

Fused Identities: An exploration of primary teachers' geographical identities.

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Teachers working with younger pupils in schools often teach their pupils multiple subjects; therefore, the relationship that the individual teacher has with each subject area is likely to be significant. This paper reports on research which focused on the relationship that a sample of primary teachers working in England, has with geography. The research explored the individuals' unique geographical stories using a phenomenological methodology in order to gain insight into the relationship between the teachers' subject-specific identity and their overall identity as teachers. This paper outlines the research findings which indicate that the teachers surveyed have a fused identity, whereby they consider their subject-specific and generic pedagogy to be complimentary facets and not mutually exclusive.

Keywords: primary geography, phenomenology, teacher identity, experience,

Introduction

In England, the formal learning of geography starts at a young age. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfE, 2017) stipulates that pupils aged 3-5, should be guided 'to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment' (DfE, 2017, p. 8), and a National Curriculum for Geography (DfE, 2013), is taught in all government maintained schools to children aged 5-11. However, whilst geography is taught as a discreet subject in English primary schools, it is one of ten or more subjects that teachers working in this sector usually teach their own class. The large majority of the teachers delivering the primary school curriculum are generalists and often have very little subject-specific pedagogical input as part of their training or even subject knowledge (Catling, 2006, 2015, 2016, 2017). Whilst these challenges cannot be

dismissed, it has been contended that irrespective of the formal education received, everyone including the youngest of children is a geographer (Grosvenor, 2007; Laphorn, 2018), and it is this view that provided a starting point for the research outlined in this paper.

Whilst acknowledging the potential for disagreement between colleagues working within the field of geography education about who is entitled to call themselves a geographer, this research has its origins in an awareness that some teachers working with young children, and who are particularly enthusiastic about and keen to promote geography consider one of their professional identities to be that of a geographer. The research set out to understand the nature of the relationship with geography held by a sample of individual primary teachers, how this relationship manifests itself in these teachers' day-to-day work in the classroom and the influences on this relationship. Additionally, it explores connections between the individuals' teaching of geography and their teaching across the primary curriculum. The research findings are not only of interest to those teaching in primary or elementary schools; there is increasing evidence that suggests teachers at secondary and high school level are having to teach subjects that they were not originally trained to teach or *out of field* (Caldis, 2017). Additionally, it is contended that detailed insight into the relationship that individual practitioners have with this one subject is beneficial in terms of understanding generic teaching practice and will therefore be pertinent for those engaged in the preparation of new teachers to teach all subjects across all age ranges.

Teachers' Subject Identity

Beijaard *et al.* (2000) determined from research conducted with experienced secondary school teachers that teachers' professional identities are the result of the different ways

in which teachers see themselves as didactic, pedagogical and subject experts. The fact that primary teachers often only receive a generalist initial training, with little time spent on individual subjects supports the argument that the different professional and subject identities of primary teachers is an area worthy of investigation (Catling, 2016, 2017; Randall *et al.*, 2016). It is therefore surprising, that to date, little research has been conducted into the relationship that teachers working with students of any age have with different subjects.

When reviewing the existing research exploring teacher subject identity it appears that much of this has been completed within the confines of a limited range of subjects, notably mathematics, science and music. Research conducted within the field of music (Hargreaves & Marshall 2003; Draves 2014) has been extensive, possibly because music is one of the few subjects that is often taught by specialist teachers even in primary schools. The research in this field often focuses on answering the question: to what extent do those who work as music teachers conceive of themselves as being teachers as opposed to being musicians? An early example of work in this area, is that by Hoffer and English (1961) who posit that in general those involved in music education fall into one of two groups; those who believe that generalist teachers cannot and should not teach music and those who believe that the generalist teacher makes a very good music teacher and should be encouraged to teach the subject. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) report on the work that has been done with the aim of increasing the confidence of generalist teachers to teach music. Arguably, the same questions about the degree to which teachers consider themselves generalist teachers rather than subject specialists could be asked of any teacher, teaching in any phase of education, teaching any subject, but particularly of teachers working in primary or elementary schools.

However, these questions cannot be considered without reference to the changing nature of teaching per se. Shulman's work (1987) is central to debates around the subject and pedagogic content knowledge of teachers; Shulman (1987) posed the question 'where did subject matter go?' and asserted that there had been a shift within teaching over recent years. The shift, he argued, is towards a focus on procedure and an emphasis towards how teachers manage classrooms, organise activities, allocate time, and structure work. Debates about the place of subject knowledge in relation to teaching in schools have included a call for a re-emphasis on subject knowledge in the classroom and encouraging the development of what Young (2008) calls 'powerful knowledge'. The result of support for this view and the calls from the wider educational community, is a National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) in England which has a stronger emphasis on subject knowledge, and a set of revised standards for all teachers (DfE, 2012) against which their performance is judged and which highlight the importance of teachers' subject knowledge (Carter, 2015, Munday, 2016).

Working within the field of geography education, Brooks (2007), conducted research with geography teachers in secondary schools, exploring how they used their subject-specific knowledge to resolve the conflicts that exist between how they understand geography at an academic level and the way they prefer to teach it. Brooks (2007) proposes that the ideas put forward by Shulman (1987) are too simplistic and do not fully capture what happens in the classroom. Her proposition is that individual teachers realise that their subject expertise fits synoptically into their broad understanding of how they teach generally, and as a result impacts on their practice and the overall quality of their teaching (Brooks, 2007). This view of how teachers operate in the classroom complements the contention that the influences on the quality of teachers' practice, includes their own perception of their subject, didactical and

pedagogical expertise (Beijaard *et al.*, 2000). Since conducting this research, Brooks has further developed this idea using the analogy of a professional compass (Brooks, 2016) to describe how significant teacher subject expertise is in relation to overall teacher identity.

Within the field of primary geography education, research and analysis by Martin (2008) and Catling and Martin (2011) examined the significance and interplay of primary teachers' knowledge bases for teaching. The research reported in this paper builds on the research of Catling and Martin (2011) with composite descriptions of how participants engage with geography produced from the evidence collected about how the teachers surveyed perceive their own geographical teacher expertise. These descriptions also highlight the degree of importance attributed to pedagogic and subject content knowledge by the individual teachers and how they perceive their work as teachers of geography. What is examined is the identity of each participant focusing on the role that they each inhabit as a primary teacher subject expert, when this expertise is defined in broad terms.

Hargreaves and Marshall (2003) contend that understanding the relationships that individual teachers have with different subjects can explain how these individuals' views of themselves, influences their motivation and possibly performance in teaching the subject. Moreover, Hodgen and Askew contend that 'developing a strong disciplinary bond is central to the teaching of any subject and as such teachers need space to develop both disciplinary intimacy and integrity' (2007, p. 484). This research was intended to bridge the gap identified in existing research into teachers' subject identities by examining the extent to which the teachers recruited to the study exhibited disciplinary intimacy in terms of their relationships to geography.

Methodology

The principal aim of the research was to explore, compare and critically analyse the constructs of geography held by five experienced primary school teachers. This was done by examining their experiences of the subject and considering the following questions: What are these participants' experiences with and of geography? What constructs of geography do these primary teachers hold and what influences these constructs? How do these subject-specific constructs relate to the overall identity of each of these primary teachers?

The research was phenomenologically inspired. Phenomenology involves the uncovering of the essence of a lived experience (Husserl, 1967; Langdrige, 2007) and as a qualitative research method involves working with a small sample in order to explore in depth a chosen phenomenon. In this case, the phenomena being explored was the essence of a positive experience with geography, and therefore, this attribute was part of the selection criteria for the research sample. The research took the form of a multi-layered case study and each of the five participants was an experienced primary teacher who has a positive relationship with geography and describes themselves amongst colleagues in their working environment as a geographer. Four of the sample were currently working in school and had been recognised by an outside agency (Inspector and / or Advisor) as teaching and promoting high quality geography in their school. The final member of the sample was the researcher, who had prior to their current position of working in the teacher education department of a university, been a practising primary teacher and had been recognised for work done to promote geography in schools. Taken together, the sample provides evidence of how a group of teachers with an identified positive connection to geography and an interest in promoting the subject, experience it.

Phenomenological research focuses on depth of experience and *how* individuals experience a phenomenon rather than *what* they experience (Moran, 2000; van Manen, 1990). It is the intentional relationship between the individual and the experience that provides the focus for such studies. The focal point for this investigation was finding out how these individuals live their geography on a day-to-day basis, how it impacts on their general classroom practice and what influences this experience.

Data Collection

The first part of the phenomenological method involves the researcher putting aside their own thoughts about the phenomena being investigated in what is called *epoché* or *bracketing*. This is a much-contested element of the phenomenological process, with, Heidegger (1962), Satre (1989) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggesting that the embodied nature of our very existence in the world means that it is impossible to achieve such a transcendental position. Lichtman (2013), whilst acknowledging these challenges, proposes a practical solution and suggests that researchers adopting the method record their own ideas about a phenomenon. This process forces the researcher to consider their own ideas, assumptions and any default position that they have regarding the experience under investigation. In order to facilitate this, I spent time prior to collecting data from the other participants setting out my thoughts about geography and being a geographer. An extract from these reflections is shown in figure 1.

My core identity has been that of a 'geographer', which I define as someone who has an innate affinity to the subject, which guides what I do sometimes in a less than obvious way but at other times quite overtly. It guides the way I think about things when I am teaching but also when I am learning. (Till, 2018, P. 24)

Figure 1: Extract from researcher's reflections on being a geographer

The next part of the data collection process involved interviewing the participants. Before taking part in the interviews, the participants had provided preliminary background information including their qualifications together with any training that they had received in geography prior to and since starting work in the classroom. The participants were interviewed on four separate occasions during the course of one academic year. I was interviewed four times by a colleague and used these interviews which were scheduled in advance of the other interviews as a pilot for each stage of the interview cycle. The phenomenological method seeks to get below the surface of an individual's experience and reveal the layers of meaning that underpin it (Moustakas, 1994; Smith et al, 2009). The first three interviews were semi-structured and included a number of broad and open-ended questions, which were designed to invite the participants to reflect on and then share their experiences with geography. During the period of data collection, the revised National Curriculum for use in English schools (DfE, 2013) was published and reflections by the participants on the geography strand of this revised curriculum, provided the specific focus for the second round of interviews.

The framework for the final interview was developed from reflecting on each teacher's responses in the previous interviews and included asking them to give further detail about or clarify earlier responses. The respondents were also given the option to keep a journal and reflect on their thoughts about geography as a curriculum subject and their relationship to it as the year unfolded. Three of the participants chose to keep a journal and the evolving thoughts recorded were picked up on in the final round of interviews. Figure 2 contains examples of questions from each of the first three interview schedules.

Interview Schedule 1

Tell me about your own experience of being taught geography?
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What does being a geographer mean to you?
Interview Schedule 2 What are your thoughts about the proposed new geography curriculum? Are there any tensions between the geography teacher that you see yourself as and the teacher that you think this curriculum requires you to be?
Interview Schedule 3 What influences your practice as teacher of geography? How do you see excellence in geography?
Interview 4-example of unique questions asked You imply that because you are a geographer that you look at things differently – that you almost have an inbuilt magnetic pull to the subject – can you explain how not being a geographer might have impacted on your career?

Figure 2: Examples of questions asked during data collection interviews

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

At the end of the data collection period, the data was subjected to a series of what are termed in the phenomenological method: *reductions* (Moustakas, 1994). The first stage of this process involved selecting statements from the data and then methodically stripping away the text until what was left was considered to be the essence of meaning behind each experience. The selection of statements was done by continually reading the data on multiple occasions and identifying and extracting statements which appeared to provide information about the experiences of the participants. In order to try and ensure validity the statement section was peer reviewed. This process of *horizontalization* involves the researcher trying to reveal the textures and structures (Moustakas, 1994) behind the experiences being examined. The *textures* are the different ways in which an experience may outwardly appear e.g. being an active participant in a nationally recognised subject association. The *structures* are the possible reasons for the textures so, for example, wanting to keep up-to-date with subject knowledge and subject initiatives in order to improve their own and others' teaching and students' learning. During this reduction process, the aim is for the researcher to stay focused on the phenomena and ask, what does this statement clarify in terms of the

meaning of the participant’s experience? An example of how this process was applied to the data is presented in Figure 3.

Extract from Original Interview Data	Selected (Refined Statements)	Identified Meaning Units (Horizons)
because of literacy and numeracy and everything, it’s sort of has slipped off the edge really it’s more money than anything – people would be interested – people would be interested I think; if there were courses laid on people would do them. They have got the interest And if you’re not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s sort of has slipped off the edge really • it’s more money than anything • people would be interested I think • They have got the interest • And if you’re not a specialist, the first thing you do is get somebody else to do your bit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for subject because of time pressure • Effect of reforms/lack of money • Geography is of interest to people • Concern for subject if taught by non-specialist

Figure 3: Example of Meaning units (Horizons) recorded against the original data

The next stage of the phenomenological process involves applying what is termed *imaginative variation* whereby a series of questions is applied to the data by the researcher. Ricoeur (1981) compares this process to that which might occur in a court of law and suggests that it provides a way for the researcher to test that they have extracted the structures behind the data. Figure 4 shows an example of the application of this process to the data in this research.

Selected (Refined Statements)	Identified Meaning Units (Horizons)	Imaginative Variation Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Teachers) they don’t make that link • I don’t know where that stems from • It’s something that I push a lot: “and this is geography” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the teacher • The importance of discreet subjects 	<p><i>Would it matter if teachers were not explicit about what is geography?</i></p>

Figure 4: Example of questions asked of the data for the phenomenological process of imaginative variation

The final stage of the phenomenological process involves the *intuitive integration* of the textures and structures extracted from the data into an *amalgamated description* of the experience as a whole. Phenomenological data is usually presented in the form of qualitative descriptions, which are designed to encapsulate the meaning attributed to the experience; these descriptions are written using the textures and structures extracted through the reduction process as a framework. This research resulted in the writing of a number of different descriptions of the experiences revealed. Pseudonyms were used in these descriptions and the first of these were detailed portraits for each of the participants. Each of these individual descriptions serves to provide a chronicle of the individual teachers' relationship with geography. An extract from one of these written portraits is presented in figure 5.

Personal passion and interest in geography are recurrent themes in Hilary's description of her relationship with geography. This relationship is both practical and emotional and she declares, "I really love geography" and talks about "people who have geography in their heart". She connects her interest in geography with her own character traits referring to how she likes finding out about people and visiting places. Hilary has a clearly articulated subject identity. She considers herself to be a geographer and believes the subject permeates much of what she does in the classroom. (Till, 2018, P.121)

Figure 5: Extract from one of the individual teacher descriptions

The second set of descriptions evolved from considering the individual portraits of experience and extracting from these, features shared by the participants. The following shared themes emerged from the data:

- A fusion of personal and professional life
- Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about teacher expertise and knowledge

- A personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject including views on primary geography subject pedagogy

Extracts from each of these three thematic descriptions are presented in figure 6:

<p>Extract from description of theme 1- A fusion of personal and professional life</p> <p><i>The participants make specific reference to having a geography subject-identity. They suggest that this is inextricably linked to their general identity. “It’s almost impossible for me to detach myself from the subject”. Each of the teachers when asked if they considered themselves to be geographers is comfortable with being described this way. There is also a sense that geography has had a utilitarian function for these individuals, providing a professional niche, an area of expertise or even a confidence boost. (Till, 2018, P.147)</i></p>
<p>Extract from description of theme 2- Clearly articulated views on primary school pedagogy – including views about expertise, knowledge and the role of the teacher</p> <p><i>These primary teachers communicate confidence when discussing their own primary pedagogy. They talk about children learning from experience and needing a variety of stimuli to engage them in learning. They contend that geography can provide a starting point and a vehicle for learning about other curriculum subjects: reference is made to teaching core and foundation subjects through geography. (Till, 2018, P.148)</i></p>
<p>Extract from description of theme 3- Personal belief in and commitment to geography as a school subject with views on primary geography subject-pedagogy</p> <p><i>Each of these primary teachers exudes confidence when talking about geography. Each of them is clear about their own understanding and perception of the subject and what they see as the purpose of geography. They talk about geography being a broad and holistic subject that involves learning about people and places and how they interact. They are unambiguous about the importance of each of the different strands of geography, citing physical, human and environmental geography. (Till, 2018, P.149)</i></p>

Figure 6: Extracts from descriptions of experiences shared by the participants

The final set of descriptions were compiled from integrating the shared elements of experience in to one *composite description* of the lived experience of geography shared by this sample of primary teachers. An extract from this composite description is presented in figure 7.

<p><i>The participants take the view that to be taught well, primary geography must be based on experiences; this view complements and cements their view that good primary teaching</i></p>
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is based on age-appropriate experiences for children, which both enthuse and motivate. As primary teachers, they do not view learning as being about merely transmitting information to children who are passive recipients. Rather, they view learning as a two-way process whereby the teacher is required to use the curriculum prescribed as a starting point from which to craft learning experiences, which are both relevant and interesting. These teachers see geography as a perfect conduit for their generic pedagogical beliefs about primary teaching. (Till, 2018, P.151)

Figure 7: Extract from the composite description of experience; a fusion between subject-specific and generic pedagogy

In addition to these different descriptions of experience, a creative approach to presenting the findings was employed in order to illustrate the way in which phenomenological research is intended to invite the reader into sharing the experience described (van Manen, 2014). Using raw data from the interview transcripts, a playscript was written with the aim of providing the reader with an opportunity to further connect with the *essence of meaning* identified. Whilst the piece, written as a playscript, is a fictional representation of what it is imagined might happen should these participant teachers be placed together in a room and asked to talk about the topics discussed during the research process, the dialogue was constructed using actual statements and words spoken by the participants during the interviews. A small number of words were inserted into the dialogue by the researcher with the aim of maintaining the flow of the conversation. These are often words which give clarity because the statements are taken directly from the original interviews. Considerable care was taken not to alter the meaning inferred by the participant's original statements or the context in which the words were spoken. An extract from the playscript is presented in figure 8.

ACT 3

The school caretaker comes in and looking at Millie points at his watch. She mouths back that she is almost done and will lock up.

Scene 1 A fused identity

Tabitha: *(Walking over to the chair where her coat is and picking it up and bringing it back to where there are sitting resting the coat on her knee and starting to talk as she walks back to the table) I've always introduced myself as a geographer ... it's quite a defining thing for me ... I've never known any different (pauses) ... I can't imagine my teaching career, my professional career without geography at the core ... (pauses) it's almost impossible for me to detach myself from the subject ... it's so... (looks perplexed for a few seconds before finishing her sentence) envelops my professional identity.*

Wendy: *(Addressing the group) I started with being a subject leader, and the result of that was to lead CPD. The impact that's had has been on my whole professional development and moving into leadership, so without geography (pauses) I wouldn't be where I am. That's the most important part of geography. It's that bit ... (pauses) that develops you as a person. It makes our learners learn who they are – gives them a sense of identity.*

Hilary: *(Smiling as she talks) I've always taught it because I've enjoyed teaching it. I was appointed by the head, who knew me, knew geography would be my (emphasised) thing. I think I've always been interested in the subject. So it's personal, and professional and really it sort of ties in. I seem to have always been the subject coordinator.*

Millie: *Interestingly (looking at Hilary), whilst obviously, I met other criteria, I was appointed because I was a geographer. I just was fascinated with geography, you know, (starts playing with the blu-tac again) and at the university I applied to were looking at oil spillages, and that aspect of things. I found it really fascinating and understanding why things are happening today. The reason I took geography is because I have an interest and a passion in it. I like the landscape, and I like talking about it. (Till, 2018, P.164)*

Figure 8: Extract from the playscript entitled 'Being a Geographer' created from raw data collected through interviews with research participants:

The research findings and their significance and implications for Geography Educators

Evidence from this research suggests that the teachers surveyed used their positive relationship with geography to make practical pedagogical links to other curriculum areas and build their confidence when teaching other subjects. The composite description of the experience outlines what was identified and labelled as a *fused identity*, whereby the participants' individual subject-identities as geographers complements and synthesises with their generic identity as teachers. A visual representation of this model is presented in figure 9.

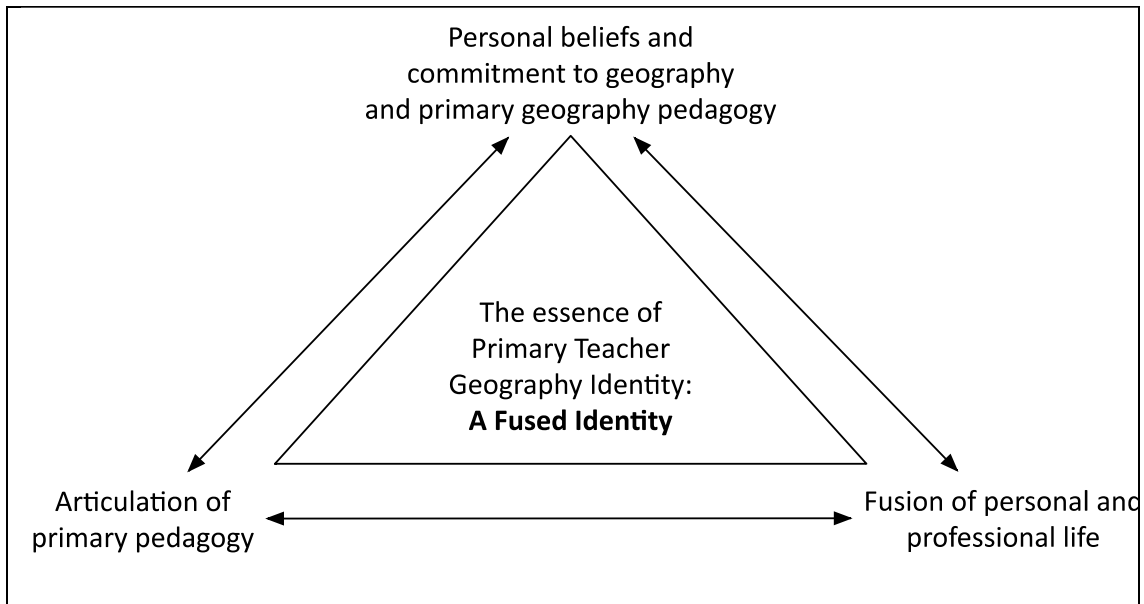


Figure 9: The essence of primary geography teacher identity: a fused identity

It was revealed in the research that geography is important to each of the participants and is also a prominent feature of their personal lives. One of the teachers talks about how in recent years the holiday destinations that she has chosen, have been influenced by the geography she has been teaching in school. She has consciously chosen to travel to some of the places that she is teaching about in order to supplement and build on her knowledge of these places. Another participant describes how she is always conscious of using her innate geographical skills to assist with orientation when she arrives at a new destination. Some of the links that the participants make between their identities as geographers and their everyday lives are more emotional, with reference to the appreciation that one participant has for what she terms as the “awe and wonder” of the world in which we live because of her knowledge of and interest in geography as a curriculum subject. This teacher goes on to express her desire to share this appreciation with the children that she teaches.

The focus for researchers using phenomenology is on lived experience and there is evidence from this study that the individuals surveyed *live* their geography. It is not confined to a one or even two-dimensional construct which sits outside of their

embodied position in the world. They do not ascribe themselves the label of *geographer* because of having great quantities of geographical knowledge, although some of them had completed single subject bachelor's degrees in geography and supplemented their knowledge by attending geography-specific training courses since acquiring these qualifications. Rather, they perceive of themselves as geographers because they are purveyors of the importance and significance of geography as a school subject for even very young children, and because they contend that the subject forms part of both their own and the everyday lives of the students they teach. There is evidence that the primary teachers surveyed here use their subject identity as a professional compass (Brooks, 2016), whereby they use their disciplinary knowledge and enthusiasm to anchor and help them navigate their journey as teachers. This is in addition to their identity as primary teachers, which also helps them navigate their journey as educators working in school or other educational settings. The two aspects of their identity combine together to provide direction for their teaching and helps them to see opportunities for teaching geography in different contexts.

For some of the participants, geography is rooted in their childhoods and contact with significant individuals such as relatives and teachers has ensured that they have had numerous and varied formal and informal geographical experiences. They talk about playing out in the woods as children and learning to navigate by the stars as well as being inspired and incentivized by family members' stories of travel and exploration. Other participants were latecomers to geography and even admit to being put off the subject in their own schooling. These converts to the subject, talk of listening to inspirational colleagues whilst on training courses and then using the subject to give meaning to their everyday work in the classroom. They also describe their lives before coming to the classroom as teachers and are eager to stress how despite some negative

experiences in school, geography has always been a discipline that they are personally interested in, particularly through a desire to embrace the outdoors and find opportunities for themselves and their families to connect with the surrounding environment. They appear to validate the claim that everyone is a geographer (Grosvenor, 2007; Laphorn, 2018).

In some cases, geography has provided both confidence and a much-needed niche where perhaps they find it challenging to connect with and be enthused by the rest of the curriculum they deliver on a daily basis. There is though, unfortunately, a suggestion that the pursuit of their interest in geography has on some occasions resulted in them being overlooked for promotion because the subject is not taken seriously enough by school management teams. This is an example of individual teacher's experience of geography in relation to other areas of practice that it would be useful to investigate further with a wider sample and with teachers who are responsible for teaching different age ranges in different settings. Do committed geography educators have the same management opportunities as colleagues who are teaching core subjects such as mathematics or do they have to switch to core subject leadership to have management opportunities?

For the participants in this research, like many teachers working with young children across the globe, geography is just one of many subjects that they teach across a week. There was evidence from all the teachers surveyed that they actively used features of their subject identity to enhance their teaching of other subjects. For example, each of the teachers surveyed, placed value in giving children as many opportunities to go outside and engage in fieldwork, particularly in their immediate local environment. This use of the outdoors was subsequently employed as a starting point for work in other areas such as mathematics, art and English. In one example the

study of rivers was used to introduce young children to journalistic writing with the study of flood reports and subsequently the children's own writing about similar events. Mathematical concepts such as decimals and fractions, which the teacher reported the children often find challenging to grasp, were taught using river measurements as a real-life context and these were seen to improve children's grasp of a range of different subject-specific concepts. These deliberate attempts to make links and connections between subjects were not however, seen as replacing the discreet teaching of geography. Rather they were seen as additions and a useful way to gain more time for geography in an overcrowded and increasingly externally prescribed curriculum. There was no tension between the teacher's geographical identity and generic primary teacher identity, they were instead found to be complementary.

Conclusions

The research reported on in this paper explored how a sample of primary school teachers construct their geographical subject identity and draws attention to the lived experience of teachers. Each of the participants like fellow educators across the globe, has multiple professional identities and roles. The teachers surveyed demonstrated enthusiasm and passion for one subject area and describe doing more than delivering the subject: they lived the experience of teaching geography. Although they bring their geography to the other subjects that they teach and the boundaries between the subjects are flexible, the lived experience of geography uncovered appears different to their practice in other subject areas. There is a sense that, geography really matters to these individuals and that these teachers have a special relationship with the subject. It is manifested by excitement and enthusiasm and is used to complement and supplement their teaching across the curriculum.

The concept of a fused identity was identified from working with individual teachers who were all deemed to have a passion for the subject. Notwithstanding the limitation that not every primary teacher will show the same enthusiasm for every subject, the notion of a fused identity indicates that having a passion and enthusiasm in teaching can be harnessed to enhance teaching in other curriculum areas. What is significant is that understanding these connections, the different identities that individuals have and how they influence overall teacher identity may provide a way to enhance a teacher's practice more generally. Although it will not address some of the issues that Catling (2017) highlights in terms of the amount of preparation that new primary teachers are given for teaching geography, this research provides evidence for the geography education community in the UK and further afield to reflect on when considering these challenges.

Each of the teachers who took part in this research had more than ten years' experience in teaching. None of them was new to the profession and therefore it can be argued that they were established in terms of both their practical pedagogy but also their emotional confidence in the classroom. The discussions that ensued immediately following the publication of the new curriculum for use in English primary schools (DfE, 2013) demonstrated these individuals' confidence in and belief in their own perception of geography. They made it clear that they did not completely agree with some of the new curriculum proposals but were unphased by this, instead suggesting that they would fit what they know works and what the children need to the new proposals. It would be interesting to compare these findings with those of teachers working in other parts of the world where new curricula have been introduced, and also to examine the experience of novice or early-career teachers. What is the actual experience of teaching geography for those enthusiastic and knowledgeable graduates

as they leave their training and enter the profession? Do they use their geography to anchor their teaching as Brooks (2016) suggests?

It would also be worth reflecting on any differences in the experience of those teaching at primary or elementary and secondary or high school and even at university level. How do these individuals use their own personal interests and experiences to complement or enhance what they are teaching on a day-to-day basis, indeed do they? What about those teaching out of field (Caldis, 2016)? Are teachers who are required to teach out-of-field able to use their subject identities to help with the teaching of those subjects they have less of a background in and are less confident in?

This research specifically looks at primary teachers' subject identity using geography as a focus and was based on a belief that teaching is a living act. Rather than focusing on how the teachers taught geography lessons, this research examined how they experienced and lived the subject. This uncovered shared characteristics of determination, confidence and belief in and/or passion for a subject. The teachers' strong subject identities were not separate from their general primary teacher identity but were fused and used as a basis for teaching other curriculum subjects. The findings indicate that the relationships that primary teachers have with the different subjects that they teach are variables that need to be considered when evaluating what it is teachers do in the classroom, how they might best prepare for and subsequently develop this role.

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