cultural, agronomic, and ecologically diverse landscape that lost a significant amount of fertility in certain areas.

The study did not have the scope to analyse all the primary sources; there is an array of archived material that necessitates further inquiries. Additional research could investigate the fate of the Fenlanders, how many were able to adopt the new method of land provision, and how many of those adapted from paludal to drained livelihoods? More significantly, what happened to those that failed to adopt and adapt? ■

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