

# Professionally Acceptable Workload

## Changing our habitus

A high-speed photograph of a water droplet falling into a pool of water. The droplet is captured mid-fall, just above the surface, creating a series of concentric ripples that spread outwards. The background is a soft, warm yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water is a clear, light blue color.

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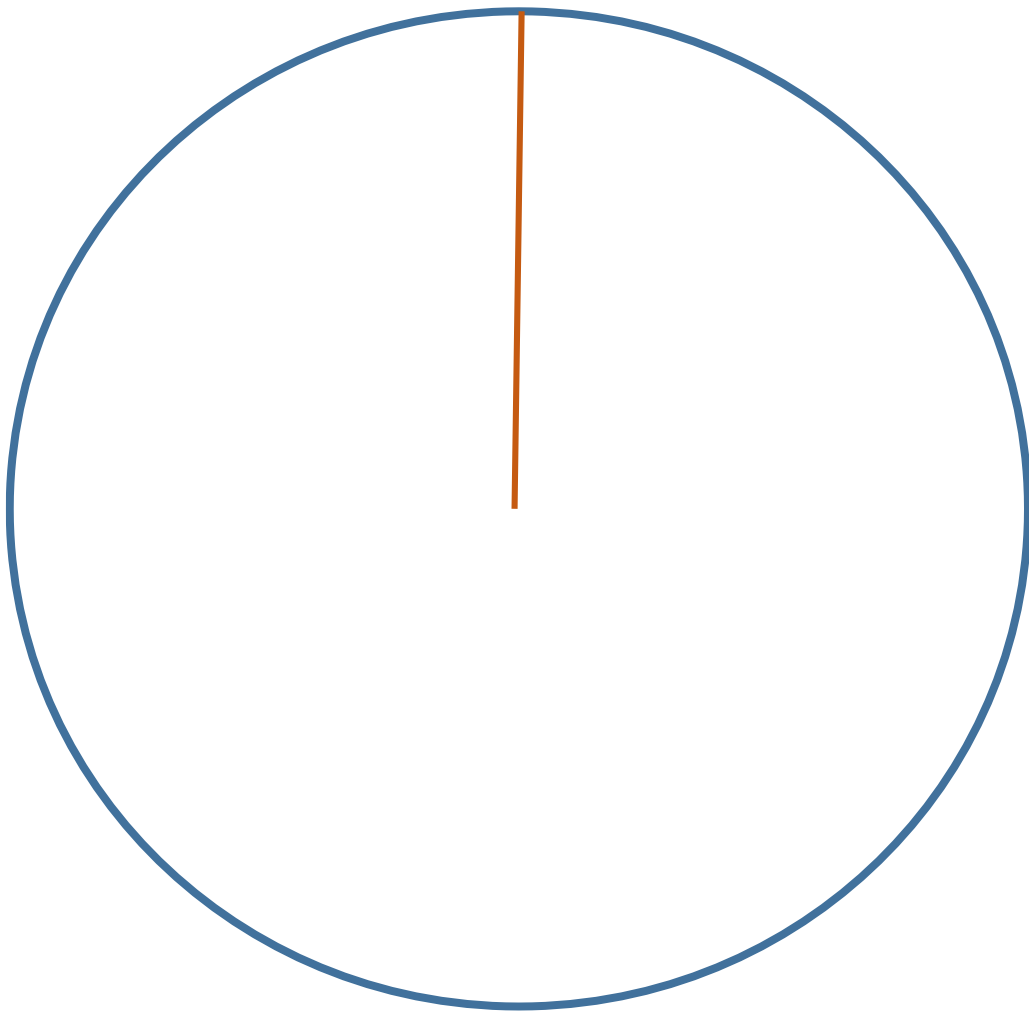
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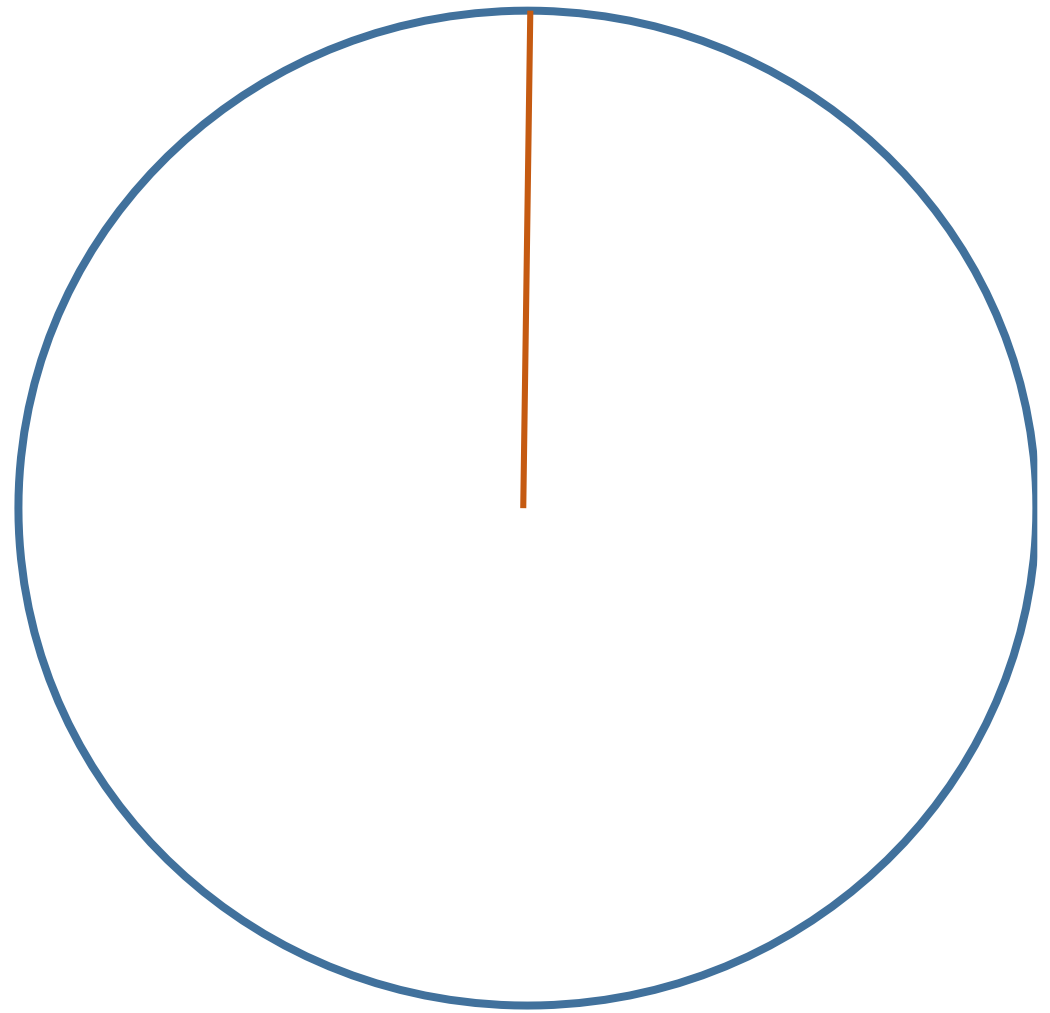
**Professionally acceptable workload: learning to act differently towards effective change.**

**A second companion paper to DfE advice on addressing teacher workload**

<https://www.ucet.ac.uk/11213/professionally-acceptable-workload-a-second-ucet-companion-october-2019>



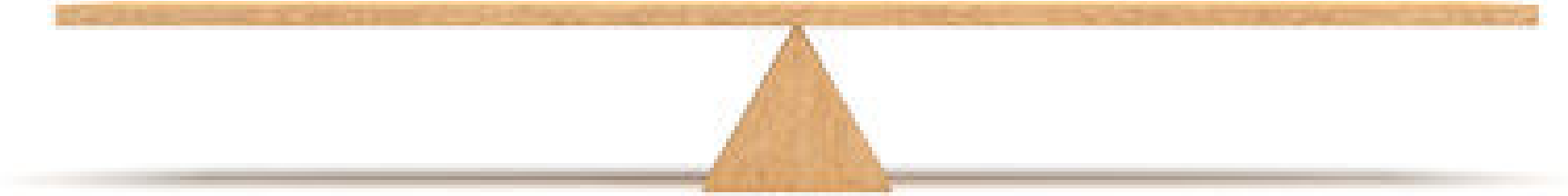
Ideal



Actual

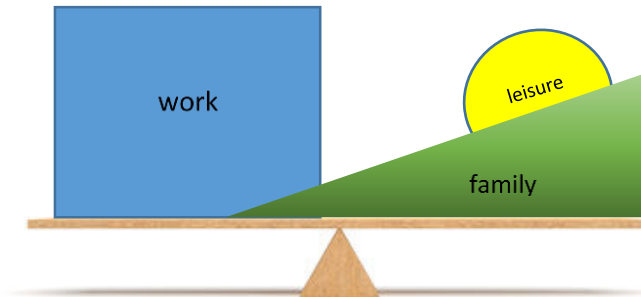
Use the charts above to show how you feel you divide your week between family/leisure/work

Job title.....



Use the board above to illustrate, in any way you choose, the relative size of family, leisure and work which you feel would give you a good balance in your life (rules of physics need not apply!)

e.g.





## We urgently require

**Primary & Secondary School Teachers**  
**Teaching Assistants**  
**Cover Supervisors**

For the following roles in the local area:

**Permanent Full Time or Part Time**  
**Supply** (on a daily, weekly and long term basis)

Please contact us on

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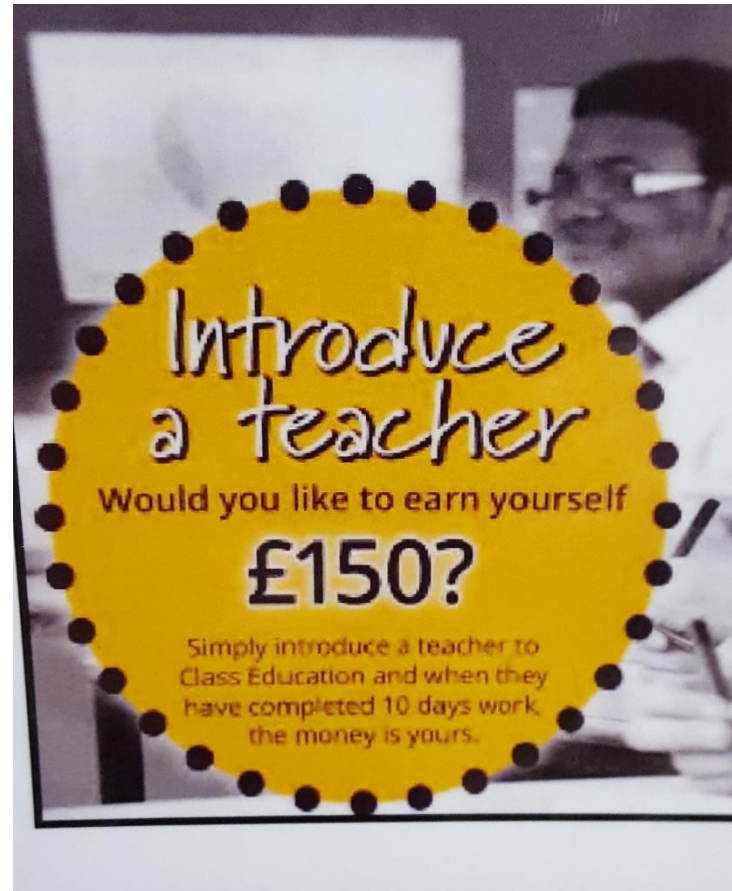
*Introduce  
a teacher*  
Would you like to earn yourself  
**£150?**

Simply introduce a teacher to  
Class Education and when they  
have completed 10 days work,  
the money is yours.

Global Education  
Reform Movement  
(GERM)  
(Sahlberg, 2011)

financialisation of  
individual worth

‘what works’



“Relates to who we are as human beings,  
what we value...it changes what it means  
to be a teacher and to teach” (Ball, 2013)

neo-liberal agenda  
(Ball, 2003)

marketisation

encroachment of the  
economic into  
education

‘sufficiency’ of  
teachers (DfE)

# Resistance – Stephen Ball (2013)

- ‘Counter discourse is possible’
- ‘Maybe the target now is to refuse what we are’
- ‘Recognise its presence in our everyday lives and relationships – the possibility for struggle and resistance’
- ‘The ethics of opposition’.



# Ideological co-option – the essential problem

- More than acquiescence/giving up/being resigned to workload.
- Internalisation of workload as a proxy for expertise and worth.





Data collection,  
management &  
communication  
are part of being  
a great teacher

Extreme  
workload is  
inevitable – it's  
how we  
maintain  
standards

The best  
teachers work  
extremely long  
hours

Guilt is a natural  
reaction to being  
out of school to  
access professional  
learning

teachers teach  
better by serial  
adopting of the  
latest initiatives

# Ideological co-option of experienced teachers

- They embody such beliefs in their own practices
- They model excessive workload and being able to 'cope'
- They have earned seniority and respect
- They are instrumental in perpetuating the practices that have led to their success
- They believe this *is* intrinsic to a teacher's professional identity
- It becomes part of their professional DNA

# ITT Core Content Framework

DfE 2019

(from September 2020)

**Professional Behaviours (Standard 8 – ‘Fulfil wider professional responsibilities’)**

Learn that...	Learn how to...
	<p data-bbox="759 254 1819 315"><b>Manage workload and wellbeing, by:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="759 354 2372 835" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="759 354 2372 529">• <i>Observing how expert colleagues use and personalise systems and routines to support efficient time and task management and deconstructing this approach.</i></li><li data-bbox="759 568 2372 682">• <i>Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues the importance of the right to support (e.g. to deal with misbehaviour).</i></li><li data-bbox="759 721 2372 835">• <i>Protecting time for rest and recovery and being aware of the sources of support available to support good mental wellbeing.</i></li></ul> <p data-bbox="759 963 2232 1086"><b>And - following expert input - by taking opportunities to practise, receive feedback and improve at:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="759 1125 2333 1239" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="759 1125 2333 1239">• <i>Collaborating with colleagues to share the load of planning and preparation and making use of shared resources (e.g. textbooks).</i></li></ul> <p data-bbox="2135 1282 2359 1329">pp. 30-31</p>

# Ideological co-option – the risks of best intentions

- We ask the wrong questions about workload and seek the wrong solutions.
- We develop strategies to maintain the marketised system as it is.
- We become unwittingly complicit in perpetuating the problems.
- As a profession, we need to be critically aware of the consequences of the decisions we make to satisfy the R&R crisis.
- The dangers of the ‘what works’ agenda, now applied to reducing workload.
- We need to be alert to sleepwalking into de-professionalisation of teaching.

# Fabrication, strategic silence and how new teachers learn to keep quiet

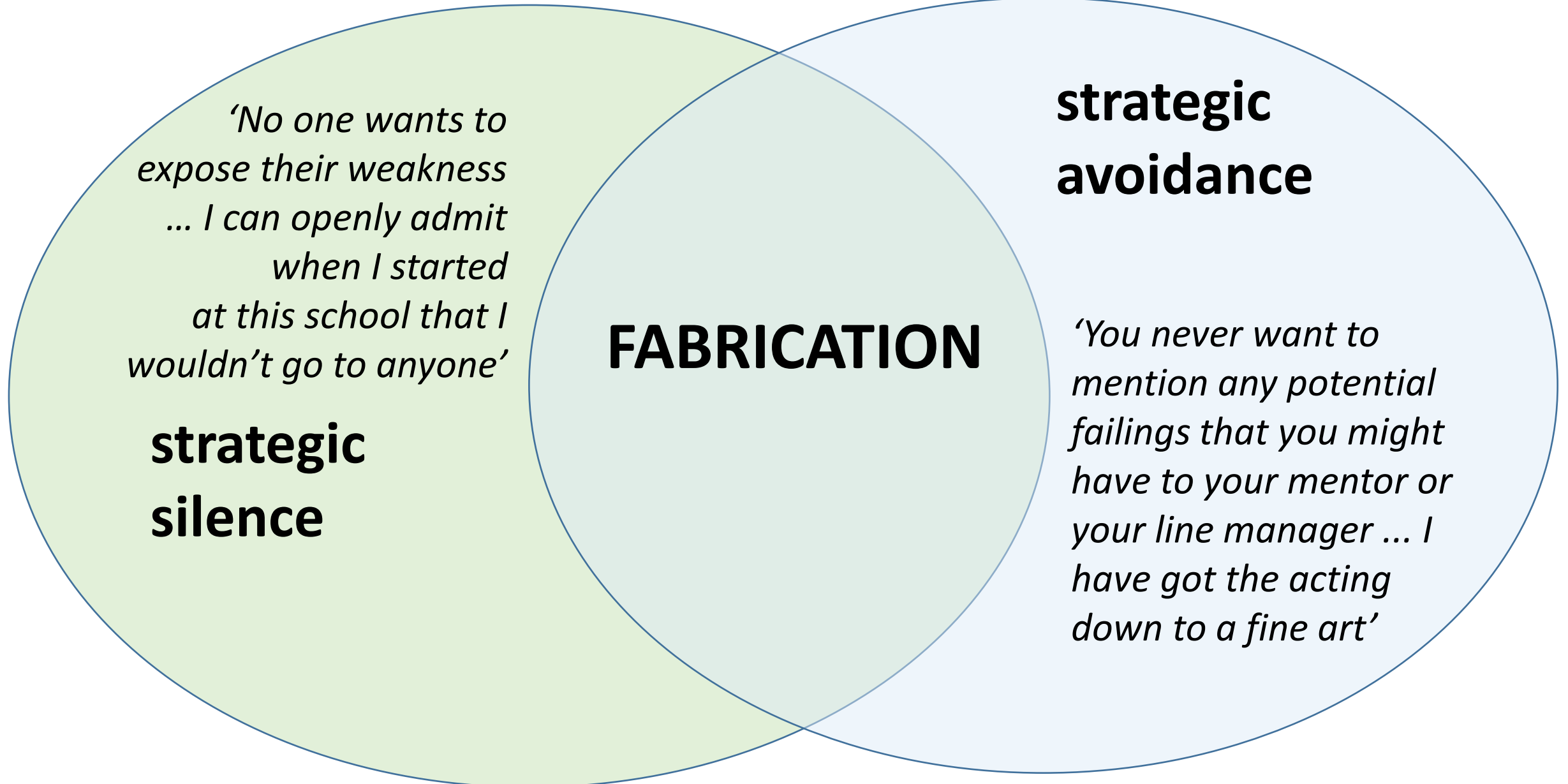
## Ulvik and Sunde (2013)

- School leaders' '**lack of awareness**' of the reality of ECTs' experiences and feelings
- They have different priorities and indicators of leading a successful school
- Concern for assimilation – 'to fit in'

## Hobson and McIntyre (2013)

- '**Teacher fabrication** as an impediment to teacher learning and development'
- '...a concern amongst [new] teachers to prevent significant others in or associated with their schools from becoming aware of what they felt were inadequacies in their professional practice'

# Maintaining the illusion



*'No one wants to expose their weakness ... I can openly admit when I started at this school that I wouldn't go to anyone'*

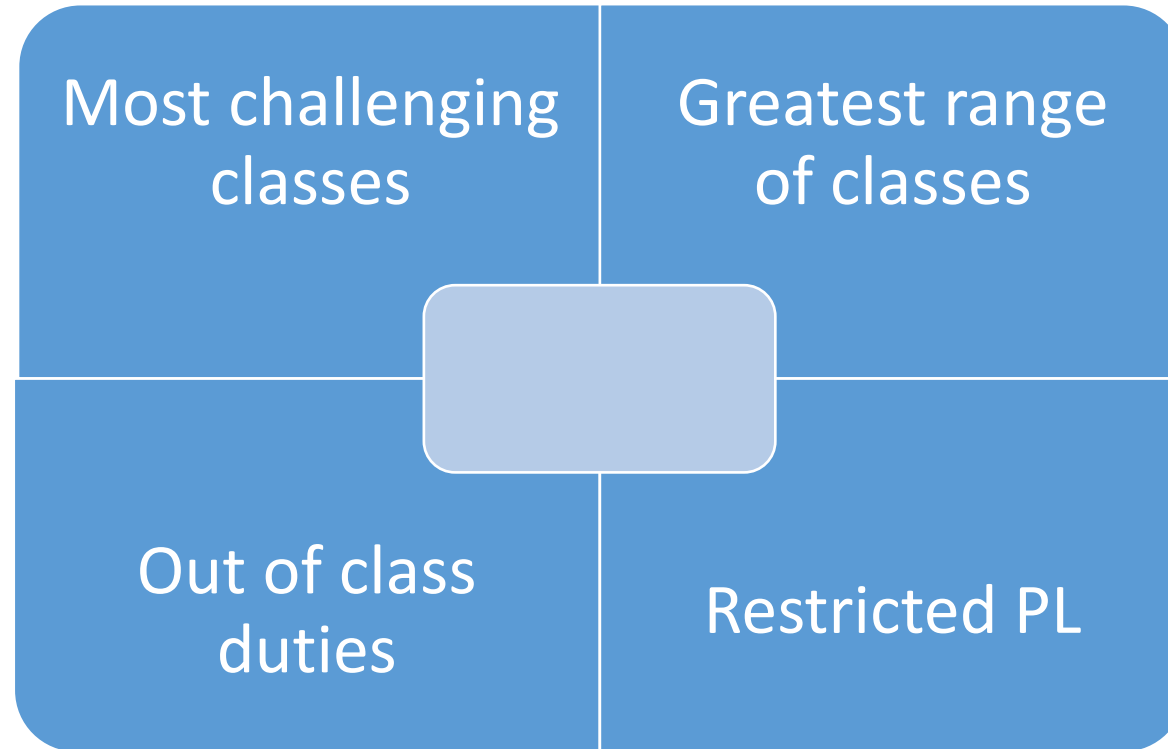
**strategic  
silence**

**FABRICATION**

**strategic  
avoidance**

*'You never want to mention any potential failings that you might have to your mentor or your line manager ... I have got the acting down to a fine art'*

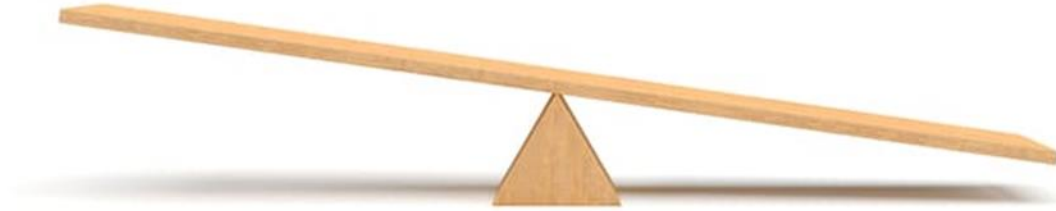
‘The profession that eats its young’ (Halford, 1998: 33)



Danielson, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Elias, Fisher, & Simon, 1980; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gold, 1996; Killeavy, 2006.



# What has been missing from the workload debate?



- Language
- Power
- Work creep
- Speaking up
- Intellectual satisfaction
- Ownership

First, when a manager interrupts with a request, the work requested is added to the current workload, adding on tasks to the individual's job. Second, interruptions have the effect of detracting from the worker's efficiency at accomplishing the first task because there are significant costs associated with having to go back and try to remember where one was when one was interrupted (Perlow, 1997; Seshadri & Shapira, 2001).

Interruptions, thus, contribute to the expansion of work hours in two ways: by adding tasks and by creating inefficiency in the accomplishment of current tasks.

*Work and Life Integration : Organizational, Cultural, and Individual Perspectives*, edited by Ellen Ernst Kossek, and Susan J. Lambert, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004.

*The need to put on your 'Boudicca pants' to stand up and have your voice heard*



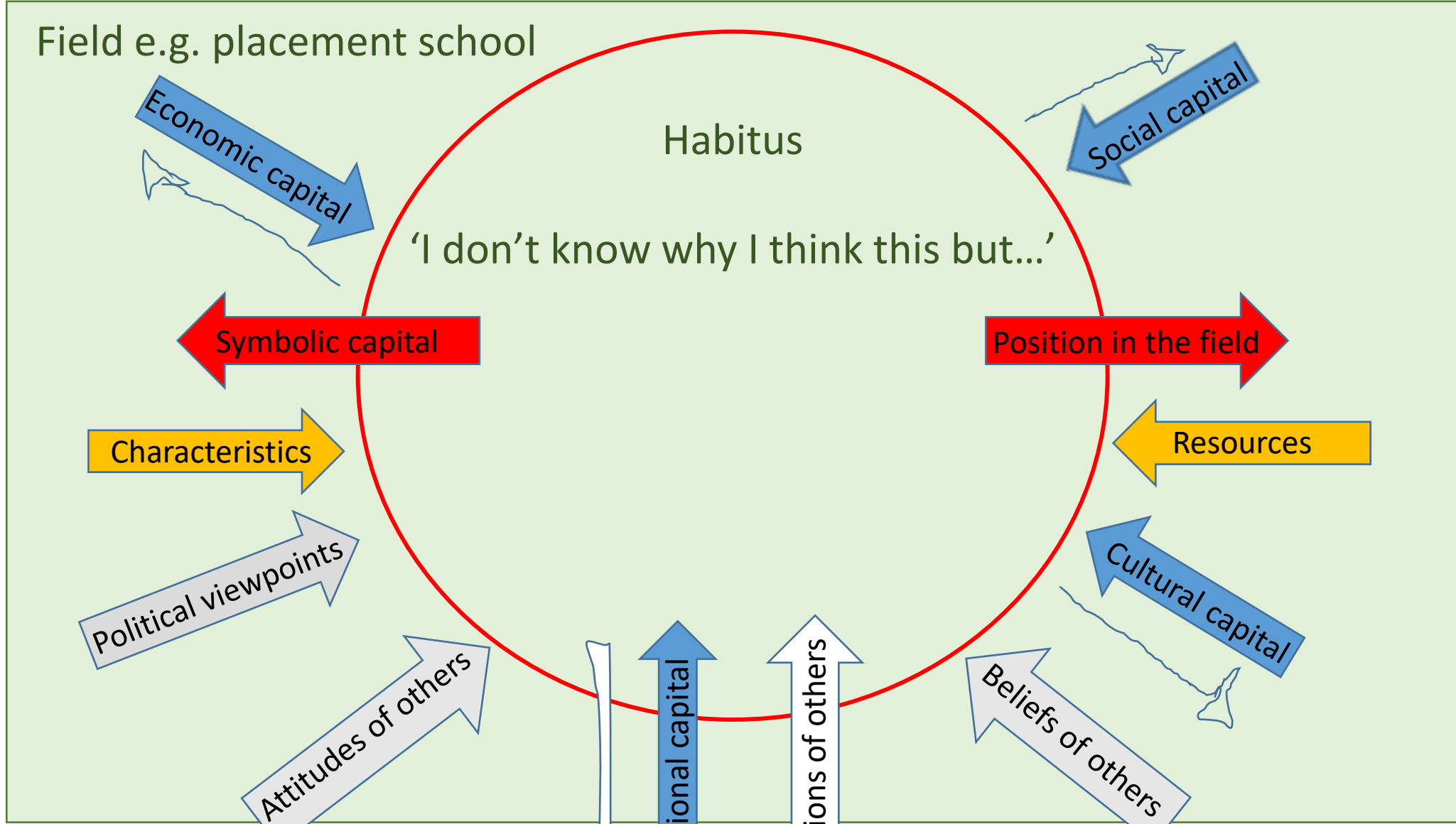
# What influences choices – are they choices?

- Individuals with high self-esteem may be more willing to attempt to protect their time for non-work activities than individuals with low self-esteem.
- People who are high segmentors may be more capable of blocking out time for their non-work activities than people who are integrators.
- The more central an individual's work identity is to his or her sense of self, the less likely it is that the individual will be able to resist the pressures that cause the expansion of work hours.

# Bourdieu in a nutshell...



- Our 'field' is the social setting in which we operate, which may overlap; e.g. ITE, a classroom, or staffroom.
- Our 'habitus' is the structure in which we have internalised all the influences on us from home, family, friends and society and which form our unknowing reactions and responses within the field(s) in which we operate as social beings.
- Our capital, 'that 'energy of social physics' ...in all its different forms'; economic capital (student loan, bank of mum and dad); social capital (who we know; how they help or hinder us); cultural capital (what we know; how we use that to our advantage or how it disadvantages us)
- Our doxa are the rules of the habitus; the commonly agreed policies of the school and unwritten rules of the school community, e.g. 'We don't take hot drinks onto the playground and we don't go onto the playground unless it is our duty.'



# Some examples of emotional capital which are likely to have a negative exchange

## Received

- 'I know you're feeling overworked at the moment, but we do just need this by Friday'
- 'You don't mind doing this for me, do you?'
- 'I've been feeling so stressed all night, after you told me how upset you were after that incident yesterday'

## Communicated to others

- 'I've come in to work this morning, but I really don't feel well...'
- 'I know you would have been able to get this done in a few minutes, but it literally took me hours.'

# Some examples of emotional capital with potential for positive exchange

## Received

- ‘Would you be able to work on this more easily from home or in school?’
- ‘What seems a reasonable timeframe?’
- This has really played on my mind, how are you feeling about it?

## Communicated to others

- ‘I have found this quite hard to make sense of. Would you be able to go through it with me again?’
- ‘I am feeling very anxious in the mornings in the staffroom briefings and there may be days when I struggle to come in. Can I talk to you about how to manage this better?’



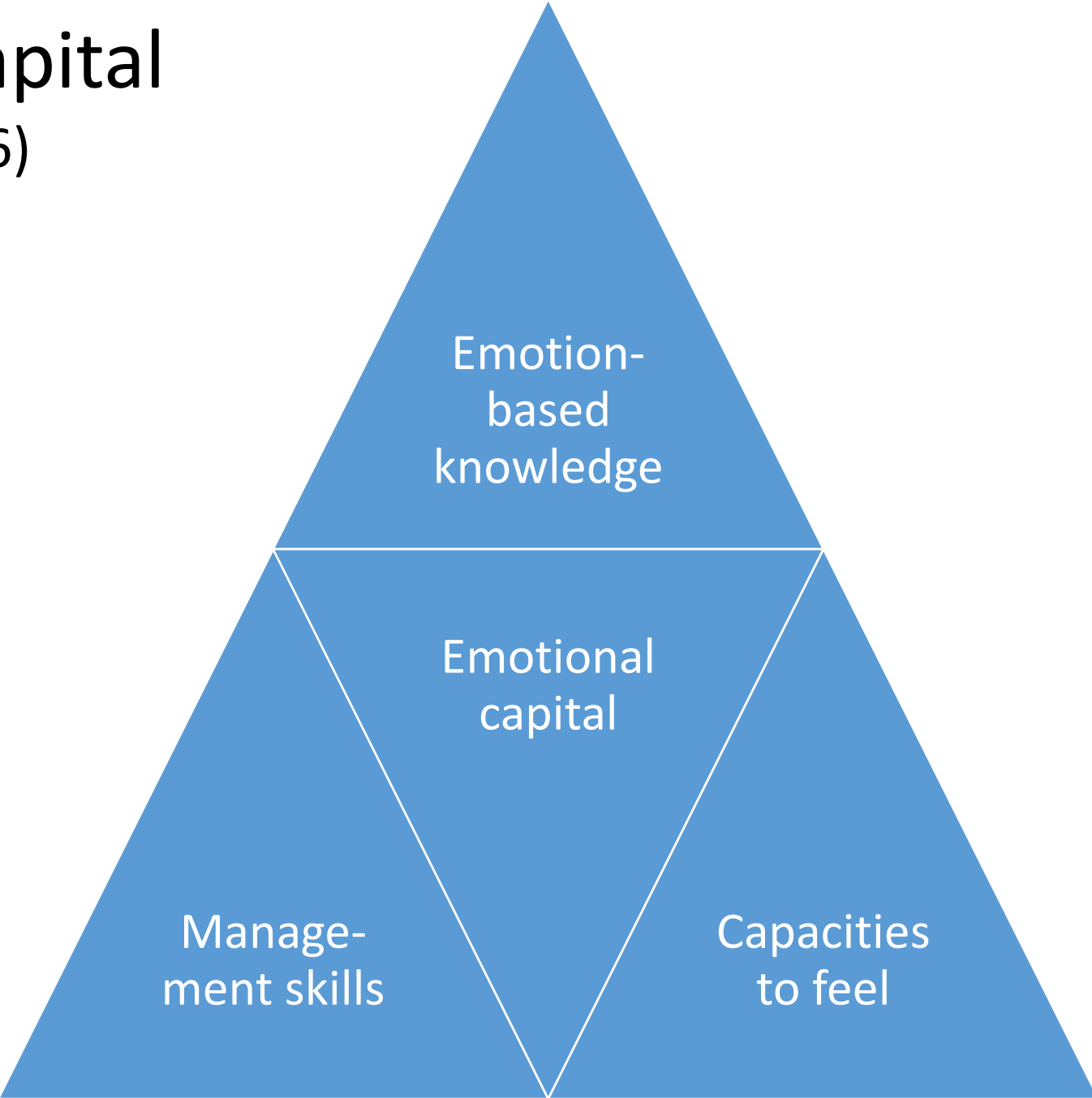
# Emotional capital

‘to analyse and challenge emotion norms in education, for example, means to reveal their historicity and contingency that have come to define the limits and possibilities of teachers and students’ understandings of themselves, individually and collectively.’

Zembylas, Michalinos (2007) EMOTIONAL CAPITAL AND EDUCATION: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM BOURDIEU, British Journal of Educational Studies, 55:4, 443-463

# Emotional capital

(Cottingham, 2016)



‘Work-life balancing is an ongoing job, one that can be consciously managed by employees and employers. The process is necessarily— although rarely explicitly so— an ongoing negotiation between employee and employer.’

Kossek and Lambert (Eds) 2004

*All* members of school communities need to engage to benefit from their collective knowledge and experience of workload, to build new insights and practices.

An understanding of emotional capital is key to this.

We need a dialogic process involving all staff and all partnerships.

Changing school cultures – making safe spaces to talk about workload and making change.

- Where and when to have honest conversations?
- Talking with leaders and mentors about
  - the responsibilities of modelling the way we work
  - the way we talk about work
- Acknowledging co-option and the emotional work that needs to be done
- Critiquing technicist advice on workload that maintains and protects the source of the dilemmas we face.

It's about supporting 'ethical opposition'

The workforce has to be central to its own change

# References

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