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Chapter 5. Who can you count on? The relational dimension of new teacher learning

Jim McNally

INTRODUCTION

The social dimension of **human** development is nothing new. Even in a professional context, we accept that our relationships with other people matter. We know from experience that this is the case but the importance of the social in **professional** development is also well supported in the literature, often it seems from a need to strike a balance against models which are overly cognitive in emphasis. Even our small-scale initial explorations into the experience of beginners in teaching revealed the prominent place in that experience of relationships with others. Although no straightforward link to any specific kinds of learning were apparent, it was evident that **interaction with others** was nevertheless central and that this empirical position was represented more accurately as ‘relational’ rather than as social, a term often seen as rather amorphous and unconvincing to the more clinically inclined. The relational or social conveys, it seems, a more ‘informal’ sense of learning, something that is not reducible to the strictly rational and predictable, **or indeed cognitive, connecting instead** to the emotions as well as the processes **and stages** of identity formation. **This chapter presents our extended exploration of the relational, its connection to the emotions, and what it means in the context of beginning teaching: the people, their roles, informal learning, and what ties it to identity and purpose.**

INFORMAL LEARNING

The fundamental question of the research prior to and during the project was to reach a deeper understanding of what and how beginning teachers learned. It was clear from earlier studies that there was much more going on in the experience of becoming a teacher than was being caught by competence-based standards (McNally *et al.* 1994) and formal structures of support such as appointed mentors (McNally 1994). The notion of informal learning served to open up a much wider sense of what that learning might be. It was a tentative term that served its purpose as an initial conceptual base but one that has received more explicit recognition in recent years (Coffield 2000; Eraut 2004). We know that much of what teachers know and do is tacit and is not easily caught by an observer or interviewer. Teachers themselves, as with many other professional contexts (Schön 1987), are rarely able to explain their expertise or how it developed. **According to Rachael, for example, her mentor ‘just has to walk in[to] a room and silence descends ... he admitted he doesn’t know how he does it. So I just hope one day that will happen to me’.** Is it surprising to think therefore, that whatever is learned from **veterans** by the neophyte in teaching may not be consciously acquired? **‘I don’t think it’s a conscious thing but I do believe that I’ve picked up skills of... of, eh... of being settled quicker, getting to know the kids quicker and things like that’ (Ann).** For the researcher as well, it is a process that eludes easy understanding, **or articulation.**

Eraut’s (2000) work has helped to elevate informal learning above its misconstrual as some kind of casual and incidental, peripheral process. As we are not yet clear on what is actually being learned informally by new teachers, it is **perhaps** too early to know whether Eraut’s theorization, his typology of implicit, reactive and deliberative learning and **the** distinction between informal and non-formal, can illuminate

understanding. Our particular description of the early learning of teachers does not readily belong to any categorisations that stem from attempts to circumscribe and define what is informal and what is not. **Though our** attempts to impose some clarity of definition do at least recognize that crucial learning takes place in ways which would not be described as formal, **or simply (that is unthinkingly or dispassionately) cognitive.**

Our use of informal includes both the everyday and the structured and is consistent with the notion of informal education as interactions with friends, family and work colleagues. The review of informal education **espoused** by Smith (2009) does suggest features that would find support from our earlier data: the range of opportunities for learning that arise in everyday settings; the importance of relationships; people's experiences and feelings; and probably the central form of conversation. His review also indicates that such informality has a purpose: running through it is a concern to build the sorts of communities and relationships in which people can be happy and fulfilled. The everyday lives of beginning teachers in schools have this implicit essence of purpose, highlighting the relational within the informal.

Informal learning may of course have different meanings in different contexts; **for example**, lifelong learning, workplace learning, organisational learning, **and** other professions. Although our use of the term emerged in grounded theory as a counterpoint to the formal, there was no intention of generalization or claim for parity of status across all learning contexts. In learning a new language or specific craft skills, for example, it is acknowledged that the support of a formal structure is superior to more informal experiences. Whatever the balance may be in different contexts, the extensive study of informal learning in the workplace by Eraut (2004: 255) concludes that 'relationships play a critical role in workplace learning'.

Studies which focus on the impact of induction programmes, as in, for example, the recent systematic review by Totterdall *et al.* (2004), tend to systematically exclude informal learning. According to Gorard *et al.* (1999), informal learning has been neglected in official policy statements and standards in the field of lifelong learning too, and also in the narrow definitions of learning present in literature on **the same**. There appears **however** to be a weight of evidence supporting a strong informal, social or relational dimension in workplace learning. The informal learning of new teachers in school may be seen as a specific illustration of this. It is intimately linked with relationships. Indeed Lohman (2000) has suggested that an environment which hinders such informal engagement actually serves as an inhibitor to learning. It is a claim that finds further support from philosophical fundamentals, **as for example in** friendship and the formation of human bonds (Almond 1988; White 1990), which are seen as universally important, especially in new situations where we are individually more vulnerable.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS

The informal and relational are also imbued with the emotional. Early evidence showed that 'affective engagement with colleagues and classes taught was of paramount importance' (McNally *et al.* 1997: 486), and **a number of** commentaries by the project's teacher-researchers contained fresh examples:

The week before school started Rachael felt nervous of the unknown [...] The probationers' day, the week before school started, was when reality set in and she felt nervous, very nervous. Apparently others felt the same. On the in-service day at school she felt more relaxed but on the pupils' first day she had never been so nervous in all her life. She couldn't stop it and the more she worried the more nervous she felt. By Thursday the feeling of physical sickness had gone and being here began to feel like her job [...] She has been pleased at the pupils' response to her lessons and she liked being recognised by them in the corridors. One other aim this year is to build up relationships with her pupils and to learn about their family networks within the school.

Over the summer Linda thought about her classes a lot. What if they are really bad? What if I can't control them? What if I feel horrible about myself? Can I handle classes?

Ann described her first week as a 'roller coaster' and 'bizarre' experience. She had half expected it to be like a student placement but it was so different because they are 'your classes'. As a student 'you knew you could hand them back' [...] Already she feels torn between the good pupils and the more challenging ones. She can see she's spending more time with a minority in some classes. She has been waking up at two or three in the morning thinking about the quieter pupils she hasn't spoken to.

Within this last emotional response to 'her classes', we do see early signs in Ann of a cognitive dimension in her learning. The recognition of difference within her class - between the good and the challenging and on time spent with the quieter pupils - tends to be the main indication of cognitive development across some of the narratives. This is no simplistic application of theory, though we might infer awareness of a concept of differentiation and related approaches, but a sense of actual difference that needs to be considered and that stems from the fundamental nature of an inevitable and even deep-seated relational engagement.

Extreme feelings can clearly take the form of anxious anticipation before the job has even started. This arises mainly from what defines the job - the pupils in the classes actually taught by the new teacher - and whether it is being done well enough. The answer tends to lie in how the same pupils respond, both in and out of class. Rachael, for example, has been pleased at the pupils' response to her lessons and she liked being recognised by them in the corridors, and her aim is to continue to build up relationships with them. For some, this defining experience is associated with a sense of whether they will be able to do the job. For Ann at least, any such doubts have been resolved within the first week or two:

After the first day she felt like not coming back and thought to her self 'What have I done?' But the week got better and better. Now she is learning names [...] After her first observed lesson during which four boys had dominated the class, Ann felt 'pretty disheartened about the whole thing'. By the following week she wasn't so totally disheartened because she realised there were lots of strategies to try. She now felt she had most of the class with her [...] She felt as if it wasn't a 'brick wall', and if she could turn round two pupils it would be a good class and she would be happier.

For another beginner, the doubt was gone, so it appears, on the first day:

[My concerns were] mostly dispelled, a positive first day. The pupils responded well to my personal style, which includes humour! When I met my classes they were friendly and respectful and I was able to have a laugh with them without them taking advantage. Some tried it on a bit to see how the new teacher would react but they were left in no doubt that I was in charge and they accepted that.

The emotional nature of the starting phase stems from the concern about whether a working relationship can be established in the classroom. This concern is not exclusively about controlling pupil behaviour. It is a more complex question of acceptance by them as their teacher and of being recognised as such.

Early professional learning involves often uneasy and fragile moves from the unregarded stranger to acceptance (or not) as a 'proper' teacher. The acceptance is layered, perhaps beginning with a recognition that the newcomer is here to stay:

Once they realised that I was here to stay, the atmosphere changed quite considerably, they actually started listening to what I had to say.

Relationship building takes time, and it is needed to solve discipline problems. Disciplinary action, on the other hand, can inhibit relationship-building. Over time, the teacher usually gains a 'reputation', and learns to square the circle of discipline and pedagogy:

It is quite strange. You think you are making progress in terms of relationship building and then something happens and a spanner is thrown in the works. It happened to me today with one of my classes. I was quite shocked by their behaviour, you know, and the way they had spoken to me and I thought I had developed a relationship of respect, you know, and it turned out two or three people didn't have quite the same idea on relationship.

If you are good at teaching your subject you won't have behaviour problems though behaviour management has been my priority first term, hoping that next term I really want to focus on the subject and how I'm delivering the subject.

Such 'reputations' are not so much a matter of strictness or friendliness or the elusive balance between these as a more cumulative getting-to-know the other.

And they see you [\[in the corridor\]](#) and say 'oh miss' and they start telling you stuff and that's really useful because when you see them in the lesson they know you've taken an interest in them outside of the classroom and you can have more of a relationship with them.

I think the longer you are here the more of a reputation you get, not like, 'Oh yeah, sir's really strict' or whatever. I think it's more as a, you know, a teacher, not just a supply.

Like the example of Rachael's mentor, who 'doesn't know how he does it', this point possibly indicates the limits of the usefulness of 'observation' of experienced and competent teachers. The 'discipline' question was less often a matter of where to go or what to do, but of how to get there. And that was a puzzling invisibility in any and all observation.

Nor is the situation totally informal, it should be said. There is a formal structure in which the experience takes place and which necessarily requires learning to happen: the timetable of classes, for example, and lesson planning. The formal-informal distinction may not even be helpful in understanding what is happening. What is clear is that the experience is largely affective in nature and explicit examples of learning - other than learning that one is becoming accepted - are **generally** absent from new teachers' accounts. **As we suggest in our discussion of the cognitive dimension in chapter seven, while it is reasonable to suppose that new teachers are learning in the sense of developing their competence in classroom management skills and curriculum knowledge, and so on, evidence of this in any explicit terms is hard to elicit. Rather, it is as if the cognitive is taken as being less problematic, or somehow predictable, and therefore rarely mentioned, or (as in the example of the teacher above who hopes to focus on his subject next term) deferred in the face of the considerable demand in the emotional domain. It is within the prominence of the relational in the data, that we find affirmation of our findings from Eraut (2004) who claims that the emotional dimension of professional work is much more significant than is often recognized. And Hargreaves (1998) too sees the emotions of teaching as not just a sentimental adornment but as fundamental in and of themselves.**

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

If relationships with pupils are definitively important, then so too are those with colleagues at this early stage. The feeling of having support at hand is of enormous importance, both from individuals and in a collective sense, as in staffrooms, for example:

Going up to the staffroom at interval and lunchtime was a double-edged situation. Rachael knew it was a good way of getting to know people and hearing about what was going on but she also felt the need to be ready for her classes and there was planning to do.

Such experience describes a 'socio-professional context' within which the individual text of the new teacher's development itself begins to appear. This could be viewed as a dynamic kind of equilibrium, the balance shifting between solitary reflection and practice and a strongly felt need for the support of others. Disequilibrium could occur at the extremes of total abandonment to one's own resources or a rigidly controlled, stifling support. In one case a principal teacher (PT) had given out his home telephone number and, in another, the new teacher had been taken 'under the wing' of a colleague:

I had been nervous and not sleeping well. The PT had given me his home phone number so I called him on Monday night. He put me completely at ease. I felt he was friendly and supportive. I still didn't sleep well but felt more relaxed about my first day.

Great atmosphere in the school dept and classroom - one teacher has taken me under her wing and is very supportive. At the end of the day I was relaxed and very positive about the future. One big help had been that the department were friendly and helpful.

It is often the case in schools that there is a natural mentoring of the beginner that involves a few people, typically from the department, but sometimes a supportive relationship can be struck up with a teacher from elsewhere in the school. Other beginners, or recent entrants, whatever their department (for secondary) or stage (for primary), are often significant players as mutual peer mentors within a more or less general mentoring environment within the school as a whole.

Linda had been out for lunch with another probationer and some of this probationer's department. It had been reassuring when they had said that they hadn't heard her voice carrying into the corridor. She had worried about how she could meet people on the staff when she worked in a two-person department. *She felt awkward about sitting down somewhere in the staffroom.*

Linda's experience corresponds with those who have found teacher development to be intimately dependent on relationships. Hargreaves (1992: 217), for example, states that:

the way teachers relate to their colleagues has profound implications for their classroom teaching, how they evolve and develop as teachers and the sorts of teachers they become [...] what goes on in a teacher's classroom cannot be divorced from the relations that are forged outside it.

Yet it is perhaps when a significant relationship does not work so well that the importance of the relational is most emphatic:

Gavin: As we put it, we feel over-supported; I mean it is good to have the support but when you are over-supported in everything...
Katie: [...] I feel like I am still a student quite frankly, that is how I feel [...] Every single class I take is getting checked up on, you know, she [the appointed mentor] is popping in, or she is asking me about it later on or she has heard me shouting and she wants to know who I shouted at and why I didn't give them a punishment exercise.

Again, we find ourselves in agreement with Eraut's (2004) observation that informal support from people on the spot tends to be more important for learning than that from formally designated helpers or mentors. This may be the case even in a school that is 'very good at doing the mentoring. We have three hours of it a week which is quite a lot... but maybe I am inherently cautious, I wouldn't necessarily reveal everything about what I am feeling to anybody' (Laura). It is a point also made by Gavin, whose appointed mentor is a departmental colleague, meaning that there are 'times that you find you cannot approach her to [...] talk things through. I feel a mentor should be someone not within that department so that you can feel as if you can go and chat to them'.

As we have suggested, the narrative evidence is permeated with the relational; indeed even those questions that probe for more specific learning, often tend to lead back to the relational and its affective impact:

Interviewer: Can you think of any other situations or anything else where you think I definitely learned something or I've changed because I've learned something?

Linda: I was just thinking about the way I put things across. I've learnt not to be quite so harsh [...] and now I'm starting to learn to ease up slightly [...] Before I thought you've got to be on task 24/7 you're not allowed to stop working or chat about something [...]. They've [classes] shown me, well, yes we can actually be better; we get more work done if we know we can speak to you about something that isn't the subject right now.

I guess I learnt a few things, simple things, I guess cumulatively just walking past some of my colleagues' doors [...] nipping in to pick up a book, you learn a lot of things that way, a lot of how other teachers conduct themselves [...] I was at the photocopier and doing some work and I was chatting away to an English teacher [who had] overheard a conversation I was having with another probationer about some particular boys in my class giving me trouble [...] she said, 'don't worry about it, I've been teaching for 45 years or whatever and they are one of the worst [classes] I've ever seen in my career', and it was just so reassuring and made me feel so much better to have somebody like that with so much experience just to say, 'don't worry about it. It's not you' [...] I guess I've learnt that you should share these things with everyone cause I think everyone feels these things about behaviour at sometime or another.

(Ann)

'Ad hoc interaction' within subject departments and conversations in staff rooms and bases appear then to mean as much to beginners as planned events, such as the observation of experienced teachers. It is evident that beginners learn about teaching in indirect ways, and in a much wider sense, through contact with teachers as persons outside the classroom. And in the example of Ann especially, we can see the demand in the emotional domain for that spontaneous, informal, personal interaction between teachers that occurs 'mainly in the interstices of school life; in the corridor conversations and exchanged glances that weld teachers and their school together in a working community' (Hargreaves 1992: 233).

INDICATORS OF INTERACTION

We were mindful in designing the EPL project of the accusation often levelled at educational research, that it is too often based on soft data. As well as probing deeply into an area of professional learning and exploring more innovatively the somewhat well trodden qualitative route to understanding, we also incorporated a quantitative element. The relational was therefore operationalised as INTERACT, one of the project's five quantitative indicators of new teacher performance. This indicator (discussed at greater length in chapter ten) provided a fairly rudimentary but nonetheless persuasive indication of the extent to which relationships count. It showed the range of relationships with others within which the interactions of new teachers took place, their general order of importance and also in what ways they were important. Briefly, the results tended to reflect the significance to new teachers of the

affective domain in their relationships with pupils and fellow teachers more so than with mentors and line managers.

If you look hard enough at relationships, of course, you may be likely to discover their importance. Hence, we re-iterate, INTERACT was developed because of the dominance of the relational theme in the project's early narrative data. But the place of relationality is not confined solely to INTERACT and the corroborating data here. For example, the statistical analysis of our job satisfaction instrument in chapter eight identifies the main source of job satisfaction among new teachers as being relational in nature. A further telling statistic reveals that as much as 41 per cent of the variation in new teachers' overall job satisfaction is attributable to their working relationships with colleagues in the same departments ($\rho = 0.642$, $p < 0.01$, $N = 29$).

The importance of teacher-pupil relationships was likewise suggested by the statistical analysis of the project's classroom environment survey. The components of classroom experience that emerged from the exploratory factor analysis of these results (using principal component analysis¹) can be summarised as follows: quality of teaching-relationships; quality of teaching-explanation; pupil engagement; pupil co-operation; equity/fairness. The personal qualities of teachers expressed through their interaction with pupils came out as the most significant aspect of the classroom environment. That is to say, quality of teaching-relationships accounted for 31.4 per cent of the 49 per cent of the variance in the results that could be explained by the five components, and included such survey variables as 'the teacher makes lessons interesting', 'the teacher makes lessons fun', 'the teacher knows the class well', and 'the teacher knows my name'.

A RELATIONAL SELF-AS-TEACHER IDENTITY

It is clear that the support that new teachers need cannot be confined to the conventional epistemological base of subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, localised information, and so on. There is a considerable need or demand in the emotional domain, met through a range of different persons and roles in a variety of relationships. The indication from *interact*, within the EPL sample, is that out of 236 recorded conversations with colleagues, new teachers felt better as a result on 43 per cent (n 102) of occasions. This kind of broad psychosocial support (Jacobi 1991) stems from the intrinsic emotional nature of the experience. It is also consistent with the key role of emotions in the construction of identity (Zembylas 2003). We have indeed tended within the project to refer to the 'emotional-relational dimension' of early professional learning (McNally *et al.* 2008) as they are often intertwined or inseparable in a given interaction. Barbalet (2002: 4) too, writes about emotion as 'a necessary link between social structure and social actor', that 'without the emotions category, accounts of situated actions would be fragmentary and incomplete'. The interactions of new teachers (as actors) support and illustrate this view.

There is then a need to think beyond the conventional epistemological constraints of a knowledge and skills base in understanding the experience of new teachers, and to acknowledge this in their preparation in courses of initial teacher education. Without taking the argument too far into an ontological case, analysis of the indicator and interview data does reveal a complexity of support and interpersonal interactions that raises questions of insecurity, vulnerability and uncertainty. These are, it appears, ineluctably experienced by new teachers.

New teachers are aware that they are changing as persons. This is partly caught in their interactions with significant others:

I've got into trouble from my mum because I used the tone and words I would use to the pupils like, 'Stop speaking to me like that'. And she just looked at me and said, 'You're not a teacher here'. And I said, 'What?' because I didn't realise I was doing it and my boyfriend's always on at me saying 'stop treating me like one of your pupils'.

The kind of development or learning which is taking place is clearly transformational and so, grounded in the narrative data, is a strong sense of identity formation. This is validated further by theories of learning that recognise transformation. Illeris (2004: 84), for example, acknowledges the presence of:

a far-reaching type of learning, implying what could be termed *personality change* and characterised by simultaneous restructuring in the cognitive, the emotional, and the social dimensions. This typically occurs as the result of a crisis-like situation caused by challenges experienced as urgent and unavoidable. Such processes have traditionally not been conceived of as learning, but they are well known in the field of psychotherapy, right back to the Freudian concept of catharsis.

This sense of a changing self permeates the narratives and is consistent with the equation of the development of self and identity to learning as an inherently emotional process embedded within a relational context (Bosma and Kunnen 2001). In exploring the place of 'self' in connection to relationality (based on the view that the narratives in themselves are powerful individual entities as well as data for thematic analysis), there is support for the concept of 'biographicity' (Alheit and Dausien 1999), the capacity that people have that could not be taught by experts and their uniqueness as a resource for building new relationships:

Ann: I was someone who liked to socialise at parties and things like that. Now I kind of feel, not past it... it's hard to put into words how I feel about it. I kind of feel like I shouldn't be doing it because I've got this respectable job but kind of... I don't know, I feel I should be somebody the kids can look up to. Conduct myself in a way that is respectful.

Interviewer: Like you're teaching all the time by the way you behave, by the way you do things?

Ann: I do feel like a teacher all of the time. I feel like a teacher at the weekends, I feel like a teacher during the holidays. You know because of the way you got to conduct yourself. It's a bit daft really because your job and your life should be separate but this is a unique job.

Relationality is therefore more than some warm, vague notion of idle friendliness in the workplace. Hinchcliffe (2004), for example, argues that there is an ethical nexus inscribed in relations with others in the workplace, that this is inescapable and bound up with technical skills and, furthermore, that it is important for human flourishing and for the quality of work that is done. *And why else would Ann come awake in the early hours 'thinking about the quieter pupils she hasn't spoken to'?*

Our concept of relationality extends to a strong sense of mutuality. The ‘pure relationship’ is one which depends on mutual trust (Giddens 1991) and it is possible to idealise teacher-pupil interdependence as a pure relationship. Giddens writes of the ontological security that pupils gain through relationships with their teachers. Yet it is clear that new teachers are dependent on their pupils for a sense of professional purpose, for their very acceptance as a teacher. The interdependence in this early stage of development is, therefore, one of reciprocal ontological security. We would suggest that this interdependent mutuality is fundamental to the new teachers’ experience, to their forming an identity as a teacher, and that it transcends the meeting of a professional ‘standard’.

Self is thus in the data. It is a mightily contested concept of course, but our grounded concept resonates with the ‘relational self’ (Schibbye 2002). This conveys a sense of agency and purpose that is consistent with our data - a self that is intrinsically dependent on pupils and colleagues and others for its emergence and expression. [As one principal teacher that we interviewed explained:](#)

[good teachers are very good at interpersonal skills. We manage very often twenty to thirty other individuals every hour. It’s a very unique job and sometimes we don’t get a chance to stop and reflect on how unique it is. The interpersonal skill thing is not just between teacher and pupil. It can be between teacher and teacher \[... it\] can be a huge stumbling block if you get somebody who thinks they can just ride roughshod over everybody.](#)

Bakhtin’s (Holquist 1990) philosophy is that ‘self’ can never be a self-sufficient construct and he emphasises particularity and situatedness, arguing that abstract questions about selfhood can only be pursued as specific questions about location. The scope of this chapter and the book as a whole limits discussion of these philosophical connections and so we can only recommend them as worthy of further reading in relation to this and perhaps other contexts of professional learning. However, there is space to quote a verse from Norman MacCaig’s early metaphysical musings, [one that](#) is succinct in capturing the person in context, farm or school:

Self under self, a pile of selves I stand
Threaded on time, and with metaphysic hand
Lift the farm like a lid and see
Farm within farm, and in the centre, me.

(MacCaig 1990: 7)

While our research findings probably belong in a fairly long tradition of teacher learning and becoming (e.g. Lortie 1975), it is not until recently that the relational and informal (and emotional) have resurfaced as crucial to early professional development. Smith (2009) recognises a purpose in informal learning that is a concern to build the sorts of communities in which people can be happy and fulfilled. [Straka \(2004\)](#), however, has cautioned that informal learning is a problematic term suffering from a lack of systematically and empirically grounded valid evidence - a challenge that this project has sought to address. In identifying dimensional themes from typically integrated experiences, our year-long tracking of new teachers has revealed that [the dimensions change in intensity over time and in relation to context, and this](#)

multidimensionality of professional learning is key to understanding identity formation in the beginner: a fundamental process that incorporates relationality, emotionality and a sense of a changing self. Perhaps no illustration is more graphic than this valedictory catharsis by email to one of the project's teacher-researchers:

Hi Phil,

Thanks for the e-mail and sorry for the delay in the reply - life has been pretty hectic recently. I have been busy finishing work on a flat that needed gutted and have bought another one as well as settled into a new job. Lochside is 100 per cent better than Eastmuir. At least you can teach and the PT is pleasant which makes all the difference. I have a nice interactive board - no more chalk that you have to lick! My room was also painted over the holidays and so I have been able to put out all the artefacts and posters that I would never have risked putting out in Eastmuir.

As far as keeping in touch with anybody from there - I don't see anybody except Kat the geography probationer who almost left teaching but is now having a much better experience at another school and so is giving it another go. I also hear from some in the learning support department now and again. It certainly wasn't a sad day when I left. As soon as the bell went I had all my belongings already packed in the car and I was out of there within two minutes.

Last year I had a dreadful skin rash and that has now completely gone so I am sure it was the stress of Irene (my PT) that caused it. Since leaving, I have only had one nightmare about her - I'm afraid it has been a recurring nightmare, which involves me running her down and I always wake up when she is spread out over the windscreen!!! I have to laugh at it really. She was a very insecure lady.

Anyway, I hope all is well with you. Are you doing the surveys again this year with the probationers?

Garibaldi.

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ⁱ A correlation matrix determined the presence of a majority of coefficients of value 0.3 and above, $p < 0.05$, which indeed suggested the presence of one or more investigative components. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.96, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, again supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix (Pallant 2007).