

A Passion for Teaching

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Introduction

When Geoff Whitty addressed this meeting last year, he, like others before him, noted concerns about the effects upon teachers of, for example, ‘performativity, managerialism and the nature of some sets of teacher competencies and standards’ (Whitty, 2006, p. 11). To these he might have added increased workload, intensification and diversification of roles and increased expectations for their social as well as intellectual influences upon pupils. I agree with him that current reforms will not necessarily lead to the deskilling and de-professionalisation of teachers. Indeed, they may, as Whitty suggests, point in the direction of ‘re-professionalisation’, with increased emphasis upon how children and young people can best be served through new ways of working and new forms of teacher-learner relationship as pupils are encouraged to become more actively engaged in decisions about their own learning.

However, strategies to improve teaching quality– whether through curriculum change, formal mechanisms of self-evaluation, inspection or programmes of continuing professional development (all of which I know are happening in Northern Ireland) need to be founded upon understandings of what good teaching looks like; and an acknowledgement that teaching effectiveness is underpinned by teachers who are able to be at their best emotionally and intellectually over the course of a forty year professional life span in contexts of different policy initiated and citizenship demands to which they will have to respond.

For the purposes of this lecture, I will make three assumptions: first that teachers’ intellectual needs – their knowledge of subject area and pedagogical content knowledge – are able to be refined and updated through formal programmes of CPD and in-school mentoring, coaching and critical friendship; second, that what marks teachers out as good or better than good is more than their mastery of content

knowledge and pedagogical skills. It is their passion for their teaching, for their students and for their learning. The third assumption that I will make – rather an observation than an assumption – is that teaching requires both intellectual and emotional commitment. Sustaining such passion is intimately connected with their commitment; and commitment is related to their sense of professional emotional identity. It is this combination of the emotional and intellectual which results in teaching at its best, what I have characterised as ‘Passion for Teaching’. It is this area of commitment, which continues to remain neglected in policy and strategic initiatives designed to raise teaching and learning standards. It is this area, therefore, which forms the focus of this lecture. I will suggest that passion is not a luxury, a frill, a quality possessed by just a few teachers or a personality trait that some teachers have and others lack. Moreover:

‘Passion and practicality are not opposing notions; good planning and design are as important as caring and spontaneity in bringing out the best in students. Although not the whole story, passion, uncomfortable as the word may sound, is at the heart of what teaching is or should be.’

(Fried, 1995, p6)

Passion itself remains ill defined at best, and at worst associated with unhelpful extremes of emotion which often cloud rather than enhance possibilities for learning. Passion is defined in the Oxford Dictionary (1989) as ‘any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully affected or moved’. It is a driver, a motivational force emanating from strength of emotion. People are passionate about things, issues, causes, people. Being passionate creates energy, determination, conviction, commitment and even obsession in people. Passion can lead to enhanced vision (the determination to fulfil a deeply held goal) but it can also restrict wider vision and lead to the narrow pursuit of a passionately held goal at the expense of other things.

Bringing a passionate self to teaching every day of every week of every school term and year is a daunting prospect. It is stressful not only to the body but also to the heart and soul, for the processes of teaching and learning are rarely smooth, and the results are not always predictable. Despite the holiday entitlement, despite the recent development in some countries of designated time for teachers to plan and reflect upon their work, despite provision of additional classroom assistance, and despite

attempts to reduce the rising levels of bureaucratic accountability which accompany results driven performativity agendas, teaching remains a stressful occupation. Thus, the hope with which many teachers still enter the profession may be eroded as battles with those who don't wish to learn or cannot, or disrupt others' opportunities to learn, increasing media criticisms and lack of work-life balance take their toll.

'Teachers have hearts and bodies, as well as heads and hands, though the deep and unruly nature of their hearts is governed by their heads, by the sense of moral responsibility for students and the integrity of their subject matter which is at the core of their professional identity. They cannot teach well if any part of them is disengaged for long. Increasingly, social and political pressures give precedence to head and hand, but if the balance between feeling, thinking and doing is disturbed too much or for too long, teaching becomes distorted, teachers' responses are restricted, they may even cease to be able to teach. Teachers are emotionally committed to many different aspects of their jobs. This is not an indulgence; it is a professional necessity. Without feeling, without the freedom to 'face themselves', to be whole persons in the classroom, they implode, explode – or walk away.'

(Nias, 1996, p305)

There are many factors which help or hinder effective teaching and learning. Not least among these are the family histories and circumstances of the parents, the students, the leadership and learning culture of the school, the effects of government policies, the perceived relevance and value of the curriculum, behaviour in the classroom and staff room, relationships with students, parents and the wider community, and teachers' knowledge, skills and competencies. Yet the primary factors in good teaching which is effective are much more than these. They are the inner qualities of the teacher; a continuing striving for excellence (in herself and others); a caring for and fascination with growth; and a deep commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for each pupil.

I now turn to talk first about three inner qualities which research suggests are central to being, behaving and remaining a passionate teacher, before addressing what are probably the two most important challenges to teachers as they move through their careers – sustaining the passion, and sense of professional emotional identity which highlight commitment, resilience and identity as key components in maintaining classroom effectiveness. My themes will be:

- i) Reflective practice
- ii) Relationships with pupils
- iii) Moral purposes: care and courage
- iv) Sustaining the passion: commitment, resilience and effectiveness
- v) Emotional identities

In doing so, I will draw upon the key findings of a unique four year national project on, 'Variations in the Work and Lives of Teachers and their Effects on Pupils' (VITAE), in order to illustrate what helps and what hinders teachers' capacities to sustain these elements and thus, their passion and effectiveness over a forty year career.

i) Reflective practice

'The people who develop ...are those who love to learn, who seek new challenges, who enjoy intellectually stimulating environments, who are reflective, who make plans and set goals, who take risks, who see themselves in the large social contexts of history and institutions and broad cultural trends, who take responsibility for themselves and their environs'

(Rest, 1986, pp174-5)

Passionate teachers are not content to reflect critically upon and examine their own teaching and its contexts, nor satisfied only to plan for the next lesson on the basis of what they have learnt from the last. Rather, they want to find ways of looking at the learning experience from different perspectives, engaging in the messy, frustrating and rewarding 'clay' of learning (Barth, 1990, p49). They want to open up their classrooms to others in order to share and learn, and ensure that their thinking and practices are not always based solely upon their own experience. They are not content only to comply with the institutional imperatives of performance management processes or school improvement planning, however well they are managed.

Reflective practice is based upon a particular notion of professionalism in which teachers have a responsibility for the education of students which goes beyond the instrumental, encompassing responsibilities to educate for citizenship and to imbue in their students a positive disposition towards lifelong learning. Yet time and

circumstance dictate that this is not always a simple matter. Witness first the testimony of a newly qualified teacher:

I used to think I'd be this great reflective teacher. I had visions of spending time at the end of each day replaying my classes to see what worked and what didn't, etcetera but, quite honestly, by the end of the day I am so frazzled from just trying to keep up I can hardly even remember what took place only hours ago! And most of the time I am so worried about tomorrow I don't even want to think about yesterday or today...I've taken to doing things for myself in the evenings now in order to get my mind off [teaching].

(Cited in Cole, 1997, p9)

This illustrates the perils of taking the popular notion of conscious continuous learning too literally. Certainly, reflection of different kinds is an essential part of teacher learning and renewal. However, it is important to remember that there will be times – perhaps in the early years of teaching, perhaps at moments of acute stress or at the end of a busy week - when reflection is either not appropriate or simply too difficult.

Brubacher and his colleagues, in answer to the question why should a teacher devote time and energy to becoming a reflective practitioner, suggest three principal benefits:

- 1. Reflective practice helps to free teachers from impulsive, routine behaviour;*
- 2. Reflective practice allows teachers to act in a deliberate, intentional manner; and*
- 3. Reflective practice distinguishes teachers as educated human beings since it is one of the hallmarks of intelligent action.'*

(Brubacher et al, 1994, p25)

To these three, we might add

4. Reflective practice enables teachers to assert their professional identity as change agents with moral purposes; and
5. Reflective practice is essential to self knowledge and continuing professional growth.

Reflective practice is an essential means of re-examination and renewal of passion by those who care about their work, who are captivated by their pupils' potential for

learning and who, because of these, actively work against becoming isolated and apathetic.

ii) Relationships with pupils

In a comparative study of policies which aimed to increase teacher quality, the common factors amongst excellent teachers identified in studies in New Zealand (Ramsay, 1993), Italy (Macconi, 1993), America (White and Roesch, 1993), Sweden (Lander, 1993) and France (Altet, 1993) were that they had a passionate desire for the success of all their students. This was communicated directly through: the classroom ethos – their sense of humour, interpersonal warmth, patience, empathy and support of their pupils’ self esteem (Hopkins and Stern, 1996). A study of a range of primary schools found that, for most children, friendships and companionships were critical to their enjoyment, together with work in which they could participate actively (Bendelow and Mayall, 2003).

Yet just as teachers may make a positive difference, so they may achieve the reverse. Twenty years ago, John Goodlad wrote of 1000 classrooms which he and his colleagues had visited that they were:

‘almost completely devoid of outward evidences of effect. Shared laughter, overt enthusiasm, or angry outbursts were rarely observed. Less than 3 percent of classroom time was devoted to praise, abrasive comments, expressions of joy or humor, or somewhat unbridled outbursts such as “wow” or “great”.’

(Goodlad, 1984, pp229-30)

Today there are still stories of humiliation, fear and disconnection in classrooms.

‘One student...said she could not describe her good teachers because they differed so greatly... But she could describe her bad teachers because they were all the same: “Their words float somewhere in front of their faces, like the balloon speech in the cartoons”.’

(Palmer, 1998, p11)

A survey by the ‘Campaign for Learning’ in England found that a high proportion of 14-16 year old students claimed that ‘poor teaching’ – associated with teachers who were distant, patronising and who were not interested in them as people – was a cause for their underachievement:

'The teachers never explain anything, they're always on people's backs like that's wrong, that's pathetic, you're thick.'

'Teachers favour the more intelligent students in our class and don't help us less intelligent students enough.'

'Basically, we are patronised and treated as though we are little kids.'

'The teachers don't even try to understand us.'

(Reported in Bentley, 1998, p80)

iii) Moral Purposes: care and courage

Whilst it is important not to 'sentimentalize' (Jackson, 1999, p. 88) it is necessary to acknowledge that moral purposes are an essential part of the identity and efficacy of many effective teachers. They are what keep teachers going. They contribute to their resilience. For passionate teachers, professional accountability is about far more than satisfying externally imposed bureaucratic demands or annually agreed targets for action linked to government and school improvement agendas. They understand that the nature of teaching, the terms of their work, oblige them to 'place the intellectual and moral well-being of students first and foremost' through their actions and interactions (Hansen, 1998, p651).

Sockett (1993) argues that techniques of teaching are always subservient to a moral end and, therefore, that the moral character of the teacher is of prime importance. He identifies five major virtues – honesty, courage, care, fairness and practical wisdom. The nature of good teaching presupposes a care for the one taught as well as respect for the integrity of what is taught (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1993). Teachers and students alike work better when they are cared 'about': an expression of teachers' personal beliefs and emotional commitment which goes beyond the contractual obligation of caring 'for' (Fletcher-Campbell, 1995). Children especially are 'emotionally attuned to be on the look out for caring, or lack thereof, and they seek out and thrive in places where it is present.' (Elias et al, 1997, p6) Yet to care for someone, teachers need to know who they are, their strengths and limitations, how they can grow in order to respond to their needs. Teachers who are passionate about their work know, also, that who they are as well as what they teach must connect emotionally with each student.

Courage too is a necessary virtue in teaching. Hugh Sockett defines courage as: 'a virtue that describes how a person, often selflessly, behaves in difficult and adverse circumstances that demand the use of practical reason and judgement in pursuit of long term commitments that are morally desirable.' (Sockett, 1993, p.74). Where curricula are closely scripted and where school cultures inhibit the expression of certain kinds of emotion, there may be less room for spontaneity, risk-taking, or improvisation in teaching. More importantly, there may be less room for attention to individual pupils' needs. To put it another way, in results driven classroom contexts, teachers need to be courageous if they are to diverge from pre-planned pathways. Additionally, in classrooms where the behaviour of some pupils is problematic, to be warm and encouraging requires courage to persist in caring for every student in the class, those who are able, those who are not, those who are interested and those who are alienated. It takes courage to continue to believe in and be actively engaged in one's moral purposes and not to default or become 'care less' under pressures of effort and energies required to fulfil instrumentally dominated agendas.

Morally based caring and courageous relationships between teachers and students, then, are fundamental to successful teaching and learning. They are the glue which binds the two together and which create rich learning opportunities. They are the abiding expression of the teacher's commitment to the student as person.

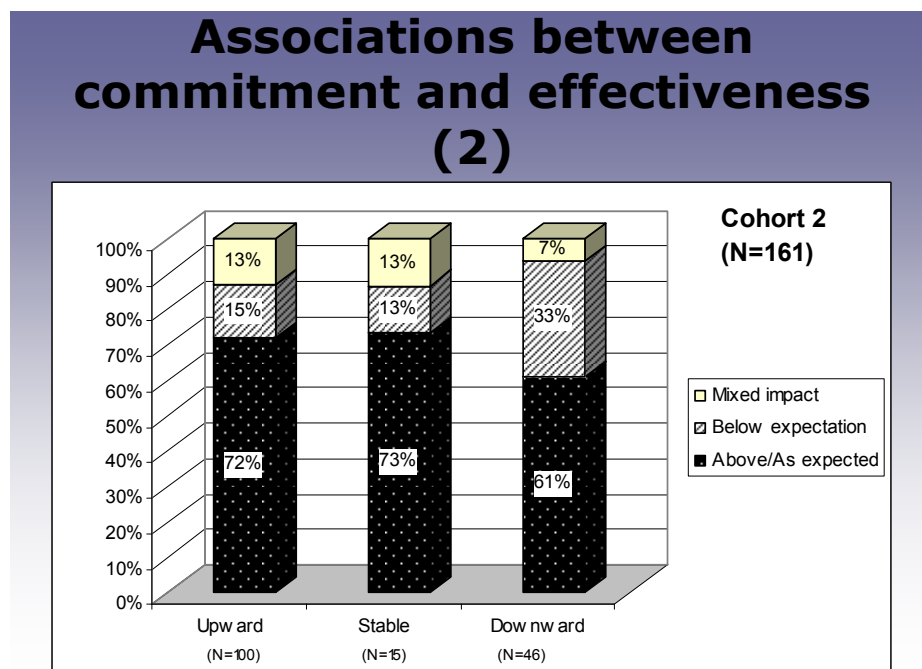
iv) Sustaining the passion: commitment, resilience and effectiveness

What is meant to be a lifelong learner who, in the words of GTCNI (2005), 'reflects upon practice, is nurtured by professional dialogue, and sustained through the active support of communities in practice' (p. v) is more than engaging in continuing professional development. However broad the range, however personalised the activities, no amount of formal professional development programming will be enough to meet the core, inner needs of teachers. A brief look at the findings of a recently completed four year large scale research study (albeit in England) which I was privileged to lead provides an indication of the realities of their work and lives over time, and the important association between sustaining the passion and commitment, resilience and effectiveness.

The VITAE project (Day *et al*, 2007) was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in order to explore variations in teachers' lives, work and effectiveness in different phases of their careers. It involved a nationally representative sample of 300 primary (Key Stage 1 and 2) and secondary (Key Stage 3 English and maths) teachers working in 100 schools across seven local authorities (LAs). The schools themselves were selected to be representative in terms of level of social disadvantage and attainment levels. The project examined influences upon and between teachers' professional and personal lives, identities and school contexts in which they worked; and associations between these, their commitment and resilience, and their effectiveness over time.

A key finding was that there is statistically significant association between teacher commitment and pupil progress and attainment as measured by national test scores. That is, pupils of teachers who are committed are more likely to perform at higher levels than those of teachers who are not committed.

Fig. 1: Associations between commitment and effectiveness



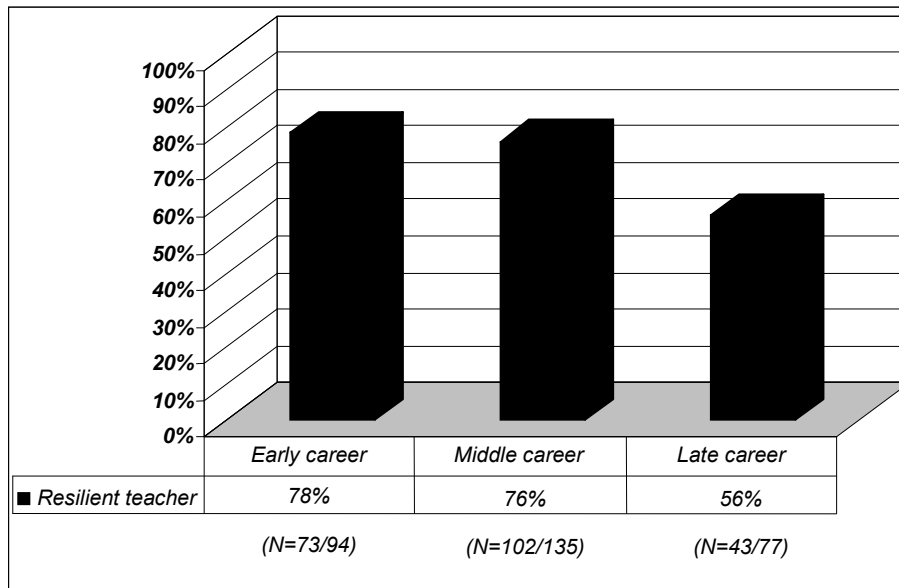
Teacher commitment is closely associated with job satisfaction, morale, motivation and identity, and a predictor of teachers' work performance, absenteeism, burnout and turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' achievement in, and

attitudes toward school (Bryk et al, 1993; Firestone, 1996; Graham, 1996; Kushman, 1992; Louis, 1998; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Teachers who are committed have an enduring belief that they can make a difference to the learning lives and achievements of students (efficacy and agency) through who they are (their identity), what they know (knowledge, strategies, skills) and how they teach (their beliefs, attitudes, personal and professional values embedded in and expressed through their behaviour in practice settings). Teachers' initial commitment, however, may rise, be sustained or decline depending on their life and work experiences and their management of these scenarios. It may be enhanced or diminished by factors such as student behaviour, collegial and administrative support, parental demands, national education policies, and teachers' own professional histories and career phase (Day, 2000; Louis, 1998; Riehl & Sipple, 1996). A key issue for all teachers and teacher educators is, therefore, how commitment may be maintained over time:

'Most teachers come into teaching because they have a commitment. But we all have a certain level and some of us plateau earlier or later than others...people who are committed don't ever stop wanting to learn...so I'd characterise someone who is not committed as being stuck...not moving on...'

It is perhaps inevitable that there will be times over the course of a career, when for personal reasons (e.g. illness, lack of promotion, critical phases in life), as a consequence of changes in policy or as a result of the emotional drive which committed, caring teachers put into their teaching, initial passion turns to frustration, fatigue, routine and cynicism or even burnout. Without commitment and passion, teaching, in Chris Clark's words, 'loses its heart' (1995, p.3). The VITAE project revealed that the commitment of teachers with more experience is more likely to decline than for those in early and middle years and that they become relatively less resilient.

Figure 2 Resilience and Professional Life Phase



v) Emotional identities

Passionate teachers do not work in isolation. They are part of a complex web of social and interpersonal relationships which make up the culture of the school and department and which will inevitably affect their work and lives.

‘Even the best teacher attitudes and responses have trouble enduring without a professional community to support, endorse, and validate them. Every teacher we encountered who was engaged in a high level of pedagogy belonged to such a community.

(McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993, p17)

Classrooms and staffrooms are places in which good teachers invest. Teaching has long been acknowledged as work in which emotions are central to their personal and professional selves (Fineman, 1993; Nias, 1996; Day, 1998). Thus, because teachers’ work is a principal location for their sense of self esteem and personal as well as professional satisfaction, it is inevitable that they will have deeply felt emotions. Maintaining an awareness of the tensions in managing our emotions is part of the safeguard and joy of teaching. The messages from a range of research are clear and unequivocal:

- 1) emotions are indispensable to rational decision-making (Damasio, 1994; Sylwester, 1995; Damasio, 2000);

- 2) emotional understanding and intelligence are at the heart of good professional practice (Denzin, 1984; Goleman, 1995);
- 3) emotional and cognitive health are affected by personal biography, career, social context (of work and home) and external (policy) factors (Kelchtermans, 1996);
- 4) emotional health is crucial to effective teaching over a career (Day *et al*, 2007).

However, research which focuses upon the passion of vocation in relation to person as well as professional is scarce (Day and Leitch, 2001). In many instances, emotions are managed and regulated only in order to ensure the efficient and effective running of the organisation and achievement of its goals. They:

'...are usually talked about only insofar as they help administrators and reformers 'manage' and offset teachers' resistance to change or help them set the climate or mood in which the really important business of cognitive learning or strategic planning can take place'

(Hargreaves, 1998, p.837)

Teaching calls for and, at its best, involves daily, intensive and extensive use of both emotional labour (e.g. smiling on the outside whilst feeling anything but happy on the inside) and emotional work which enables teachers to manage the challenges of teaching classes which contain students with a range of diverse motivations, personal histories and learning capacities (Hochschild, 1983). However, too much of the former leads to a disengagement with the complexities of teaching and learning, and a loss of trust by students; and too much investment of one's emotional self may lead to personal vulnerability, feelings of inadequacy at being unable to engage everyone in learning all the time and, in extreme cases, overwork and breakdown. It may lead teaching to become predominantly 'emotional labour' where the smile of communication is about business not the person, where 'How are you today?' does not require a response, and where even acts of care are understood as devices to progress rather than emanating from genuine respect:

'When we sell our personality in the course of selling goods or services we engage in a seriously self-estranging process...'

(Hochschild, 1983, pix)

It is abundantly clear from the VITAE research that experience of positive emotions prompts individuals to engage with their environments. Rather than fight against or ignore change, resilient teachers absorb, mediate and, where appropriate, adapt in the belief that they can continue to contribute positively to broad rather than narrowly defined educational purposes.

Fredrickson (2004) has developed a ‘broaden-and-build’ theory of positive emotions. She suggests that, ‘the personal resources accrued during states of positive emotions are durable, (outlasting) the transient emotional states that led to their acquisition’; (p. 1369) and that, ‘positive emotions may fuel psychological resilience’ (p. 1372). In other words, they serve as resources which assist people to cope with adversity.

‘When positive emotions are in short supply, people get stuck. They lose their degrees of behavioral freedom and become painfully predictable. But when positive emotions are in ample supply, people take off. They become generative, creative, resilient...’.
(Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1375)

There are unavoidable interrelationships, also, between professional and personal identities, if only because the overwhelming evidence is that teaching demands significant personal investment.

‘The ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about, and engagement with, students’.
(James-Wilson, 2001, p. 29)

Identities are not stable but discontinuous, fragmented and subject to change (Day and Hadfield, 1996). Indeed, today’s professional has been described as, ‘mobilizing a complex of occasional identities in response to shifting contexts’ (Stronach et al, 2002, p. 117). Such mobilizations occur in the space between the ‘structure’ (of the relations between power and status) and ‘agency’ (the influence we and others can have), and it is the interaction between these that influences how teachers see themselves, i.e. their personal and professional identities. Emotions play key role in the construction of identity (Zembylas, 2003). They are the necessary link between the social structures in which teachers work and the ways they act.

Thus, a positive sense of identity with subject, relationships and roles is important to maintaining self-esteem or self-efficacy, commitment to and a passion for teaching (Day, 2004).

Here are just a few illustrations of the challenges which teachers in this project were managing in their attempts to maintain their passion for their work:

'Work does hinder my home life because I end up working most weekends and several nights in the week. I have no energy to do other things'.

'You have to learn to say 'no' to people, not just at work, but at home as well'.

'I love working here because everyone is so supportive and works together'.

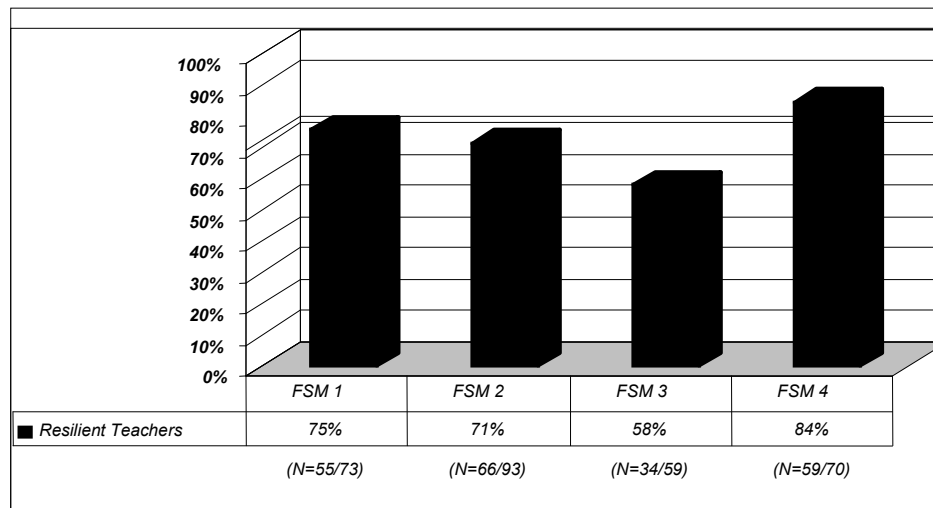
'I think I had a life until I got promoted, then it became a lot more difficult to keep home and work separate'.

'I don't think I can carry on with this much stress for much longer. It can't be good for my health'.

There is a difference, also, between those who teach in the most disadvantaged communities and those in communities which were disadvantaged but less so. It may be the case that FSM⁴ schools, which receive more advantageous resourcing than others, may also attract more teachers who are more vocationally and ideologically oriented to working in areas of extreme socio-economic deprivation than others.

¹ The % of pupils in a school eligible for free school meals (FSM) provides an indication of low income and social disadvantage. It was used to divide schools into four categories from least to most disadvantaged. FSM 1 describes schools with 0-8% of pupils eligible for free school meals. This percentage rises to 9-20% for FSM 2 schools, 21-35% for FSM 3 schools, and over 35% for FSM 4 schools.

Fig. 3 Resilience and FSM



The supporting factors mentioned most frequently in VITAE were:

- **leadership**

It's good to know that we have strong leadership who has a clear vision for the school (Laura, Primary).

- **colleagues**

We have such supportive team here. Everyone works together and we have a common goal to work towards (Helen, Primary).

We all socialise together and have become friends over time. I don't know what we'd do if someone left (Lesley, Secondary).

- **personal**

It helps having a supportive family who don't get frustrated when I'm sat working on a Sunday afternoon and they want to go to the park (Simon, Secondary).

The negative pressures mentioned most frequently were:

- **workload**

It never stops, there's always something more to do and it eats away at your life until you have no social life and no time for anything but work (John, Primary).

Your life has to go on hold – there's not enough time in the school day to do everything (Hazel, Primary)

- **pupil behaviour**

Over the years, pupils have got worse. They have no respect for themselves or the teachers (Jessica, Primary).

Pupil behaviour is one of the biggest problems in schools today. They know their rights and there's nothing you can do (Nicola, Primary).

- **leadership**

Unless the leadership supports the staff, you're on your own. They need to be visible and need to appreciate what teachers are doing (Catherine, Primary).

I feel as if I'm constantly being picked on and told I'm doing something wrong (Jamie, Secondary).

When faced with situations, or 'scenarios' which potentially may have destabilising negative effects on their personal lives, their lives in the workplace, their professional value systems or any combination of these, teachers' sense of self, their efficacy, motivation and commitment may be threatened. More importantly, their felt vulnerability may result in increased passivity and conservatism in the classroom as the passion to teach well dies and survival becomes the principal objective.

Thus, teachers' effectiveness is not simply a consequence of age or experience. Teachers' professional life phases and identities are core moderating influences upon their effectiveness; and teachers' capacities to manage the changes in these contexts were mediated by school leaders, colleagues, external policy effects and personal events and experiences.

Conclusions

For most of us at some time or other, for shorter or longer periods in our professional lives, initial passion dies or mutates: either as a result of circumstance, for example, a school culture which frowns upon the communication of excitement about learning; or as the physical, emotional and intellectual challenges of 'being the best' every day, every week, every year with children and young people who are not always appreciative becomes too wearing; because of personal circumstances, or as the ageing process begins to take its toll.

This evidence about variations in teachers' commitment and resilience provides a new perspective on teacher quality, effectiveness and retention issues. Research on teacher attrition and retention tends to focus on factors affecting teachers' decision to leave the teaching profession (OECD, 2005). Instead, what is required is a better understanding of the factors that enable teachers to sustain their motivation, commitment and passion, and, therefore, effectiveness in the profession. The retention of teacher commitment in the classroom is a key issue in the business of raising standards.

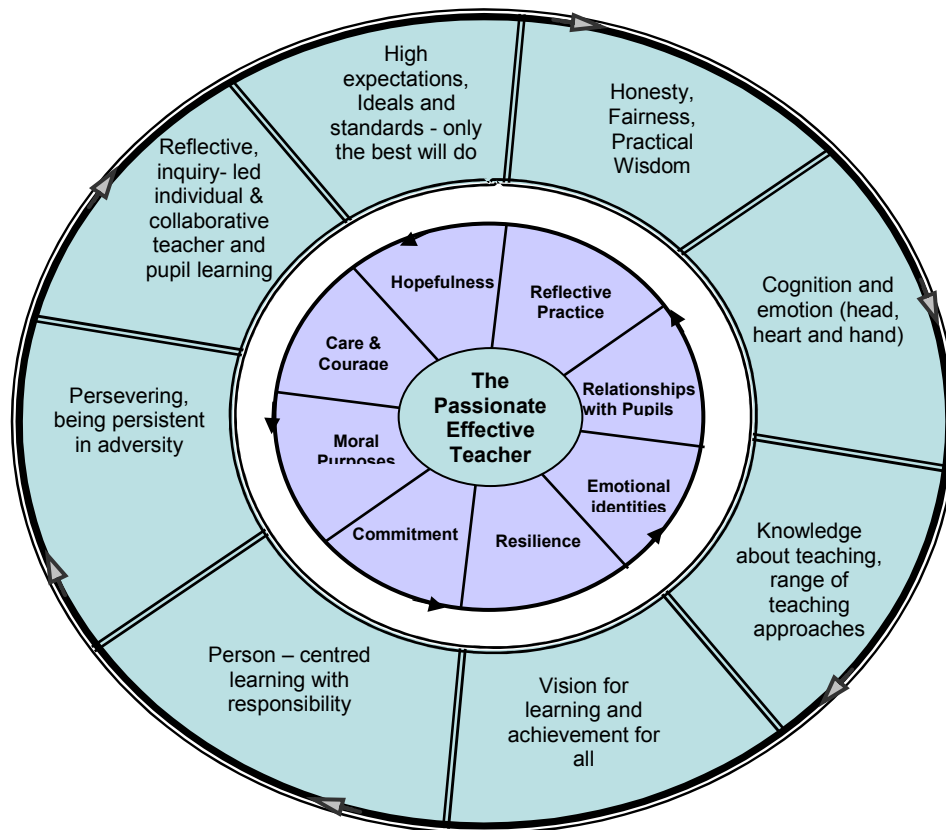
In Figure 4, I bring together the five key elements, inner qualities of passion and effectiveness which I identified at the beginning of this talk; i) reflective practice; ii) relationships with pupils; iii) moral purposes, care and courage; iv) professional emotional identities; and v) commitment and resilience. One characteristic of passionate, resilient teachers who continue to 'bounce back' from negative emotional experiences in response to changing demands in school and classroom is hope, an 'affirmation that despite the heartbreak and trials that we face daily...we can see that our actions can be purposeful and significant' (Sockett, 1993, p. 85). To be resilient is to retain hope, to possess a disposition:

'which results in them being positive about experience or aspects of that experience...the belief that something good, which does not presently apply to one's own life, or the life of others, could still materialise, and so is yearned for as a result'.

(Halpin, 2003, p.15)

The eight elements in the inner ring represent an alternative version of qualities and characteristics necessary to becoming and remaining a passionate and effective teacher. The elements bring together the personal and professional, the ideological and the practical, the mind and the heart to form an holistic agenda for the initial and continuing development of all teachers.

Figure 4: The Passionate Effective Teacher



If teachers’ personal lives and identities interact closely with their professional lives in a symbiotic relationship, as the overwhelming research and anecdotal evidence suggests, if passion as I have defined it in this talk is a necessary condition for commitment, if commitment is associated with effectiveness, and if it can be predicted that almost all teachers will face a time when the well of passion runs dry, then it would seem reasonable for policy makers, associations such as your own, teacher educators, school leaders and teachers themselves to plan to meet this eventuality. Certainly it would be in the interests of ‘standards’ and the well being of staff and, ultimately, pupils.

Passion is fundamental to commitment, resilience and effectiveness. If teachers are to sustain their commitment, resilience and effectiveness - their passion for teaching - they and those responsible for their training, education and leadership must be encouraged to build understandings of the cognitive and emotional contexts in which they work in order to increase their capacities to manage these. It is in everyone’s interest to ensure that the inner values, qualities and purposes which form the

foundation for passion among effective teachers, and which find their expression in the vision, knowledge, expectations and practices which children and young people experience, are developed and nurtured.

Teaching well in these changing times requires more than content knowledge and classroom competencies, more than ‘a sophisticated understanding of, and the capacity to move between, the multiple dimensions and perspectives within education’ (Crosswell, 2006, p. 222). It requires, above everything else, passion. To teach effectively is not easy and to continue to teach effectively is even more difficult to achieve. Yet, if teachers are to meet the demands of today’s standards, and the expectations of today’s and tomorrow’s pupils, parents and politicians, their inner passion for their work and their pupils, their sense of positive emotional identity as professionals must be supported. For teachers to be and continue to be committed, resilient and effective, they need to work in an external environment which is less alienating, less bureaucratically managerial, less reliant on crude measures of performativity – for we know from countless studies that this saps rather than builds morale. They need to work in schools in which leadership is just, supportive, clear, and passionately committed to challenging them to sustain the quality of their commitment. They need a strong and enduring sense of efficacy. They need to believe, and have reason to believe, that they are making a difference. They need, in short, to have a passion for teaching.

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