



Schools Under Pressure:

Stress, coping and well-being among teachers,
pupils and headteachers.

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Abstract

Stress among diverse members of school communities has received differing levels of attention and research activity. Whilst teaching has been studied extensively and is consistently recognised as one of the top three most stressful occupations, stress among headteachers and pupils has received less attention from researchers. This submission includes a critical review of the current state of knowledge and research in respect of stress, coping and well-being in schools (considering headteachers, teachers and pupils) and the significant original contributions to the growth and development of knowledge in this field made by a book, four chapters and four journal articles.

The corpus of the selected works is embedded in extensive research and project work spanning more than twenty years, carried out with over 3200 adults and pupils drawn from over 200 primary, secondary and special schools in the UK. As the work was oriented toward solving practical problems in the “real world”

(Feilzer, 2010, p8), a pragmatic stance was a primary consideration for each of the projects. Research designs adopted were varied, including methods drawn from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

A dual process transactional model of stress and coping is presented as the underlying framework for the studies. Results indicated that, despite the differences in the role and status of the varied populations investigated and the contrasting environments in which they operate, some consistencies were found in terms of levels of stress resulting from the impact of; organisational factors; interpersonal relationships; communication inconsistencies and daily hassles on coping and well-being. These findings informed key elements of the behaviour management training programme on the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses at the University of Cambridge, recognised as “excellent” and “highly distinctive” by Ofsted (e.g. 2008, 2011), and have been incorporated into the Teacher Training Agency guidelines for behaviour management training for all teachers (TTA, 2012).

Declaration

This work has not been submitted previously in support of any degree, qualification or course.

Signed:
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Date:

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VOLUME 1

Item 1: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (2016). Stress, coping and teacher well-being. In R. Chaplain, *Teaching without disruption in the primary school: A practical approach to managing pupil behaviour* (2nd ed., pp.30-52). London: Routledge.

Item 2: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (1995). Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 15(4), 473-489.

Item 3: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 28(2), 195-209.

Item 4: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (2001). Stress and job satisfaction among primary headteachers: A question of balance? *Educational Management & Administration*, 29(2), 197-215.

Item 5: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (1995). Leading under pressure: Headteacher stress and coping. In D. Hustler, T. Brighouse, & J. Rudduck (Eds.), *Heeding heads: Secondary heads and educational commentators in dialogue* (pp. 222-232). London: David Fulton Publishers.

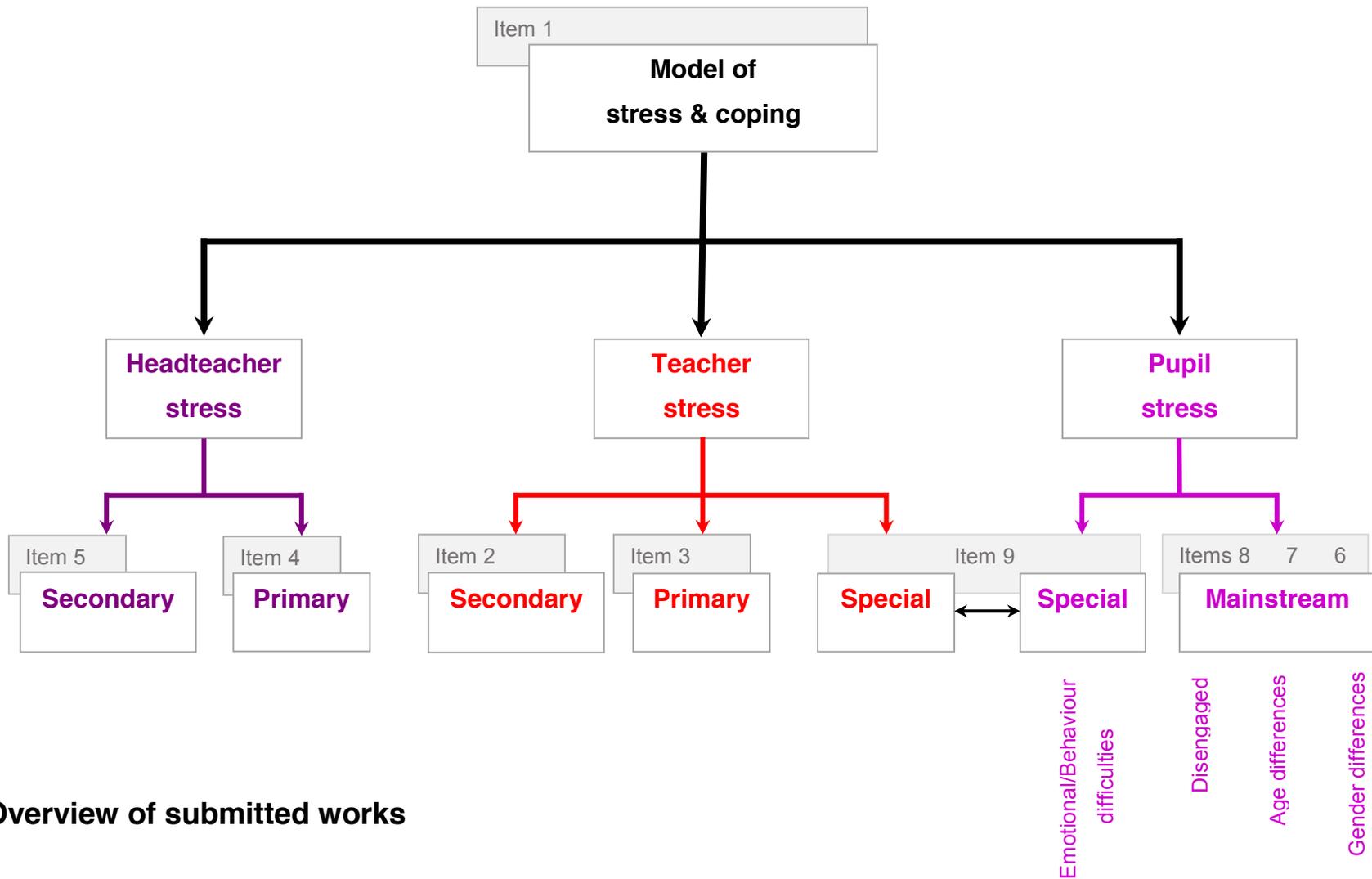
Item 6: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (2000). Beyond exam results? Differences in the social and psychological perceptions of young males and females at school. *Educational Studies*, 26(2), 177-190.

Item 7: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (1996). Pupils under pressure: Coping with stress at school. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp. 118-132). David Fulton Publishers.

Item 8: **CHAPLAIN, R.** (1996). Making a strategic withdrawal: Disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp.101-115). London: David Fulton Publishers.

VOLUME 2

Item 9: **CHAPLAIN, R., & Freeman, A.** (1994). *Caring under pressure*. London: David Fulton Publishers. (166 pages).



Overview of submitted works

Supporting paper

Introduction

This document represents part of my submission for the award of PhD by Published Work. The context of this thesis is timely, as stress, mental health and well-being are currently at the forefront of health and education debates (e.g. Prime Minister's Office, 2017; NHS, 2015, 2016, 2017). Here, I reflect on the current state of knowledge and research in respect of stress, coping and well-being in school communities, and the contributions made to the field by my own work in the form of a book, four chapters and four journal articles (see Appendix 1). The corpus of the selected published work, embedded in extensive rigorous research and project work spanning more than twenty years, has made original contributions to knowledge in respect of school staff and pupil stress, coping and well-being. The submitted works, which draw on a range of both established and innovative research methodologies from positivist, interpretative and mixed methods approaches, have generated academic discussion and are cited widely in the academic literature, as detailed in the summaries of each item (Appendix 2).

A secondary output of my research is the integration of the findings into my professional development work, supporting frontline teaching and learning in schools. The submitted materials and my wider research in this field, have fed directly into the programmes of school development and teacher development on PGCE and in-service courses at the University of Cambridge. The Cambridge PGCE is listed as the top teacher training provider in England in the latest Good

Teacher Training Guide (2017) and is ranked as the “pre-eminent individual provider” topping both Primary and Secondary tables. My behaviour management training and teacher support programmes are listed as “unique selling points” of the courses and have been consistently recognised as “excellent” and “highly distinctive” by Ofsted (e.g. 2008, 2011).

Furthermore, my work has directly impacted government policy in respect of teacher training and development in England and Wales, as a basis for Improving Teacher Training for behaviour management (TTA, 2012).

Here I offer a brief summary of main claims as to the original contributions of my work to knowledge by:

- the development of a model of teacher stress and coping and an associated professional development tool;
- the development of methodology and methods to investigate stress and coping;
- addressing significant gaps in knowledge of stress and coping among practitioners and pupils in mainstream and special schools;
- understanding the role of autonomy, control and personal agency in coping and well-being;
- highlighting the impact of policy and legislation on coping and well-being among staff and pupils in mainstream and special schools.

This information is expanded upon in each of the summaries of the submitted

works in Appendix 2.

A note on my research methodology

This section will outline the approach taken in my research, providing a rationale for this position, and a brief description of selected works to exemplify the range of methods used. For a more in-depth description of individual submitted works, please see the summaries in Appendix 2 and/or the submitted items in Appendix 3.

The substantive paradigm for my work is pragmatism. It is concerned with addressing real world issues (Feilzer, 2010), the overall aim being to improve teaching and learning; personal development of teachers, headteachers and pupils; and whole school development. Pragmatism emphasises the need to adopt the most appropriate research methodologies to address particular research questions. This freedom of methodological choices enables decisions to be made based on the goodness-of-fit between the method and a particular research question. As an approach to knowledge construction, it recognises the existence and importance of the natural and physical world, while also having a high regard for the reality of perceptions, experiences and actions of individuals (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

I have not limited myself to purely quantitative nor qualitative approaches, rather drawing from both separately, as well as in different combinations, to seek

authentic answers to my research questions. To facilitate this authenticity, my cross-sectional, repeated measures and longitudinal research designs have included questionnaires, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and focus group data collection methods. This methodological framework has guided my thinking in the nine items of submitted work that I discuss below.

My initial interest in stress, coping and well-being among pupils and teachers came through my experience as a practitioner working among staff and pupils in residential special schools (Item 9). My participant and nonparticipant observations and interviews of pupils, parents, teachers and other professionals, alongside interrogating secondary data, led to me wanting to conduct a closer, more rigorous examination of the experiences of children and young people in residential accommodation. I was interested in how and why pupils ended up in residential education, including why their behaviour could not be managed in mainstream and day special schools and units. These young people represented the most challenging pupils, most being excluded from mainstream and referral units for their 'antisocial' behaviour. On the one hand, I was interested in how, often having suffered multiple traumas in their lives and disrupted education, they coped with: restricted freedom and autonomy; access to their established social support networks and a lack of control over important life events. On the other, I was interested in the effects on the mental health of staff coping with the pressures of managing the behaviour of challenging pupils considered by many as out of control, operating in a total institution (Goffman, 1957). The results of this work are detailed in Item 9.

From this study, I went *up* a level, to consider mainstream schools, examining teachers' perceptions of working with pupils who have special needs (Item 3) since it was usually referral from these teachers, supported by their managers, that initiated the process of transfer from mainstream to special provision. From here, I looked at both teachers' and pupils' views and understandings of each other's behaviour and motivation. Of particular interest were pupils on the tipping point of moving from the least to most restrictive environments. I therefore shifted my focus to disengaged and disaffected pupils, since this was a common feature of many of the pupils I had encountered in residential education. I concluded that various personal, interpersonal and organisational factors, linked to behaviour management, lay at the heart of understanding why relationships, teaching and learning were undermined. Given all the above operate within an organisation, I considered how those with overall responsibility for the well-being of staff and pupils coped with these pressures. Within each study, comparisons were made between variables such as gender, age, experience, context and developmental level. The submitted works are connected in various ways, reflecting how these different members of diverse school communities coped personally and interpersonally and how organisational factors impacted on the daily lives of all those involved. A secondary output from my work has been application of my research to teaching - my professional work has focused on how to develop effective behaviour management programmes for teachers, as behaviour management training for teachers is generally poor (TTA, 2012).

When I began my research journey, mixed methods research was not recognised in the way that it is now and I have witnessed its gradual acceptance as a third research paradigm (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It was only as recently as 2005, that the American Educational Research Association formed a special interest group on Mixed Methods Research and in 2007, that the Journal of Mixed Methods was introduced. I adopted a mixed method approach for many of my studies, because of my belief in the merits of using both quantitative and qualitative methods to generate authentic data. As Creswell (2003) pointed out, the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (p.4).

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) presented a typology of research designs including standard notations for mixed methods research. For clarity, I have used their notations to describe the designs used in my research. The terms *qual* and *quan* are used to symbolise qualitative and quantitative research. Upper case (e.g. *QUAN*) indicates which aspect of the design is dominant and in lower case (e.g. *quan*) which aspect is less dominant. A plus sign (+) indicates a project carried out in parallel and an arrow (→), a project carried out sequentially. My research designs include various combinations of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and methods, three examples of which (taken from my submitted works) follow:

practice on the mental health and well-being of school communities. For example, most of the multi-agency institutions described in Item 9 were closed around 10 years ago, as they were considered not fit for purpose. However, in 2016, the Ministry of Justice announced proposals to introduce new 'secure schools' - descriptions of which is almost identical to those that were closed. A second issue, the lack of behaviour management training for teachers (TTA, 2012) - a primary cause of stress for staff and pupils in schools – continues to be sidestepped, despite the Government appointments of three successive behaviour specialists since 2005 charged with addressing this issue.

In order to illustrate how my work is linked to the existing knowledge, the following section elaborates on the stress, coping and well-being literature, alongside my own work.

Understanding stress, coping and well-being in school communities.

This section is divided into four sub-sections. Each sub-section includes reference to the literature on stress, coping and well-being among staff and/or pupils in different types of school and how my work links to the development of knowledge in those areas. In section 1, I discuss conceptual and theoretical frameworks and the relationships between them (linking directly to Item 1). The focus in section 2 moves to the experiences of teachers, both trainee and experienced (linking directly to Items 2 & 3). Section 3 looks at headteachers

(linking directly to Items 4 & 5). Finally, section 4, examines pupils' experiences, both mainstream pupils (linking directly to Items 6, 7 and 8) and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties in residential special schools (linking directly to Item 9).

1 Conceptual framework

In the following section, I will define and contextualise my usage of the terms stress, coping and well-being and illustrate how my submitted work relates to current understandings.

According to Hobfoll:

No concept in modern psychological, sociological or psychiatric literature is more extensively studied than stress. The sheer amount of scientific literature is so extensive that it is no longer possible to conduct a comprehensive review. (2004: 1)

Consequently, given that it has attracted the interest of many different disciplines, finding a universally accepted definition of stress is problematic. I define psychosocial stress in the following way:

Stress is a negative feeling state which has both psychological and physical components. It is experienced as an assault on 'self'. Stress is not consistent between individuals, nor stable over time. (Item 1)

The 'self' includes personal, professional and social elements which can be affected individually or can interact. For instance, personal goals that are shared with others, despite often being seen as positive, can result in stress and additional demands on coping, if disrupted (Millar et al., 1988). Teachers in Item 2 said that they gained most job satisfaction from their perceived performance as a teacher. However, the shared goal of learning with a class could be undermined by the teacher having to control the behaviour of disruptive pupils.

Research into psychological stress has produced numerous models which attempt to explain the process, among which Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory (1984) is probably the most influential. It places cognitive appraisal or self-evaluation as the key concept to understanding differences in how individuals cope with stress. The transactional approach has had a significant influence on my thinking because of its emphasis on the relationship between stressor, response and outcome and the dynamic nature of stress.

Like stress, coping has also received substantial attention, with almost one million articles produced between 1988 and 2014 alone (Frydenberg, 2014), resulting in a range of definitions. Coping includes behavioural, cognitive, and/or emotional reactions in response (reactive) to or in anticipation of (proactive), a perceived stressor (Dubow & Rubinlicht, 2011).

Similarly difficult to define, is well-being. The well-being of the young and old has become a topic of interest among politicians and the media, yet research on well-

being is a relatively recent phenomenon (e.g. Seligman, 2011). Thomas (2009) concluded that well-being “is intangible, difficult to define and even harder to measure” (p. 11) nevertheless, coping strategies have been shown to play a decisive role in well-being (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderón, 2013). Descriptions of psychological well-being include: coping with stress; self-efficacy, self-esteem; emotion regulation; positive relationships with others; adapting to change; satisfaction with specific life domains; living and working productively; feeling competent; happy; and having an internal locus of control in respect of important elements of your life (Quevedo & Abella, 2014). These (and other) elements related to control, autonomy and self-efficacy feature throughout my studies as indicators of levels of well-being among staff and pupils in schools. For example: in Item 3 the well-being of trainee teachers after their final practicum was particularly low - as measured by the General Health Questionnaire. Trainees reported feeling unsupported, having negative relationships with mentors and other teachers, and self-doubt which they attributed to their school placement. In Item 8, the self-concept and self-esteem scores of the disengaged boys were significantly lower, and stress scores higher, than the engaged boys. Many of the open comments suggested they believed they lacked autonomy and control over important events suggesting that their subjective well-being was also low compared with engaged boys.

Effective coping makes a positive contribution to well-being and *vice versa*. People cope, but do so differently even in the same context - some more effectively than others; and individuals cope more effectively on some occasions

than others when faced with the same stressor. The ability to adapt and improvise to overcome stressors is preferred to over reliance on a limited set of coping responses (Item 1).

According to Grant et al. (2003) stressors are: “Environmental events or chronic conditions that objectively threaten the physical and/or psychological health or well-being of individuals of a particular age in a particular society” (p. 450). Whilst I support this definition, I would add *perceived* events, since a stressor can be generated in worrying about an upcoming event which may, or may not, take place. It can also result from ruminating about a negative event that did occur which can create high levels of anxiety, undermining self-efficacy, coping ability and creating self-doubt. Several examples of both are evident in my submitted works. Trainee teachers (Item 3) reflecting on their lessons always feeling they were not good enough which led to them questioning their professional competence. It is also important to differentiate between those stressors over which an individual believes they have no control and those they believe they have. Stress resulting from uncontrollable events results in a focus on regulating emotions. Some events are so threatening and devastating that pretending everything is OK is the only way to cope - at least in the short term. In contrast, an individual can engage in problem solving with events that they can control. Therefore, different types of stressor require different ways of coping. The correct balance of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies has the potential to buffer the impact of stress on well-being (Item 1).

Three types of stressor have been identified: cataclysmic, life events and daily hassles (Antonovsky;1979) or what McNamara (2000) called non-normative, normative and daily hassles. Whilst everybody is exposed to life events (e.g. death of someone close) and some to cataclysmic events (e.g. terrorist attack) individuals have little or no control over either. In contrast, all members of a school community are exposed to regular minor stressors or daily hassles (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which Kanner et al. defined as:

the irritating, frustrating, distressing demands that to some degree characterize everyday transactions with the environment. (1981: 3)

More recently O'Connor et al. highlighted how daily hassles can make it difficult for an individual to achieve personal goals:

Hassles are events, thoughts or situations which, when they occur produce negative feelings such as annoyance, irritation, worry or frustration, and/or make you aware that your goals and plans will be more difficult or impossible to achieve. (2008: S20)

Daily hassles can be balanced by daily uplifts or positive experiences which affects an individual's subjective sense of well-being.

One important contribution of my work is highlighting the impact of daily hassles on staff and pupils' stress and coping. For teachers, daily hassles included persistent low-level disruptive pupil behaviour, such as talking out of turn (e.g. Item 1). For some headteachers it included time wasted getting bureaucrats in

local authorities to authorise minor purchases (e.g. Item 5). For pupils, daily hassles included being picked on by peers and teachers and the negative impact on established social relationships from having to change groups for different subjects (e.g. Items 6 and 7). However, the same everyday event could be viewed as either hassle and or uplift by different pupils. Having to wait in line for dinner was an irritant for some pupils but for others it was a time to have fun “we all sit round in a circle trying each others’ shoes on . . . it’s right good” (Item 7). Which prevails (irritation or fun) depends on individual subjective interpretation and individual goals.

Understanding stress requires considering the subjective significance of the event (e.g. Horowitz et al., 1979), considering individual differences in coping skills and resources (Andrews et al., 1978) and the context (Chaplain, 2016). Whilst much research has focused on the effects on individuals of major life events (e.g. parents divorcing), the cumulative effect of minor everyday hassles can be underestimated. McLean suggests why this may be the case:

the unit of stress (daily hassle) is relatively small and the stressors so familiar, these kinds of stressors have been taken for granted and considered to be less important than more dramatic stressors. Clinical and research data indicate that these . . . can be potent sources of stress. (1976: 298)

Sandler et al., (1997) found that daily hassles were better predictors of adjustment problems than life events for adolescents and can have a significant

detrimental impact on their mental health. As Carter, Garber, Ciesla, and Cole concurred:

hassles alone also have an important relation to psychopathology in adolescents, particularly hassles occurring within the school environment, which is an especially salient context for children's development. (2006: 437)

In item 1, I present details of an interactive model of teacher coping which is based on the premise that: coping occurs at two levels; and personal, interpersonal, situational and organisational factors covary to produce adaptive coping (reduce stress) and maladaptive coping (increase stress). It is a dual-process model, various forms of which exist in psychology (e.g. Sherman, Gawronski & Trope, 2014). I argue that not all coping is the result of deliberate conscious appraisal or a volitional activity - some is carried out automatically or unconsciously (Bargh, 2013). Competent skilled individuals are often regarded as such because of their ability to cope with or solve problems, or carry out daily tasks (e.g. managing a class) calmly and with seemingly minimal effort or attention i.e. 'automatically'. The competent teacher has a large repertoire of automatic strategies which reduces demands on valuable cognitive resources needed to cope with novel situations or persist with difficult stressors. Classroom routines, triggered by simple nonverbal signals are examples of *structural* automatic coping strategies. These routines are not cognitively challenging but where not established in classrooms, are associated with disrupted lessons (Evertson et al., 2003). Where they are effective, they can help inoculate both

teacher and pupils against stress. They are developed through overlearning, a process wherein newly acquired skills are practiced beyond the point of initial mastery which leads to them being carried out automatically. Other examples are overlearning professional social skills such as scanning (Chaplain, 2016). I have used the above model in my professional development work to improve teachers' resilience by advancing their classroom management knowledge and competence, using skills-based problem focused training and coaching and support.

Having discussed the key concepts in general terms I now focus on stress, coping and well-being for individual groups: teachers; headteachers and pupils.

2 Teacher stress, coping and well-being

According to the Health and Safety Executive's comparative study across professions teaching is the *most* stressful (Smith et al., 2000), a claim echoed by the NUT (2000). A recent survey of 4500 teachers reported that teacher stress continues to be a problem, with 98% feeling increasingly stressed and around three quarters saying that teaching was having a serious effect on their physical and mental health and almost half planning to leave teaching within five years (Lightfoot, 2016). Nevertheless, Kyriacou (2011) found that, despite teaching being recognised as a high-stress occupation, teachers are reportedly healthier than other professional groups. I have also pointed out that teachers and headteachers who were stressed could still have high levels of job satisfaction -

which prevailed depended on the nature of the stressor and specific facet of job satisfaction (Items 2 and 4).

One of the most frequently reported and independently predictive of teacher stress, is pupils' disruptive behaviour. There is extensive consistent evidence collected over a long period of time highlighting the relationship between managing pupil behaviour, discipline problems and high levels of stress and distress for both trainee and qualified teachers (for example, Barrett & Davis, 1995; Berg & Cornell, 2016; Brock & Grady, 1998; Chaplain, 1995, 2008; Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Hart, 1987; Head, Hill & McGuire, 1996; Zeidner, 1988).

Three other stressors commonly reported by teachers are: workload; change and lack of support, but these are stressors frequently reported in studies of occupational stress in other professions. Stress resulting from excessive workload is reported by: nurses (Weigl et al., 2016); social workers (Blomberg et al., 2015); and GPs (Doran et al., 2016). In fact, most workers are increasingly confronted with stress from heavier workloads due to living in a "getting more from less" era (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2009). Some researchers have argued that multiple facets of stress working synergistically are more powerful than single factors. For example, stress resulting from pupils' disruptive behaviour is not just an interpersonal issue it is also related to administrative workload. As MacBeath and Galton argued pupil misbehaviour results in:

. . . increased workload, because someone has to supervise detentions and

periods of isolation during lunchtime and morning breaks. Furthermore, forms then need to be completed so that the decision to implement such sanctions could be justified to senior management, who in turn are in a position to defend the school's stance should an irate parent challenge the decision. (2008: 9)

Similarly, change, a frequently reported stressor, is also not unique to teaching. Change is inevitable in any organisation, given for example, the phenomenal advances in technology and more recently the impact of austerity. That is not to ignore that, for many years, schools have also been bombarded with changes to curriculum, special needs provision, health and safety and inclusion to name a few. In Item 9, I pointed out how the impact of the Children Act (1989) had made life more stressful for those working in residential facilities.

Kyriacou (2001) argued that there will always be a need for research into teacher stress, since examining stress levels and the nature of stressors at landmark changes is important. Much of the submitted work was undertaken in part to determine the effects of specific changes. For example, Item 2 was carried out at a time when the integration/inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools was expanding. This change created additional pressures for mainstream teachers, including how they (teachers) would be supported in class. Of the three stress factors identified in Item 2 *Professional concerns* (supporting SEN) accounted for a little more variance than did *Pupil behaviour and attitude* in the study. However, it is important to recognise that

SEN encompass a wide range of difficulties, including behaviour difficulties - a group which continue to be a source of stress for teachers, headteachers and other pupils. To date, little seems to have been done to address these concerns given that twelve years after Item 2 was published MacBeath and Galton wrote:

Teachers . . . blame the deterioration in classroom discipline . . . on the increase in the number of children with serious learning difficulties now entering schools as the result of “inclusion without adequate resourcing”.
(2008: 8)

This report (ibid) was published at the same time as Item 3, my study of stress and distress among trainee secondary teachers. Whilst almost identical numbers of male and female teachers (40%; 38% respectively) reported managing pupil behaviour as the main source of stress, more men found pupils with specific behaviour difficulties and disorders more stressful than did women. Comments typically referred to “challenging behaviour from pupils inappropriately placed in mainstream classrooms”. Female trainees also reported receiving more threats of physical aggression than did their male counterparts. One might argue that threats of physical assault by pupils directed at a teacher warrant being labelled a serious behaviour difficulty. If that is the case, then the figures are perhaps more similar than may at first appear and are indicative of problems in defining behaviour difficulties. This study also highlighted the high levels of psychological distress among the sample and associated detrimental effects on their well-being, something of more recent concern in schools and other workplaces (e.g. the NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, 2015). The female respondents in this

study reported higher levels of psychological distress than males, which reinforced similar findings from other studies (e.g. Goldberg & Williams, 1988; Pevalin, 2000). This is an important finding and cause for concern given the proportions of females in the teaching profession. Regression analyses identified managing pupil behaviour as the *only* factor to make a unique contribution to the prediction of psychological distress.

Pupil behaviour and discipline are also implicated in problems of teacher recruitment and retention (Barmby, 2006; House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2004; Hobson et al, 2009; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). In 2014, the Chief Inspector of Schools commented that around two-fifths of teachers leaving the profession within five years was a “national scandal”, adding “I think most of them leave because of misbehaviour in schools. They find it far too challenging, far too difficult”. (Wilshaw, 2014)

A lack of social support is linked to stress and equally applies to anyone. Different types of social support link to specific stressors as I discuss in my submitted works. Lack of support for teachers is particularly implicated in coping with disruptive behaviour. A major reason reported for the high levels of stress among teachers, according to Merrett and Wheldall (1992), resulted from the lack of training they received in behaviour management skills. The shift of teacher training from universities to schools reflected the government’s attempt to improve teachers’ behaviour management skills (DfEE, 1988) and make them more effective practitioners (Anderson, 1995). Partnership schools now “have the

leading responsibility for training students to . . . manage classes.” (DfE, 1992: para 14). The efficacy of this strategy is challenged, given that stress associated with classroom management does not decline as the school placement progresses (Burn et al., 2003; Capel, 1997). As Merrett and Wheldall (1992) observed, the chances of a trainee finding themselves in a welcoming school, with supportive teachers, cooperative pupils, and a skilled well-informed, and appropriately experienced mentor were uncertain. Moreover, despite continuing with this policy, the DfE at the same time recognises that poor pupil behaviour is the “greatest concern voiced by new teachers” (DfE, 2010). The above observations – supported by my findings question the efficacy of the current policy of shifting more training into schools as opposed to providing training in effective evidence-based behaviour management techniques.

Again, this concern is reinforced by trainee teacher’s comments in Item 3 where they reported a lack of support and negative attitude of mentors, other teachers, heads of departments and headteachers towards trainees, notably in respect of classroom management. Comments such as, “unhelpful almost obstructive” . . . “hardly spoke to me and when he did was always critical no balancing of positive and negative, just negative” . . . “and taking no interest in my presence in their school” were not uncommon and hardly welcoming to the profession. However, such lack of support is not limited to trainee teachers, as similar comments have been made by qualified teachers (Wallace, 1996). As Day et al. reported, “an ineffective or unsympathetic Head of Department or headteacher would tend to erode the resilience . . . of teachers dealing with . . . classroom crisis” (2006:

224). One might reasonably conclude that such behaviour would be magnified for a new entrant trying to acculturate to the profession. As Haggerty et al. (2011) pointed out “although behaviour management dominated much of the thinking of the NQTs, the support they received in relation to it seemed conceptually limited.”, an observation which mirrors the concerns I raised in respect of trainee teachers. Furthermore, McLaughlin et al. (1986) suggested trainees are often given classes which experienced teachers do not want to teach or the mentors have themselves have difficulties controlling.

I would argue that although teachers identify excessive workload, change and lack of support as major stressors, it is managing pupil behaviour that most distinguishes teacher stress from other work-related stressors in most other professions. It is pervasive among teachers of both sexes, of different ages and at different stages of their careers and indeed frequently cited as a reason teacher burnout (Aloe et al., 2014; Gavish & Friedman, 2010) and for leaving the profession as outlined in The Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010).

Effective management of social behaviour is associated with high levels of pupil engagement with learning, whereas ineffective behaviour management is associated with pupil disengagement, general misbehaviour and pupil aggression (Lewis et al., 2005; Marzano, 2003). In item 8, only one teacher took some responsibility for their pupils’ disengagement with learning through negative messages from teachers. The other teachers externalised responsibility - causal

explanations included: pupils being disruptive or having behaviour problems (43% of comments); pupils' personality and disposition (40% of comments); pupils' community, family or deviant peers (15% of comments). Teachers externalising blame for pupil disengagement is not uncommon (McInerney, 2009). It is a process which has potential negative consequences for both teachers and pupils, being associated with higher levels of stress (since an individual relinquishes control) and also linked to teachers' self-efficacy and low expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2014). Teachers with low expectations used more negative behaviour management approaches and had more disruptive classrooms than those with high expectations of their pupils (Rubie-Davies, 2007).

The disengaged pupils similarly externalised most of the causes of their difficulties to teachers - including disengagement from learning and lack of success. Self-serving attributional bias is a common human predisposition where people attribute their successes to their personal characteristics, and their failures to factors beyond their control, a process that helps maintain their self-worth (Shepperd, Malone, & Sweeny, 2008).

Most people demonstrate this behaviour on a regular basis but doing so can deprive people of opportunities to learn and develop. In the above example, (Item 8) it is the pupil who loses out most, since they have little or no control over decision making and access to credentialed courses. The pupils saw teachers as largely responsible for their failure at school because, among other things, they

perceived teachers were particularly unfair towards them. Like their teachers, they had come to have low expectations for their future success which may be the result of being exposed to teachers' negative expectations. At the same time, they still wanted to succeed academically, but felt they lacked the strategies needed to learn effectively, nevertheless they struggled on, though feeling unsupported. One might be tempted to conclude that, in a more pupil-aware climate, this would be less likely to occur but the evidence challenges this assumption. Similar outcomes have been observed by Rubie-Davies (2006) who found that the self-perceptions of pupils who began the year confident in their abilities were significantly lower by the end of the year when placed with low-expectation teachers. The reverse was the case for those placed with high-expectation teachers.

Mismatches between the interpersonal perceptions of staff and pupils were also highlighted in Item 9. Findings in this study demonstrated how the perceived functions of routines, designed by adults to maintain order and ensure the smooth running of a total institution on the one hand and support the well-being of pupils with behaviour difficulties and disorders on the other, were viewed very differently by the two groups. In several cases, staff beliefs about the function of a routine was not shared by pupils and in some cases, had directly opposing beliefs. Such misunderstandings have the potential for unintended negative outcomes for both parties resulting in conflict and stress. Both Items 8 and 9 had important messages regarding the value of taking on board the perspectives of all pupil groups in decision-making to improve school and classroom climates. At the

time of writing these Items, pupil voice was not fashionable and the book which I edited with Rudduck and Wallace (1996), and from which Item 8 was taken, was considered a catalyst for the growing attention to pupil voice which followed.

Having examined stress, coping and job satisfaction among teachers at different stages of their careers, the next section looks at headteachers' perspectives, discussing how they share similar experiences but with different emphasis.

3 Headteacher stress, coping and well-being

Dramatic changes to the role of a modern headteacher have been associated with increased levels of stress and ill health. Stressors commonly reported by headteachers echo those of teachers, namely: workload, interpersonal relationships with staff and pupil misbehaviour (Chaplain, 2001; Phillips & Sen, 2011). In addition to strategic planning, the headteachers and senior leadership team (SLT) are responsible for organising the day-to-day running of the school and supporting staff in an environment of increased testing, scrutiny, accountability and community involvement. Indeed, Sammons (1999) suggested that, in effective schools, the headteacher is central to the development of professional practice and Blase and Blase (2002) found substantial evidence showing that positive leadership in schools was linked to psychologically and physically healthy work environments, staff well-being and overall academic success. It can be of no surprise then that headteachers report feeling under pressure, which can make excessive demands on their ability to cope (Crawford

& Earley, 2011; Earley et al., 2012; Galton & MacBeath, 2008).

There is a lack of research into headteacher stress (Phillips & Sen, 2011), a situation I was highlighting in 1995 and 2001 (Items 5 and 4). This paucity is perhaps surprising given ongoing problems recruiting and retaining headteachers along with the numbers taking early retirement (Higham et al, 2015). What limited research has been carried out over the last 30 years, points to an increase in levels of work related stress (Phillips & Sen, 2011). In 2001, when I asked a group of headteachers the question “In general, how stressful do you find being a headteacher?”, over half (55%) reported feeling *very stressed* or *extremely stressed* as a result of work-based pressures (Item 4). Six years, later using questions from my study, Phillips, Sen and McNamee (2007) found little had changed, with just under half (43%) of the headteachers they studied reporting being *very stressed* or *extremely stressed*.

A major concern and source of stress shared by both teachers and headteachers is pupils’ behaviour and the inclusion of pupils with behaviour disorders in mainstream schools (MacBeath et al., 2006). Concerns about behaviour resulted in the requirement for all maintained schools to publish behaviour policies. These policies are available for public scrutiny and cover everything from rewards to restraint of disruptive pupils. At the same time, being under additional pressure to ensure academic performance figures remains high, adding to the burden of managing the school as a whole (DfE, 2010; Peaston, 2011).

Whilst being directly involved in the management of pupil behaviour is stressful, it also generates additional associated demands on headteachers. These demands include supporting teachers and other staff physically and psychologically and through professional development, as well as dealing with pupils and their (often angry) parents (Item 4). Being proactive in the development of a behaviour policy and ensuring staff have appropriate professional development, support their well-being and have access to appropriate resources, all form part of the leadership component of a headteacher's work. However, a recent study by Ofsted found that teachers in several schools were unhappy about the lack of support provided by some headteachers in respect of behaviour management, which created further stress for the teaching staff. They reported that many teachers felt the headteacher could do more to ensure that all staff applied policies consistently. This suggests that teachers are aware of internal inconsistencies in their own school and want senior leaders, to be actively monitoring behaviour and taking more effective action, to take more responsibility for putting a stop to this problem (Ofsted, 2014: 15).

Not feeling supported by headteachers can significantly increase teacher stress with a potential negative impact on school and classroom climate. Whilst headteachers are expected to manage and minimise stress among their staff and provide support in the workplace, headteachers can also be viewed as a source of stress because of their behaviour and attitude (Tepper, 2000). When staff are experiencing stress, it is the manager's responsibility to make changes to find a solution (Saksvik et al., 2002).

Social Support for heads often comes from other senior staff and/or governors, but this can for some be perceived as being hit and miss (Item 5). Social support has several elements - received support (what is provided); social embeddedness (quality and nature of relationships with others); and perceived support (believing that help would be available if necessary). Perceived support has a buffering effect on stress and a direct protective impact on well-being, whilst received support has an indirect impact by helping to maintain perceived support (Kaniasty, 2005). Received support is therefore beneficial, provided it preserves or enhances perceived support.

As professionals, most teachers like to feel they have a role to play in making important decisions in school that affect their work life and there are claims that this is more likely given there has been a shift from hero leadership to one of distributed leadership (Silins & Mulford, 2002). However, Gronn (2010) warned that whilst this shift may have occurred, the scope of the heads role has not diminished. As I pointed out in Item 5, whilst some headteachers claimed to believe in shared decision making, others were openly more tokenistic. For example, one said, "I don't believe you can have a democratic organisation!". She went on to say that although she asked for other people's ideas, she would ultimately make unilateral decisions.

My studies of headteacher stress included in this submission (Items 4 and 5) highlighted many of the pressures headteachers had to cope with were often

neglected or marginalised because of the focus on teachers' issues. Headteachers can feel that staff do not appreciate the pressure put upon them as the following quotes from primary headteachers illustrate:

The staff do not appreciate all the other demands on my time. Sure, I would like to have more time for informal and professional talk, but there are not enough hours in the day especially with the [new] building problems. They just don't appreciate what I am going through. Female, (Item 4: 205)

I can't understand why they [the staff] can't or won't accept my job is to manage and this can involve making unpleasant decisions. I can rise above it but I would rather have a more pleasant atmosphere. Male, (Item 4: 205)

Another significant source of stress, and a personal dilemma for some headteachers, is sharing power and control with others or delegating responsibility. Handing over decision making can be difficult. As one headteacher confided, "I need to become more comfortable about delegating tasks to other people . . . I am aware that I will burn myself out if I don't share out the burden" (Item 4: 208). This can be especially true when a school has gone through a period of difficulty – problems managing a group of disruptive pupils or major change for example. A headteacher who has maintained a visible presence during a difficult period may find it hard to hand back the reins if he or she perceives doing so might result in a return to the problem situation. By the same token, not sharing responsibility creates other pressures, such as feeling overwhelmed.

Using the headteacher inappropriately for support can be indicative of structural difficulties, ineffective policies and negative routines in a school. As Ofsted pointed out in their report on exclusion:

In high excluding schools (but not exclusively) . . . *headteachers and senior staff* . . . worked hard but were often overwhelmed by numbers of pupils referred to them for indiscipline by classroom teachers. Frequently such referrals short-circuited established systems and merely reflected the unwillingness of some staff to deal with problems at source. (1996: 19)

Headteachers are under pressure from multiple sources both internal and external (Items 4 and 5). They have to balance the demands placed on them by various stakeholder groups. This includes balancing the expectations of teaching staff, alongside those of pupils, their parents and governors. Since these groups seldom have the chance to interact, they often conflict and create additional pressure on headteachers.

Despite the reported high levels of stress, Johnson et al. (2005) found that well-being and job satisfaction among headteachers was no worse than that of other occupations and both well-being and job satisfaction are generally better for headteachers than that of teachers. In contrast, Phillips et al. (2007) found headteachers' health to be worse than that of other comparative occupations and mental health issues were found to be greater among female than male

headteachers; and worse for primary than secondary headteachers (ibid). Dewa et al., (2009) found the opposite, that is secondary headteachers' mental health was worse than primary headteachers. My study (Item 4) offered some insight into these contradictions, because I examined the interplay between sources of stress and sources of job satisfaction for different groups of headteachers. Qualitative differences between two sub-groups of very/extremely stressed headteachers who differed in their levels of job satisfaction were compared. The *very stressed* but *very satisfied* group gained most satisfaction from personal factors (e.g. competence, personal performance, health) whereas the *very stressed* but *not satisfied* group gained most satisfaction from structural factors (e.g. administration). In contrast, the *very stressed* but *very satisfied* experienced most stress came from interpersonal factors (e.g. lack of support and/or shared focus) and the *very stressed* but *not satisfied* found personal factors most stressful. There were also gender differences. The latter group for example, were exclusively female. Other more recent studies also found higher levels of stress among female headteachers (e.g. Ferrie, 2004, Phillips, Sen & McNamee, 2007).

Having argued that headteachers experience similar pressures as teachers, the next section discusses the pressures on pupils in mainstream and special schools.

4 Pupil stress, coping and well-being

Writing in 1989, Dunham reported that, whilst stress amongst teachers has

tended to be a high-profile issue and has received considerable attention from researchers, “stress amongst pupils has generally aroused less specific concern” (1989: 16). What limited research exists comes to similar conclusions - that the pressure of academic work, that is exams, revision and homework are the main sources of stress (e.g. Kyriacou & Butcher, 1993; Putwain, 2011). Pupils in Items 6, 7 and 8 were also concerned about examinations, with many linking this to worrying about achieving their longer-term vocational goals. In Item 6 there were differences between the foci of males and females. Female pupils were more stressed than their male counterparts about school and their careers, and this was not just amongst those who were struggling academically. However, whilst many pupils in Items 7 and 8 made reference to examinations, many also referred to the stresses resulting from organisational rules and routines, which created daily hassles for them.

The perspectives of younger pupils or those who are disaffected or marginalised because of their behaviour difficulties or placed in special units – areas which I have examined – are less well researched than those taking credentialed qualifications. Whilst the longitudinal study (Item 7) recognised exam stress among older pupils, attention was also drawn to what these same pupils considered stressful earlier in their school careers - ideas often relating to restricted freedom and autonomy. Similar concerns were *unsurprisingly* expressed by pupils in residential environments (Item 9). Problems coping with school was highlighted by a study of 30,000 children aged between 8 and 16 by The Children’s Society (2012) who found that levels of unhappiness at school

were higher than in all other measured areas of their lives and related to issues I had been raising in my studies nearly twenty years earlier, namely: freedom, choice and autonomy.

Compas and Reeslund (2009) argued that the healthy development of adolescents, can be put at risk through exposure to stressful events in school, but they acknowledged that there were individual differences. These differences result from the interplay of individual and environmental susceptibilities and resources, and the individual's range of coping strategies. For example, pupils in Item 9 had greater restrictions on their freedom and even less autonomy than pupils in Items 6-8. Whilst the latter had free space, the former had every aspect of their lives monitored 24/7 and often a limited coping template (Kendall, 1993). Walking out of a mainstream secondary school following an argument with a teacher or peers may raise concerns and a phone call to parents. Walking out of a residential unit is considered absconding, which can culminate with arrest by the police and sometimes placement in custody, all having implications for future placement and intervention.

The majority of studies of adolescent stress and coping have tended to focus on life and/or traumatic events and their effects on functioning (e.g. Sandberg & Rutter, 2008). Consequently, most research looks at the psychological effects on adolescents of stressors such as, exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, divorce, bullying and marital conflict (Cicchetti & Toth, 2005).

Life events are often associated with anxiety in adolescents and compounded in those who have an external locus of control (Gale et al., 2008). Disengaged boys, the subject of Item 8, tended to have an external locus of control and feelings of helplessness in respect of re-engaging with learning. Whilst they recognised the importance of, and desire for, credentialed qualifications, they believed that success was unlikely at their school. This represented a bleak future. Similar negative thinking and external loci of control was evident among pupils in the other mainstream samples (Items 6 and 7) as well as those in residential special schools (Item 9) but for different reasons.

Adolescence is often referred to as a time of 'storm and stress' - a conceptualisation not without its critics (Casey et al., 2010). It is a period in which many adolescents frequently experience intense negative affect which is linked to mood swings, risky behaviour and emotional volatility. The speed and magnitude of these changes can exceed the socio-emotional coping capacity of many young people and the resultant phenomenon of adolescent stress is widely acknowledged (Byrne et al., 2007). Only recently have researchers turned their attention to well-being in adolescents. One reason for this was the UNICEF study of well-being (2007) in which adolescents from both the UK and USA were ranked among the bottom four countries.

Maintained schools now have statutory duties to promote the well-being of pupils

(Children Act, 2004). The relationship between well-being, academic learning and mental health has been made clear. As Brooks (2013) reported, supporting physical and mental health, and promoting socio-emotional learning among pupils in school creates a 'virtuous circle' which strengthens pupils' attainment and achievement and in turn enhances their well-being - something I was arguing in Items 6 - 9 many years previously.

Many approaches to improving adolescents' well-being have focused on disease prevention or risk reduction, but more effective outcomes can be achieved by equipping them to cope with daily hassles (e.g. Duncan et al., 2007). My research has highlighted the negative effects of some school structures (e.g. rules and routines, access) and organisation on pupils' attitude to work, their self-concept as learners, self-esteem and well-being (Items 7 and 8) emphasising how everyday interaction between individuals and their environment can either support effective coping or generate stress.

The importance of effective behaviour management in school on pupils' coping, well-being and resilience was made clear by the DfE (2016). The most significant factors that protect adolescents and help them to develop resilience include: clear policies on behaviour; positive classroom management; a whole-school approach to mental health; and a sense of belonging (ibid, 9). Pupils tend to be more resilient in schools where they enjoy the feeling of belonging (Osterman, 2000) and they are more likely to hold positive attitudes to learning, are more engaged with learning and feel safe and secure - as reported in Item 8. These, and other

factors (e.g. organisational structures, pupil characteristics, relationships with teachers), create the conditions for learning (Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996).

Similarly, the negative effects of not including all pupils in decision-making were proposed by Jamal et al. (2013) in their analysis of 19 research studies. They found consistent evidence that limited involvement of some pupils in decision-making, could result in them feeling they have no stake in their school community, negatively affecting relationships with teachers and prosocial peers and encouraging antisocial behaviour, including increased involvement with risky behaviour. Adolescents who become disengaged from conventional groups (e.g. school, prosocial peers) are more likely to bond with disruptive peer groups in order to establish social identity and a sense of belonging (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993).

Since my early work with Rudduck and Wallace (Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996), there has been increased interest in taking account of pupil perspectives across a range of issues, including social behaviour and mental health (e.g. Bahou, 2011). Pupils' perspectives offer an essential dimension to the development of behaviour policies and this is now formally recognised. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child meant that pupils were entitled to have a voice in matters that affected them (UNCR, Article 12, 1989). As a result, all pupils must be allowed to help shape a school's behaviour policy.

However, the government's response was somewhat underwhelming. Their official guidance stated that pupil involvement "need not be laborious or burdensome for the governing body . . . class teachers . . . could simply talk to their class about the behaviour principles and gather any views" (DCSF, 2009).

Whilst the majority of adolescents emerge from the second decade of their lives without lasting difficulties (Graber et al., 1996), for some the many changes that occur during adolescence result in negative, and sometimes devastating consequences. For example, those who do not experience positive peer and adult relationships, have limited coping skills, academic and behavioural difficulties (Feldman & Elliot, 1990; Lerner et al., 1996).

Pupils in items 6 - 9 made reference to wanting support from teachers who showed a genuine interest in their learning and well-being. However, social support has been shown to have differential effects. For example, Schraml et al. (2011) found lower levels of social support made a significant contribution to the variance explained in stress symptoms among adolescents. In contrast, whilst DuBois *et al.*, (1994) found an association between high levels of social support at school and positive pupil outcomes (better grades and lower risk-taking) it occurred *only* among pupils experiencing life (event) stressors, such as poverty or parents' divorcing, but did not find this among pupils who were not experiencing these stressors. The optimal source of social support may depend on developmental level e.g. support from parents seeming more significant in early adolescence than in late adolescence (Stice et al., 2004).

There is a significant increase in the numbers of pupils with low levels of subjective well-being as they progress through secondary school compared to levels in the primary years. This may not be attributable to age but to social context. Of particular note is the relationship between disruptive behaviour in class and low levels of subjective well-being. This effect was found to be the case 'both for the young people who were being disruptive, and for those who witness the disruption.' (Chanfreau et al., 2013: 13) something highlighted by disengaged pupils in item 8. Therefore, establishing effective strategies for managing disruptive behaviour to minimise stress and promote well-being becomes as important for pupils as it is for teachers.

Conclusion

This critical review and commentary has shown how my work has made significant contributions to knowledge and research in respect of stress, coping and well-being in schools. In particular, it has demonstrated how, over a twenty-year period, my work has been both innovative and creative on the one hand and questioned policy and practice in schooling on the other. A central tenet of my arguments is how, despite differences in age, development, status and roles of different members of a school's community, what causes stress and what supports coping well-being are in many ways not dissimilar. My work has made use of various methodologies and methods to produce both breadth, depth and authenticity to my research. I have framed my work within social and

organisational psychology demonstrating, for example, how organisational structures and interpersonal relationships can interact and be interpreted and appraised as either stressors or resources, or both, depending on a range of interrelated factors. These factors include personal disposition, expectations, intended and unintended outcomes, context and time. Furthermore, I have shown, through my writing and practice, how to apply research and theory to classroom and effective schooling, some of which has been recognised in government policy.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

List of submitted published work

Chapters (Items. 1, 5, 7 and 8)

CHAPLAIN, R. (2016). Stress, coping and teacher well-being. In R. Chaplain, *Teaching without disruption in the primary school: A practical approach to managing pupil behaviour* (2nd ed., pp.30-52). London: Routledge.

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Leading under pressure: Headteacher stress and coping. In D. Hustler, T. Brighouse, & J. Rudduck (Eds.), *Heeding heads: Secondary heads and educational commentators in dialogue* (pp. 222-232). London: David Fulton Publishers.

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Pupils under pressure: Coping with stress at school. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp. 118-132). David Fulton Publishers.

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Making a strategic withdrawal: Disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp.101-115). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Journal Articles (Items. 3, 4, 6, and 2)

CHAPLAIN, R. (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 28(2), 195-209.

CHAPLAIN, R. (2001). Stress and job satisfaction among primary headteachers: A question of balance? *Educational Management & Administration*, 29(2), 197-215.

CHAPLAIN, R. (2000). Beyond exam results? Differences in the social and psychological perceptions of young males and females at school. *Educational Studies*, 26(2), 177-190.

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 15(4), 473-489.

Book (Item 9)

CHAPLAIN, R., & Freeman, A. (1994). *Caring under pressure*. London: David Fulton Publishers. (166 pages).

All of the submitted works are included in Appendix 3, apart from Item 9 (book) which is a separate volume.

Quality indicators relating to submitted works

Chapters

One chapter included in this submission was taken from *Teaching Without Disruption in the Primary School (2nd edition)* (Chaplain, 2016) published by Routledge. Routledge academic book publishing was given the highest rating 'A' (awarded to top international publishers) based on the SENSE Benchmarks for Publication Output at the Research School for Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment.

Two chapters included in this submission were taken from *School Improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996), which was

published by David Fulton Publishers which is part of Routledge (Taylor Francis Group) a leading international academic publisher in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Journal Articles

Four out of the nine published works are peer-reviewed articles. All of these journal articles were published in high-ranked British research journals placed in the top 51 education journals listed in the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) indicator (rated at the times the articles were published).

Educational Psychology

Educational Management and Leadership

Educational Studies

Book

The book *Caring Under Pressure* (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994) was published by David Fulton Publishers which is part of Routledge (Taylor Francis Group) a leading international academic publisher in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Appendix 2:

Summaries of submitted published work

(including a brief outline; methodology & method; key findings & contributions to knowledge for each item; citations and book reviews)

Item 1

CHAPLAIN, R. (2016). Stress, coping and teacher well-being. In R. Chaplain, *Teaching without disruption in the primary school: A practical approach to managing pupil behaviour* (2nd ed., pp.30-52). London: Routledge.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Chapter	Single author	53 (1 st edition)

Brief outline

This chapter is taken from the second edition of *Teaching Without Disruption in the Primary School* which was commissioned by Routledge given the popularity of the first edition. In a recent review, the first edition was the 7th most accessed eBook across the entire Cambridge University and Colleges library system out a total of 3200 titles. This chapter includes a review of the research literature on teacher stress and coping, and highlights how the management of pupil behaviour has consistently been identified as a significant *individual* predictor of teacher stress and explains what makes it so stressful. The dual-process model which informs my own theorising in respect of stress, coping and well-being is presented. The model demonstrates how different levels of thinking and associated emotional and behavioural responses are linked to effective and ineffective coping. In addition, evidence-based material on how to develop more effective coping strategies to enhance well-being is presented. The importance of maintaining the balance between stressors (challenges) and resources (personal, interpersonal and organisational) is made explicit and a model for understanding this relationship is provided. Although only one chapter is included in this submission, other chapters draw on the various elements of the model to demonstrate how theory and research can be applied to developing behaviour management at the whole-school, classroom and individual pupil level.

Methodology & method

A review of the research literature on teacher stress and coping and presentation of a model to explain the transactional and dynamic nature of stress, coping and well-being.

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This chapter made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- placing my own work in the wider context of theorising and research into teacher stress, coping and well-being;
- providing an overarching and orienting framework in the form of a dual-process model of stress and coping which incorporates organisational, interpersonal and personal elements;
- providing a practical model to enable teachers to understand the relationship between stressors and resources, coping and well-being and how to review, improve and expand their coping strategies.

Reviews

As this second edition has recently been published, no reviews are available at this time. I have however included (i) two reviews of the first edition which were published in peer reviewed journals and (ii) comments made by independent reviewers on the proposal for a second edition.

(i) 1st edition

Educational Review, 2005, 57(4)

This is a thought-provoking book, with a good mix of theory and practical application. It also includes topics and ideas that are not always considered in more narrow treatments of the issue of student behaviour. The focus on the school as an organisation and the implications of various leadership styles of the senior managers in the school will be food for thought . . . I would recommend this book to both teachers in preparation and to experienced teachers, and it should remain on their shelves for reference.

Dr. Robyn Beaman, Research Fellow. Deputy Director, MULTILIT, Macquarie University Special Education Centre.

Educational Review, 2005, 57(1)

The author provides a great deal of interesting and well-researched information. . . . Quite correctly he emphasises the importance of the total milieu in establishing the conditions for managing behaviour in a school. . . . Chaplain freely acknowledges two important issues which most writers in this field seem to ignore. First, that behaviour management is one of the major concerns for all teachers and second, that teachers have to take charge of matters in the classroom (p. 140). In other words, classroom control is an important issue for every teacher, however senior and however experienced. The section dealing with whole-school behaviour policies (pp. 83–84) is especially good, as is that on support for staff on pages 112–116. In summary, this is a book which will repay careful reading on the part of teachers.

Dr Frank Merrett, Lecturer/Research Fellow, University of Birmingham.

(ii) 2nd edition

Comments from independent reviewers commissioned by Routledge on the proposal for the second edition

Reviewer 1

Managing behaviour is fundamental to teaching: this is the book that teachers should read first. Chaplain's writing demonstrates that rare combination of rigorous research knowledge translated into exemplary classroom practice. Most of all, his expertise is built on a deep understanding of the psychological and social factors that are a daily reality for teachers and their pupils.

Reviewer 2

The proposed features are interesting, relevant and appropriate. The structure of the book works well. The style is fluent and covers both underpinning theory and practical applications. The coverage in the book is comprehensive and relevant topics and emergent areas all covered. The author is very well known and respected in this area of work.

Reviewer 3

It is clear to me that the new edition will provide an up-to-date and important contribution to the field.

Reviewer 4

The author is well placed to ensure that all topics and emergent areas are covered in the text in order to update and augment the existing strengths of the first edition.

Item 2

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 15(4), 473-489.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Refereed journal article	Single author	277

Brief outline

A study of 267 primary teachers' experiences of stress and its relationship to specific facets of job satisfaction. Differences were found in respect of gender, age and experience on both measures. Unlike previous measures, the stress instrument used was designed to measure frequency as well as intensity of perceived stressors. When asked how stressful they found teaching, 23% said they found their work *extremely stressful* or *very stressful*. A principal components analysis identified three stress factors: *Pupil behaviour and attitude*; *Professional concerns* (relating to supporting pupils with special needs) and *Professional tasks* (relating to teachers feeling unsupported or lacking in confidence in their work) which combined accounted for 50% of the variance. Several repeated measures analyses of variance were carried out using the stress factors as dependent variables and gender, age and experience as independent variables. Stress and job satisfaction were negatively correlated and interacted. When asked "Are you satisfied with teaching as a profession?" 37% of respondents answered 'yes' or 'yes, *definitely*'. Females were more satisfied than males and differences reached significance. Respondents were most satisfied with their professional performance and least satisfied with availability of resources.

Methodology & method

Sequential mixed method multistrand design QUAN → QUAL

Cross-sectional study using questionnaires (open and closed questions) and interviews with sub-sample.

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- adding to the limited number of studies of primary teacher stress;
- identifying which stressors had the greatest effect on primary teachers at that time;
- illustrating how the measurement of overall job satisfaction hides qualitative differences in the specific facets of teaching which are most satisfying and how the latter are linked to different types of stressor and interact with age, gender and experience;
- showing the effects of using a different approach to measuring stress. By combining perceived intensity of a stressor with its frequency to produce a compound score. Teacher stress is usually measured by asking about intensity alone.

Item 3

CHAPLAIN, R. (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 28(2), 195-209.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Refereed journal article	Single author	220

Brief outline

A study of 268 trainee secondary teachers using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and a questionnaire with closed and open questions designed to measure stress at the end of the final teaching practicum. When asked how stressful they found teaching, 46% said they found their work *extremely stressful or very stressful*. A principal components analysis produced a three-factor solution: *Behaviour management*; *Workload* and *Lack of support* which accounted for 52% of the variance. A multiple regression analysis was carried out using psychological distress as dependent and the three stress factors as independent variables. Only *Behaviour management* reached significance as a predictor of distress. Differences were found between male and female trainees in respect of levels of stress and well-being and what they found most stressful in the practicum. Attention was drawn to the inadequacies of teacher training in respect of behaviour management and challenging the current strategy of shifting more training into schools.

Methodology & method

Parallel mixed method monostrand design QUAN + qual

Cross-sectional study using questionnaire (closed and open questions) + GHQ.

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- adding to the limited research into trainee teacher stress, coping and well-being;
- highlighting the stressors most responsible for predicting well-being in trainee teachers;
- challenging the efficacy of government policy in moving responsibility for behaviour management training into schools;
- highlighting the need for trainee teachers to be provided with standardised comprehensive evidence-based behaviour management training.

Item 4

CHAPLAIN, R. (2001). Stress and job satisfaction among primary headteachers: A question of balance? *Educational Management & Administration*, 29(2), 197-215.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Refereed journal article	Single author	92

Brief outline

A study of levels of stress and job satisfaction among 36 headteachers from primary schools in the West Midlands – East Anglia region. Data were collected using a questionnaire with open and closed questions and a two-stage interview process.

Over 55% of the heads considered headship to be an *extremely stressful* or *very stressful* job, with 84% said that they felt stressed most of the time. Nonetheless 56% felt *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with being a headteacher. What heads found stressful, based on the open questions, was categorised under four headings: *school structures* (e.g. maintaining standards) - the most commonly reported stressor; *interpersonal relationships with staff and parents* - the next most reported; *external factors* (e.g., government policies) and finally *personal factors* (e.g. health) - the least referred to. The interview data were analysed under five *managerial* themes: *managing self*; *managing others*; *managing finances*; *managing the curriculum*; *managing change*. An exploration of the relationship between stress, social support and job satisfaction concluded the initial analysis.

Around half of the headteachers regularly felt *very stressed* but further investigation identified two qualitatively different sub-groups of *very stressed* headteachers. One group who were *very satisfied* with their job and a second

who were *not satisfied* with their job. Through examination of the responses of the two groups, a model was produced to represent their differences. The *very stressed* and *very satisfied* headteachers perceived most stress coming from interpersonal relationships (e.g., parents, unsupportive staff, external bodies) and most satisfaction from their performance as a headteacher, something over which they had the most control. In contrast, the *very stressed* but *not satisfied* group found most satisfaction from administration and structural aspects of their work and most stress from their performance as a headteacher.

Methodology & method

Sequential mixed method multistrand design quan → QUAL

2 phase cross-sectional study using:

Phase 1 Questionnaire to determine levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction using closed questions (with Likert scales) plus open questions which were linked to the second qualitative phase.

Phase 2 Two-part interviews. The first part was semi-structured and the second asked respondents to reflect on their questionnaire responses.

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- providing an important addition to the paucity of research into primary headteachers' stress and job satisfaction;
- providing insight into the pressures facing primary headteachers at a time of increasing national concerns about recruiting and retaining headteachers – something which continues to be a concern;

- highlighting the complex underlying structure of stressors and their relationship with sources of job satisfaction among headteachers who reported feeling very stressed. The message being that single measures of stress and job satisfaction can hide important qualitative differences;
- reporting gender differences in respect of job satisfaction, with all the not satisfied (but very stressed) headteachers being exclusively female.

Item 5

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Leading under pressure: Headteacher stress and coping. In D. Hustler, T. Brighouse, & J. Rudduck (Eds.), *Heeding heads: Secondary heads and educational commentators in dialogue* (pp. 222-232). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Chapter	Single author	17

Brief outline

This chapter is taken from a book which reported a novel study of 8 secondary headteachers in dialogue with educational commentators. Headteacher stress was analysed under three headings: *managing oneself*; *managing others* and *managing the organisation*. The personal control of finances following introduction of local management of schools was something they found most satisfying, along with the not unrelated feelings of autonomy and personal control. However, this satisfaction was tempered by a concern about falling foul of Local Authorities as a result of 'breaking away' from their control. Similarly, managing others who were supportive raised satisfaction levels, whereas staff (including senior managers) could be subversive or undermine the mission of the school and hence be a source of stress.

These findings highlight the transactional nature of the stress and coping process which explains variation across contexts as well as within contexts and between individuals and for individuals at different times. The complex and dynamic relationship between stress and job satisfaction was highlighted.

Methodology & method

Sequential monomethod multistrand design QUAL → QUAL

Cross-sectional study using a new and experimental approach which recorded the major elements of a debate between a group of 8 secondary headteachers and a group of educational commentators focused on a number of key elements of modern headship. The data used the headteacher as the central focus around whom there would be a form of discussion or debate involving both the headteachers and a group of commentators from different educational sectors. The process began with interviews of each headteacher individually. The transcripts were analysed by the commentators who held a one-day conference to discuss each of the transcripts separately and to identify questions to ask specific headteachers. The transcripts from the meeting, along with the specific questions arising from the commentators' discussion, were sent to the individual headteachers. The headteachers were then invited to offer their comments, views on and reactions to the discussion and resultant questions. Finally, each commentator produced an essay, the themes of which reflected the interviews, discussion and their own interests. This chapter reported their comments in relation to stress and coping.

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- adding to the limited research on secondary headteacher stress and coping;
- reporting, in a frank way, what secondary head teachers feel are the pressures facing them as they attempt to manage major changes and maintain variety, in a climate of increasing pressure to standardise schooling;

- showing how an alternative, novel and interactive methodology could be used to identify pressures on headteachers;
- highlighting the dynamic relationship between stress and satisfaction in respect of how headteachers managed three key elements of headship (managing self, managing others and managing the curriculum) which could be both stressful or a source of satisfaction. Which prevailed at any time depended on the dynamic relationship between individual and context.

Item 6

CHAPLAIN, R. (2000). Beyond exam results? Differences in the social and psychological perceptions of young males and females at school. *Educational Studies*, 26(2), 177-190.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Refereed journal article	Single author	49

Brief outline

This paper drew on data from a larger national study of secondary pupils' perspectives on their schooling and their futures which was commissioned by the NEBPN and OFSTED. The project was jointly directed by myself and Professor John Gray (University of Cambridge). It reported differences between male and female pupils' perceptions of schooling and their futures. The levels of stress, motivation, self-efficacy and their interpersonal relationships were examined of a national sample of around 1000 Year 10 pupils from 24 schools in England and Wales. Male pupils reported a higher external locus of control. Female pupils reported higher levels of anxiety in terms of concerns about achievement performance and career orientation. The results raised concerns about socio-emotional coping and psychological well-being of pupils, in particular females.

Methodology & method

Parallel mixed method monostrand design QUAN + QUAL

Cross-sectional study using:

Questionnaires (open and closed questions).

Performance data were also collected on KS3 results in mathematics, English and science

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- questioning whether the focus on the widening gap between boys and girls in an increasingly exam-oriented system of schooling had ignored other important issues such as, personal agency, motivation and stress;
- showing that whilst most pupils enjoyed coming to school and considered it worthwhile, over half were often bored, fed up and stressed at school;
- highlighting how stress in pupils in their final years of statutory school was generated by both exam pressures and anxiety about their futures beyond school;
- identifying significant gender differences - females feeling more stressed at school and more concerned about their futures than male pupils. At the same time females were more motivated and had higher self-efficacy;
- highlighting the importance of paying attention to the impact of schooling on the socio-emotional coping of pupils, which at that time was not particularly fashionable with the DfE as it is currently.

Item 7

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Pupils under pressure: Coping with stress at school. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp. 118-132). David Fulton Publishers.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Chapter	Single author	528 (book)

Brief outline

This chapter reported findings from the ESRC project 'Innovation & change: The quality of teaching & learning'. This longitudinal study tracked the careers of 80 pupils over the 4 years of their secondary schooling in three comprehensive schools in the Midlands and North of England. The pupils were 12 years old when the fieldwork began and 16 years old when it ended. Students were interviewed for 20 minutes once a term throughout the project, initially in pairs then later individually, which produced over 900 interview transcripts. The interview data were supported with information from teachers and analysis of school records and through attendance by researchers at certain key events (e.g., parents' evenings).

The focus of this chapter was on how the stresses and concerns of pupils changed as they progressed through their secondary school career and as moved from early to middle adolescence. Key stressors included daily hassles from coping with school organisational demands, curriculum, teachers, peers and examinations.

Methodology & method

Sequential monomethod multistrand design QUAL → QUAL

Longitudinal cohort study using data taken from over 900 interviews conducted over a 4-year period

Key findings & contribution to knowledge

This study made a significant contribution to knowledge by:

- adding to the limited research into pupil perspectives in general and in respect of stress specifically;
- highlighting the stresses created through the tension between organisational structures; lacklustre teaching; lack of support from, and not being treated with respect by, teachers; inconsistent support from peers;
- highlighting the importance of matching specific social support (e.g. instrumental versus emotional) to specific stressors (novel versus familiar);
- illustrating the role pupils might play in improving a school's socio-emotional climate;
- providing the catalyst to subsequent studies and projects on involving pupils in school improvement and research.

Reviews

Journal of Education for Teaching, (1996), 22(3), 339-340.

A glance down the contents page of this publication holds the promise of some topical and valuable pupil perspectives, from the secondary sector, and a welcome and refreshing emphasis in an area - school improvement - currently dominated by more centrally determined edicts. A view from the school centre rather than the governmental centre is doubly welcome when we are

reminded, as this book does, that nothing is central to the learning experience than the experiences of the learner. . . . data are pertinent and illuminating and throughout, combine with findings, frameworks and conclusions from related research in a way that brings coherence, consistency and unity to the individual contributions . . . The centrality of the pupil is established with a plea from pupils for account to be taken of their social maturity and of the tensions they feel “as they struggle to reconcile the demands of their social and personal lives with the development of their identity as learners. . . .”

Chapter 9, addressing stress and its management, reveals pupils as cherishing interactions with teachers who care about, keep abreast of and are prepared to discuss the trauma, dilemmas and uncertainties in their lives. . . . The chapters are intrinsically interesting with well-structured use of qualitative material . . . themes are lucid and well-conveyed . . . the book has much to offer beginning and experienced teachers in identifying and contextualising ways forward . . . it is crucial for teachers to signal to pupils that they enjoy teaching their subject and that they enjoy teaching them. I applaud any invitation to put the joy back in teaching.

Dr Pat Broadhead, Lecturer in Education, University of Leeds.

Times Educational Supplement 25th July, 2008

This seminal work argued that “what pupils say about teaching, learning and schooling is not only worth listening to, but provides an important - perhaps the most important - foundation for thinking about ways of improving schools”.

It argued that the maturity and capabilities of young people were much greater than most schools recognised, and that deep-rooted assumptions about childhood and adolescence needed to change to fit current realities. The aim, it concluded, should be “to strengthen young people’s sense of themselves as confident learners and strengthen their commitment to achieve”. The book

became, as Michael Fielding of London's Institute of Education put it, "the catalyst of the school improvement movement", both in the UK and around the world.

Jeremy Sutcliffe, Associate Editor.

Cambridge Journal of Education, (2007), 37(3), 317-320.

What . . . *School Improvement: What pupils can tell us?* (did) was to render the pupil experience of contemporary schooling under a highly prescriptive national curriculum so transparent as to subvert the standards-driven school improvement agenda, and call once more for the renewal of pedagogically-driven innovations by teachers in partnership with their pupils.

John Elliot, Emeritus Professor of Education; University of East Anglia.

National College for School Leadership (2002)

What Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace 1996 have drawn together the results of a fascinating and important study about the pupil's view of learning.

Howard Green, Educational Consultant.

Item 8

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Making a strategic withdrawal: Disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp.101-115). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Status	Authorship	Citations
Chapter	Single author	528 (book)

Brief outline

This study commissioned by TVEE (North of England) investigated what was becoming a national concern, namely disengagement and underachievement among secondary school boys. Teachers at three comprehensive schools in Derbyshire identified two groups of boys from years 8/9 - one group they considered to be engaged with learning and one they considered to be disengaged with learning - and completed an *Inferred Self-Concept Scale* for each boy. Each boy (n = 59) completed a *Self-concept as a Learner Scale (SCAL)*. To identify their perspectives on: schooling; teachers; learning; and their futures boys at one school were interviewed in depth whilst those from the other two schools completed a questionnaire. Disengaged boys: felt that teachers were unfair and biased against them; scored lower on the SCAL and had lower self-esteem than the engaged boys. The disengaged were also impulsive; gave up easily and felt more stressed at school. Despite these drawbacks the disengaged boys still wanted to succeed in credentialed qualifications, but felt they did not have the task orientation/problem solving strategies nor perceived support to be able to do so.

- identifying significant differences in the perceived selves as learners, social identities and stressors between engaged and disengaged pupils;
- demonstrating how disengaged boys, despite their difficulties, were concerned about gaining success in credentialed qualifications but did not know how they might re-engage with learning to achieve this;
- providing practical examples of how professionals might intervene with pupils who are disengaged from learning.

Book Reviews

Reviews of the book from which this chapter was taken by Professor John Elliot, Howard Green, Dr Pat Broadhead and Jeremy Sutcliffe are provided in Item 7. The following is a specific review of this chapter.

Chapter 8 focussed on disaffected and disengaged males. Disappointingly, only one teacher in the study felt that negative messages from the teacher was a contributory factor and yet the pupils' responses contradicted this so many times that reconsiderations seem timely. Also, "more women than men, suggested that the need to maintain the macho male stereotype was a key factor in disengagement". There has to be food for thought here for women teachers; can we continue to consign some adolescent boys to their stereotypes without reconsidering the negative effects of our own conditioning?

Dr Pat Broadhead, Lecturer in Education, University of Leeds.

Item 9

CHAPLAIN, R., & Freeman, A. (1994). *Caring under pressure*. London: David Fulton Publishers. (166 pages).

Status	Authorship	Citations
Book	Joint (Chaplain 80%; Freeman 20%)	14

Brief outline

This book reported a study of the experiences of both pupils (primary and secondary aged) and staff, working in four contrasting residential special facilities. The book includes a review of the development of specialist residential provision for pupils with behaviour difficulties, highlighting links between special education, social services provision and the criminal justice system. The rhetoric and reality of planned intervention in the 'best interests of the child' were discussed. The demographic characteristics of the pupils and of the staff working with them were profiled. One school provided the main focus of the study and archival records of 1500 pupils over ten years were examined. Empirical data were collected using multiple methods including focus groups, interviews, observations and questionnaires. The other schools studied provided additional data. Social representations of what staff and pupils found stressful and how they coped were examined. Also included is a comparative analysis of both group's perceptions of the function and effectiveness of organisational routines and rituals. The inconsistencies between pupils' and staff's interpretation and appraisal of control and support structures were considered to contribute to the stress experienced by both groups. Also highlighted was the significance of considering pupil perspectives when determining such structures.

- highlighting the increased stress generated in an already stressful environment among staff, resulting from the introduction of major changes to legislation;
- identifying the dilemmas faced by those making decisions about caring for and educating very challenging children at a time of conflicting legislation and policy making;
- highlighting the impact of a lack of training on the well-being of staff responsible for the care, control and education of the most behaviourally challenging pupils in difficult conditions;
- challenging a policy which resulted in the mixing of abused and abusing pupils in the same residential facility;
- challenging residential placement policies, allegedly in the best interests of the child, but in reality based on occupancy or 'heads on beds' thinking;
- providing insight as to the experiences of *invisible* pupils moving around social services, education and justice systems and the difficulties they experience getting back into mainstream education;
- carrying an important message to the policy makers currently considering the rebirth of alternative provision with remarkable similarity to the community homes with education and approved school system;
- giving vulnerable pupils in a marginalised system a chance to present their viewpoint as to the reality of everyday life in residential care and education.

Book Reviews

Educational Research, (Summer 1995), 37(2)

This is a welcome addition to the research literature . . . a worthwhile book . . . Empirical data are interspersed by expositions of the existing theory underpinning the two main strands of the research: the experiences of the

young people and staff of stress and their strategies for coping within the residential setting; and the 'rituals' of institutional life. . . . the chilling fact that the environment in which we expect adults to care for young people with severe emotional, behavioural and social problems can create tensions which put pressure on the very act of caring for these vulnerable young people. Be prepared: it's a discomfoting story of unmet needs. One's guilt increases as one turns the pages.

Dr Felicity Fletcher-Campbell, Senior Lecturer (Inclusive Education), Open University.

Cambridge Journal of Education, (1995), 25(3), 410.

Residential homes for children with special needs have been in the news several times in the recent past, and the news has not been good. 'Jo Public' is treated to salacious tales of abuse and mayhem and has a picture either of Dickensian rules and regulations or alternatively of freewheeling liberalism. Staff in residential homes never seem to get the control quite right. Too much and they are accused of bullying, too little and they are accused of rewarding young thugs.

Chaplain and Freeman's book enables the reader to see past the stereotypes and begin to understand the world of young people in difficulties and their carers. This is an account of a research project . . . which has as its central theme stress and ways of coping with it, both by staff and by young people. It offers a perspective on the reality as perceived through the eyes of the people involved . . . Meanings are presented in terms of both staff and young people.

After an historical background to residential care for young people in difficulties and a discussion of the literature pertinent to stress and coping, the reader is introduced to the research study itself. Data had been collected through a variety of techniques, from studying case notes to questionnaires and

interviews and, in analysis, presents a rich view of daily life.

Presentation of the data offers the reader insight into the characteristics of the young people involved, revealing them to be a mixture of those who have offended and those who have been offended against. Putting together these two categories of young people is far from ideal and the situation contributes to the already stressful situation of being 'in care'. When one combines this with a staff composed mainly of untrained residential social workers the capacity for either group of people coping with stressful situations is not great.

The questionnaires and interviews reveal a variety of potential and actual stressors as the culture and rituals of life in residential care are placed under the microscope. The authors suggest that rituals, such as meal times and getting up, are very important in the control of young people in difficulties and in the way in which both staff and young people cope with the stress of living together in the unnatural situation found in residential care. Their final chapter, entitled 'The way forward', continues the advice by suggesting strategies to improve the service, such as the need to decide for which young people the service is intended and the need to improve the selection and qualifications of the staff.

This is an interesting account of residential provision provided in a readable style which adds to the small but growing literature on this subject. I have only worked as a supply teacher in this much hidden and neglected area of human services, but I recognise the scenarios and the words of the informants in the research. It all rings depressingly true. Chaplain & Freeman's study has captured what actually happens and, when this is coupled with their advice on giving proper consideration to strategic planning and appropriate training for staff, government and local authorities have much help when they decide that it is no longer a tenable situation just to insist that troubled children should be neither seen nor heard.

Dr Penny Lacey, University of Birmingham School of Education.

Journal of Adolescence, (1995), 18, 247-251.

So much has been written about abuse in residential homes and schools that there is a risk of the reader becoming desensitized to the predicament of the children and staff who live and work in them. "And so why another book about this very issue?" you might ask. The justification for this book is that it focuses on those aspects of life in residence which have been neglected by other writers and which young people and their carers find stressful. It is written with a wide readership in mind and will be of undoubted interest to those involved with the education and care of children in residential environments.

Chaplain and Freeman express concern for staff working in residential settings, with young people whose behaviour may be as disturbed as it is disturbing. They support the effort and commitment of those involved in trying to help and effect change in young people in difficulties, whose experience, qualifications and training are for the most part minimal and whose managers seem indifferent to their plight. The writers concern is also for the young people themselves. The "abused" and the "abusers", the "acting out" . . . and "the withdrawn", all mixed together in some specialist residential provision. It is their contention that the institutions themselves exacerbate the problems faced by residents by adding "institutional stressors" to personal and interpersonal ones.

The book is based upon research which is phenomenological, in that it uses the participants' descriptions of their own experiences as the data. The adoption of this approach provides us with a very readable tome and one through which we begin to understand the world of those studied "through their eyes". It might be argued that the empirical basis is weakened by the knowledge that the authors theorizing is formulated upon data collected from only four specialist residential settings. However, this must not be allowed to detract from the book's positive aspects. It explodes a myth that interventions

in the lives of young people are organized and planned and emphasises the need for policy makers and senior service managers to facilitate a co-ordinated interagency response towards meeting the needs of children in their care.

Derek John Norton.

Appendix 3:

Copies of submitted published work

Appendix 3.1: Item 1

CHAPLAIN, R. (2016). Stress, coping and teacher well-being. In R. Chaplain, *Teaching without disruption in the primary school: A practical approach to managing pupil behaviour* (2nd ed., pp.30-52). London: Routledge.

Chapter 2

Stress, coping and teacher well-being

The focus of this chapter is on how to maintain and enhance teacher well-being by explaining how to develop effective strategies to cope with perceived stressors. Armchair conjecture suggests teacher stress has negative effects on well-being but the evidence shows this is not inevitable. Being subjected to excessive demands and feeling unable to cope can make some people ill, but stress can also be a motivator – the spice of life! By understanding how the stress and coping process works, teachers can develop proactive and less cognitive-demanding coping strategies. As with stress and coping, definitions of well-being are wide-ranging and often nebulous. In this chapter the focus is on psychological well-being which is experienced as a positive emotional state, the product of maintaining a balance between situational factors, organisational factors and personal factors – all of which are developed throughout the book.

Stress in schools

Over thirty years ago, the International Labour Organisation (1982) highlighted teacher stress as a 'steadily growing problem'. Almost 20 years later, the National Union of Teachers argued that 'Stress is one of the biggest problems facing teachers today' (NUT, 2000). In a comparative survey of all professions, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found teaching was the most stressful occupation (HSE, 2000). The HSE later classified stress as health-related and issued guidance to employers (HSE, 2001) requiring them to ensure that their employees' health is not harmed by work-related stress. The HSE went on to produce guidelines for developing the competencies required for managers to prevent and reduce stress at work and support their staff. These were: consideration; integrity; managing emotions; communication, empowerment and problem solving; managing conflict; sociability and empathy – interestingly the very qualities necessary to produce a positive classroom environment. Thus the onus is on managers and employers to make sure that their staff are sufficiently resilient and supported to cope with the pressures of their work.

Labelling teaching as a stress-ridden profession can be destructive for both experienced and prospective teachers. Doing so can create self-fulfilling prophecies since if:

teachers read frequent reports that teaching is stressful and start to believe it. As a result perhaps, normal upsets that are part of most jobs become mislabelled as chronic, inherent stressors, and a vicious circle begins that results in a higher incidence of self-reported stress.

(Hiebet and Farber, 1984: 20)

Stress continues to attract the interest of many research and professional groups, with hundreds of articles appearing in journals aimed at teachers, psychologists and health professionals. There is extensive evidence established over many years which has repeatedly identified pupil behaviour as a major contributor to teacher stress, affecting the well-being of both trainee and qualified teachers (e.g. Chaplain, 1995, 2008; Head *et al.*, 1996; Hart, 1987; Tsouloupas, 2010; Zeidner, 1988). Merrett and Wheidall (1992) suggested that the low priority given to teaching trainees classroom management skills, was a major contributor to stress levels. Their concern continues to ring true as Taylor pointed out: 'The greatest fear trainee teachers have is that they won't be able to manage behaviour' (TTA, 2012). Some studies have reported that teacher trainee stress associated with behaviour management does not decline as they progress through their in-school experiences (Burn *et al.*, 2003; Capel, 1997) which may well contribute to the high numbers of trainees failing to complete their training (Smithers and Robinson, 2000) and to those who leave teaching within a few years (Jarvis, 2002). Kyriacou and Kunc, discussing the issue of trainee and teacher attrition reported that, 'in England, about 40% of those who embark on a training course (on all routes) never become teachers, and of those who do become teachers, about 40% are not teaching 5 years later' (2007: 1). They also found that teachers leaving the profession within a few years of qualifying, identified disruptive pupils as a key concern – an observation which remains unchanged (e.g. Wilshaw, 2014).

Stress in schools is not just about individual teacher qualities. It concerns the interaction between the individual and the organisation and is multi-level in nature. Stress at the organisational and structural level can result from: ineffective management (Torrington and Weightman, 1989); lack of communication; poor working environment; excessive workloads (Kyriacou, 2001); staffing levels; lack of support; time pressures and lack of resources; job demands; role strain, role ambiguity and role conflict (Bacharach *et al.*, 1986); or, in more global terms, through negative organisational culture and climate. Most of these stressors are not peculiar to schools and can be found in any organisation.

At the interpersonal level, lack of *perceived* support from colleagues and senior staff can make coping more difficult, since social support correlates negatively with stress. According to Sarason *et al.* (1990) the higher the level of perceived

social support, the lower the level of stress. Believing support is available, prepared and capable of helping in the form of materials, lesson cover, advice or just an adult to have a chat with, can combat feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

Murray-Harvey *et al.* (2000) reported that mentors supervising trainee teachers had two contrasting functions – first as principal coping strategy (support, advice) and second, paradoxically, as a potential stressor, because of the supervisor's role in assessing trainee performance. As Merrett and Wheldall (1992) concluded, the chances of a trainee finding him/herself in a welcoming school, with supportive teachers, cooperative pupils and a skilled, well-informed and appropriately experienced mentor were uncertain, adding to the stresses of joining the profession.

The perceived quality of interpersonal relationships with pupils, can also be both the greatest source of job satisfaction but also a major source of stress. As Klassen *et al.* pointed out, 'Teaching is a unique occupation in its emphasis on establishing long-term meaningful connections with the clients of the work environment (i.e. pupils) at a depth that may not be found in other professions' (2012: 151). They concluded that emotional involvement with pupils in the classroom is driven by teachers' basic psychological need for relatedness and where this is undermined by conflict, it causes stress (*ibid.*). Teachers are required to engage in direct continuous social interaction with pupils and their emotions, but with strict rules governing teachers' own emotional reactions in such interactions. Consider for example, dealing with an aggressive, threatening or challenging pupil whilst containing your own frustration or anger at being on the receiving end of abuse – something demanding what Morris and Feldman called the 'effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions' (1996: 987). Teacher-pupil conflict can reduce teachers' efficacy beliefs and worse lead to helplessness, negatively affecting teacher socio-emotional well-being (Spilt *et al.*, 2011).

So whilst positive feedback from pupils raises levels of job satisfaction, where it is negative can make excessive demands on coping, notably when having to spend time managing disruptive pupils at the expense of teaching (Kalker, 1984). Baumeister *et al.* (2001) reported that negative experiences (e.g. negative emotions; negative feedback) have a greater impact and are more powerful than positive ones. Negative information is processed more thoroughly in the brain than positive information, so leaves a stronger emotional footprint and has a greater potential long-term effect on well-being.

Many studies of occupational stress fail to acknowledge pressures beyond school, which can significantly influence coping and well-being. Galloway *et al.* (1985) reported that one in six teachers questioned said they suffered extreme stress from their families, and one in seven reported stress from financial worries. The interplay between home and work was shown in a study by Syrotuik and D'Arcy (1984) who found levels of social support from spouses were inversely related to stress among individuals with high-pressure jobs. Despite the stressful nature of their jobs, social support from spouses or partners could buffer negative

work effects. However, expectations of teachers in terms of commitment, preparation and marking outside school hours, which encroaches on personal lives, along with poor career and salary structures, has the potential to create disharmony in some households and leave people feeling unsupported.

Personal resources or vulnerabilities either facilitate or impede coping. An individual with appropriate resources and weak constraints develops adaptive coping strategies, which results in having a healthier psychological and physical well-being (Jerusalem, 1993). Nonetheless, as teachers progress through their careers factors considered responsible for stress change. Some have suggested that stress in training should be regarded as a normal part of teacher development (Murray-Harvey *et al.*, 2000). Others suggest that new entrants to the profession will experience more stress than their older and/or more experienced colleagues (Coates and Thoresen, 1976). Whilst new entrants may well experience some anxiety as they adjust to a new role, more experienced teachers have been found to experience stress in relation to their career and perceived obsolescence (Laughlin, 1984; Chaplain, 1995). At the beginning of their careers, teachers' concerns are directed inward, to issues concerned with survival and protecting the self, which has been linked with stress (Chaplain and Freeman, 1996). In contrast, experienced teachers tend to be more pupil-focused, concerned with empowering and developing them holistically (Fuller, 1969). Smilansky (1984) however, found that *more* competent teachers reported higher levels of stress since they felt more pressured to ensure higher levels of performance, which could be difficult to live up to. Hence, just as concerns change with age and experience, so do stressors.

At the personal level, a range of dispositional characteristics have been shown to influence levels of stress and well-being. Individual characteristics implicated in these processes include: type A personality (Cinelli and Ziegler, 1990); self-efficacy (Schwarzer, 1992); locus of control (Steptoe and Appels, 1989); extraversion (Hills and Norvell, 1991); self-esteem (Brockner, 1988); sense of humour (Martin and Dobbin, 1988); assertiveness (Braun, 1989); and hardiness (Funk, 1992). However, their ability to predict coping has been challenged because accurately isolating and measuring single characteristics, and controlling for the effects of overlaps between some of the constructs, is problematic (Burchfield, 1985; Schaubroeck and Ganster, 1991). It is well established that individual differences can affect how people approach or cope with stress but there is no complete explanation of the stress and coping process.

In conclusion, stress or the ability to cope cannot be explained solely in terms of organisational effects, although certain organisations do generate stressful conditions whilst others are supportive. Similarly it cannot be explained purely in terms of interpersonal relationships, nor individual characteristics. Nonetheless, certain 'types' of individuals appear more prone to stress than others. Separating individual differences from context is unwise because of the transactional nature of stress. The balance between the two, the associated emotional state and coping strategies used, moderates the level of an individual's well-being.

What is stress?

Contemporary definitions of stress and coping highlight the centrality of a psychological dimension. In doing so, account is taken of how individuals interpret their worlds differently, which affects their experience of stress and how they cope. Within most psychologically based definitions, cognitive appraisal is seen as an important element. Hence, the degree to which something in our lives is stressful or not depends on: how we perceive or interpret it; to what extent we appraise it a potential or actual threat; along with what resources we perceive are available to help us to cope with it. An imbalance between perceived stress and resources determines whether we consider ourselves stressed, distressed or coping.

To understand the relationship between stress, coping and pupil behaviour many psychologists refer to an interactive or transactional model of stress. Lazarus (1966) argued that an event could only be considered stressful if perceived as such by an individual. He emphasises the importance of mental activity (cognition) in what he refers to as 'transactions' with the environment – individuals both *influence* and *respond* to their environments. Stress is experienced when the magnitude of stressors exceeds the person's ability to resist them. In response, the coping individual either changes themselves or their environment (or both) in order to counter the stressors. This relationship is interdependent, dynamic and reciprocal.

A number of developments and changes have been made to Lazarus's original model, both in terms of stress generally and more specifically in respect of teaching (e.g. Sutherland and Cooper, 1991). It is to a cognitive model of stress and coping, developed by Freeman and Chaplain (Freeman, 1988; Chaplain and Freeman, 1996) that I now turn to explore stress and coping in schools.

Thinking, feelings and behaviour

Stress is about thinking (cognition), feelings (emotions) and behaviour. Someone who is stressed will have thought about and interpreted an event, experienced some emotions and will probably behave differently to normal. Whereas Lazarus emphasised the role of thinking (cognition) and its 'transaction' with the environment in his explanation of stress, Kyriacou highlights the emotional component of the process:

The experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions such as frustration, anxiety, anger and depression, resulting from aspects of his or her work as a teacher.

(1997: 156)

Chaplain and Freeman incorporated all three elements, highlighting the role of individual differences and changes over time:

Stress is a negative feeling state which has both psychological and physical components. It is experienced as an assault on 'self'. Stress is not consistent between individuals, nor stable over time.

(1996: 40)

What constitutes an assault to the self is down to the interpretation of the individual teacher. For example, it could be perceived as being directed toward a teacher's professional self – that their teaching competence is being questioned; or their social self – being made to look stupid in front of others; or personal self – a comment about their looks. The self comprises of, in part, a set of goals which are apparent in ongoing behaviour, many of which are experienced socially, and stress can result from these shared experiences being interrupted (Millar *et al.*, 1988). An example of this is when disruptive pupils disturb the shared goals of teachers and 'on task' pupils, increasing coping demands on both parties.

In neurological terms, any potential threat to 'self' is perceived by and symbolised in several neural regions (including the amygdala) which are believed to make up a basic 'neural alarm system'. This system is considered responsible for perceiving and producing a coordinated response to stressful events (Eisenberger, 2012). In contrast to stress, teacher well-being is associated with a positive feeling state and minimally requires two crucial ingredients – positive affect or pleasure and a sense of meaningfulness or engagement in life, the neural mechanisms of which are believed to be distributed about the brain including hotspots in the limbic system (Berridge and Kringelbach, 2011).

Comparing the psychological components of both definitions of stress and well-being highlights the importance of the interpretation and appraisal process, which is central to experiencing different emotions (Power and Dalglish, 2007).

Cognition, emotion and behaviour are interlinked. For example, a pupil continually disrupts a lesson, which the teacher *interprets* as deliberate and directed towards her. She may initially feel anger toward the pupil, which is likely to be mediated through body position, facial expression and language. Anger, a moral emotion, is a response to personal offence which results from attributing blame to another person for a wrongdoing (Power and Dalglish, 2007). If later, on reflection, she concludes that the lesson could have been better prepared and more interesting, her emotional reaction might be guilt or shame which are social emotions (*ibid*). Cognition and emotion are not the only mental activities which influence what is perceived as a stressor, as there is another member of the psychological trilogy – motivation. Who or what we blame for our stress affects the degree to which we persevere with a task (Hewstone, 1989). If, for example, a teacher attributes a pupil's misbehaviour to internal, unchangeable and uncontrollable causes (e.g. genetic) she may see little value in persevering to change that pupil's behaviour.

Levels of coping

How we cope depends on how we interpret and appraise potential stressors and resources and how that appraisal makes us feel and behave. Alternatively, how we feel can affect what we select to appraise and give attention to in the first place. If we are feeling sad or depressed, we are likely to attend to negative behaviours and if we are feeling happy, more likely to attend to positive behaviours (Calder and Gruder, 1988).

Not all coping results from deliberate attention (conscious activity): some is carried out automatically or unconsciously (Kihlstrom, 1999). One measure of an individual's competence is the degree to which they can cope or solve problems with minimal conscious attention, i.e. 'automatically' (Power and Brewin, 1991). Automaticity is demonstrated by competent individuals who, with seemingly little effort, solve problems or sustain coping with difficult situations over time, hence, are resilient. In contrast, the less competent individual would need to engage more deliberately with a problem in order to find a solution, which is a slower and more inefficient process.

A coping teacher is able to integrate cognitive, emotional and physical activity to manage a class apparently without effort. Her body language, what she says and how she says it project confidence and authority. Expressing appropriate emotions, interacting with pupils, focusing primarily on positive features but quickly perceptive to changes such as early indicators of pupils 'sliding' off task or unacceptable behaviour, and responding with a little fine tuning here and there to keep pupils engaged with learning. Yet, in the same school there may be colleagues who seem to have to work flat out, are hurried and overwhelmed and who struggle to maintain a reasonable level of order. How might we explain these differences, given that they share a similar environment and are similarly trained? Can it be put down to personal qualities and are these qualities inherent or learned? Some people have attributes well-suited to particular activities, such as their physical build, manual dexterity or social skills. Others appear able to organise and reflect on their thinking more easily than others. Some seem to flourish in environments that others feel sick even thinking about. These and other differences highlight the multiplicity of factors involved in trying to unravel how people differ in their response to pressure and how to support them when their responses are ineffective.

People can start to improve their coping skills by redefining the way in which they view the world and how they interact with it. By analysing their resources, developing their knowledge and skills; seeking appropriate support and reflecting upon how they perceive and solve problems, they can extend their repertoire of coping skills. If these skills are effective and practiced (overlearned) they can become automatic, reducing the amount of mental energy required to use them.

A number of cognitive and motor skills, initially carried out deliberately or consciously, can be made automatic through overlearning, after which we have

no direct introspective access (conscious awareness). For example, learning to drive a car begins with focused thinking, even talking aloud to guide behaviour until automatic. Once established we cannot reflect *directly* on the procedures or mental operations involved. Asking an experienced competent teacher how he manages behaviour so easily and effortlessly often results in him finding it hard to explain, because many of his actions are habitual – often resulting in the conclusion they must have special qualities. However, in reality they will have learnt, memorised, redefined and modified, incorporating what they have been taught and observed, initially in a very deliberate and planned way, before, over time, it became automatic. Understanding the history of their learning experiences and identifying how they influenced the final behaviour, thinking and emotional reactions becomes extremely difficult.

A dual process model of coping

Chaplain and Freeman (1996) offer an architecture to explain how: coping occurs at two levels; coping teachers differ from those who are not coping and; the various personal, situational and organisational and interpersonal dimensions might influence the coping process (see Figure 2.1). In this model, understanding how levels of thinking interact with the different mediating factors is the key to understanding stress and coping. The following section considers some of these issues.

The model presents two levels of thinking which reflect different theorised systems, explained by reference to a metaphor of the functional relationship between executives and workers in an organisation or, BOSS (executive system) and EMPLOYEE (automatic system). These terms were adopted from Hampson and Morris (1989) and share features of other dual process models in social and cognitive psychology (e.g. Evans, 2008) and which inform our judgements, decisions and behaviour. References to other variants can be found elsewhere in this volume.

In simple terms, employee systems operate at the *non-conscious* automatic level, for example, perception and memory. They are fast and include routine processes which rely on mental shortcuts (heuristics) whose operation we find hard to explain but use continually in routine everyday activities. Examples of non-conscious processes include a range of actions developed by teachers over time and carried out without having to think about them. Triggered by a cue that is salient to the current context, stored knowledge and/or emotional reactions associated with that cue, are automatically accessed. For example, a teacher using facial expression and eye contact to redirect potential disruptive behaviour. The learning of this association is through repeated practice over a long time (Evans, 2008). Once activated, these knowledge structures, and associated emotions, can further affect an individual's thoughts, feelings, or overt behaviours. For example, the first time a novice teacher experiences a defiant pupil refusing to work may invoke an ineffective response, since they

have not acquired the requisite knowledge and developed effective responses. Even having acquired a new response, a teacher may regress to a previous automatic ineffective response when under pressure, if the new response is not overlearned.

In contrast, higher level cognitive activities (e.g. planning) are controlled by BOSS systems which require *conscious* intentional activity, are slow, flexible and responsive to novelty (see Figure 2.1). For example, organising an educational trip to London for 30 Year 1 pupils would require considerable planning. The two systems, the theory suggests, usually interact seamlessly to determine behaviour, but sometimes compete. The head cancelling your non-contact time for the third week in a row may make you want to give her a piece of your mind, but an upcoming promotion may make you think twice!

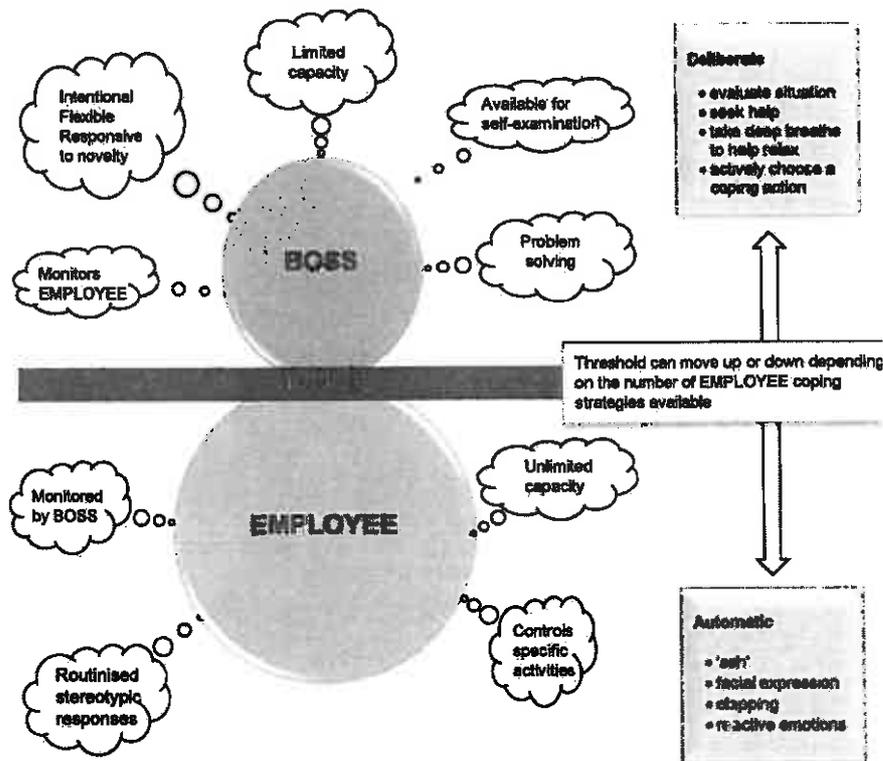


Figure 2.1 The cognitive architecture of BOSS and EMPLOYEE systems

Note

The size of the two systems in the diagram symbolise the relative capacity of each – EMPLOYEE having the more extensive capacity but only dealing with routinised behaviour. The threshold distinguishes the two different types of coping and changes depending on internal and external conditions. If you are feeling unwell (internal) you may be preoccupied with your health, which, takes up BOSS processing capacity limiting its availability for other problem-solving activity.

Whether or not a person becomes consciously aware of an event depends on the level of attention BOSS systems pay to particular incoming information, their active knowledge of that information and their current state. In the classroom, whether or not we choose to respond to the behaviour of a particular pupil, amongst the mass of information reaching our ears, eyes and nose, will be influenced by: previous experience; how we are feeling; whether we have been primed (positively or negatively) in advance; which behaviours we are generally sensitised to; plus any other things demanding our attention. Whilst it is possible to close our eyes and concentrate on sounds, smells and bodily sensations, these sensations usually encroach minimally on conscious awareness. When the executive system (BOSS) takes in information, it restructures and re-organises it and decides whether to process it further, store it or discard it. This manipulation of information occurs at many levels, from simple images to how we represent the world.

The point at which coping changes from BOSS to EMPLOYEE and vice versa is called the *threshold* (Freeman, 1988). The coping teacher has a large repertoire of automatic coping responses so has a high threshold, hence the longer it takes before having to engage in conscious coping, minimising demands on BOSS. The poor copier has a low threshold, requiring them to make more regular demands on BOSS in order to cope. The threshold is dynamic for both effective and ineffective copiers. Various issues can influence its upward or downward movement. Consider the following example of a teacher's working day (see Table 2.1).

The example illustrates how levels of coping can fluctuate over even short periods of time. Feeling good in your personal life is no guarantee of feeling likewise at work and vice versa, but each can influence the other quite markedly.

BOSS is also responsible for monitoring EMPLOYEE systems – to make sure everything is working OK. If you thought you saw your partner in the street and asked them what they fancied for lunch, only to discover it was a stranger, you might decide to visit an optician, as one of your EMPLOYEE systems is not functioning correctly. In the present model, stress is experienced when BOSS systems decide we are *not* coping, usually when overlearned non-conscious coping strategies have been identified as unsuccessful (an example is provided in Figure 2.2).

Automatic coping is the norm, since most people cope with various difficulties with little or no apparent conscious regard for them. To cope effectively people tend to select activities which they enjoy and in which they are usually successful. However, it usually becomes painfully obvious if our strategies and actions are not working as we become alerted to feeling stressed, i.e. not coping. We might pause, try to select carefully what we say, take deep breaths to control our heart rate to mask signs of anxiety, and look for support from others. In this way, coping becomes an intention, of which we are fully conscious (i.e. BOSS level). BOSS however, has limited processing capacity

Table 2.1 Everyday BOSS and EMPLOYEE coping in school

Time	Event	Appraisal	Coping or not coping	Emotional state
0800	Start the day on a high, having just received a tax rebate	Life is great! Now I can afford a new iPad – will take my husband out this evening for a meal!	Coping	Happy
1130	Have a great morning and my class is really responsive. One or two pupils are a little excitable but I deal with them quickly	Teaching is really satisfying, the children are enthusiastic and this is a subject I enjoy	Normal coping mainly automatic (EMPLOYEE)	Happy
1315	During lunch find a group of pupils playing with matches on the playground. Two of the boys become verbally abusive in front of a large group of children and some parents	I am very unhappy with this behaviour. Arguing and threatening when caught is pushing the limits and especially embarrassing in public	Coping but requiring more BOSS level thinking to resolve conflict and deal with aggression, feeling a little stressed	Irritated and angry
1400	Report incident to head who arranges to meet with the pupils and myself at 4.00pm to discuss situation	Could have done without meeting at that time, as I have to pick up my husband from work	Coping (still using BOSS) with pupil problem but have to negotiate with my husband to alter pick up time. Head is likely to keep me there until turned 5.00pm, not normally a problem – I could tell him about my date, but I am applying for promotion	Frustrated

Time	Event	Appraisal	Coping or not coping	Emotional state
1430	The deputy head asks me (again) to keep an eye on her group (a regular occurrence when she is 'teaching')	I am getting sick of this. It is becoming more regular and whilst school is open plan and I am next door, she has a number of difficult pupils in her class who take some watching – she has no consideration for others. Tonight's date looks like being a disaster	Struggling a little to cope (still using BOSS), quite annoyed at pupils, colleagues and deputy head – I feel really put upon	Angry
1530	Boys involved in incident come to the classroom and apologise. I give them a number of jobs to complete over the next week and tell them I will be speaking with their parents, which they accept without an argument	Feeling a little better, don't need to go through drawn out discussion with head. Just need to avoid him. If I tell him I have dealt with the situation he will end up telling me his life story. I will send him an email	Can get back to winding up this lesson (using EMPLOYEE), pupils respond well to this routine. I can also go back to thinking about spending my windfall, having a nice meal and start smiling again	Relieved and happy

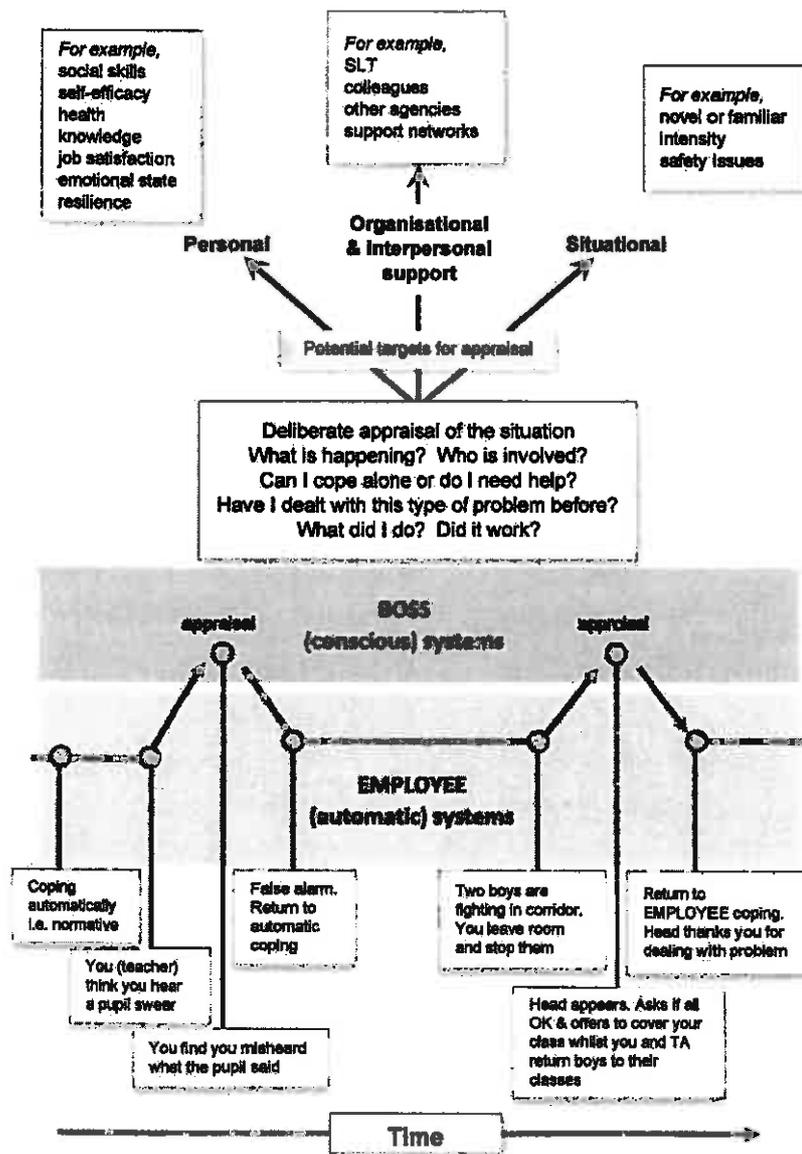


Figure 2.2 Interactive model of coping

Note

The figure shows how coping might move between conscious (BOSS) and automatic (EMPLOYEE) over a short period of time. Only two events are shown, but in reality there will be multiple things being coped with simultaneously in EMPLOYEE mode. It is only when we become aware that something is not how it should be we activate BOSS mode. How we then cope depends on our appraisal of the nature of the event and whether we believe we have the resources available (personal, interpersonal, organisational) to cope.

and so is more restricted in the number of procedures it can carry out at any one time. Try multiplying 54 by 13 in your head whilst reading this page to see what I mean! Hence, overreliance of BOSS to cope with trivia leaves people feeling unable to think about other important issues.

The best copers tend to have a large repertoire of automatic coping strategies (EMPLOYEE), relieving pressure on BOSS. Poor copers and novices are more aware of having to make a conscious effort to cope (i.e. extensively use BOSS) because they have a limited number of effective overlearned automatic strategies. Making a conscious effort to cope, and find ways to 'survive' minor disruption reduces available processing capacity in BOSS. In the classroom the poor copers are aware that they are not managing their pupils' behaviour and make effort to solve more 'crises', limiting attention to thinking about teaching, making lessons less interesting and making matters worse.

Whilst poor copers will have automatic responses to managing behaviour they are usually ineffective, such as overuse of avoidance or arguing with pupils. Many of these responses, developed in childhood, continue into adulthood but remain unchanged and immature, for example, shouting, bullying, running away and sulking. Since they are activated automatically people are unaware they are using them unless they take time to consciously reflect, appraise and modify them which is difficult during a lesson!

I have, on a number of occasions, observed teachers trying to reduce the noise level in their classes by repeatedly using commonly recognised instructions such as 'Be quiet' or 'Stop talking' but seemingly unaware that the pupils are not taking a blind bit of notice. Despite this they carry on, often increasing the frequency and/or volume to little or no avail. When told about this they often do not believe it until they see themselves on video. Other behaviours can result in similar outcomes e.g. shouting, clapping, blowing whistles and so on. This is not to suggest that such techniques do not work for many teachers. I certainly support maximising triggers to cue routines or responses from pupils, provided they are working – which means monitoring pupils' responses, not making assumptions. Many behaviours and expressions that come naturally and which are used automatically often work well, however, they can become inappropriate or redundant. Again, monitoring can be enlightening and helpful in developing new ways of working.

Amongst a large staff group it is probable that some will, at times, use immature ineffective strategies in order to cope, but until they become aware of doing so, and take action to extend their repertoire, effective coping will likely not be forthcoming. For some, this will only occur after they have become angry or dealt with a situation badly. Therefore, some automatic coping strategies create more stress and upset, *not* because we intended to use them *but* because they were activated before we became aware of them.

In sum, a lack of coping at EMPLOYEE level usually comes to BOSS's attention through cognitive appraisal or feedback from others. Therefore coping precedes stress, since stress is awareness of not coping. At that point

BOSS systems take over and plan how to deal with the problem and monitor/control emotional functioning. EMPLOYEE functions continue to be monitored by BOSS as long as it is not overloaded. New ways of dealing with novel situations, if practiced, can become EMPLOYEE strategies.

Appraising stressful events

What is actually appraised will vary from event to event and from individual to individual, for example, what constitutes a threat will differ from class to class, pupil to pupil and where in school the event is taking place. Dealing with an aggressive Year 6 pupil in a hidden area of the school car park whilst surrounded by a group of his friends *may* be perceived as more threatening than dealing with him in a corridor with a colleague nearby.

Figure 2.2 shows the three principal sources of stress i.e. perceived personal inadequacy, external impediments and situational threats that are the usual targets for appraisal. Within these three headings the range of possibilities is almost limitless because of the interplay between individual and context. What follows are some not exhaustive examples of the potential influence different factors may have on coping.

Situational variables

The first response after becoming aware you are not coping is usually to consider the immediate situation, to confirm whether: you have read and understood it correctly; to what extent it poses a threat; and the degree to which it is novel or familiar to you. If it is novel then you may, at first, be alarmed or shocked as to why it has occurred and the initial emotional reaction may require you to consider how to react. Coping with the unexpected can result in people reacting inappropriately when emotions are running high, because they have not previously considered or rehearsed how to cope with it. However, it is also possible to mishandle the familiar since a teacher and a pupil(s) may have fallen into a ritualised negative cycle, which is reinforcing the undesired behaviour. Always making a disruptive pupil work with a TA may be something the pupil quite enjoys, providing him/her with an incentive to misbehave! The message here is twofold – on the one hand anticipating possible changes and being proactive in preparing for how to deal with them; on the other reviewing the strategies you use regularly but which may be creating problems for you.

Organisational variables

Organisational support can provide a framework for supporting teachers dealing with managing behaviour. However, a classroom teacher, unless in a management role, may have limited control over a number of organisational

variables. Nonetheless, teachers are likely to cope more effectively with behaviour management if they:

- believe that the school's rewards and sanctions are effective and that they are empowered to make full use of them all;
- perceive the leadership team as supportive, available and committed to professional development in respect of behaviour management and minimising unnecessary pressure on teachers;
- work in a school with a strong social identity which acts as a buffer to stress;
- perceive colleagues are willing and in a position to offer appropriate social support;
- are provided with necessary resources;
- have pleasant working conditions – preferably spacious, well-ventilated/heated and decorated rooms;
- believe communication systems are appropriate, accessible and effective;
- work at a school which encourages open, non-judgemental discussion of stress and behaviour management, as opposed to viewing stress as a personal weakness on the part of a teacher;
- receive positive feedback for their efforts.

Interpersonal variables

Relationships with colleagues, managers and pupils can provide support or raise stress levels. A number of researchers have proposed that social support is a buffer to stress (e.g. Cobb, 1976; Frese, 1999). In his study of trainee teachers, Chan (2002) suggested that social support might be regarded as a resource or protective factor and *could* also serve as a buffer mitigating the effects of stress. However, other researchers have questioned the role of social support in helping people cope. Stansfeld *et al.* (1997) for example, suggested that social support did not act as a buffer for stress. Such contradictions highlight the complex and multi-dimensional nature of social support in terms of structure, function and how it changes over time (Kahn and Antonucci, 1980) and therefore differs in its power to alleviate stress. Cassidy (1999) suggests that having a social network is more important than functional social support. Different types of social support (emotional, instrumental, esteem, intergroup; see Table 2.2) are believed to operate as buffers, if matched to specific types of stress (Cohen and Wills, 1985).

The importance of making this distinction was made clear by Cutrona and Russell, 'we encourage researchers to distinguish between tangible and informational forms of support and between expressions of caring and respect for competence as distinct types of emotional support' (1990: 360). Again it is understanding the interaction between the individual and their environment and how this changes which holds the key to understanding stress and coping.

Table 2.2 Functions of social support

Category of social support	Function	Type of stress buffered
Emotional	Someone to turn to for comfort	Unexpected events which are usually emotionally charged e.g. pupil being violent in class
Instrumental	Practical advice and tangible support	Expected events e.g. preparing to teach a difficult class
Esteem	Recognition of effort or competence being valued by others	Stress following prolonged period of pressure e.g. taking a difficult pupil into your class to relieve pressure on other teachers
Inter-group	Colleagues with shared professional interests	Sharing teaching methods, developing new initiatives to support teachers and pupils

Personal variables

Personal characteristics are often proposed as a key to effective coping and much popular advice on coping with stress suggests for example, developing a healthy lifestyle; being more assertive; skills and knowledge; and enhancing self-efficacy and the like – some of which are discussed elsewhere in this book. However, whilst the value of individual strengths is salient, it is equally important to remember that a teacher exists within a complex hierarchy of nested systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), some of which he/she has direct control over whilst others are more abstract. A wide variety of personal characteristics have been found to relate to levels of stress (see Figure 2.2) but the focus in this chapter is on self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is an individual's beliefs about their capabilities to execute and regulate important events in their lives which influences a person's choice of what they undertake or avoid (Bandura, 1981). If you do not believe that you have the capability or status to manage an aggressive, challenging pupil, why bother trying? However, individuals with high self-efficacy, take on challenges and persist longer when faced with a problem.

In respect of stress and coping, Maier *et al.* (1985) argued that it is not stressful life conditions that determine whether an experience will be detrimental but the degree to which an individual *believes* they are capable of coping with the stressor. People experience lower levels of anxiety from threats they believe they can control. High self-efficacy then acts as a buffer to negative stress and fosters positive appraisals of difficult situations (Carver and Scheier, 1988).

Self-efficacy is considered to be both a (personality) trait (Barfield and Burlingame, 1974) and a state, i.e. a response to a specific situation (Ashton and Webb, 1986). The development of self-efficacy is complex and begins in

childhood through self-appraisal skills which inform self-knowledge and self-regulation. As an individual gets older self-efficacy continues to be influential in how he/she copes with various life transitions (e.g. home to school, school to work, job to job) and feedback from significant others. Self-efficacy results from the interaction between: personal factors (e.g. physical, psychological); behaviour (e.g. verbal, nonverbal) and environmental factors (e.g. social, situational).

Self-efficacy can be general or specific to particular activities (such as teacher-efficacy). Teachers' efficacy beliefs have a critical influence on their performance and motivation (Bandura, 1997). High efficacy teachers tend to be more relaxed and more trusting of pupils, experience less disruption in class and behaviour management is more positive and more successful (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

However, whilst individual teacher efficacy is important, so too is collective teacher efficacy which Goddard *et al.* (2000) define as teachers' beliefs about the collective (not individual) capability of a staff group to influence pupil outcomes. In other words the degree to which the staff of a school believe their efforts will result in positive outcomes for pupils. Klassen (2010) argues that support intended to assist teachers in managing pupil behaviour should not be solely directed at developing individual capabilities, but also address building collective beliefs about managing pupil behaviour, i.e. the mindset of the staff as a group. In his study of teachers' attributions for misbehaviour, Miller (2003) highlighted the role of the collective staff group (staffroom culture) in contextualising individual teachers' beliefs about their ability to manage children's behaviour successfully.

Mastery experiences are the most important contributor to the development of efficacy beliefs amongst both novice and experienced teachers (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Other contributors include observing others, emotion regulation and advice from others (Bandura, 1997). The latter is particularly susceptible to the prevalent attitudes that a school's staff collectively hold and communicate about how to cope with certain groups of children. This can influence the beliefs of individual teachers (Jordan and Stanovich, 2003), especially early in their careers.

Teacher efficacy operates at the personal and institutional level in schools and the effects on teachers' performance and well-being are well established in the literature as Bandura pointed out:

Many teachers find themselves beleaguered day in and day out by disruptive and non-achieving pupils. Eventually their low sense of efficacy to fulfil academic demands takes a stressful toll. Teachers who lack a secure sense of institutional efficacy show weak commitment to teaching, spend less time in subject matters in their areas of perceived inefficacy, and devote less overall to academic matters. ... They are especially prone to occupational burnout ... a syndrome of reactions to chronic occupational

stressors that include physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation of the people one is serving and feelings of utility concerning personal accomplishments.

(1995: 20)

Organisational conditions which undermine teachers' professional self-efficacy include limited professional development, heavy workloads, poor prospects and an unsatisfying imbalance between their work life and personal life (McAteer-Early, 1992).

Teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy are vulnerable to difficult situations because they often worry about their level of competence, have low expectations, experience strong negative emotional reactions, feel criticism is directed at their self-worth and tend to accept criticism for failure more readily than praise for success. This can have a knock-on effect on pupils in a similar way, creating an overall negative classroom environment. Gibson and Dembo (1984) found that teachers who have high instructional efficacy empower their pupils to master their learning whereas those with low efficacy undermine their pupils' efficacy and cognitive development.

Low self-efficacy can be improved by attention to issues at personal, interpersonal and institutional levels. For example, forcing yourself to take recuperative breaks from emotionally taxing work by not always taking work home all the time and stopping ruminative thinking. Bandura (1997) and Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1985) suggest that those who work this way and who convince themselves that there is no time to rest, or feel they are too tired after work to engage in leisure pursuits do not usually welcome such advice. Bandura (1997) recommends a guided mastery programme to help them gain control of their lives to alleviate pressure. However, this is not likely to be sufficient since the difficulties are not just at the individual level, as previously discussed, and so intervention is also required to prevent organisational demands undermining teachers' efficacy. Teachers need some control over matters which affect their working lives and ownership of schooling as well as classroom process. In appraising their effectiveness teachers should focus primarily on those features over which they have control. Being realistic about what you can and cannot control, acquiring knowledge about how to manage behaviour and mastering the requisite skills rather than relying on 'luck' may seem obvious. However this is often not the case, especially among inexperienced teachers. For example, Weinstein (1988) found that trainee teachers had unrealistic optimism in thinking that the problems others experienced managing pupil behaviour would not be a problem for them. Furthermore, Emmer and Aussiker (1990) found that even when trainee teachers had experienced difficulty managing classes, they still held unrealistic beliefs about their capability to manage behaviour.

Balancing stressors and resources to improve well-being

In order to develop new ways to enhance coping and well-being Chaplain and Freeman (1996) developed the individual coping analysis (ICAN) model (see Figure 2.3). It is used to analyse the (im)balance between stressors and resources to provide a basis for developing new ways of doing things including raising self-efficacy.

The analysis is intended to be ongoing, not just a one-off activity, since stressors and resources can change roles over time, stressors becoming resources and vice versa because of changes to ourselves and our environment. One example of this might be professional commitment or enthusiasm. Teachers are expected to be committed to their work and indeed many interviewees are looking for evidence of this when making appointments. In practice, demonstrating one's commitment or enthusiasm often includes: completing work outside official hours (e.g. marking, preparation); supplementing equipment from personal funds, supporting trips and sports activities beyond the working week. If this commitment leads to success in gaining a job or promotion then it might be considered a resource. However, if this commitment leads to a teacher (or head teacher) spending more and more time at work or engaged in work related activities and less and less time at home or with his/her friends and family, it can lead to difficulties at the personal and/or interpersonal level (i.e. become a stressor). In the case of the latter, if those close to you feel marginalised and neglected then there is a danger of losing valuable social support. As one teacher sadly informed me:

I get home from work by around 5.00 pm absolutely tired out. Then I often have two or three hours of marking or preparation to do. Meals at home tend to be convenience or take away. I used to really enjoy cooking and doing the garden but it doesn't happen anymore. My husband also works hard but can't understand why I have to spend so much additional time preparing and marking. He says I am turning him into a 'curriculum widower'. We never even manage to get to the gym together now, despite planning to do so. I really love teaching but this is not helping my marriage at all.

(Rachel, Year 6 teacher)

Disruption in teachers' personal lives can result in difficulties coping at school and vice versa, hence the need to keep personal and professional lives in balance. It is not difficult to find yourself in a ritual of behaviour which fails to acknowledge the thoughts and feelings of others. Generating time to stand back and evaluate your situation is one way to avoid this.

Where the two circles meet in Figure 2.3 is where coping takes place. One might argue that coping invariably occurs, but some forms of coping are more effective than others under certain circumstances, but not in others. For

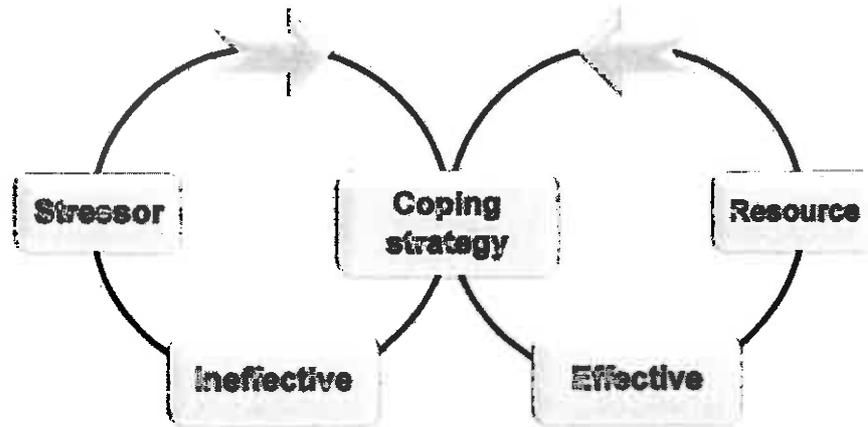


Figure 2.3 Individual Coping Analysis (ICAN)

example, an event may be so painful to take on board that initially you ignore it or pretend everything is ok, even if it is not. However, doing so as a long-term or regular strategy is likely to lead to further problems. At the same time, always confronting your problems head on and immediately can also be counterproductive since it is likely to prove exhausting and lead to other difficulties such as being seen as being aggressive (see Table 2.3). Some forms of coping have their own logic, such as initially deflecting a problem with a view to making space and time to solve it more directly later. A simple example might be overhearing a pupil swearing and opting not to intervene until the situation is more easily dealt with, perhaps when there is no audience. There is no right or wrong way of coping effectively (beyond legal and professional requirements), it depends on the individual and the social context. Coping is not simply a matter of either/or – that we cope or we do not. In some instances for example, we might use a coping strategy which is initially effective and subsequently disastrous. There can also be unintended consequences. Improving your coping requires reflecting on the strategies you are using, identifying your favoured approach and if necessary proactively planning and learning new strategies, to cope with current or future potential stressors which Lazarus and Folkman (1984) called ‘anticipatory coping’.

You will no doubt be familiar with preparing for particular social encounters, an interview for example, and trying to anticipate what is likely to be asked and how you will respond and rehearsing what to say. However, rehearsing coping strategies should go beyond what to say, to include how to say it, along with nonverbal communication, something we are less aware of when communicating.

Table 2.3 Coping styles

	<i>Active</i>	<i>Passive</i>
Direct	Confront the problem	Avoid the problem
Indirect	Seek advice on how to deal with the problem	Smoke or drink more

Note

All four coping styles can be effective, but over-reliance on one type can lead to problems. Always confronting the problem may be seen as aggressive; always seeking advice as overly dependent; avoiding the problem as being weak; smoking and drinking too much is unhealthy.

Table 2.4 Individual Coping Analysis (ICAN)

<i>Resource (support)</i>		<i>Difficulty (stressor)</i>
I am a good teacher and I enjoy teaching.	Self	I do not feel confident of my knowledge of teaching science.
They are always prepared to listen to my problems.	Friends	They want me to go out every night and I cannot.
I find teaching pupils with SEN very rewarding.	Pupils	I find some pupils hard to motivate.
Most are happy to share ideas for lessons.	Colleagues	Some are inconsistent in dealing with disruptive pupils which creates problems for me.
The school is fortunate in having lots of good resources.	School organisation	There is a lack of structure.
The head is an excellent teacher and very supportive.	Management	The deputy undermines my authority by coming into my room and disciplining pupils when it is not necessary.

Since all behaviour can be expressed in terms of the interaction between ourselves, stressors and resources, it follows that the evaluation of our coping strategies is central to understanding whether or not we are dealing with our stressors in the most effective way. Using the layout in Table 2.4 you can carry out a number of evaluations, for example if you are concerned about the behaviour of a particular class or pupil you could consider how:

- the behaviour which is causing you concern, is influenced by the stressors and resources of the pupils;
- you normally cope with their behaviour and how this may affect their coping strategies and stressors;
- others cope with this group;
- whole school policies interact with what is going on in your classroom;
- what support is available.

It is not sufficient to merely list stressors and resources. It is essential that you take time to examine the interaction between you and the various factors involved. You, and other colleagues may all be aware of particular difficulties but cope with them in very different ways despite seemingly having similar resources (training, lifestyle and working in the same organisation). To make new strategies automatic requires overlearning – doing so can increase your coping repertoire and improve your well-being.

Annotated further reading

Chaplain, R., and Freeman, A. (1996). *Stress and coping*. Cambridge: Pearson.

This text expands the model outlined in the present chapter and provides a progressive series of linked exercises to help develop more effective coping at the organisational, situational, interpersonal and personal level. Exercises include proformas and rating scales to assist the reader in analysing their stressors, extend their coping template and enhance well-being.

Further reading to support M level study

Clunies-Ross, P., Little, E., and Kienhuis, M. (2008). Self-reported and actual use of proactive and reactive classroom management strategies and their relationship with teacher stress and student behaviour. *Educational Psychology*, 28, 693–710.

This article examines the relationship between stress and behaviour management strategies, comparing proactive and reactive strategies. Based on self-report methodology, the authors found that reactive strategies were predictive of particular stressors, notably student misbehaviour – whereas proactive approaches were not. However, they also raise issues about methodology and about the complex relationship between proactive and reactive approaches.

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Appendix 3.2: Item 2

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 15(4), 473-489.

Stress and Job Satisfaction: a study of English primary school teachers

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ABSTRACT *Using a self-report questionnaire, a picture of the sources of stress and job satisfaction amongst a sample of 267 teachers, drawn from primary schools in the North and Eastern regions of England, is established. Teachers scored the frequency and intensity of 18 items on a stress scale. A principal components analysis was carried out and three factors were identified: professional concerns, pupil behaviour and attitude and professional tasks. The strongest correlations were found between professional concerns and occupational stress. Biographical factors were examined and significant differences were found between men and women, and teachers of different ages and length of teaching experience. Men reported more stress than women on professional tasks and pupil behaviour and attitude. Women scored higher than men on professional concerns. Just over one-third of teachers were satisfied with their job. When specific facets of job satisfaction were examined, teachers were most satisfied with their professional performance and least satisfied with teaching resources. Stress and job satisfaction were found to be negatively correlated. High reports of occupational stress were related to low levels of job satisfaction. Attention is drawn to the likely significance of including a frequency as well as intensity measure when considering the experience of stress and to the complex nature of job satisfaction.*

Teacher Stress in the Research Literature

Occupational stress, including teacher stress, has attracted considerable research interest in recent years. Several writers have produced comprehensive literature reviews on teacher stress (e.g. Kyriacou, 1980; Dunham, 1992; Johnstone, 1989; Borg, 1990), which have examined research into both primary and secondary phases. However, most research into teacher stress has focused on the experiences of secondary school teachers (Borg, 1990) in contrast with the present study's concern with the primary age-range.

Many of these studies have highlighted the issue of methodology, focusing on the shortcomings and advantages of different approaches. The most common method of recording stress has been through self-report questionnaires, but this is one of a number

of methods including diaries, physiological measures, and individual, biographically orientated interviews.

Borg (1990) draws particular attention to the lack of any major investigation into the nature of primary teacher stress, citing Spooner (1984) as the only such study to date. Borg *et al.* (1991) report the experiences of Maltese primary teachers, analysing them in terms of factors such as age, length of teaching experience, and the age and ability levels of children taught. Using self-report questionnaires, they identified four key factors associated with stress: 'pupil misbehaviour'; 'time/resource difficulties'; 'professional recognition needs'; and 'poor relationships'. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) in their earlier secondary school study had used similar questionnaire items and had identified cognate latent factors. In both cases the factor labelled 'pupil misbehaviour' accounted for the most variance in the rotated solution. In both pieces of research the teachers were asked to rate the *degree* (intensity) to which individual items were stressful on a scale ranging from 0 to 4. What is not evident in these studies is the *frequency* which teachers experienced these items.

One of the concerns of this paper is to establish if different results emerge when measures of frequency of experience of potential stressors are combined with a measure of the perceived intensity of stress.

Teacher Stress and Children with Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs have been recognised as creating additional pressures for teachers (Galloway, 1985), especially in the light of major educational reforms and moves towards integration (Lewis & Summons, 1994). The stressful effects of teaching pupils with various different special needs have been examined, including: the hearing impaired (Luckner, 1989); children with severe difficulties (Sutton & Huberty, 1984); and those with reading difficulties (Carlile, 1985). However, most research has focused on the stress caused by behaviour problems either generally, such as in relation to self-doubt and questioning of professional competence (Miller, 1994); or the stress experienced in specialised environments, such as in special schools (Pont & Reid, 1985; Chaplain & Freeman, 1994). The additional pressures of providing the National Curriculum for children with special educational needs alongside a reduction in special needs support services (Evans, 1992) and of special needs responsibility posts (Fletcher-Campbell, 1993) have been identified as current areas of concern for primary school teachers.

Job Satisfaction

A negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction has been established in previous research. (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979) However, job satisfaction was examined using a single-item self-report measure of overall job satisfaction. In addition to a single item, Borg *et al.* (1991) asked teachers whether they would select teaching as a career were they to start their lives again. As Galloway *et al.* (1985) point out, the use of single-item measures may obscure differences in the sources of teachers' overall satisfaction. With the exception of Holdaway (1978), Galloway *et al.* (1985) and Travers (1992), little has been done to examine what specific facets of the teaching process provide the greatest and least satisfaction.

This paper seeks to expand previous research and answer the following questions:

- What experiences were considered stressful by a sample of English primary school teachers?
- What was the relationship between frequency and the perceived intensity of stressors in the professional lives of primary school teachers?
- Has the integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms influenced teachers' stress and coping?
- What were the major sources of job satisfaction for primary teachers?

Method

Teachers were asked to complete self-report questionnaires in which they were told to rate both the frequency as well as the intensity of stress they experienced in their professional lives. They were also asked to indicate how satisfied they were with teaching as a profession and to identify what specific facets of teaching they found most satisfying.

Subjects

Data were collected from primary school teachers ($N = 267$) employed in the North and Eastern regions of England. In all, 300 questionnaires were distributed to teachers considered representative of the range and diversity of primary schools in the regions; the returns represented an 89% response rate. All subjects were currently working in primary or junior schools and teaching children in the upper-primary phase. All held full-time posts and had completed at least their first year of teaching. In this study only teachers who were not managers (head or deputy) were included in the analysis. In order to triangulate the data and add detail, a random sample ($N = 35$) were also given semi-structured interviews. Schools were selected at random. All questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher in sealed envelopes to ensure confidentiality.

Instruments

The self-report stress questionnaire was based on an earlier instrument developed by Freeman (1987) and Chaplain and Freeman (1994), for research and consultancy work. The items were generated from teachers' phenomenological accounts of stressful or bothersome events in their lives. Minor changes have been made to nomenclature over time to reflect recent changes in educational terminology and teaching phase. The questionnaire is subdivided as follows:

(a) *Biographical Details.* Age, overall length of teaching experience, previous teaching experience, sex.

(b) *Stress Scale.* A total of 18 items are listed. Teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which they found these aspects of their work stressful and how often they experienced them (the 18 items included the following: getting professional tasks completed; feeling confident as a professional; controlling pupils behaviour). Each item was rated first in terms of frequency of occurrence ranging from 'never' (score 1) to 'continuous' (score 4). They were then asked to rate how stressful they found each item: from 'not stressful' (score 1) to 'extremely stressful' (score 4). To find the overall

stress effect, the two scores were added to give a total score out of eight, and then halved, to give an overall score out of four.

The items were generated from teachers' own explanations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which were gathered in interview. In addition, a general stress item was included which asked them to rate the degree to which they considered teaching stressful.

(c) *Job Satisfaction.* Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert type scale ('Yes definitely'[5], 'Yes'[4], 'Yes and no'[3], 'No'[2], 'Definitely not'[1]) their level of satisfaction with six facets of their professional work: curriculum; school facilities; school organisation; school management; teaching resources; performance as a teacher. In addition, they were asked a general question, rated in the same way, about how satisfied they were generally with teaching as a profession.

The questionnaires were piloted with 20 primary teachers to confirm the content and face validity. Only minimal changes were required.

Results

Biographical Details

More women than men returned the questionnaires, even adjusting for the greater numbers of women in primary schools, a feature noted by Johnstone (1993). A total of 73% of the sample were women. Ages were fairly normally distributed with 26% under 35 years, 44% between 36–45 and 18% over 45 years.

Previous teaching experience varied: 36% had taught infants, 16% secondary; whilst 6% had worked in special education at some time during their careers. Overall length of teaching experience ranged from 2 to 35 years ($M = 15.4$ years, $SD 7.3$ years). Age and length of experience were positively correlated in this sample ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.02$).

Stress

Occupational Stress

In response to the question "To what extent are you stressed in teaching?" approximately 23% of the whole sample rated their work as 'very' or 'extremely stressful'. Women scored higher than men in terms of occupational stress. Whilst stress levels decreased from the youngest to the middle-age group, they rose again for the oldest group. In order to ascertain the possible effects of biographical factors, two separate two-way ANOVAs were carried out (Sex \times Age, and Sex \times Length of Experience). No differences reached significance between any of the groups, either as main effects or interactions (see Table I).

Stress Scale Items

A maximum score of four indicated a stressor which was perceived as occurring continuously and as being extremely stressful. A score of one indicated an item not occurring frequently and perceived as not stressful. Means ranged from 1.13–2.77, with standard deviations ranging from 0.41 to 1.18. All items correlated positively and significantly with self-reported occupational stress ($p < 0.05$, r ranged from 0.15–0.84, see Table II). A correlation matrix of all items consisted mainly of positive correlations

TABLE I. Occupational stress scores for whole sample and biographical subgroups

	N	Occupational stress	
		M	SD
Whole sample	267	2.39	0.93
Sex			
Male	71	2.29	1.13
Female	196	2.39	0.89
Experience			
< 6 years	38	2.32	0.62
6-15 years	80	2.27	1.08
15-25 years	113	2.41	0.88
25+ years	20	2.21	0.36
Age			
up to 35 years	69	2.62	0.84
35-45 years	119	2.30	0.89
over 45 years	49	2.52	0.95

Notes. Mean scores are based on a four-point composite scale. A high score indicates high levels of stress.

(148 out of 153), the negative items being associated with *wanting skills necessary to enable pupils to learn and controlling pupils behavior*.

To determine any underlying factor structure, the 18 items were included in a principal components analysis, having first met the rigorous criteria specified by Norusis (1992). As Table II illustrates, all items loaded positively on the first factor and accounted for 28.7% of variance in the unrotated solution. Following examination of the scree plot, three factors were rotated (eigenvalues 5.09, 2.06 and 1.72, respectively) using Varimax to provide the best solution. These rotated factors accounted for 28.5%, 11.8% and 9.9% respectively.

Items with significant factor loadings (> 0.4) were used as a basis for explaining the factors and are shown in Table III. The three factors were labelled as follows:

Factor 1: *Professional Concerns*—items concerned with supporting less able children, helping children with problems and achieving personal goals.

Factor 2: *Pupil Behaviour and Attitude*—items concerned with controlling pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to themselves and school.

Factor 3: *Professional Tasks*—items concerned with obstructions to carrying out professional activities, concerned with getting professional support, changing conditions in school to promote children's learning and feeling confident as a professional.

The overall scale proved internally reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$), as did each subscale with alpha coefficients of 0.79, 0.74 and 0.73, respectively.

To establish whether or not there were biographical differences within subgroups, several multiple analyses of variance were carried out. Using repeated measures analysis of variance, the three factors were treated as dependent variables, and sex, age and experience were employed as independent variables. Following Borg *et al.*'s (1991)

TABLE II, Stress scale items: means and standard deviations, correlations with occupational stress and unrotated factor loadings

Item No.	Item	M	SD	Correlation with occupational stress	Loading on first unrotated factor
1	Getting professional tasks completed	2.77	1.08	0.48	0.575
11	Getting time to accomplish personal goals	2.69	1.11	0.53	0.646
18	Providing appropriate teaching materials for children with special educational needs	2.36	1.18	0.33	0.583
17	Improving pupils achievements	2.33	1.11	0.41	0.668
4	Accomplishing tasks essential to pupil learning	2.32	1.14	0.55	0.654
6	Changing conditions in school to improve children's learning	2.21	1.13	0.36	0.434
9	Wanting parents and pupils to have positive attitudes towards education	2.11	1.01	0.42	0.489
14	Supporting children with special educational needs	2.06	1.08	0.84	0.511
5	Helping pupils with their problems	2.02	1.07	0.77	0.580
2	Wanting pupils to have positive attitudes towards themselves	1.97	1.07	0.25	0.569
7	Feeling confident as a professional	1.95	1.08	0.36	0.590
3	Feeling good about myself as a teacher	1.88	0.99	0.38	0.570
10	Changing conditions outside school to improve pupils lives	1.80	0.98	0.16	0.346
8	Wanting skills necessary to enable pupils to learn	1.76	0.93	0.25	0.570
12	Motivating pupils to learn	1.68	0.89	0.16	0.566
16	Lack of professional support	1.57	0.90	0.26	0.328
13	Controlling pupils behaviour	1.43	0.76	0.15	0.352
15	Maintaining rapport with pupils	1.13	0.41	0.30	0.384

Notes. Differences between scores for males and females reached significance on Items 15 and 17 only. Women scored higher (more stress) than men on Item 15 (maintaining a rapport with their pupils) ($t=2.64$ (264), $p<0.02$). Men scored higher (more stress) than women on Item 17 (improving pupils achievements) ($t=-3.16$ (264), $p<0.002$).

example, the scores for the three factors were obtained by producing a mean for each. The criterion for inclusion of items was a factor loading of above 0.4. Where items cross-loaded, the factor with which it loaded highest was adopted. Differences between the resultant means reached significance for each of the three factors. *Professional concerns* had the highest mean score ($M=2.16$, $SD=0.71$) followed by *professional tasks* ($M=2.05$, $SD=0.70$) and *pupil behaviour and attitude* ($M=1.79$, $SD=0.62$). All subgroups were found to interact significantly with the stress factors. Table IV provides a summary of the interactions.

Sex × Stress Factors—Consistent with Borg *et al.* (1991), male and female results interacted. Females scored higher than males in respect of *professional concerns*. However, for both other factors—*pupil behaviour and attitude* and *professional tasks*—men scored higher than women (see Fig. 1).

TABLE III. Stress scale items rotated solution (varimax) showing significant factor loadings (above 0.4)

Item	Professional concerns	Pupil behaviour and attitude	Professional tasks
Supporting children with special educational needs	0.82		
Helping pupils with their problems	0.77		
Accomplishing tasks essential to pupils' learning	0.69		
Getting time to accomplish personal goals	0.65		
Getting professional tasks completed	0.63		
Maintaining rapport with pupils	0.40		
Controlling pupils behaviour		0.80	
Wanting pupils to have positive attitudes towards themselves		0.76	
Changing conditions outside school to improve pupils' lives		0.61	
Motivating pupils to learn		0.60	
Wanting parents and pupils to have positive attitudes towards education		0.47	
Wanting skills necessary to enable pupils to learn		0.41	
Lack of professional support			0.71
Changing conditions in school to improve children's learning			0.69
Feeling confident as a professional			0.59
Improving pupils' achievements			0.57
Feeling good about myself as a teacher			0.54
Providing appropriate teaching materials for children with special educational needs	0.44		0.48

Experience × Stress Factors—Pupil behaviour and attitude seemed to generate equal amounts of stress for teachers irrespective of length of teaching experience. Although the pattern was not consistent across all experience groups, there was a tendency for the less experienced to be more stressed by *professional concerns* than their more experienced colleagues. The least experienced teachers scored lower on the *professional tasks* than did more experienced teachers.

Age × Stress Factors—All three age-groups shared similar levels of stress with regard to *professional concerns*. Scores for *pupil behaviour and attitude* were more widely distributed, with the stress score reducing as age increased. The oldest and youngest teachers scored similarly in terms of *professional tasks* and lower than the middle-age group.

TABLE IV. Repeated measures ANOVA results for the three stress factors and biographical differences showing two-way interactions

	N	F-value	df	p
Sex × Stress factors	248	8.29	2.492	< 0.005
Experience × Stress factors	251	2.96	6.494	< 0.008
Age × Stress factors	232	3.95	4.465	< 0.004

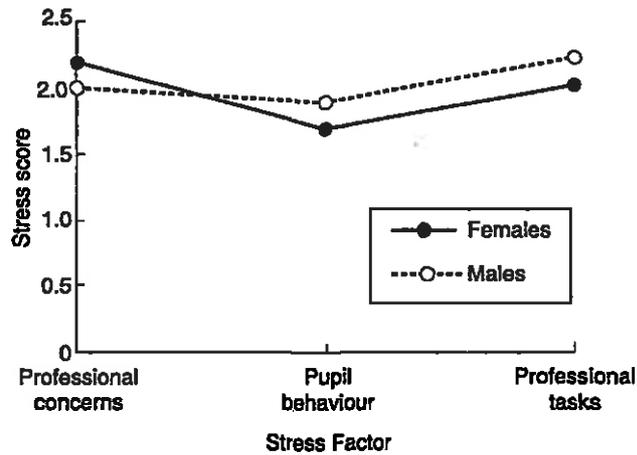


FIG. 1. Relationship between stress factors and sex of respondent (mean scores).

Job Satisfaction

Overall Job Satisfaction

Table V shows the mean and standard deviation scores for the whole sample in response to the question: "Are you satisfied with teaching as a profession?" It also shows results for the biographical subgroups. Overall, 37% of subjects were satisfied with their job ('Yes' or 'Yes definitely'), with a further 47% having mixed feelings ('Yes and no'). The mean satisfaction score for the whole sample was 3.29 (SD 0.96) out of a maximum score of 5. Females were more satisfied with teaching as a profession than males, and a *t*-test indicated that the difference was significant ($t = -2.9$ (249), $p < 0.004$).

Differences based on age and experience were measured using one-way ANOVA. The youngest and oldest groups recorded higher levels of satisfaction with teaching than the middle age-group ($F = 3.82$ (236), $p < 0.02$). Using length of experience as a main effect failed to reach significance. Overall, the evidence suggests a reduction in levels of job satisfaction to mid-career/middle age, which then tends to rise as teachers reach the end of their career. Relationships between mid-career aspirations and satisfaction may provide some explanation here.

Separate factorial analyses of variance, using job satisfaction as the dependent variable, with *sex and age* and *sex and experience* as factors, were carried out to examine interaction effects. In terms of overall satisfaction, both factors interacted significantly (see Table V). Women in the middle age and experience group scored lower than both the youngest and least experienced and the oldest and most experienced group. However, men in the middle age and experience group scored higher than both youngest and least experienced and oldest and most experienced groups (see Figs 2 and 3).

Specific Facets of Job Satisfaction

Analysis of specific facets of satisfaction were found to correlate positively and significantly ($r = 0.18$ to 0.2 , $p < 0.003$ to 0.002) with reported levels of overall job

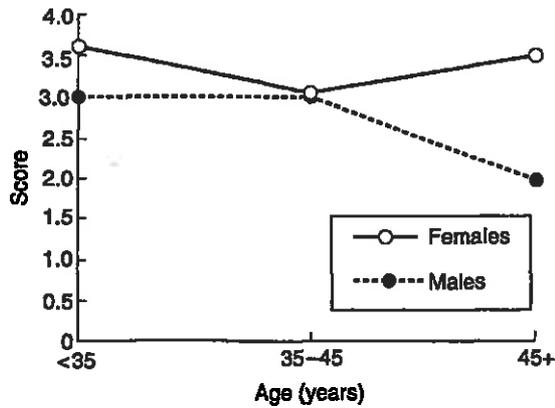


FIG. 2. Overall job satisfaction by age and sex (mean scores).

satisfaction, with the exception of the curriculum and facilities, which failed to reach significance at the 0.05 level.

The most satisfying single aspect reported by the sample was personal performance as a teacher. This can be related directly to teachers' perceptions of their professional competence and, hence, is a useful indicator of their professional identity. Central to satisfaction with professional performance was positive feedback from children, in terms of both social and academic behaviour. As two teachers put it:

After 20 years I still feel great when I know the children are learning and all the preparation was worthwhile (male, 20 years' experience).

Seeing a child progress and interested in what I am teaching...is particularly satisfying (female, 2 years' experience).

It is interesting to note that, whilst personal performance was considered the most satisfying facet, no less than 42% of the sample felt uncertain ('Yes and no') about satisfaction with their performance and a further 2% ('Definitely not') satisfied with it.

Lack of resources was identified as the biggest obstruction to teachers' job satisfaction; 35% were either 'Not' or 'Definitely not' satisfied with the resources available in their schools. Comments from interviews indicated that teachers felt much of their

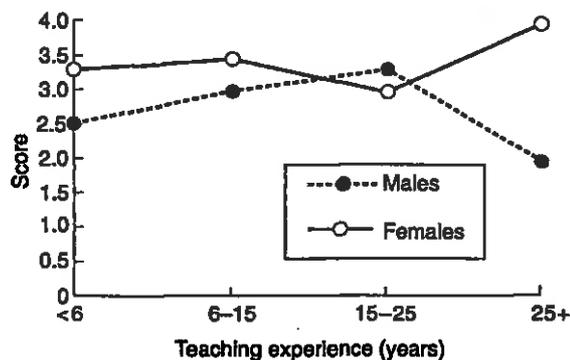


FIG. 3. Overall job satisfaction by sex and experience (mean scores).

TABLE V. Overall job satisfaction and specific facets of satisfaction

	Specific facets of job satisfaction													
	Overall job satisfaction		Curriculum		School facilities		School organisation		Teaching resources		Management (headteacher)		Performance as a teacher	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Whole sample	3.29	0.96	3.30	0.81	3.05	1.01	3.30	0.89	2.78	1.03	3.13	0.98	3.60	0.64
Males	3.00	0.69	3.08	1.01	2.90	1.02	3.15	1.04	2.62	0.75	2.92	1.01	3.69	0.73
Females	3.35	1.02	3.38	0.70	3.06	0.99	3.27	0.84	2.81	1.09	3.10	0.96	3.57	0.63
t-test	t = 2.9***													
Age (years)														
< 35 (GA1)	3.46	0.85	3.35	0.89	3.32	1.09	3.52	0.92	3.14	1.17	3.39	0.98	3.62	0.64
35-45 (GA2)	3.09	1.00	3.34	0.67	2.77	0.99	3.19	0.93	2.55	0.99	3.07	0.99	3.60	0.69
45+ (GA3)	3.41	1.08	3.22	0.84	3.08	0.91	3.27	0.76	2.88	0.93	2.79	0.82	3.57	0.61
ANOVA	F = 3.82**													
Interaction: Sex × Age	F = 4.61**													
	F = 12.86***													
	F = 3.70**													
	F = 3.42*													
	GA1 > GA2													
	GA1 > GA3													
Experience (years)														
0-6 (G1)	3.13	0.70	3.61	0.75	3.47	1.06	3.50	0.65	3.32	0.87	3.42	0.95	3.53	0.65
6-15 (G2)	3.36	0.93	3.21	0.88	3.01	0.88	3.17	0.95	2.68	1.02	3.09	0.90	3.56	0.50
15-25 (G3)	3.14	0.98	3.24	0.72	2.76	0.98	3.18	0.97	2.52	0.99	3.01	1.08	3.55	0.71
25+ (G4)	3.40	0.99	3.45	0.99	3.40	1.10	3.55	0.51	2.85	1.04	3.00	0.65	3.65	0.75
ANOVA	F = 7.60***													
Interaction: Sex × Experience	F = 13.58***													
	F = 3.66***													
	F = 3.79***													
	G1 > G3													
	G1 > G2 > G3													

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Notes: All mean scores are based on a five-point scale. A high score indicates a high level of satisfaction. Means and standard deviations: significant ANOVA and t-test results for whole sample and biographical subgroups are included.

work was underfunded, resulting in their having to spend more time producing materials which they felt ought to have been made more available:

With increased administrative demands, time for producing materials for children becomes more difficult (female, 9 years' experience).

I have never begrudged buying things for the classroom, but with more special needs children it's getting ridiculous—do they expect us to buy teaching aids as well? (female, 15 years' experience).

Whilst 27% were satisfied with resources ('Yes' or 'Definitely yes'), it was interesting to note that in some of the schools studied, teachers had opposing views. What emerged from interviews was a perceived uneven distribution of funding within the school. Unsurprisingly the most disaffected individuals, in this respect, worked at schools where projected spending plans were either not readily available:

She [head] keeps all the goodies to herself and gives it to whoever is 'in'—I'm not one of them (male, 4 years' experience).

or not adhered to:

It was agreed that I would receive a new set of books—two terms ago! But have they been ordered? No! Why? Because the priorities were changed again—as usual! (female, 6 years' experience).

Differences between males and females in respect of specific facets of job satisfaction reached significance only in the case of the curriculum, where males indicated less satisfaction than females ($t = 2.62$ (246), $p < 0.009$).

Significant differences were observed between older and younger teachers, as well as between more and less experienced teachers in respect of resources. Older and more experienced teachers were less satisfied in this respect than their younger and less experienced colleagues (see Table V).

Facilities, including conditions of the building, space and decor, were considered satisfactory or above by 36% of the respondents, with 29% less than satisfied ('Not' or 'Definitely not'). Teachers interviewed complained of poor decoration and lack of staff facilities, but most importantly about lack of teaching spaces ("With classes this size and the demands of the curriculum, you need more space"). They also complained of the inadequacy of the staff areas ("That 'telephone box' down the corridor is our staffroom", "You haven't time to go out to lunch, but eating in the staffroom is depressing"). As with resources, older and more experienced teachers were less satisfied with the school facilities than the younger less experienced colleagues (see Table V).

Despite these specific criticisms, 43% of subjects were satisfied ('Yes' or 'Yes definitely') with the organisation of the school, and a similar proportion (37%) with management of the school. By contrast, only 16% were 'Not' or 'Definitely not' satisfied with the organisation of the school, although a higher proportion (23%) were not satisfied with their senior managers. Older and more experienced subjects were less satisfied with organisation and management than were younger teachers. However, these differences reached significance only in terms of the management item (by age, $F = 5.75$ (236), $p < 0.005$).

Several teachers commented that whilst they felt some degree of personal control over the overall organisation of the school, they considered that an area of *particular* difficulty was coping with the behaviour of the head. They mentioned such things as

having to cope with the 'idiosyncrasies of the head', or of a head who exhibited 'extreme behaviour', which might mean either mood swings or volatile/emotional responses. They also found heads difficult who did not 'stand up for' their colleagues in times of crisis.

Significant interactions occurred between age and sex, and experience and sex, in respect of satisfaction with school organisation, school facilities and the curriculum (see Table V). Younger and less experienced males were more satisfied with school facilities and school organisation than their female counterparts, but this situation was reversed with older and more experienced teachers, older males were less satisfied than females of similar age and experience with this facet of job satisfaction.

Just under half (47%) of teachers were satisfied ('Yes' or 'Yes definitely') with the curriculum; only 13% were not so ('No' or 'Definitely not'). It would appear from the interviews that most teachers were satisfied with the National Curriculum as a framework ("I agree with it in principle") but were very concerned about the amount of administration ("All the record keeping is very draining") and frequency of changes imposed ("It's changing all the time").

Looking at biographical differences, this was the only facet where differences between the sexes reached statistical significance. Female teachers were more satisfied with the curriculum than were male teachers. Whilst no main effects were found for age and experience, there were significant interactions. Older and more experienced males were more satisfied than their female counterparts, whilst less experienced males were less satisfied than females in the same experience group.

In summary, whilst a high proportion of teachers were satisfied with their job—generally and specifically—the least satisfying facets were working conditions and the lack of teaching resources. Younger teachers were generally more satisfied with their work than their older and more experienced colleagues, although the middle age and experience group were least satisfied as a whole.

The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Stress

To establish whether there was any relationship between self-reported occupational stress, job satisfaction and the stress factors identified, correlation coefficients were explored. Each of the three stress factors was positively and significantly correlated with occupational teacher stress. The largest coefficients were with *professional concerns* and *professional tasks* (see Table VI). Furthermore, all aspects of stress (occupational and all three factors) were found to correlate negatively and significantly with job satisfaction.

In order to investigate any differences between specific facets of job satisfaction and the stress factors, further correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) were calculated. The results are shown in Table VI. The correlation coefficients for the three stress factors and overall satisfaction were similar. However, as is evident from Fig. 4, there were large differences in the strength and patterns of correlation for specific facets of job satisfaction and the three stress factors.

The only significant correlation in the case of *pupil behaviour and attitude* was with satisfaction with one's performance as a teacher. *Professional tasks*, on the other hand, had significant correlations with all facets of job satisfaction—but these were strongest with performance as a teacher, school organisation and learning resources. *Professional concerns* were most strongly correlated with school organisation, resources and school management.

TABLE VI Correlation coefficients for occupational stress, stress factors and overall and specific facets of job satisfaction

	Overall job satisfaction	Stress factors		
		Professional concerns	Pupil behaviour and attitudes	Professional tasks
Occupational stress	-0.16**	0.79****	0.31****	0.45****
Overall job satisfaction		-0.22****	-0.20***	-0.22****
Specific facets of job satisfaction				
Facilities		-0.14*		-0.19**
Curriculum		-0.13*		-0.19**
Performance as a teacher	0.20**	-0.17***	-0.21***	-0.36****
School management	0.18**	-0.24****		-0.25****
School organisation	0.18**	-0.28****		-0.34****
Resources	0.18**	-0.25****		-0.30****

* $p < 0.02$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; **** $p < 0.005$. All correlations are Pearson's r .

Discussion

Previous studies (e.g. Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Laughlin, 1984; Borg *et al.*, 1991) showed that approximately one-third of teachers reported their jobs as 'very' or 'extremely stressful'. In these studies teachers had reported, using unidimensional ratings, how stressful certain aspects of their work were perceived to be. Thus, what was being measured was the perceived or actual intensity of stress generated by aspects of

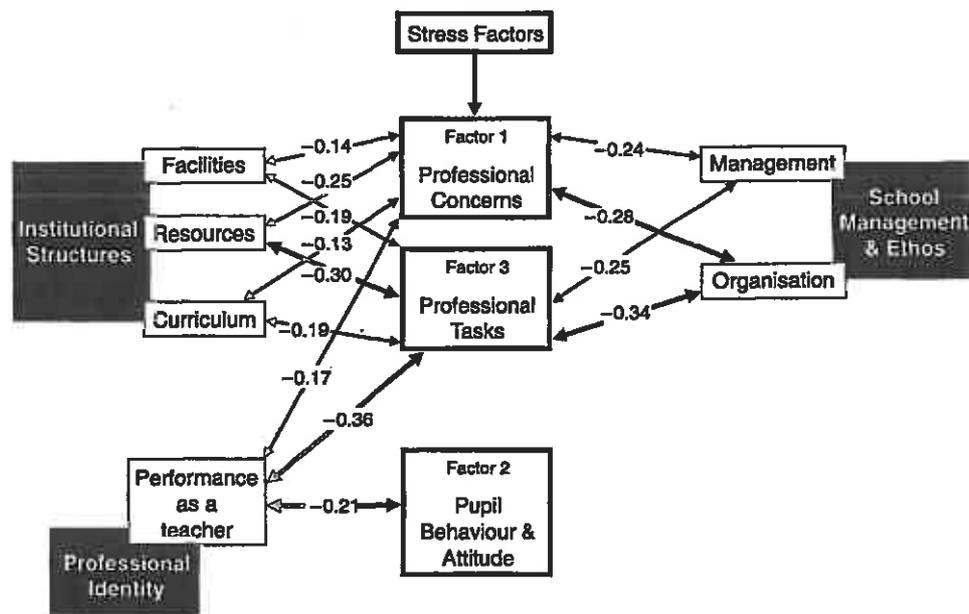


FIG. 4. Correlations between the three stress factors and the six specific facets of job satisfaction. Note: All correlation coefficients are Pearson's r and reached significance at above $p < 0.02$ level. See Table VI for further details.)

their job. In the present study, a different method of recording was used in which teachers were rating both the intensity and frequency of items believed to cause stress, and the results appear to have been different. Fewer subjects (23%) identified their work as 'continually extremely stressful' or 'regularly very stressful'. This result is closer to that of Spooner (1984), who reported that 18% of teachers rated their work as 'extremely' or 'very' stressful. The Spooner study is perhaps the most appropriate comparison as it focused on *primary schools* in England, whereas earlier studies had either focused on teachers in a different sector (i.e. secondary phase), or teachers in a different education system. Teachers in the present sample seemed to be experiencing more stress than the teachers involved in Spooner's earlier study.

Spooner's study apart, the present sample would appear to have perceived their work as less stressful than did teachers in the other studies cited. On the other hand, such a conclusion may reflect the introduction of a 'frequency dimension' into the enquiry. It would be interesting to subject this finding to further study.

Consistent with Kyriacou & Sutcliffe (1979), no significant differences were found between any subgroups (Sex \times Age, Sex \times Experience) in respect of occupational stress. Borg *et al.* (1991), however, found that teachers with 20 or more years' experience had reported greater occupational stress than their colleagues who had less than 11 years' experience.

The principal components analysis of the stress scale employed here identified three underlying factors labelled: *professional concerns*, *pupil behaviour and attitude* and *professional tasks*. Unlike the findings of other studies (e.g. Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Borg *et al.*, 1991), this study found that *pupil behaviour and attitude* were not identified as the most stressful aspect of teachers' work. The introduction of children with special educational needs into mainstream primary classrooms has required an extension of skills for many teachers. It may be that the teachers in the present study were less preoccupied with classroom discipline and more with how to help children with learning difficulties, through the provision of learning support and pastoral support. This was made very clear in the interview data where most of the 35 respondents, when asked to identify the things that caused them most concern in their job, mentioned learning difficulties, appropriate conditions for learning and personal support for pupils. Most primary schools still lack a system of pastoral support—unlike most secondary schools—and this is likely to contribute to the stress experienced by those coping in the primary school with children who have learning difficulties. Recognition of this was made in the School Teachers' Review Body report (1994, p. 4) on teachers' workloads:

Classes which had high proportions of pupils with special needs made greater and more intensive demands on teachers.

The report also acknowledges the increased pastoral roles of teachers working with 'socially deprived groups of pupils'.

This is not to say pupils' behaviour and attitudes were not a source of stress—they clearly were. It could be argued that comparison between this sample and the others cited is somewhat inappropriate because of situational or methodological differences. Alternatively, it could be argued that this sample was drawn from a group of schools with few problems of pupil behaviour, but, in fact, the sample included schools which contained numbers of very difficult children and the teachers interviewed were certainly involved with these children in their classes.

The present study indicates that over one-third (37%) of teachers were satisfied

('Yes' or 'Yes definitely') with teaching as a profession. A larger number (47%) had mixed feelings about teaching, which may say something about the timing of the research as much as about teaching as a profession. This figure compares with Spooner's study in the Midlands of England (1984), which found that 48% of teachers considered they gained 'much' or 'extreme' satisfaction from their work. The figures appear somewhat lower than those found in the studies reported by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979), Laughlin (1984) and Borg *et al.* (1991), who reported that around 70% of their samples found teaching 'very' or 'fairly satisfying'. However, it should be noted that the question in the present study, and in Spooner's, was worded slightly differently from the other studies, and this may account for some variance. On the other hand, it may indicate a lower level of job satisfaction among English primary school teachers, as opposed to their Australian, New Zealand, Maltese or British secondary phase counterparts. Furthermore, it may reflect a current perception of teaching, highlighting issues such as increased workloads, reduced autonomy and lack of status since the introduction of major educational reforms. This interpretation is supported to some degree by Johnstone (1993), who draws attention to the increased workload of primary teachers. Travers (1992) also reports teachers as having 'abysmally low job satisfaction' compared to other 'highly stressed occupational groups' such as 'doctors', 'dentists' and 'tax officers'.

In line with some other studies, the present study found that females were more satisfied with the profession overall than males (Holdaway, 1978; Borg *et al.*, 1991). The study did not show that job satisfaction increased consistently with age, as was the case in research reported by Galloway *et al.* (1985). Indeed, satisfaction dropped significantly from teachers in the youngest age bracket to teachers in the middle age bracket, but rose again for teachers in the oldest group. Length of experience was not found to discriminate significantly, but followed a not dissimilar pattern to age. Men in the oldest and most experienced groups were the least satisfied with teaching as a profession.

Turning to specific facets of job satisfaction, teachers were more satisfied with their own performance as a teacher than with any other aspect, with men scoring higher than women. This suggests a relatively high level of professional self-esteem and perhaps raises some questions about the relationship between professional self-esteem based on classroom teaching and the overall level of satisfaction with teaching as a professional career.

With the exception of satisfaction with the curriculum—where women scored higher than men—men's and women's scores were not significantly different. Whilst the youngest and oldest females scored much higher than their male counterparts, the middle age-group score for both sexes was almost equal. The perception of the National Curriculum was positive in the present study.

There were other significant interactions between sex and age. The oldest females responded differently from the youngest females in being less satisfied than men with *school facilities* and *school organisation*; there were no obvious indications from the questionnaire responses, nor from the interview responses, as to why this should be. Galloway *et al.* (1985) suggest that differences between levels of satisfaction could be accounted for by whether or not the head had a teaching responsibility. This, in turn, tends to be related to school size, heads of smaller schools tending to have greater teaching loads than heads of larger schools.

Particularly interesting is the reversal in the pattern of response from male and female teachers. The oldest men were the least satisfied overall, while the oldest group of

women were the least satisfied with specific aspects of the job. This interpretation adds weight to Galloway *et al.*'s (1995) suggestion that single item measures can obscure more complex issues in assessing job satisfaction.

Research into the concept of stress has revealed difficulties in definition and measurement (e.g. Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979; Johnstone, 1989; Borg, 1990). However, the need to recognise individual differences and social context now appears to be widely accepted in the literature (Cox & Ferguson, 1993). The present study indicates that there is a need for further research in three areas:

- the difference made by measuring frequency of stress as well as intensity of stress;
- the relationship of job satisfaction (recognising it as complex concept) to different aspects of stress;
- the impact on stress levels and coping strategies of teachers of integrating children with special educational needs into primary classrooms.

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Appendix 3.3: Item 3

CHAPLAIN, R. (2008). Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 28(2), 195-209.

Stress and psychological distress among trainee secondary teachers in England

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The relationships between stress and psychological distress were investigated among a cohort of trainee secondary school teachers in England. Specifically, the study examined the structure of a Teacher Stress Scale and its relationship to mental health as measured by the 12-item General Health Questionnaire. Three factors were identified: behaviour management, workload, and lack of support. Differences were identified between men and women in respect of stressors and psychological distress. Stress attributed to pupils' disruptive behaviour and stress attributed to perceived occupational stress were found to be significant predictors of psychological distress. The findings are discussed in relation to the degree to which trainees are prepared for the challenges they are likely to experience as teachers.

Keywords: stress; psychological distress; disruptive behaviour

The attrition of trainee, novice, and experienced teachers is a widespread problem in the UK. Kyriacou and Kunc (in press) reported: "In England, about 40% of those who embark on a training course (on all routes) never become teachers, and of those who do become teachers, about 40% are not teaching 5 years later" (p. 1). At the same time the number of secondary teachers taking early retirement has increased by 93% over the last seven years; many blame this on the stress resulting from managing pupil behaviour and successive government initiatives (Henry, 2007; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000).

The study of teacher stress has a long history. It has become a research topic with worldwide interest (Kyriacou, 2001). However, stress among trainee teachers is less well researched, perhaps in part because, as Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) suggested, it is viewed as a normal part of teacher development and therefore accepted as a natural element of the transition from novice to qualified teacher.

Teaching has consistently been ranked as a high stress occupation (Beer & Beer, 1992; Borg, Riding, & Falzon, 1991; Johnson et al., 2005; Travers & Cooper, 1996), with 33–37% of teachers frequently reporting being very or extremely stressed as a result of factors intrinsic to their work (Borg, 1990; Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni 1995; Chan & Hui, 1995; Kyriacou, 1987, 2001). The most frequently reported factors include pupils' disruptive behaviour, workload, school ethos, and lack of support from colleagues and/or managers (Durham, 1992; Johnstone, 1989, 1993a, 1993b; Timperley & Robinson, 2000; Travers & Cooper, 1996; Wilson, 2002).

Studies of trainees have reported the same stress factors (Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999), which is perhaps unsurprising given the high levels of stress reported by teachers with whom trainees train. As Wooton (1993) pointed out, trainees placed in schools with teachers who are stressed

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also become stressed. Furthermore, given that the most powerful predictor of retention among trainee teachers was how much pleasure they anticipated they would get from the job (Wilhelm, Dewhurst-Savellis, & Parker, 2000), the reality of teaching during training often results in their optimism being dampened (Veenman, 1984).

The most stressful component of teacher training is the practicum (Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999; Macdonald, 1993) and within the practicum managing pupil behaviour has been reported as the most stressful element (Mastrilli & Sardo-Brown, 2002; Veenman, 1984). Disruptive pupils also generate high levels of stress for qualified teachers (Hart, 1987; Head, Hill, & McGuire, 1996; Zeidner, 1988); they are a risk factor in determining acute psychological distress (Finlay-Jones, 1986) and a serious deterrent to trainees joining the profession (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Point, 2003). While there is a popular belief that coping with disruptive pupils improves with experience, a number of studies have found that the stress associated with disruptive behaviour did not decrease as the practicum progressed (Burn, Hagger, Mutton, & Everton, 2003; Capel, 1997; Elkerton, 1984; Silvernail & Costello, 1983). This may well contribute to the attrition of trainees during training, and of those who leave teaching within a few years (Smithers & Robinson, 2000).

The effect of stress on the psychological health of teachers has attracted researchers' interest (Beer & Beer, 1992; Johnstone, 1993b; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Stress is believed to contribute to physical illness, absence, and early retirement from the profession. Punch and Tuettmann (1990) listed a range of associated physical symptoms ranging from rashes to cardiovascular disease, behavioural changes such as deterioration of relationships and work performance, and psychological reactions such as anxiety, confused thinking, feeling inadequate, panic, and phobias. While depression is the most common outcome of teacher stress, other problems include chronic fatigue and burnout (Betoret, 2006; Friedman & Farber, 1995; Russell, Altrmaier, & Van Velzen, 1987; Shirom, 1997). The relationship between teacher stress and psychological distress is complex (Chan, 2002), as it encompasses such a wide range of symptoms. Nonetheless, psychological distress does provide some measure of mental health but is not synonymous with it – mentally healthy people are not immune from anxiety and depression.

Very high levels of psychological distress have been recorded among teachers. Punch and Tuettman (1990) found that levels of psychological distress among secondary teachers were twice that of the general population. More recently Johnson et al. (2005) compared the psychological health of 26 different professions, and found teaching to be one of the six most stressful occupations. Differences between the psychological health of male and female teachers have also been identified. Kovess-Masféty, Rios-Seidel, and Sevilla-Dedieu (2007) found that female teachers consistently scored higher on psychological distress than male teachers. Using the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSC), which measures anxiety, distress, and depression, they found the largest differences in the secondary school sector, where male teachers scored lower (more healthy) and female teachers scored higher (less healthy) than teachers elsewhere. In their study of correlates of psychological distress among secondary school teachers, Punch and Tuettmann (1990) found that while work-related stress factors only accounted for a small amount of variance in psychological distress, 'much more can be accounted for among female teachers than among males' (p. 379) which, they felt, may result from the former investing more of themselves in teaching and thus putting themselves at higher risk. Punch and Tuettmann suggested that environmental aspects of teaching are more important in generating and ameliorating psychological distress among female than male teachers and urged researchers to investigate these differences further.

Government concerns about the preparation of teachers led to major changes to initial teacher training in England and Wales during the 1990s – changes which have continued to the present day. These changes have included the introduction of a competence-based framework for initial

training and the move of substantive amounts of responsibility for training from university departments into schools (Department for Education and Employment, 1998; Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2006). As a result, trainees now spend 24 weeks of their 36-week course on school-based training – the rationale being that more time spent training in schools will better prepare them to cope with the demands of teaching.

The relative lack of research into stress and psychological distress among UK trainee teachers is perhaps surprising, given the numbers who reportedly never commence teaching, who leave very early in their careers, or who go on to potentially add to the high levels of teachers who report being stressed or experiencing mental health issues. As Kyriacou (2001) argued, there will always be a need to research teacher stress, in particular the relationship between stress from excessive demands such as workload and disruptive pupils and concerns about self-image. The present study addresses some of the less well-researched areas and adds to the literature on teacher stress.

The main aim of the present study was to examine the nature and levels of stress and psychological distress reported by a cohort of trainee secondary school teachers, in the light of successive changes to initial teacher training in England. The most notable change has been the transfer of substantive amounts of responsibility for training from higher education institutions to schools, a move intended to prepare trainees to cope better with the demands of classrooms, in particular managing pupil behaviour.

Method

Participants

A cohort of 343 full-time trainee teachers taking a secondary (11–19) postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) was invited to take part in the study. For their practicum, trainees spend 120 days of their one-year course in partnership schools where they are supervised by a mentor and supported by a professional tutor. While on the practicum, the school provides in-house training in respect of curriculum issues and classroom behaviour management, and trainees gradually increase their teaching load to around 66%. In all, 268 questionnaires were returned, which represented a high response rate (78%). Of the trainees participating 190 were women (71%) and 78 were men (29%), which accurately reflected the proportions of the full cohort. Ages ranged from 22 to 51 ($M = 26.4$, $SD = 5.04$) and most respondents were under 30 years of age (81%). Most trainees had a first degree in arts or humanities (80%); the remainder had science or maths degrees. The majority (62%) had worked prior to joining the course, with occupations ranging from scientist to ski instructor, and most (78%) reported that they planned to remain in the teaching profession in excess of 10 years.

Measures

The first section of the questionnaire requested demographic information regarding sex, age, subject of first degree, and career intentions.

Teacher Stress Scale

The self-report stress scale used in the present study was based on an earlier instrument developed and used by Freeman (1986) and Chaplain and Freeman (1994) to investigate teacher stress. Items on the original scale were grounded (Glasser & Straus, 1967) in the phenomenological accounts of stressful events in the lives of secondary teachers obtained using open interview techniques. Minor modifications were made to the original questionnaire to make it fit for use with trainees, for example by adding 'being observed and assessed' to the list of items. It was then piloted with

a group of 25 trainees, not involved in the main study, to check validity, and further minor changes were made to the questions.

Participants were asked to rate 23 specific items (listed in Table 3 below) in response to the question: 'How stressful have you found ...' Items included lesson planning, attitude/behaviour of teachers/senior management, lack of recognition, and controlling pupil behaviour. Rating was on a five-point Likert type scale (extremely stressful = 5, very stressful = 4, moderately stressful = 3, mildly stressful = 2, not at all stressful = 1). A total score was calculated by adding the individual responses and a high score indicated greater stress.

Two general questions were also added. The first assessed perceived occupational stress and asked, 'How stressful do you consider the job of a secondary teacher to be?' The second (practicum stress) asked participants to give an overall rating of their practicum experience: 'Overall, how stressful have you found your professional placement?' The two questions were included to differentiate trainees' personal experience of the practicum from how stressful they perceived the job of a teacher to be based on their observations – the latter providing them with some insight into what they might experience when they take up employment as teachers. Both questions were scored in the same way as the individual scale items.

A final question asked: 'What do you consider is the most stressful aspect of teaching?' It invited respondents to add any additional open comments about stress and stressors they had experienced. The open question was included to provide participants with the opportunity to elaborate on items on the scale, or add items not included on the scale, which were emotionally significant to them.

Psychological distress

An abbreviated version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Goldberg, 1978) was used to measure psychological distress. The GHQ-12 is widely recognized as a reliable well-being screening instrument. Participants indicate whether they have recently experienced abnormal thoughts, feelings, or behaviour (e.g., problems sleeping, decreasing confidence, feeling constantly under strain). The emphasis is on changes in condition, rather than an absolute level of the problem. Respondents compare their present state with their normal situation; responses range from 'better than usual [or much more than usual]' to 'much less than usual' and 'much less capable'. The 12 items are balanced: half load positively and half load negatively. There are four scoring systems available: Likert, modified Likert, GHQ, and CGHQ. On the Likert scale, used in the present study, each item is rated on a four-point scale (0–3), with the most positive responses scored as 0 and most negative responses scored as 3. The maximum score was therefore 36 and a high score indicates high levels of dissatisfaction with current mental state.

Procedure

Participants voluntarily completed the self-report questionnaires immediately after they finished their final practicum. Administration of the questionnaires took place in academic subject groups. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality. The collected questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS version 14. The data were checked for consistency and, as a result, six questionnaires were removed from the sample, leaving 262 for processing.

The open comments were content analysed as follows. First, a coding frame was devised to describe their thematic content. The codes were then applied to all the comments. A second coder was then employed to test the reliability of assigning codes independently, and interrater reliability was good (Cohen's $\kappa = .80$).

Results

Perceived occupational and practicum stress

Scores on these two general stress questions were positively correlated ($r = .52, p < .001$). Almost half of the sample (46%) considered teaching as a profession to be very or extremely stressful, whereas 38% considered their practicum to have been very or extremely stressful. The only significant demographic difference found was between male and female trainees' responses to the question 'In general, how stressful do you consider the job of a secondary teacher to be?' Women perceived the job to be more stressful than did the men (see Table 1). While no significant interactions were found for sex \times age, there was an interesting pattern of scores for perceived occupational stress: scores for the youngest male and female trainees were almost identical, whereas there was a visible distance between the two sexes in the other two age groups (see Figure 1).

Teacher Stress Scale

Scores on the 23 items were added to give a total stress score for the scale, and thus the potential scoring range was 23–115. Although women ($M = 56.4, SD = 14.3$) scored more highly than men ($M = 55.1, SD = 12.0$), the difference failed to reach significance ($t[260] = .621, p = .535$). Furthermore, while total stress scores increased with age (< 25 years: $M = 55.3, SD = 13.7$; 25–30 years: $M = 55.9, SD = 14.6$; > 30 years: $M = 58.6, SD = 11.8$) these differences failed to reach significance ($F[2,260] = 0.777, p = .46$).

Individual scale items

A maximum score of 5 indicated that an item had been extremely stressful. Means ranged from 1.7 to 3.13 with standard deviations ranging from .868 to 1.297. A correlation matrix of all items

Table 1. Mean scores for perceived occupational stress and practicum stress by sex and age.

	N	Perceived occupational stress		Practicum stress	
		M	SD	M	SD
Whole sample	262	3.45	0.74	3.30	0.93
Sex					
Men	76	3.26	0.80	3.29	0.93
Women	186	3.53	0.71	3.30	0.93
<i>F</i>		5.39		0.00	
Partial η^2		0.03		0.00	
<i>p</i>		0.02		0.96	
Age					
< 25 years	120	3.45	.76	3.21	.94
25–30 years	92	3.47	.70	3.37	.88
> 30 years	50	3.31	.75	3.36	1.01
<i>F</i>		0.63		0.74	
Partial η^2		0.01		0.01	
<i>p</i>		0.53		0.48	

Note. Mean scores are based on a five-point scale (1–5); a high score indicates a high level of stress.

Partial η^2 is an alternative form of η^2 and indicates the contribution of each factor, taken as if it were the only variable, so that it is not masked by other more powerful variables (Pierce, Block, & Aguinis, 2004).

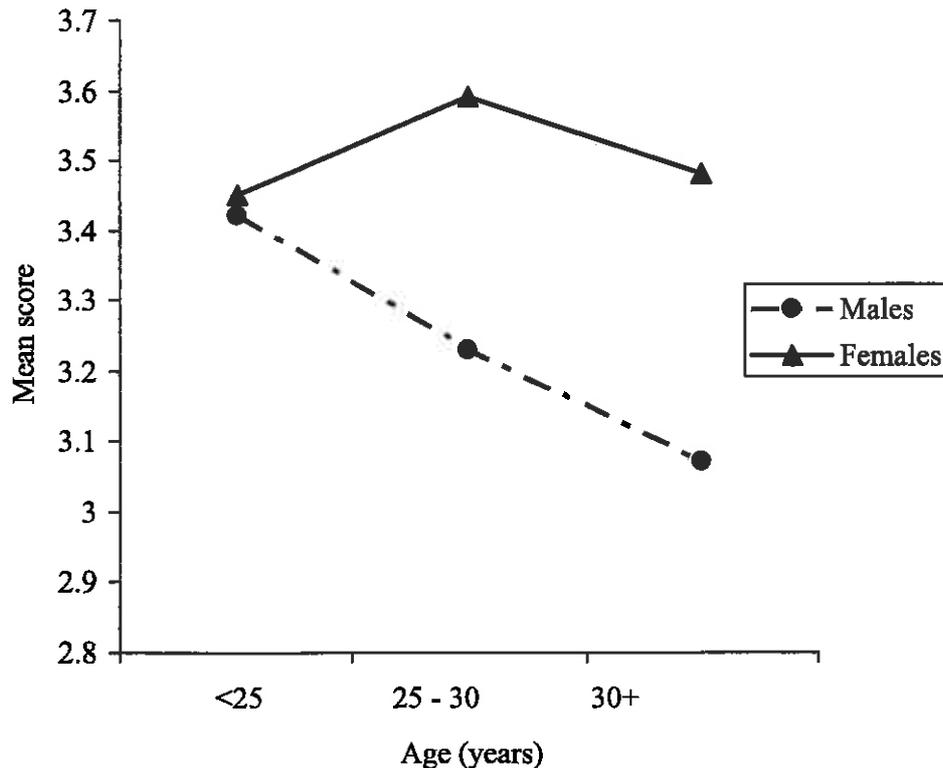


Figure 1. Mean scores (sex × age) for responses to the question 'How stressful do you consider the job of a secondary teacher to be?'

consisted of all positive correlations, and all items correlated positively and significantly with both perceived occupational and practicum stress (see Table 2). The scale had high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$).

To determine any underlying structure, all 23 items were included in a principal components analysis. All items loaded positively on the first factor (see Table 2) and accounted for 32% of the total variance in the unrotated solution. The factor structures were identified using a scree plot (Cattell, 1966) and Monte Carlo PCA for parallel analysis (Watkins, 2000). A three-factor model was found to be the best solution (eigenvalues 7.40, 2.04, and 1.90 respectively) and rotated orthogonally using varimax accounted for 25%, 14%, and 13% of the variance respectively. Items with significant loadings above .4 were used as a basis for explaining the three factors (see Table 3): these were labelled behaviour management, workload, and lack of support. Differences between the means for the three subscales reached significance (Wilks' $\lambda F [2,261] = 40.33$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .27$).

Repeated measures multiple analysis of variance was used to examine demographic differences, with the three factors as dependent variables and sex and age as independent variables. However, no differences reached significance, either as main effects or interactions.

General Health Questionnaire

The women's mean score ($M = 12.6$, $SD = 6.4$) was significantly higher than the men's ($M = 10.8$, $SD = 5.9$; $t[260] = 1.99$, $p < .05$), indicating increased dissatisfaction with current mental status

Table 2. Teacher Stress Scale means, standard deviations, correlations with occupational and practicum stress, and loadings on first unrotated factor.

Item	Item	M	SD	Correlation with practicum stress	Correlation with occupational stress	Loading on first unrotated factor
5	Controlling pupil behaviour	3.13	1.08	.31***	.23**	.699
6	Pupils with behaviour problems	3.13	1.10	.31***	.23**	.718
4	Lesson planning	2.74	1.01	.44***	.41**	.565
1	Feeling good about yourself as a teacher	2.67	1.16	.46***	.35**	.512
11	Motivating disinterested pupils	2.63	0.98	.28***	.27**	.615
19	Loud/noisy pupils	2.58	1.01	.22***	.21**	.646
3	Assessing pupil performance	2.58	0.98	.35***	.36**	.645
2	Administrative tasks	2.58	1.04	.31***	.47**	.654
7	Mixed ability teaching	2.55	1.05	.30***	.34**	.598
23	Pupil apathy	2.54	1.09	.33***	.36**	.744
14	Lack of recognition of effort	2.53	1.29	.37***	.19**	.523
13	Feeling in control of class	2.52	1.06	.36***	.32**	.749
9	Raising pupils' achievements	2.49	0.91	.31***	.27**	.599
12	Pupils' attitudes towards school	2.46	1.06	.37***	.26**	.718
22	Pupil aggression	2.43	1.21	.25***	.14*	.709
8	Teaching pupils with SEN	2.39	0.97	.20**	.31**	.661
21	Having teaching observed/assessed	2.32	1.15	.24***	.26**	.649
15	Attitude/behaviour of senior management	2.23	1.28	.28***	.08	.680
10	Keeping records	2.20	0.98	.26***	.34**	.674
16	Attitude/behaviour of other teachers in your department	2.20	1.29	.35***	.09	.619
18	Maintaining positive rapport with pupils	1.72	0.87	.30***	.21**	.630
17	Attitude/behaviour of teachers in other departments	1.70	1.01	.15*	.05	.637
20	Attitude of parents	1.70	0.93	.16*	.12	.577

* $p < .02$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Teacher Stress Scale – varimax rotated solution.

Item	Component		
	1	2	3
Feeling in control of class	.77	.13	.16
Controlling pupil behaviour	.76	.10	.05
Pupils with behaviour problems	.76	.18	.01
Loud/noisy pupils	.73	.01	.12
Pupil aggression	.64	.09	.28
Motivating disinterested pupils	.63	.29	.07
Pupil apathy	.62	.24	.21
Maintaining positive rapport with pupils	.61	.01	.22
Pupils' attitudes towards school	.60	.16	.28
Mixed ability teaching	.53	.40	.01
Teaching pupils with SEN	.50	.32	.01
Feeling good about yourself as a teacher	.44	.29	.09
Having teaching observed/assessed	.33	.27	.16
Assessing pupil performance	.16	.76	.11
Keeping records	.01	.74	.17
Administrative tasks	.03	.71	.20
Lesson planning	.29	.60	.06
Raising pupils' achievements	.32	.46	.20
Attitude/behaviour of senior management	.14	.09	.77
Attitude/behaviour of teachers in other departments	.03	.10	.77
Attitude/behaviour of other teachers in your department	.13	.09	.73
Lack of recognition of effort	.24	.12	.63
Attitude of parents	.35	.13	.40

Note. Items in bold indicate loadings > 0.4.

in female trainees; however, the magnitude of the differences between the two means was small ($\eta^2 = .02$). Differences between the three age groups failed to reach significance at $\alpha = .05$. These findings are consistent with various validation studies of the GHQ – that is, significant differences between sexes but not between age groups (Goldberg & Williams, 1988). While Pevalin (2000) reported a number of studies which demonstrated a gradual rise in GHQ scores with age (up to 60 years), in the present study this trend was only observed among the women. Indeed, the men in the over 30 group had the lowest score of all groups measured.

The zero order correlation matrix for the three stress factors and perceived occupational stress with GHQ-12 scores is shown in Table 4. All stress factors positively correlated with scores on the GHQ-12 in the expected direction and reached statistical significance at the $\alpha = .01$ level. The correlations between the three stress variables and psychological distress for the whole sample were of medium strength (Cohen, 1988).

To investigate which of the independent variables best predicted level of psychological distress, a multiple regression analysis was carried out using psychological distress scores as the dependent variable and the three stress factors and perceived occupational stress as predictors (see Table 5). In relation to the whole sample, 16% of the variance in psychological distress scores is explained by the stress variables. There was a difference between sexes – among the men, the stress variables accounted for 18% but among women they accounted for

Table 4. Correlations between stress factors and GHQ-12 scores for the whole sample, and for male and female trainees.

Stress factor	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Cronbach's α	No. of items	Correlation with psychological distress			<i>z</i>
				Whole sample <i>N</i> = 262	Men <i>n</i> = 76	Women <i>n</i> = 186	
Behaviour management	2.55 (.69)	.89	13	.31**	.28*	.32**	.29
Workload	2.52 (.70)	.75	5	.25**	.25*	.25**	0
Lack of support	2.10 (.83)	.75	5	.25**	.14	.28**	.91
Perceived occupational stress	3.45 (.74)		1	.33**	.41**	.28**	1.05

Note. Stress rated on five-point scale; a high mean value indicates a higher level of stress.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

15% of variance, with behaviour management and perceived occupational stress reaching significance in respect of R^2 change.

Open question

Responses to the open question 'What did you find most stressful about your placement?' were content analysed and categorized, and comparisons were made between the sexes. Of the 253 responses, 63 were from men and 190 from women. Comments ranged from simple phrases and sentences to accounts covering two sides of A4; women provided the more detailed accounts. The content analysis generated four categories: managing pupil behaviour; administration, planning, and lack of time; negative attitude of mentors, teachers, and senior management team (SMT); and self-worth and personal agency. Representative comments, along with their relative frequencies within each of the four groups, are reported below in rank order.

Managing pupil behaviour

Most open comments were placed in this category and there were almost equal proportions of men (40%) and women (38%) referring to stress resulting from difficulties in managing pupils' behaviour. However, men made more comments about having to manage pupils with behaviour difficulties or 'disorders' ('pupils with behaviour problems who struggle to conform to teachers'

Table 5. Multiple regression results for the prediction of psychological distress (GHQ-12) using the three stress factors (behaviour management, workload, and lack of support) and perceived occupational stress.

Stress variable	Whole sample	R^2 change	
		Men	Women
Behaviour management	.09***	.08*	.10***
Workload	.01	.02	.01
Lack of support	.01	.00	.02
Perceived occupational stress	.05***	.08*	.03***
R^2	.16***	.18*	.15***

$N = 262$; * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

requests'; 'challenging behaviour from pupils inappropriately placed in mainstream classrooms'). In contrast, most comments from women related to low-level disruption ('always chattering'; 'out of their seats') or managing the whole class ('getting them to be quiet for long enough so I can teach'; 'answering back when I ask them to be quiet'). Female trainees also reported more threats of physical aggression from pupils ('I had to operate in a situation where I had to face the fear of physical threats of violence towards me by students'; 'one boy threatened to hit me on more than one occasion').

Administration, planning, and time management

Roughly equal proportions of men (32%) and women (33%) trainees commented on administration, planning, and time management as stressors. Most comments reflected concerns about having to spend too much time 'planning lessons' and/or 'juggling multiple demands from Faculty and school' and/or 'unnecessary amounts of paperwork'. However, the pressure of coping with excessive amounts of paperwork is a familiar, rather than novel, complaint reported by inexperienced and experienced teachers alike.

Negative attitude of mentors, teachers, and senior management

In contrast to the two previous categories, male and female trainees viewed lack of support from mentors, teachers and managers differently. While 19% of men found this area stressful, only 15% of women felt likewise. For some trainees, getting a supportive or 'good' mentor was fortuitous. The following quote from a female trainee summarizes the spirit of such comments: 'My friend had a lovely mentor, very dedicated and caring. Mine hardly spoke to me and when he did it was always critical, no balancing of positive and negative, just negative.' In other contexts it was teachers other than the mentor who seemed unsupportive: 'With one exception, they [the other teachers] were very unhelpful almost obstructive in some cases' (male trainee). The attitude of the SMT also caused concern for some trainees, for example through acting 'unprofessionally ... walking into my classroom and disciplining a student then walking out without saying a word to me!' Others felt that the SMT had unrealistic expectations of what trainee teachers should be expected to do, such as 'covering classes at the drop of a hat which meant teaching lessons for which I was unprepared'. Alternatively, some found the SMT to be invisible, 'taking no interest in my presence in their school'.

Self-worth and personal agency

This area produced the biggest difference between the sexes, with 8% of men and 14% of women making comments of this kind. Most of the self-critical comments were made by female trainees. These included an unrealistic desire always to deliver the perfect lesson, whereby failure to do so would reduce self-image ('convincing myself that I can teach'; 'struggling to get my teaching right every time'; 'I always come out of lessons worried that they weren't good enough.'). Others related to general self-doubt ('feeling inadequate in teaching and managing a class'; 'I have high expectations of myself which I am not achieving and now I am doubting my abilities ... I am beginning to wonder if teaching is really for me').

Discussion

The findings of the present study extend previous research into the relationship between trainee teacher stress and distress. Experiencing high levels of stress, caused by disruptive pupils, high workload, and feeling unsupported during the practicum, may well lead to trainees becoming

demotivated, suffering ill health, decide not to teach, or leaving teaching prematurely. The present findings have practical implications for those concerned with the training of secondary school teachers.

Overall, 38% of the trainees in this study felt that their teaching experience had been very or extremely stressful, a percentage which almost matches the highest figure reported by practicing teachers (37%) in a number of studies (Borg, 1990; Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995; Chan & Hui, 1995; Kyriacou, 1987, 2001). At the same time, almost half the cohort (46%) thought that the job of a secondary teacher was very or extremely stressful, based on their observations in school. This finding that almost half of the cohort anticipate that life will be very or extremely stressful when they commence teaching should be of concern, especially given that the level of pleasure trainees anticipate when they become teachers best predicts retention (Wilhelm et al., 2000).

Women in the present study scored significantly higher than men on the GHQ-12, a finding consistent other studies (Goldberg & Williams, 1988; Pevalin, 2000). Of particular relevance to the present study, Kovess-Masféty et al. (2007) reported differences in the levels of mental health of teachers across teaching phases. Interestingly, female secondary teachers scored higher on psychological distress than male and female teachers in any other teaching phase. In contrast, secondary male teachers scored lowest of all teaching groups (distress measured using the Hopkins Symptom Checklist, a measure which correlates [$r = .78$] with the GHQ-12; Goldberg, Rickels, & Downing, 1976).

With regard to understanding the nature of trainee teacher stress, three factors were identified: behaviour management, workload, and lack of support. These factors are recognizable as characteristic of stressors intrinsic to teaching in the research literature (e.g., Borg et al., 1991; Durham, 1992; Galloway, Ball, Blomfield, & Seyd, 1982; Kyriacou, 2001; Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999). Two of the factors are concerned with interpersonal relationships and the third with administrative demands, a distinction that has different implications for training – since the latter is potentially easier to quantify and address. Hereafter, discussion will focus on the two interpersonal factors.

Although in the present study all three factors were correlated with psychological distress, the salience of managing pupil behaviour is evident both in the stress scale scores and in the open comments; it is the only factor to make a unique contribution to the prediction of psychological distress. The open questions in the present study shed further light on qualitative differences between male and female trainees with regard to behaviour management. While men made more references to stress resulting from dealing with pupils who have behaviour difficulties, women made more reference to threats of physical aggression being directed at them, a feature Kovess-Masféty et al. (2007) also noted in their study.

Stress related to managing pupil behaviour among trainee teachers is certainly not a new phenomenon. Merrett and Wheldall (1992) highlighted a large body of research that identified the 'grave anxieties' of trainees about behaviour management. They added that, despite a national UK study of discipline in schools (*Elton Report*, 1989) having recommended training student teachers in group management skills, there remained no adequate provision of practical training in this area. The UK government now requires trainees to spend almost all of their PGCE year in partnership schools, who take the 'leading responsibility for training students to ... manage classes (Department for Education, 1992, para. 14) – an approach which Anderson (1995) and Tomlinson (1995) suggest has the potential for more effective teacher training. As a result more time is now spent in schools than in higher education institutions (HEI) than ever but, one might ask, has this change resulted in better-equipped trainees?

Based on the present study, one might question the efficacy of increased time spent in school as a means of improving trainees' ability to cope, particularly with disruptive behaviour. While

the present study focused on a single cohort, the findings here are in keeping with successive surveys of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) by the UK Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), in which NQTs highlighted inadequacies in the teaching of behaviour management techniques during their training (TDA, 2005). Interestingly, despite these survey findings the TDA make the claim in their recent guidance on training standards (TDA, 2006) that 'The teaching profession has never been in better shape' (p. 2). The levels of stress and psychological distress reported by trainees in this and other recent studies of teacher stress, including their own surveys, along with rates of teacher attrition, might lead one to ask how 'better shape' is being measured.

In the present study, lack of support was found to correlate significantly with occupational stress, but only in the case of female trainees. Official support in school is provided by the trainee's mentor; the trainee's relationship with the mentor can be pivotal in determining the overall success of the placement. The degree to which mentors were perceived as supportive in this study was variable, with some trainees having to rely on other teachers, sometimes in other departments, for instrumental and emotional support. Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) argue that support from a supervising teacher has two functions, first as principal coping strategy and second, paradoxically, as a potential stressor, because of the supervisor's role in assessing trainee performance. Having one's teaching observed and assessed can be a distraction; however, having it observed by someone whom you feel does not value or respect you, as was the case for some of the trainees in the present study, could severely disrupt an individual's teaching performance and threaten their self-image.

The female trainees in this study made substantially more references to threats to their self-image, particularly if lessons were perceived as not being excellent, than did male trainees. Forlin (2001) also found that female teachers reported greater stress from threats to their perceived professional competence than their male counterparts. In the present study, the central role of the mentor relationship and perceived levels of support were clearly salient to many trainees, as indicated in the teacher stress scale and in their open comments. Merrett and Wheldall's (1992) observation – that the chances of a trainee finding him/herself in a welcoming school, with supportive teachers, cooperative pupils, and a skilled, well informed, and appropriately experienced mentor were uncertain – would appear as relevant today as it was then. Getting the trainee–environment fit right and monitoring the quality of mentoring would seem an essential feature of ensuring better quality training. The reality is that positive trainee–mentor relationships are often down to luck and are marred by personality conflicts (Merrett & Wheldall, 1992; Tickle, 1994).

There are a number of limitations to the present study. Using self-report measures in a cross-sectional study can bias responses, since sociocultural factors may influence what teachers consciously appraise and report as stressful. Hiebert and Farber (1984) urged caution in drawing conclusions about the intrinsic nature of stress in teaching, arguing that the publicity given to teacher stress has the potential to generate a self-fulfilling prophecy, redefining everyday 'normal hassles' as chronic inherent stressors. However, the present findings are fairly consistent with previous research using different methodologies over a long period of time. The cohort design meant that the sample was not random and hence cannot claim to be representative of the UK population of trainee secondary teachers nor of different modes of training, and hence caution must be used in attempting to generalize the findings. There is a need to conduct studies with samples representative of other types of teacher training to determine their impact on trainee well-being.

The conclusions of the present study are that changes are needed to the structure and content of initial teacher training in at least three areas. First, more comprehensive training in behaviour management techniques is needed, including providing trainees with greater knowledge and understanding of pupil behaviour and behaviour difficulties. Group management techniques

should be taught to trainees, such as positive behaviour management, cognitive-behavioural approaches, microteaching of interpersonal skills, group problem-solving, managing the classroom environment, and, for some individuals, clinical supervision. Such approaches are established, tested, effective, and available. While the HEI may provide the most suitable venue for such training, it would also be productive to involve schools in producing a coordinated package to ensure that all trainees receive a balanced input. Second, training is needed in stress management techniques, again involving both schools and HEI to promote shared understanding. Third, more efforts should be made to match trainees to placement schools, mentors, and optimal types of support, which, although a difficult challenge given the numbers of trainees involved, is certainly worthy of further attention. The question is whether those responsible for decision-making in teacher education are prepared to invest in them.

In sum, the findings of the present paper add to the broader literature on stress and distress among trainee teachers and highlight demographic differences. The levels of stress and distress identified suggest we should be concerned about the mental health and preparedness of trainees to teach. The degree to which high levels of stress will be sustained during their careers is not measured in the present paper. However, the consistent reporting of high levels of stress and distress among experienced teachers would suggest it seems quite possible.

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Appendix 3.4: Item 4

CHAPLAIN, R. (2001). Stress and job satisfaction among primary headteachers: A question of balance? *Educational Management & Administration*, 29(2), 197-215.

Stress and Job Satisfaction among Primary Headteachers

A Question of Balance?

Roland P. Chaplain

The Dynamics of Stress and Job Satisfaction

Interest in teacher stress has grown substantially in recent years. Although it is not a new phenomenon as the following quotation from *The Schoolmaster* (6 December 1879) demonstrates:

The headmaster of Woolwich-Common Military College shot himself on Saturday last. His brother gave evidence to the effect that the deceased had often complained that the work was killing him, saying that the trouble of teaching did not affect him as much as the worry of management. This case gives rise to serious considerations. . . . What is not so evident to the general public is the distressing state of mind in which a large number carry out their work.

Researchers have examined teacher stress in different phases of education, including both secondary school teachers (Capel, 1987; Sheffield et al., 1994) and primary school teachers (Borg et al., 1991; Boyle et al., 1995; Chaplain 1995a). By contrast there have been fewer studies of stress among headteachers—in particular among primary headteachers.

The tasks that primary headteachers are expected to undertake have changed significantly in recent years (Southworth, 1995) and increasingly their work is perceived as pressured. These pressures have come from a variety of sources including changes to legislation, relationships with key stakeholders in education (including parents and governors) and increases in the management (as compared with *teacher*) role (Boydell, 1990; Grace, 1995; Jones, 1999; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998).

Just before the introduction of the Education Reform Act (1988), a national study of occupational stress among headteachers in the UK was carried out by Cooper and Kelly (1993). Collecting data by self-report questionnaires, they concluded that primary headteachers were experiencing higher levels of job dissatisfaction and stress than their secondary and tertiary counterparts. The two main sources of stress were 'work overload' and 'handling relationships with staff'. Cooper and Kelly concluded that this was more prevalent in primary schools because of: a lack of clerical support; their small size and hence lack of variety, rewards and power; their relatively low status and the perceived less demanding nature of their job; and the amount of teaching cover they had to provide.

A study carried out by Ostell (1998) examined the relationship between stress, anger and psychological health, concluding that headteacher coping could be enhanced through support at two levels: organizational and personal. The former relates to providing heads with the 'necessary' organizational or structural resources (staffing, finance, etc.) and the latter to the development of problem-solving skills and the emotional-coping capacities of heads. This could possibly be facilitated, Ostell suggests, by developing heads' ability to review their appraisal of difficult situations and the strategies they employed to cope. While there may be a widespread perception that certain events are commonly stressful, this may not be borne out by the accounts of people actually involved.

Stress has proved difficult to define both conceptually and methodologically, not only because of the breadth of areas investigated, but also because of the use of the divergent use of the term in different disciplines. As Elliot and Eisdorfer (1982) pointed out 'stress research is filled with confusion, controversy and inconsistency'. The implications of the term are different when used in medicine or physiological studies as compared with psychological research. This has led to a body of theoretical knowledge concerned with the concept of stress which is notably diverse. Simple physiological explanations are generally acknowledged to be inadequate (Cox, 1978; Cox and Ferguson, 1991) since they fail to account for individual subjectivity in the perception of stress and individual differences in coping. The present article adopts a psychological framework as a basis for understanding occupational stress. Much of the work which psychologists have undertaken in developing explanations of stress and coping has recognized that it is our perceptions and understanding of what is happening that are the key, that is, cognitive appraisal (see Fontana, 1989, for instance). Lazarus (1966) pioneered the development of the stress and coping paradigm, arguing that an event is only stressful if it is perceived as such by an individual. Cognitive appraisal therefore mediates between being aware of a potential stressful event (e.g. OFSTED inspection) and an individual's reaction to it. Primary appraisal determines the degree of threat the potential stressor offers and secondary appraisal is concerned with assessing one's ability to cope with the event. Clearly, the level of personal, interpersonal and organizational resources an individual *perceives* they have available is pivotal in understanding to what extent they feel prepared to cope with specific events. For example, the degree to which a headteacher feels stressed or is having difficulty coping depends upon the outcome of such appraisal.

Stress is a complex phenomenon and one prevalent error has been to define it in terms of its damaging effects. However, at one level, stress is seen as a motivator. As Seyle (1974) commented, stress is the stuff of life, without stress we would not want to survive, since some degree of stress is invigorating. Defining stress primarily in terms of its damaging effects is therefore limiting since there cannot be any job which is not stressful at some time and stress may be productive.

Research into the concept of stress, has raised a number of methodological difficulties in terms of conceptualization, operationalization and measurement both in general terms (Kaplan, 1990; Schafer and Fals-Stewart, 1991) and specifically with reference to teacher stress (Johnstone, 1989; Kyriacou, 1998; Pithers, 1995). Much psychological research has been based on analysis of the results of self-report questionnaires using complex statistical techniques (e.g. Borg et al., 1991; Boyle et al., 1995) to produce models of stress. Other researchers have relied on qualitative methods in order to emphasize individual perspectives (Brown and Ralph, 1998; Freeman, 1986; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998). The latter approaches have grounded their understanding of stress in the personal accounts of those

involved, arguing that individuals are able to talk about feelings associated with stress and how they try and cope with it. Bartlett (1998) argued that the 'discursive perspective'—citing Radley's (1993) biographical and cultural perspectives on health and illness as one example—is a relatively new approach but one which lies at the 'cutting edge' of research into stress. This approach draws upon individual accounts of stress which in turn draw upon the 'prevalent lay theories [operating] in the social and cultural milieu'. The present study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Antonovsky (1979) suggested three key sources of stress: cataclysmic life events, major life events and daily hassles. While some headteachers may experience cataclysmic or major life events in their out-of-school lives and occasionally in their in-school lives, they are *at least* as vulnerable as any other member of the school community to everyday hassles and uplifts. A number of studies have demonstrated that daily hassles were a more efficient predictor of psychological ill health than (major) life event scores (DeLongis et al., 1982; Johnson and Bornstein, 1993; Kanner et al., 1991).

A number of studies have established a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1979). However, many have relied on a single question. Too heavy a reliance on single-item measures (e.g. 'Overall, how satisfied are you with teaching as a job?') has been questioned as this may hide a teacher's overall sense of satisfaction with the various facets of their work (Chaplain, 1995a; Galloway et al., 1985). Hill (1994) found primary headteachers attributed most dissatisfaction to work overload, with most satisfaction coming from interpersonal relationships (with pupils as opposed to staff) and from autonomy. While relationships with pupils were consistently rated the source of high levels of satisfaction there was a recognition of heads being unable to spend as much time with pupils following recent changes to their managerial responsibilities.

This study seeks to answer five questions about primary headteachers' perceptions of their jobs:

- How stressful is primary headship?
- What are the most stressful aspects of their management role?
- How satisfying is primary headship?
- What are the sources of job satisfaction?
- What is the relationship between stress and job satisfaction?

The Study

The present study is an analysis of perceived stress and job satisfaction among a sample of primary headteachers currently working in the West Midlands–East Anglia region. It examines headteachers' perceived *level* of stress and what specific aspects of their management roles they felt were most stressful. The data were grounded in the heads' phenomenological accounts of their experiences of stress in their working lives. Also examined were how satisfied they were with their job generally and what specific facets of their work they considered provided *most* job satisfaction. The research, conducted in two phases, involved headteachers from 36 schools. In the first phase a self-report questionnaire containing both open and closed questions was used to determine levels of occupational stress and satisfaction and to highlight their concerns. Data in the second phase were collected by individual interviews, with each lasting about one hour. The first part of the interview

had semi-structured questions and the second part asked them to reflect on their responses to the questionnaire.

Of the heads 19 were female and 17 were male. Ages ranged between 33 and 54 years (mean 45 years). This balance of each sex in the present study reflects approximately the current proportions of males and female heads in primary schools. Recent statistics show that female headteachers now make up 57 percent of primary headteachers (*Times Educational Supplement*, 14 October 1999). This is an interesting contrast to Hill's study in 1994 where males outnumbered females, which was representative of the national ratio at that time. The schools in the present study ranged in size from 50 to 460 pupils on roll (mean 205) and the number of staff for whom they were responsible ranged between 8 and 33.

Phase 1: General Levels of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Before I consider the details of the interviews, the results of the questionnaires completed by each headteacher in phase 1 will be presented and discussed.

How Stressful is Primary Headship?

Just over half of the headteachers (55 percent) considered being a headteacher was *very or extremely stressful* (see Table 1). A further 40 percent considered the job *moderately stressful*. The salience of including *frequency* of feeling stressed in addition to *intensity* of stressors was highlighted in an earlier study of primary classroom teachers (Chaplain, 1995a). When asked about how frequently they felt stressed, 84 percent of respondents answered *most of the time*. A further 12 percent experienced stress *about half of the time*. Only 6 percent of heads considered their work as *mildly* stressful and a similar small number (4 percent) felt stressed only *occasionally* (Table 1).

Responses to open choices about what aspects of their work caused most stress were categorized under four headings: external factors (e.g. legislation, governors, inspections); school structures (e.g. maintaining standards and budgets); interpersonal processes (e.g. relationships with teachers and parents); and personal factors (e.g. professional activities and lifestyle).

The most commonly reported stressors came from the category *school structures*. Headteachers' comments indicated that they experienced considerable stress as a result of having to organize and manage a number of different and diverse areas including: school budgets, maintaining standards and pupils' behaviour and learning. The second most frequently reported stressors came from the quality of *interpersonal relationships* and here the difficulties which caused concern were relationships with adults (shared almost equally between parents and staff) as opposed to relationships with pupils.

Comments related to *external factors* were rated as the third most stressful category. Government legislation and guidance were at the top of the list, closely followed by local government and school governors. These factors could distract heads from their more proximal duties such as day-to-day management of staff and pupils by imposing seemingly inescapable demands on their time and resources. The fourth most stressful area was related to personal factors including professional activities, lifestyle and health.

Table 1. Reported levels of occupational stress, frequency of feeling stressed and general levels of job satisfaction (%)

	<i>Extremely stressful</i>	<i>Very stressful</i>	<i>Moderately stressful</i>	<i>Mildly stressful</i>	<i>Not at all stressful</i>
In general how stressful do you find being a headteacher?	8	47	40	6	0
	<i>All of the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Seldom</i>
Does your answer to question No. 1 reflect your feelings?	0	84	12	6	0
	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Yes and no</i>	<i>Not satisfied</i>	<i>Definitely not satisfied</i>
How satisfied are you with being a headteacher?	22	34	22	22	0

How Satisfying is Primary Headteaching as a Career?

To determine levels of job satisfaction respondents were asked: 'How satisfied are you with being a headteacher?' Just over half (56 percent) reported they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their jobs (see Table 1). Aspects of their work which brought most satisfaction were related to their professional status, challenge and their own performance. There were, however, exceptions—especially to the former, and the following interview quote encapsulates these negative feelings: 'I find the work intellectually insufficiently challenging. Whilst the potential to respond to challenging opportunities is there, the time is not. Too much time is spent responding to immediate demands with limited time for reflection' (female).

Furthermore, most heads reported being satisfied with the facilities and resources in their school and with their school's organization. However, issues concerned with school organization were also cited as the principal cause of most stress (see previous section). Few felt satisfied with the level of support they received from both colleagues and others involved with their school (e.g. governors, LEA).

Phase 2: Identifying Specific Aspects of Stress and Job Satisfaction—the Interview Data

In phase 2 attention is directed to the analysis of interviews with each headteacher. Heads' verbal and more open accounts of what they found difficult to cope with, along with what provided them with most job satisfaction, offered a complementary and sometimes different dimension to data from their questionnaire responses. Headteachers have a great number of tasks to perform within many arenas. The present study asked heads to identify their main sources of stress and job satisfaction and these were grouped, for purposes of this analysis, into the following categories: managing self, managing others, financial management, curriculum management, the management of change and finally stress and social support. The analysis of the interview transcripts will be reported under these six headings.

Managing Oneself

The human need to perceive oneself as having control over actions and outcomes is well-documented in the psychological literature. Two prominent concepts in this field of study are self-efficacy and locus of control and it is to a brief explanation of these two areas that attention is now directed. Perceived self-efficacy refers to 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Bandura, 1997: 3). In the present study, the concern is not with global self-efficacy but with a specific domain: professional self-efficacy.

The relationship between self-efficacy and stress has also been highlighted in earlier research (Jex and Gudanowski, 1992; McAteer-Early, 1992; Matsui and Onglatco, 1992). The level of stress experienced by an individual is often viewed in terms of task demands that tax or exceed an individual's self-perceived capability to manage them. An individual who has a high level of personal efficacy (belief in their ability to produce certain actions) and who does not achieve valued outcomes despite their efforts will not necessarily give up. On the other hand, someone who has low levels of personal efficacy and who experiences similar obstructions will quickly give up. The former by contrast will intensify their efforts and, if necessary, try to change inequitable social practices. Positive beliefs about

one's personal efficacy and the belief that one can produce certain outcomes is strongly related to effective coping. A relationship between self-efficacy and extreme stress or burnout has also been established, those with low professional self-efficacy being less able to cope and more prone to burnout (Chwalisz et al., 1992). Other research has highlighted the relationship between perceived control and increased self-esteem, reduced stress and enhanced performance (Israel et al., 1989).

A second cognate of personal control is the 'locus of control' construct. Originally developed by Rotter (1966), locus of control is concerned with the degree to which individuals believe their life is under their own control (internal locus of control) or the control of others (external locus of control). The concept refers to the beliefs that a person holds about where social reinforcement originates: that is, within the person or external to them. For example, someone who is successful in an examination and who has an internal locus of control may attribute their success to their own ability. In contrast, someone with an external locus of control may attribute their success to luck. An internal locus of control is usually perceived as more psychologically healthy.

Research into stress has also identified the importance to professionals of feeling in control of their lives, effective copers having a high internal locus of control as opposed to a high external locus of control (Hurrell and Murphy, 1991). Effective coping is thus facilitated by a personal sense of control as an individual perceives themselves to be, to varying degrees, the outcome controlling agent. However, Bandura (1997) argues that to view self-efficacy and locus of control as the *same* phenomenon is incorrect as they are 'entirely different' and this has been corroborated empirically.

Comments from heads in the present study often highlighted the satisfaction they gained from awareness of personal ability to achieve important goals such as dealing effectively with new demands and of having the power to engage in strategic change:

I love being able to make choices in order to target the needs of my school . . . for example, releasing funds for the IT development activities. (female)

It is much more enjoyable now that I understand and feel confident about managing the whole thing [budgeting]; it used to be a real nightmare. (male)

Personal control could, however, be a double-edged sword in that individuals could develop the belief that they are responsible for everything at all times, which can, in turn, lead to overwork, exhaustion and depression. As one head put it: 'I sometimes wonder if anybody else does anything around here, I'm the first to arrive and the last to leave'. (female) There is sense in which, because heads are so closely associated with their schools, they can be perceived as 'owners' of them (Nias et al., 1989). If the head is perceived as the 'owner' of the school then it perhaps hardly surprising that they are expected to put far more into the organization and make more sacrifices than their staff.

Reluctance to hand over control and the resultant costs were made clear in a number of comments, for example: 'I need to feel in control of the admin. and paper demands, so when it comes to strategic planning, which for me is the most satisfying part of the job is to take place, it does so at too great a personal cost' (female). The need to feel completely in control could sometimes result in overwork, 'I find it very difficult to switch off, which often means I can't relax when I get home . . . I feel I have to prepare for whatever trivia I am going to have to deal with tomorrow'. (female)

Personal pressures could also be very significant when, for instance, some heads felt they did not have enough time to complete important tasks which could lead to overwork, fatigue, lowered self esteem and increased uncertainty: 'I like to think that I am in control but often find I can't switch off . . . in the long term this results in me failing to complete tasks . . . not a good situation . . .'. (male)

Managing Others

While management of themselves was considered important, most time was typically spent managing others (adults and pupils), often to the detriment of more personal issues. This was understandable since, if headteachers felt they were not seen to be coping well, were not on top of things or were considered incompetent, then the whole school would be significantly affected and could start to deteriorate in all its operations. Headteachers generally recognized the importance of teamwork, high morale and enjoyment of work. This was seen to lead to increased confidence and creativity and could result in improvement for all. The potential for the inter-relationship between self-management and the management of others to be either a source of stress or satisfaction was frequently highlighted.

Several heads reported that there were occasions where other people were not supportive and could block their sense of satisfaction and increase stress: parents, for instance, whose views conflicted with those of the school; disruptive pupils; LEA or government requirements which could generate stress by adding a feeling of not having control of decisions, which in turn could affect the 'smooth running of the school'. Difficult teachers and staff 'hang-ups' could combine with a limited awareness of, or a failure to recognize, the nature and diversity of the headteacher's role to create excessive demands on time that could then threaten the planned and 'agreed direction' of the school: 'It is very annoying when having spent several hours in meetings agreeing a particular policy only to find certain individuals continuing in their old ways'. (female)

Many heads reported feeling undervalued by colleagues and others for their contribution to the smooth running of their organization and for the support they offered their staff. It often felt like a 'one way street . . . I give—they take'. There can be a tension created when teachers, failing to recognize the role of the head, measure heads' effectiveness on how much *teaching* they do, as opposed to how much *managing* they do. This has been generated by the myth that heads have to be all things to all men (and women) at all times. If heads fall into this trap they find themselves spending inordinate amounts of time attempting to keep everybody happy, something which is impossible.

Other people's [staff] hang-ups . . . if you're not in the office when they send a miscreant to you it's not on and if you're not in the classroom offering support that's not on either . . . how many places can you be in at one time? When I was a teacher you never saw the head! (female)

There are some who don't like my management style but that is inevitable . . . the biggest problems come from those staff who are reluctant to consider any form of change. (male)

Some heads felt the need to be liked by their staff, and while there is nothing wrong with being liked one is in danger of making this a priority and undermining professional

responsibilities or making them harder to execute. The difficulty of balancing personal and professional relationships, of trying to keep everybody happy, was evident in the voices of the heads:

They [staff] don't appreciate all the other demands on my time. Sure I would like to have more time for informal and professional talk but there just aren't enough hours in the day especially with the [new] building problems. They just don't appreciate what I am going through. (female)

It can be very unpleasant walking into the staffroom where there is an atmosphere. I ... can't understand why they can't or won't accept that my job is to manage and this can involve making unpopular decisions. I can rise above it but I would rather have a more pleasant atmosphere ... (male)

Dealing with problem staff was often difficult as a result of either or both a perceived lack of effective disciplinary measures in teaching or lack of support from governors and LEA:

These three people [teachers] were here when I arrived and they had been a constant source of trouble for the previous head—they're barrack-room lawyers and look for any excuse to rock the boat. They are well known to the governors and advisors, and even caused a snigger among the panel when I came for interview—although I did not get the joke at the time. I have tried to reason with them, given them additional resources and responsibilities, eventually putting my foot down—all to no avail. I raised the issue with the governors and the LEA ... and we agreed that I would up the pressure on them, but when it came to the crunch they all backed down leaving me looking like a right idiot. (male)

Or not being able to get away from them which could result in personal and emotional discomfort:

... the situation became unacceptable. They [staff] were intent on being bloody-minded and there were several confrontations in meetings. I had had enough. Every time I went into the staffroom there was a strained atmosphere, then my deputy fell ill. I took to taking tea in my office and doing my administration during the working day—I had previously always left such work for evenings and weekends. ... it makes you really angry sometimes! (female)

Such experiences can increase feelings of isolation for headteachers, forcing them to cope single-handedly with difficulties which required a united front.

Managing Finances

Managing the school budget could be a very difficult area for headteachers. In this task many reported being well supported by colleagues, travelling bursar and budget managers, governors, IT systems, and County Hall, but this was not always the case. The amount of time allocated to these tasks was also variable: as it is cyclical and spasmodic in nature most

heads interviewed felt it took about 15 to 20 percent of their time. With additional pressures being placed on headteachers in recent years they frequently found themselves working on the budget in 'out of school time' in order to be uninterrupted. It was a source of satisfaction when headteachers managed to balance the budget and survive in a reducing budget framework where redundancies and insufficient funds threatened the school's priorities.

Some headteachers found satisfaction in using resources creatively to achieve the school's priorities and value for money. Attracting additional financial support from other sources was also satisfying, but balancing the books was the main satisfaction: 'When it all balances it feels good . . . but there's never enough money—whatever you're doing . . . what I really like is having the freedom to make decisions'. (female)

Most stress related to financial management came from uncertainty about future financial allocations and the lack of information in this respect. Management of declining budgets and maintaining solvency was perceived as difficult and was reflected in the concerns expressed by the headteachers.

The funds always seem to be on the limit and I worry about suddenly being faced with an unexpected demand. (male)

You are accountable to so many people and frankly I lack enthusiasm for the detail many of them require. (female)

Priorities identified by the headteachers reflected the situations they were in. They wanted to preserve their curriculum goals, balance the budget, undertake damage limitation and involve others in school development. Organizational factors such as lack of resources and the need personally to manage all the changes could exert a negative influence.

Managing the Curriculum

A major source of satisfaction for those who work with young people is that derived from seeing them develop in all areas. In the present study this was reflected in the satisfaction heads gained from managing the curriculum, summarized by one as 'improving the curricular experience for pupils and providing them with a solid base'. This also meant meeting pupils' needs and ensuring progress. Most headteachers found other colleagues, governors and parents were generally helpful in this respect, along with support in the form of In-Service Education for Teachers (INSET), clustering and fundraising. The heads considered that the time they spent on this activity was 'never enough'.

The main stressors were requirements imposed by the government—the frequent changes to the National Curriculum and assessment procedures—combined with those emanating from the school, notably a lack of resources and 'staff who lack the relevant skills and knowledge' to apply new requirements. Resistance to change was seen as being shared by some teachers, governors and parents. These difficulties reflected the hesitancy that occurs when confidence is diminished. Priorities for the headteachers were long-term planning, active rather than passive learning, maintaining the system and INSET. 'Making it work' for the benefit of pupils seemed to be a key recurrent concern.

I know we have had to cope with lots of changes but I do find some staff resistant to change or who lack flair and vision with respect to improving what we teach and how we teach it. (male)

... some parents get hold of the wrong end of the stick. They hear about a literacy hour, or whatever, and expect results straight away. Other parents and some teachers, sadly, have entrenched attitudes and prove difficult to sell new initiatives to. (female)

Being able to develop new areas especially through effective delegation is rewarding however; at the end of the day it is children's achievements that count. (male)

... wonderful ... when teachers are enjoying delivering it and children are learning and are interested in it. (female)

Managing Change

Headteachers spend a significant amount of their time managing change. Some of the changes have been imposed. Such changes have had to be incorporated into schools' priorities and planning and could easily be sent off course by additional sudden changes or uncertainties. Headteachers could not do this alone and a number reported feeling supported by colleagues, governors, LEA and through appropriate INSET. Managing these processes could be a source of great satisfaction as heads viewed themselves as empowered through being 'change agents'—making things happen and achieving a consensus through active involvement of staff and, most notably, 'when it works'. Change permits evaluation and reflection on existing processes, provided the pacing is appropriate. Certainly, being able to see the positive effects on pupils' aspirations and achievements through improvement of the curriculum and a general commitment to learning was highly valued. Priorities reflected the juggling of external pressures alongside the school's internal priorities: preserving good practice, sticking to principles while optimizing change, making smooth transitions and 'getting it right so people can have confidence in what we are about'. A number of headteachers qualified this further:

The process of moving forward ... a sense of knowing where we have come from and in which direction we are going. It's about establishing a general commitment to learning, especially when staff feel that it has been fun. (male)

... making things work better and go more smoothly for others as well as for me. (female)

... seeing measured improvement in children's learning ... and the achievement of personal objectives. (male)

Stress came mainly as a result of staff anxieties and lack of competence on the part of some teachers. Change inevitably generates stress for individuals and groups since it disturbs what is known and predictable.

Limitations to change result from having to move at the pace of the slowest member of staff. Sometimes you think they are being deliberately awkward; you know, they waste time giving reasons why they should *not* do something rather than getting on and trying it. (male)

... some people get very anxious about change; they have to be coaxed out of their set ways. (female)

Stress, Social Support and Satisfaction

Social support is recognized as a buffer to stress (Grace and Schill, 1986), burnout (Himle et al., 1991) and can have a positive effect on mental health (Thoits, 1982). However, some writers (Antonucci and Israel, 1986, for instance) have identified an important distinction between *perceived* social support and *received* social support. Sarason et al. (1990) argued that it is the *perception* of social support that is the most important factor in maintaining psychological health. This perception of feeling supported has been recognized as a measurable personality characteristic and one which varies among the population as a whole (Sarason et al., 1983). In other words those individuals who perceive this 'sense of support' enjoy better psychological health than those who do not and further this characteristic is stable over time. Cutrona and Russell (1990) highlighted the need for recognition of the multifaceted nature of social support and how different forms of stress require different types of social support in order to meet particular stresses. Emotional support is more likely to be needed in novel or unexpected situations and likely to be provided by someone to whom we feel close. Instrumental support tends to be more useful in proactive preparation for what is expected. Effective coping through the use of social support might best be served by identifying and distinguishing between the different types of support and then learning to fit them to particular forms of stress rather than assuming that social support has some singular, universally effective properties.

Support from others, however, could be fickle. A previously supportive staff group could be disrupted by a new appointment or the group dynamic be affected adversely as a result of changing expectations, demands or working conditions. Delegation, or handing over some control, could create difficulties, but there was some recognition that through the development of other people difficult issues could be addressed, as one head made clear in the following comment:

I need to become more comfortable about delegating tasks to other people. I know it makes sense but sometimes it feels like I'm asking too much of them—at the same time I am aware that I will eventually burn myself out if I don't share out the burden.
(female)

The quality of relationships, enabling and empowering others, enjoying their support and a shared focus were declared sources of great satisfaction. Also important was a positive self-appraisal by heads of their personal performance and feeling in control while still being accessible and approachable. Headteachers also found it particularly rewarding when they felt they could access support from other headteacher-colleagues who might 'understand' their situation more accurately than 'junior colleagues'. Such support was usually accessed through networking or membership of professional associations. This contact, however, tended to be infrequent so was of little help in providing support for immediate difficulties. Under such circumstances the temptation to ring another head for help or advice was tempered by feelings of 'distracting them from their busy schedule' or questioning one's own competence and ability to cope. Some heads highlighted how staff in their own organization who 'shared the vision' for the school and could be trusted to manage alongside helped them to cope more effectively and in these instances the support was more readily available.

A Closer Look at Very Stressed Headteachers

The questionnaire and interview results revealed that around half the heads (55 percent) reported experiencing *very high* levels of stress on a *regular* basis and it is to this group that attention is now turned. Analysis of this group revealed two qualitatively distinct sub-groups. The first and larger group (33 percent) said that they were experiencing *extreme or very high levels of stress* from their work on a regular basis, but at the same time also indicated they felt *very satisfied* with their work (hereafter the *very satisfied* group). The remaining 22 percent also felt they were experiencing regularly high levels of stress but in these cases were generally *not satisfied* with their work (hereafter the *not satisfied* group).

Further analysis of the two groups revealed interesting differences between them:

- While the *very satisfied* group included equal numbers of males and females, the *not satisfied* group was exclusively female.
- The majority of the *very satisfied* group (66 percent) identified their main causes of stress as coming from interpersonal relationships, external factors and school structures, with very few identifying their personal factors as the main cause. In contrast, most of the *not satisfied* group (75 percent) identified personal factors (professional activity, lifestyle, health) as the main causes of stress in their lives.
- For the greater majority (80+ percent) of the *very satisfied* group most satisfaction was identified as coming from personal performance as a head, school organization and resources, with no one identifying aspects of their job that was definitely not satisfying. Clearly heads could identify occasions when some aspect of their work ceased to generate satisfaction but equally found occasions when the same aspect had. In contrast, while for the majority (76 percent) of the *not satisfied* group most satisfaction was gained from the quality of resources and the curriculum, a similar number considered that headteaching as a profession, the level and quality of support they received and personal performance as a head were the least satisfying aspects of their work.

Differences between stressors and sources of satisfaction for the two groups are highlighted in Figure 1.

Although both groups believed they were *very stressed* the nature of their stress and sources of satisfaction were not the same. While personal factors (competence, autonomy and satisfaction with personal performance and health) provided most stress for the *not satisfied* group these factors provided most satisfaction for the *very satisfied* group. It is perhaps not unexpected for the *very stressed but very satisfied* group to attribute their greatest satisfaction to personal factors—that is, aspects of their life over which they perceive they have most control. Such a belief is likely to enhance their self-esteem and professional self-efficacy. In contrast the *very stressed but not satisfied* group are more of a concern since they are attributing most stress to personal factors, behaviour which is less psychologically healthy since attributing difficulties to one's lack of competence can result in reduced motivation and negative affect such as guilt or shame (Weiner, 1992).

The fact that the *not satisfied* group in this study were exclusively female is also of concern, even though the present study is based on a relatively small sample. It would have been a (welcome) bonus if this finding could have been further examined within the

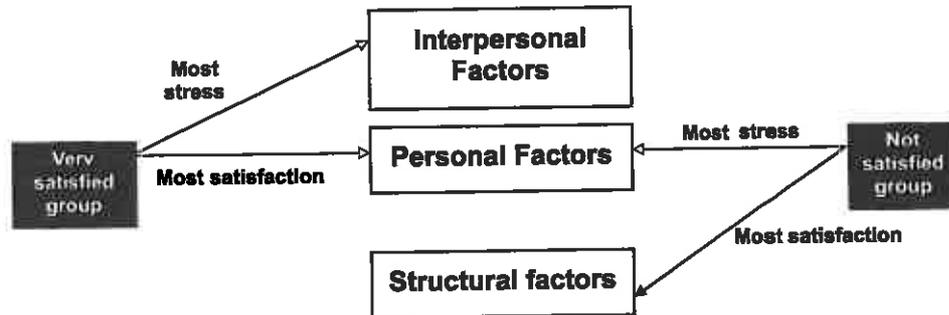


Figure 1. Comparison of sources of stress and satisfaction for 'very satisfied' headteachers and 'not satisfied' headteachers

same study. Until more studies are carried out one can only speculate as to some of the reported effects.

The *not satisfied* group claimed that they gained most satisfaction from the more administrative aspects of their work, that is, resources, facilities and the curriculum, and least satisfaction with personal and interpersonal aspects of their work. Dissatisfaction with personal performance could indicate a low level of self-efficacy, that is, a belief that they lack the ability to achieve their desired outcomes in their work. One reason for this may relate to the nature of the job itself. Primary headship was traditionally a male-dominated occupation and although there are now more female than male heads, established perceptions are likely to persist. Research carried out by Betz and Hackett (1981) showed how traditionally gendered roles could affect negatively the efficacy beliefs of women compared with men. When they measured the general self-efficacy of men and women across a wide range of occupations they found no significant differences between them. However, when they examined differences between non-traditional and traditional occupations they did find significant differences. While occupational self-efficacy scores for men were equivalent in both traditional and non-traditional occupations, women's occupational self-efficacy was significantly lower for traditionally male-dominated occupations and higher for traditionally female-dominated professions. Similar results have been found elsewhere in accounts such as Rooney and Osipow (1992); Church et al. (1992). To develop this further it is important to distinguish between self-efficacy and locus of control. It might be that the women in the *not satisfied* group study did recognize the relationship between having an internal locus of control and outcome expectancy, or at least the achievement of performance markers. In other words they knew what qualifications and experience were required in order to achieve a headship and had personally gained both. However, as Bandura (1997) pointed out, this awareness does not necessarily translate into efficacy beliefs. Hackett and Betz (1981) suggested that career self-efficacy played a more important role than ability in the restriction of women's career choices, which ultimately relates to socialization processes—an observation which may have a relevance to the present study.

It could also be that we are witnessing what Davidson and Cooper (1992) claimed were the higher levels of stress among women than men as a result of having to break through the 'glass ceiling' into management posts. Whatever the reason, if the current social climate is adversely affecting the coping strategies of this group then attention needs to

be focused on how to support these and others where they exist, particularly as the numbers of female heads increase. Ostell (1998) suggested that headteachers need two forms of support—organizational and personal—in order to function effectively. Given that the *not satisfied* group were most satisfied with facilities and resources, it is likely to be the latter (social problem-solving and emotional coping resources) which are required.

However, it is also important to note that the present study offers only a snapshot and not a longitudinal perspective. There is evidence to suggest that our coping responses are dynamic, not stable over time. It is possible that the cognitions and feelings expressed could be different or even reversed were the two groups to appraise their situation on another occasion. A proposed relationship between job satisfaction, professional efficacy and perceived autonomy for the two groups is summarized in Figure 2.

Discussion: Identifying Effective Copers

Although using a different methodology, the present study shared some findings with those of Cooper and Kelly (1993), Hill (1994) and Chaplain (1995b). Work overload and handling relationships with staff were high on the list of stressors for headteachers in all three studies. One difference in the present study was the inclusion of job satisfaction in the equation and here significant differences were observed. The focus of the present study was to enquire what headteachers found most stressful and what provided most satisfaction in their everyday work. Chaplain and Freeman (1998) argued that coping is the normative state: stress occurs when we become aware of having to cope with a situation. The heads in the present study considered they were all coping with their everyday stressors, albeit in different ways and with different levels of effectiveness. As has been pointed out, our understanding of stress is very much influenced by the current social and cultural milieu and there is presently a growing popular debate about the levels of stress in the workplace. We should, then, be aware of this when interpreting self-reports, as Hiebert and Farber (1984) point out:

... teachers read reports that teaching is stressful and start to believe it. As a result perhaps normal upsets that are part of most jobs become mislabelled as chronic,

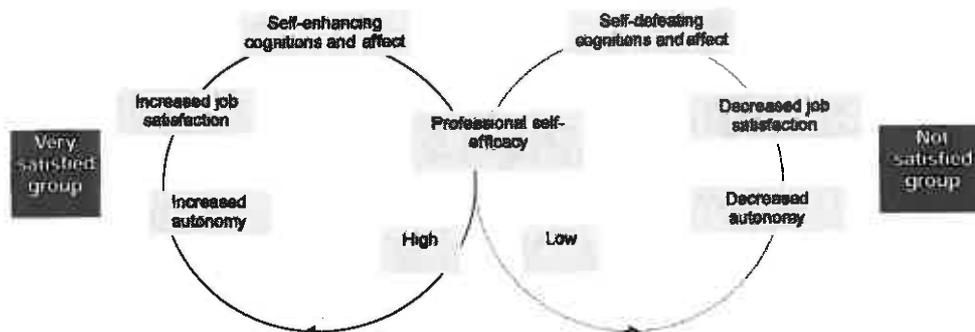


Figure 2. Relationship between levels of job satisfaction, professional self-efficacy and perceived autonomy for heads who reported high levels of stress but differed in their sources of stress and levels and sources of job satisfaction

inherent stressors, and a vicious circle begins that results in a higher incidence of self-reported stress.

Nevertheless, stressors need not be 'chronic' or indeed cataclysmic to have pathological effects; over time everyday hassles can have a significant cumulative effect. As the Elton report pointed out (DES, 1989) teachers were more often worn down by everyday 'trivial' misbehaviours than by serious misbehaviour.

It is also important to remember that stressors and sources of satisfaction can change over time. What might be perceived as a resource at one point in time is perceived as stressful at another point in time and vice versa (Chaplain and Freeman, 1998). Change is frequently seen as stressful, and yet, although change may lead to additional work, it can be exciting and challenging in very positive ways, leading to self-development. The satisfaction and rewards which came from feeling in control at one point in time could become a source of stress at a second point, when feeling unsupported for instance. Understanding the dynamics and inter-changeability of stressor and resource is an important part of understanding stress and coping. Feeling under pressure can be a great motivator, enabling individuals to draw upon reserves in order to meet a deadline. However, sustained effort in 'overdrive' can result in distress and burnout. Achieving a balance between stressors and resources then becomes a central feature of the coping process. The heads in the present study were aware of both sides of the equation but often reported them as mutually exclusive rather than seeing them as a virtual continuum.

The balance between stressors and coping resources can be upset by seemingly small demands made by one's family, which can appear overwhelming when work seems more important. Work is, however, just one component of complex and dynamic life patterns. Being able to put work into perspective is important in becoming an effective copier (Dunham, 1992; Kyriacou, 1980). The early and untimely death of colleagues can often shock us into a reconsideration of our circumstances.

The amount of time we spend on various activities can give a rough estimation of the priority we place on them. Many of the heads in the study admitted to spending considerable amounts of time at work and then continuing this work at home. Spending as little time as possible with one's family will be perceived by family members as devaluing them and putting them last, which can lead to additional stress from another sector of one's life.

Conclusions

Significant themes that emerge from the present study are:

- Autonomy, that is, the feeling of being in control of themselves and their organization, appears central to heads' effective coping.
- Professional self-efficacy is a necessary part of a coping professional. Some of the heads were not completely convinced they were functioning as well as they might but found it difficult to declare to staff that they were experiencing these thoughts and feelings.
- Colleagues are an important, if variable, source of perceived social support. The quality of relationships underpins all management and plays a key role in the stress levels of heads.

- The availability of resources has a profound effect on heads and their management of the school, the school's priorities for change and improvement for students.
- While outside organizations and individuals could provide resources and support, they can also make additional demands and generate stress, for example the positive and negative effects on schools of receiving inspection reports (Wilcox and Gray, 1995).
- While recording levels of stress can be helpful, it can also obscure more complex relationships between stress and satisfaction. Heads who reported their work was very stressful could differ markedly in their levels and sources of job satisfaction.

This article has offered an alternative perspective on the relationship between stressors and sources of satisfaction among primary heads in post. What emerged from the study is a need to further understand the balance between the various dimensions of stressors and resources, alongside effective support systems for heads. The next phase is to pin down more precisely the qualitative differences between those heads who were *very stressed but very satisfied* and those who were *very stressed and not satisfied* with their work.

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Appendix 3.5: Item 5

CHAPLAIN, R. (1995). Leading under pressure: Headteacher stress and coping. In D. Hustler, T. Brighouse, & J. Rudduck (Eds.), *Heeding heads: Secondary heads and educational commentators in dialogue* (pp. 222-232). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Leading Under Pressure: Headteacher Stress and Coping

Roland Chaplain

There is growing evidence of rising levels of stress affecting headteachers. This has been widely attributed to the effects of successive waves of innovation in schools impacting on headteacher's workloads (Weindling, 1991). As a result many heads have retired because of pressure and disillusionment (NAHT, 1988). Much of the work which psychologists have undertaken in developing explanations of stress and coping has recognised that it is our perception and understanding of what is happening that is the key (Fontana, 1989). In this essay stress is defined as what we experience when we become consciously aware of not coping. In other words coping is the normative state, and this is evident in the voices of the heads interviewed.

Approaches to investigating and explaining headteacher stress differ. Kelly (1988) describes in generic terms factors of a head's job perceived as stressful, for example work overload and feeling undervalued. Cooper and Kelly (1993) came up with similar observations in their later study, with work overload as a principal factor. Other researchers have recorded major life events and/or daily hassles.

The focus for this essay is heads' individual explanations of stress and coping as they relate to a range of managerial activities: managing oneself; managing others; and managing the organisation. In examining the balance between the job satisfaction and the pressures that each of these activities generates for heads, explanations of how they cope both at a personal, interpersonal and structural level will be discussed. One salient aspect of coping is the availability of social support (Cutrona and Russell, 1990) and the range and availability of such support for heads will be highlighted.

At the commonsense level, the concept of stress is often one in which

individuals are under pressure of differing intensity, and is perceived as a negative experience. However, it need not necessarily be negative, for some people and in some contexts it is a powerful motivator. Many of us require deadlines and challenge to add spice to our lives and this is a positive aspect of being under pressure as one head acknowledged: 'I do need change and to be on the edge'. However, when deadlines are multiple and resources (personal or otherwise) limited, the intensified challenge can lead to overwork, anxiety and ultimately illness.

Personal characteristics can have similar effects. Enthusiasm and commitment, are usually perceived as a resource, and are commonly regarded as features of 'good' employees. Certainly they are qualities often sought by employers, but in some circumstances these same qualities can create problems for individuals who possess them. If a head's commitment to school results in him or her spending more and more time at work and time at home is spent thinking about or catching up on work it is potentially detrimental to relationships and health. If home is merely somewhere to eat, sleep and carry on working is it really a home? Heads in this study and other studies of headteacher stress have suggested that this is too often the case and can affect personal lives. It is important when evaluating stress to determine our perceived resources and stressors, and to reflect on how they might reverse roles over time.

There are also issues concerned with professional aspects of headship and stress. Three areas have been identified consistently in the literature (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994) as indicators of stress:

- job satisfaction; achievement, recognition and positive feedback;
- competence: feeling appropriately experienced and qualified for the job;
- autonomy: acting according to one's own priorities or principles; being responsible for and influencing decisions which affect our work.

Job satisfaction is negatively correlated with, and is a useful gauge of, stress (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1979). One major source of satisfaction in working with people is in the positive feedback loops which we develop between ourselves and others. As classroom teachers, we develop relationships and get satisfaction from seeing students develop and learn. Teachers develop strategies to ensure a positive evaluation by the students. This also appears to be the case for heads, several comments illustrating the importance of such feedback, '... my first (target) was that children should know who I was One feature here was the headteacher's award system'. As Jones (1987) indicated in her study of 400 secondary headteachers 'What heads say they most enjoy about their jobs is the pupils'. However, whilst the amount of time a head spends with

children is variable it is not likely to be high. Whilst some of the heads still teach children the managerial pressures for heads, in recent years, are more rather than less likely to remove individuals from regular and sustained direct work with children. As Jones (1987) suggested 'Perhaps distance lends enchantment' along with 'wistful nostalgia about when one was a "real" teacher and knew how to teach well, make good relationships with pupils'. Nostalgia, or perhaps more accurately remembering things the way they weren't, is a powerful and almost universal coping strategy. This is however something of an over-simplification.

Interaction with students can become a source of negative feedback. If for example, one is continually dealing with discipline matters referred from other people not consuming their own smoke: 'We don't exclude many ... probably more sending out of lessons *by classroom teachers* which is a form of exclusion'. Many of the heads sought ways to counter this by making their direct contact with children predominantly positive, for example, introducing a 'headteacher award scheme', which meant they could offer carrots as well as sticks. All these mechanisms seek to provide two distinct, but not mutually exclusive forms of positive feedback – firstly, positive feedback from students, hence a feeling of being valued by the consumers, and secondly being seen by colleagues as still in touch with the 'reality' of teaching, and hence receiving positive feedback from them.

Professionals are thought to have particular knowledge, understanding, ethical standards and skills that separate them from other groups. Competence to do the job is usually demonstrated through examination and practice. Feeling competent is usually achieved through being able to undertake and complete tasks that are within one's professional identity but with some challenge, otherwise they become routine and not developmental. Feeling the need to prove one's competence as a classroom teacher can, however, be an unhelpful temptation for heads to be drawn into. It can create role confusion as to what constitutes being a good head – super-teacher, manager, administrator, buffer for the staff from outside pressure? Indeed heads are expected to 'do the lot' but how realistic are such demands? Heads often talk of being the captain of the ship but as Gray and Freeman suggest they forget that 'captains do a different job from other sailors' (1988:205), and that a ship would not get very far if they didn't. Many heads seem to feel they have to be seen doing everything, read and sign every report, attend every production of every play and all other public and whole-school events – but why? Gray and Freeman suggest it results from involvement in 'necessary trivia, but trivia nevertheless', and to resolve this 'heads need to look carefully at how they manage their time' (1988:212).

Autonomy is a double-edged sword. It contributes considerably to feelings of both satisfaction and competence but it also involves taking responsibility for what happens. Thus heads take responsibility for both the good and bad aspects of their school. In reality no one individual is ever entirely responsible for corporate work; all workers share a responsibility. Heads do expect to set their own priorities without being overwhelmed by external constraints or internal pressures. However, they can find themselves trying to keep control of everything, at all times, and are reluctant to share decision-making and responsibility with other colleagues. In doing so they affect adversely their *colleagues'* feelings of autonomy, who in turn are likely to reciprocate with negative feedback. Heads often behave this way in a genuine attempt to protect their staff 'from outside pressures' so they can get on with other duties, but failing to recognise the unintended negative effects on other professionals' development.

Managing Oneself

Managing one's professional identity, by which is meant maintaining continuity and distinctiveness as a headteacher, requires effective personal coping skills along with interpersonal support. Individuals differ substantially in how they attain this. For some 'direct active' (e.g., confront the issue) or 'indirect active' (e.g., seek feedback) approaches are preferred, whilst for others 'direct passive' (e.g., avoid the issue) or 'indirect passive' (e.g., drink more) tactics may be used. Effective copers use a combination of tactics since over-dependence on a particular strategy can create difficulties. Always confronting issues directly can lead to free-floating hostility and may affect interpersonal relationships; always wanting time to consider issues can be seen as avoidance and indecision.

In the interviews the heads revealed a range of reasons for developing a particular identity as a head. Some originated from motivation to become a teacher and/or head. One said he had 'formulated his ambition when he was 7'. Others had for many years been against the idea 'I did not want to be a head: I did not like the culture which surrounds heads and I still don't'. However they all declared a similar desire – to empower children through education, but the vehicle of empowerment and the definitions of education were varied. Often, unsurprisingly, these reflected their personal interests and values, which in turn affected the nature, duration and direction of their stress and how they coped with it.

One self-confessed 'radical' who believed in the 'democratic spirit and

strength of community', had developed a school which fostered a commitment to international rather than national aims. Another, who followed a 'traditional' approach, saw the key to empowerment through the development of basic academic skills and social competence. In terms of stress both stances provide challenges or motivation for their own professional and personal development. At the same time they generated difficulties when those around failed to appreciate or did not understand their vision. Coping with these difficulties differed: some heads were aggressive being 'quite tough' and not afraid to 'rattle some cages' – others went for more of a 'counselling' type approach, listening, talking to and being accessible for staff. For some the latter approach represented a contrast to styles used earlier in their careers which were more 'autocratic' or that of a 'benevolent despot'. Such development is not unfamiliar in teaching children, where a stand-off approach, to establish authority is gradually modified to a more informal and friendly atmosphere.

Research into stress has identified the importance to professionals of feeling in control of their lives; effective copers having a high internal locus of control (believe *they* can influence events that affect their lives) as opposed to a high external locus of control (*others* have more influence over their lives) (see Hurrell and Murphy, 1991). Effective coping is facilitated by a personal sense of control. Self-efficacy, or the belief that one can personally influence outcomes and take action to solve a problem, enhances motivation and self-directedness. High self-efficacy beliefs, even if unrealistic, are considered to be a good thing, because if you have high expectations of yourself you tend to rise to them (Bandura, 1992). A person who believes they are able to cause events can lead a more active self-determined life-style, and is more likely to enjoy better health, higher achievement and better social integration. One might argue that heads need to be *seen* to be *in control* of themselves and the situation.

However, the need to feel completely in control can sometimes result in over-work – and delegation is an issue here. Some heads admitted to finding this difficult; 'I'm not famous for delegating'. Other heads, although prepared to delegate, tried to ensure they kept a more direct control over the subordinate(s) concerned, for example, by implementing a flatter management structure in which they could exert control more quickly. Heads might want to minimise mistakes by keeping an eye on everything, 'my approach is also to deal with incidents as and when I come across them, rather than asking someone else to deal with it'. Such activity is not real delegation and can be seen by staff as questioning their competence, lowering their self-esteem and increasing their stress level. As Gray and Freeman (1988) suggest, some heads will only delegate if there is certainty of success which has implications for trusting staff.

Doing everything ourselves similarly doesn't guarantee success.

Several heads acknowledged that their vision and mission at different times had resulted in their being at odds with and isolated from various individuals, groups and institutions in the school community. This caused them to feel stressed. There are problems in making improvements a personal crusade (Hopes, 1986). In the interviews this was exemplified by in-school interpersonal relationships, such as negative responses from teachers 'a large minority against me' and the senior staff 'has been divided at times'. In other cases pressure had come from the Local Authority, especially those who had gone GM where they and their schools had been 'ostracised by the LEA' and 'threatened by the Director', for trying to save their schools from closure. Conversely some heads acknowledged LEA staff as an essential source of social support since, as one commented, without it she would be left 'entirely on *her own*'.

Personality has proved a useful predictor of stress and of physical health (Cooper and Payne, 1991). Two characteristics often highly regarded (even expected) in professionals are enthusiasm and commitment. One head admitted to being a 'workaholic', others commented that they did not feel they could maintain their current work rate forever. In some cases this had an effect on their personal lives. One found herself 'near to being clinically depressed' in another case work pressure placed his 'marriage under stress'. The potentially destructive desire to push themselves to achieve more and more in less and less time is characteristic of behaviour which psychologists call type A personality. It includes behaviours such as: hyper-alertness; feeling continually under pressure; and making constant attempts to think or do more than one thing at a time. Such behaviour is not uncommon among headteachers. A strong correlation has been established between this type of personality and coronary heart disease (*see for example Friedman and Rosenman, 1974*). Apart from heads who might have a type A personality, many others complain of being placed under considerable pressure to give more and more time. Research has highlighted time management as a major problem for heads (STRB, 1994) but little is done to help make space for heads to slow down.

Managing Others

Managing other people is commonly a source of satisfaction for headteachers – it is after all a major component of their work. Some heads were very clear about how empowering and developing their staff was the key to an effective school. In one school the head had continued his

career-long desire to develop his staff by providing, among others things, a residential week each year to concentrate on school issues.

However, staff could also create stress for heads, by their perceived attitude. One head commented 'the main barriers ... to her school being successful ... are to do with some staff not transcending where they are now'. In some cases teachers were 'underperforming' and 'for some a light needs turning on'. In other instances their competence was questioned they 'do not plan lessons' or 'their teaching is fossilised'. Whilst giving teachers autonomy implicitly makes them responsible for their behaviour, there is a danger in continually blaming others for organisational difficulties. Staff need professional supervision, differentiated development programmes and to feel that responsibility is shared to enhance their professional identity. Heads who perceive their staff as the sole problem are externalising responsibility, which is ultimately an unhealthy state.

The senior management team provide social support for most heads. However, in one case they 'blew hot and cold' in their allegiance. In another school they were expressing dissatisfaction with changes that had affected their identity and feelings of personal control adversely. Some senior managers were unhappy about moving to a more strategic position from 'being used to specific discrete areas of responsibility' but this was not common to all of the situations. Heads most recently in post were more likely to indicate this, an observation reported elsewhere (Weindling, 1990). In some cases heads were very confident about their managers and delegated with confidence, other heads had difficulty letting go. Another questioned the reality of equality in decision making, 'I don't believe you can have a democratic organisation', but would 'ask for views and then decide'.

Relationships with governors were almost always perceived positively, although in some cases it came specifically from working with the chair and/or vice-chair, whilst in other cases it was with a whole range of governors. The fortuitous nature of such support is reflected in statements made by heads. Some felt it necessary to exert considerable control over their governors, by 'having to do a lot of the work ... you have to hold their hands', whilst others said they were 'a distinctive, good and powerful body'; another had been obviously grateful for the technical expertise available on the governing body when extending the school building.

Managing the Organisation

The potential of the National Curriculum to create pressure for heads,

schools and teachers was a major issue in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The dust now appears to have settled, with most heads supporting the *concept* of a National Curriculum. Attitudes towards the National Curriculum were, however, more varied. In one case it was considered 'essential', but another actively campaigned against it, seeing it as 'regressive'. All were critical in some way regarding either, how it had been introduced (without sufficient consultation with professionals) or with its potential to stifle teacher creativity and reduce autonomy. Testing was similarly both a form of stress and satisfaction. Almost all heads stated they believed whole-heartedly in curricular accountability but the form and direction of this differed significantly often reflecting the individual's vision and perception of education and who it is meant to serve.

The changing nature of inspection was also a cause of some anxiety, since OFSTED inspectors were not held in the same esteem as HMI. There was almost universal praise for the quality of the latter but many felt concern about new inspectors not being 'qualified to get to grips with his school' or their inconsistency of reporting because of 'how variable it can be across different schools and with such different teams'. Some felt the unique flavour of their school and its curricula expertise, often reflecting the head's personal interests, could not and should not be monitored and evaluated against the OFSTED framework which 'doesn't show the personality of the school'. For one head the inspection itself was satisfying in challenging areas of concern identified by her – and some teachers had been 'shocked to the core about their teaching' after inspection. Another head felt that 'OFSTED would shoot us down if inspected now'. One had been unhappy when the Authority from which he had separated and suffered considerable angst, won the inspection contract, creating the 'most stressful experience' in his whole career. The relationship between who one believes the school is serving, how it should be controlled and monitored, is made obvious – and clearly individualised.

Arguably the greatest change to the role of the headteacher in the 1990s has been the increased responsibility for school budgets as a result of LMS. The changing role of the head from senior professional to accountant was initially perceived by many as potentially very stressful. The interviews indicate, perhaps surprisingly, that this component of the job is the most satisfying for heads since it enhances most directly their feelings of personal control and autonomy. LMS was seen as empowering heads (and schools) and enabling them to direct spending to their own priorities flexibly and quickly, compared with former LEA bureaucratic structures 'It used to drive *me* barmy having to telephone the eighty ninth

filing clerk to get permission to buy a stamp'. Some heads felt very strongly about how important this control was to their professional identity, to the point that one 'would resign tomorrow if LMS disappeared'.

The heads of the GM schools were particularly satisfied with their current situation of receiving substantial increases in funding for professional development and facilitating their priorities. The DFE had been particularly supportive (they've been 'terrific') to some heads. There was some concern in the longer term that LEAs might 'get their own back' by affecting recurrent funding levels. Whilst GM offered a positive solution to some heads it was a personally unacceptable route for others who said they 'would never opt out' and 'the day my governors say yes to GM, I'll resign'.

Most heads acknowledged LMS as a powerful form of maintaining job satisfaction but in different ways. Some felt they now had power to direct finance to the areas most appropriate for developing the school. The direction of spending varied greatly, with some seeing the empowerment of the learning process via developing the learning environment, as opposed to individual teachers; for others the opposite was clearly the case. In Jones' (1987) study, carried out when the changes to school management were being introduced, managing resources was seen as something negative. In the current study heads were, for the most part, optimistic if not very positive about their management of resources. Those most satisfied appeared to be within the grant maintained sector, who, whilst recognising the kick-start nature of the government initiative, were looking forward to 'supercharging' areas previously under-funded or neglected within LEA priorities but important to them or their community.

Summary

This essay has focused on some of the issues facing heads currently, and how they have appraised and responded to these challenges. It has been argued that listing items as 'stressful' or 'supportive' is too simplistic. What is perceived as stressful to one individual is appraised as supportive to others, or fluctuates between the two for an individual over time. The variation in the nature of stress and style of coping depends on the interaction of: personal characteristics; the nature and availability of particular forms of social support; organisational resources.

Within an organisation there may be a temptation to feel isolated. However, sharing problems with others, motivating them and using their

skills effectively are necessary management skills. Maintaining a balance between one's personal and professional persona is as essential as is being able to maintain optimism. Work is one aspect of complex life patterns that shift as demands change. Even small demands made from the family can seem overbearing if work seems more important. However, it is clear that being able to put work into perspective is important in achieving effective coping. The early and untimely death of colleagues can often shock us into a re-consideration of our circumstances.

Headteachers make a significant difference to schools and to the experiences colleagues and pupils have in those schools. It is usually the headteacher, leading under pressure, who sets the ethos and ensures that all in the school community reduce their experience of stress, and increase their satisfaction from the work they undertake. The personal strategies, outlined in this chapter, showed the importance of having a clear vision, maintaining a perspective on what had to be done and the inter-relations between different spheres of activity. Successful coping also requires thinking time for deliberate planning and also being open and honest and proactive rather than responsive to situations.

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Appendix 3.6: Item 6

CHAPLAIN, R. (2000). Beyond exam results? Differences in the social and psychological perceptions of young males and females at school. *Educational Studies*, 26(2), 177-190.



Beyond Exam Results? Differences in the social and psychological perceptions of young males and females at school

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SUMMARY *This paper reports the views and perceptions of around 1000 students in their final two years of compulsory schooling in respect of self-efficacy, goal orientation and motivation, stress and interpersonal skills. Gender differences are also reported. The study found that most students were generally positive about school and their future and felt in control of their lives. However, whilst male students felt better prepared in terms of problem solving, they were more likely to rely on luck and others to control their successes than were females. Whilst most pupils enjoyed going to school, over half often felt stressed, bored or fed up with school, and most of this group were female. The majority of students, of both sexes, felt comfortable approaching and communicating with teachers and adults in general, although up to a quarter had difficulties in this respect.*

Introduction

This paper examines the views of around a thousand students currently completing their last two years of compulsory schooling, with particular reference to gender comparisons. There is considerable evidence to demonstrate that girls are outperforming boys at GCSE level and have done so consistently over the last 10 years; a comprehensive review of some possible explanations for these differences was offered in a recent report by Arnot *et al.* (1998). The present paper attempts to extend the debate by asking how such performance differences are reflected in other aspects of young people's thoughts and feelings about school themselves and work. To what extent has the emphasis on measured achievements between the sexes ignored other important social and psychological dimensions?

In the present paper, four psycho-social constructs are used to gain important insights into pupils' perceptions of their currently situated and projected thoughts and feelings. The four constructs are: self-efficacy; goals and motivation; stress; and interpersonal skills.

Among explanations that have been offered to account for performance

differences are those related to differences in self-concept. Within this broad area, much energy has been directed to self-esteem—both global and domain specific (Marsh, 1990). Many studies have argued that self-evaluation may act as a mediator of expectations of success (or failure) as well as subsequent levels of motivation and outcomes. Whilst a number of studies have looked at differences between the self-esteem of males and females (Renshaw, 1990; Skaalvic, 1986) evidence concluding that girls have lower self-esteem than boys has been questioned (Arnot *et al.*, 1998). The present study looked at another construct—self-efficacy, that is ‘individuals’ beliefs about their abilities to execute and regulate important actions in their lives’ (Bandura, 1981) rather than self-esteem (the degree to which you like yourself); there is growing evidence to suggest that differences in levels of self-efficacy are correlated with levels of performance in academic terms (Zimmerman, 1995), socio-emotional coping (Ozer & Bandura, 1990) and career choice and development (Harvey & McMurray, 1994).

Self-efficacy, in turn, is related to motivation, goal orientation and coping. Contemporary research into motivation has identified both cognitive and social-cognitive determinants of expectations of success in academic, social and vocational environments (Weiner, 1992). How an individual attributes (perceives the causes of outcomes) is believed to influence their achievement behaviours, expectancies and emotions. For instance, an individual who attributes success to relatively stable factors (such as high ability) should have higher expectations of future success than someone who attributes success to unstable factors (such as luck). Repeated attributions for success and failure in a particular direction result in the development of attributional styles (Galloway *et al.*, 1996). Individuals with adaptive styles expect to succeed, given sufficient effort, and also see failure as a challenge—something to be mastered. Conversely, individuals with maladaptive styles are more likely to expect failure so give up when faced with a task where their fears might be realised. Two qualitatively different forms of maladaptive style have been identified, self-worth protection and learned helplessness. Some research (Craske, 1988) has related particular styles to gender-linked dispositions in specific contexts, although how far these can be generalised has also been contested (Rogers *et al.*, 1998).

Perceived stress among students in school is relatively under-researched, at least in comparison with studies of teacher stress. Whilst school-related stress has a considerable influence on young people’s lives (Schultz & Heuchert, 1983), it often fails to receive significant attention from teachers (Blom *et al.*, 1986). Where studies of young people have been carried out, the emphasis has tended to be on extreme events (Gamezy, 1986) or on the potentially psychopathological consequences for ‘at risk’ young people (Compas, 1997). A number of studies have focused on the latter, often in relation to severe acute or chronic events (see, for example, Hammen 1991); fewer, however, have looked at the effect of the more common and cumulative effects of everyday hassles (Kanner & Feldman, 1991). The present study examines young people’s experiences of stress from a transactional perspective, that is in terms of their

appraisals of their current environment and circumstances in relation to their schooling and their futures (especially in respect of career orientation).

Another area currently receiving much attention in education is the core or key skills agenda; key skills are seen as measurable qualities concomitant with an effective workforce in the modern workplace (Dearing Report, 1996; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; Gonczi *et al.*, 1995). They provide, in some ways, a contrast to 'traditional' academic qualifications. This changing emphasis was highlighted in *Towards Employability* (Industry in Education, 1996), whose authors noted a scepticism on the part of employers about the levels of competence and practical abilities reflected in 'today's qualifications'. Furthermore, they were surprised to find employers had a 'strong current tendency to discount qualifications in favour of candidates' personal qualities'. Worthy of note were 'initiative, motivation, pleasantness, and communication skills which were no longer assumed to "come with the package" of a standard education' (p. 9).

The present study is concerned, in essence, with two questions:

- What perceptions do young people (aged 15–16 years) currently hold of themselves, school and their futures?
- Do male and female students differ in relation to these?

Method

Twenty-four secondary schools from various regions of England and Wales were each asked to nominate 40 Year 10 students to complete a self-report questionnaire, which included both quantitative and more qualitative measures. The questionnaire was based on an earlier instrument developed by the author (Chaplain & Freeman, 1994; Chaplain, 1996). Questionnaire items were generated from a number of sources and were piloted for the present study with 75 Year 10/11 students. Students were selected to represent a range of ability and a balance of both sexes (although some schools were single sex) and different levels of social advantage. Questionnaires were usable from 21 of the schools—two failed to respond and one data set could not be used. The questionnaire sought biographical details and career aspirations, and then required respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements on a five-point scale (strongly agree—strongly disagree). Students were also encouraged to add any open comments at the end of each section. The questionnaires were supplemented by information on students' Key Stage 3 performance in English, mathematics and science.

Results

Data reported in the following sections refer to the percentages of students who 'agreed' with each statement ('strongly agree' and 'agree' were collapsed to make one category). Differences between male and female mean scores are also shown and discussed. Hypotheses about differences between the sexes were tested using an independent sample *t*-test. All results are summarised in Table I.

TABLE I. Scores for students' perceived self-efficacy, motivation and goal orientation, stress, and interpersonal skills

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Males		Females		Males	
	(% Agree)		(% Agree)		(Mean/SD)	
	All students	Males	Females	Males	Females	Significance
	(% Agree)	(% Agree)	(% Agree)	(Mean/SD)	(Mean/SD)	(<i>t</i> -test)
Self-efficacy						
To be successful in life you need to be lucky	17	20	14	3.49/1.07	3.64/.94	<i>p</i> < 0.03
What happens to me in the future really depends on other people	9	11	6	3.72/.99	3.91/.86	<i>p</i> < 0.004
I can solve most problems if I try hard enough	90	91	89	1.84/.66	1.94/.68	<i>p</i> < 0.03
I am confident that I can deal with unexpected events	66	67	63	2.23/.81	2.29/.78	
It is what I do that makes a difference to what happens in my life	94	92	95	1.52/.68	1.55/.60	
It is usually best to wait and see what happens in life	40	38	41	3.01/1.19	2.97/1.10	
Motivation and goal orientation						
<i>School Context</i>						
At school I get my work done but no extra	45	49	41	2.78/1.11	2.98/1.07	<i>p</i> < 0.0005
I tend to give up easily with my schoolwork	24	22	27	3.54/1.08	3.43/1.14	
You have to be clever to do well	21	24	18	3.41/1.18	3.65/1.06	<i>p</i> < 0.003
I need to make more effort at school	77	72	83	2.18/1.05	1.94/.86	<i>p</i> < 0.0005
I will do well in my exams	49	52	45	2.55/.64	2.63/.64	
I enjoy reading	58	48	70	2.61/1.19	2.42/1.10	<i>p</i> < 0.0005
I enjoy writing	61	57	65	2.82/1.16	2.33/1.04	<i>p</i> < 0.01
<i>Work Context</i>						
I would rather have a job than come to school	42	45	38	2.68/1.24	2.90/1.25	<i>p</i> < 0.01
I am looking forward to the day I start work	61	61	62	2.33/1.02	2.34/1.03	
If I try hard enough I will get a job when I finish my education	86	86	86	1.82/.76	1.79/.76	

I will definitely get a job when I finish my education	43	42	44	2.59/.91	2.46/.84	$p < 0.03$
I have learned a lot about the world of work	61	58	65	2.54/1.02	2.40/.95	$p < 0.03$
Learning about the world of work will help me to get a job in the future	73	69	77	2.21/.87	2.04/.82	$p < 0.006$
Stress						
I enjoy coming to school most of the time	71	71	72	2.47/.98	2.31/.97	$p < 0.02$
I often get bored at school	65	63	67	2.50/1.03	2.41/.94	
I often get fed up at school	58	55	62	2.63/1.13	2.50/1.03	
I often get stressed at school	51	45	58	2.91/1.22	2.53/1.20	$p < 0.0005$
School is a waste of time for me	4	6	3	4.25/.94	4.37/.80	
I often worry about my future	61	56	68	2.60/1.16	2.30/1.07	$p < 0.0005$
Interpersonal Skills						
<i>School Context</i>						
I don't like asking teachers to explain things	34	34	33	3.22/1.13	3.29/1.18	
I enjoy taking part in discussions	55	57	53	2.57/1.09	2.70/1.18	
I find it easy to follow written instructions	76	72	75	2.19/.84	2.21/.84	
<i>General Context</i>						
I find it easy to listen to adults when they give me advice	75	73	77	2.17/.87	2.11/.92	
I find it hard to tell people when I don't understand something	36	36	37	3.18/1.0	3.20/1.0	
I enjoy working as part of a team	85	86	85	1.90/.73	1.87/.78	
I find it easy to work with adults	79	77	80	2.03/.81	2.00/.74	
I feel awkward meeting people for the first time	48	48	46	2.81/1.17	2.84/1.15	

Notes:

Columns 1-3 show percentages of students agreeing (recorded 'strongly agree' or 'agree', with each statement.

Columns 4 and 5 show means and standard deviations for males and females for each item.

Column 6 shows level of significance reached between mean scores for males and females for independent samples *t*-test.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy relates to an individual's beliefs about their personal agency, the degree to which they believe that they have the capabilities to complete a task or are able to cope with a difficulty. It can be measured at a number of levels from the specific (e.g. perceived ability in mathematics) to the global (the degree to which you believe you are capable of controlling your life choices).

The vast majority of students (over 90%) felt they were capable of dealing with most problems if they made sufficient effort, that it is what they themselves do (self-regulation) that makes a difference to their lives and also felt confident in dealing with unexpected events (see Table D). However, at the same time almost half were of the opinion that it is best to wait and see what happens in life, which suggests that these individuals are putting their futures down to chance. The results indicate that whilst most generally felt in control, some have more immediate concerns (notably exams) that were likely to affect their career orientation.

Most students also recognised the relationship between effort (as opposed to ability) and success. This tendency is considered by motivational psychologists to be psychologically healthy, since it implies confidence in self-regulation and personal control. These results were confirmed in responses to the negatively oriented questions. Comparatively few students felt that 'to be successful in life you need to be lucky' (< 20%) and that 'what happens to me in the future really depends on other people' (9%). Students who traditionally attribute control of their success and futures to external uncontrollable factors tend to be low achievers, those perhaps more predisposed to accepting failure as inevitable. However, most of the students who did so in this study had, in fact, achieved average or above-average levels in their Key Stage 3 SAT results.

A number of the differences between males and female students reached significance. Males were more confident about their problem-solving skills than females, suggesting the former had higher self-efficacy in this respect. However, at the same time males tended to believe, more strongly than females, that being successful in life requires luck and that what happens to them in the future depends more on what other people do than what they themselves do. These are both negative tendencies, since they imply a reliance on external uncontrollable factors, which are likely to reduce expectations of future success. At one level this appears to be a contradiction in terms. Males are more confident in their personal abilities in terms of solving problems but, at the same time, are more likely to accept that external uncontrollable factors (luck and other people) are powerful contributors to shaping their lives. It is worth noting that only a small proportion of the sample actually agreed with these statements (< 20%); however, amongst those that did there were three times as many males as females. Holding a belief that chance is working against self-regulation can also contribute to depression. Abramson *et al.* (1978) have suggested that some adolescents are susceptible to 'universal helplessness'—in other words, they view

outcomes as non-contingent. The present findings suggest that some of these students were thinking along similar lines.

Motivation and Goal Orientation

Contemporary accounts of motivation highlight the central importance of an individual's causal explanations (attributions) of previous success and failure in shaping levels of engagement and persistence on subsequent tasks. It has also been argued that these attributions can lead to the development of adaptive or maladaptive styles over time, which can have longer-term consequences (Galloway *et al.*, 1996).

In the present study, over half the students were motivated to complete work beyond what was expected of them and a similar number expected to do well in their exams. Around a quarter of all students tended to give up easily, and similar numbers felt you have to be clever to do well. The majority felt they needed to make more effort at school. The results suggest that the sample is, for the most part, positive about their school work and furthermore feel in control of their successes.

Three of the comparisons between males and females proved significant, however. Male students were more likely to get their work done (but do no extra) and recognised, more strongly than their female counterparts, that they needed to make more effort at school. Females were making additional efforts to achieve their targets but almost half felt that this was still not enough. It is perhaps reasonable to ask whether we are identifying a relationship between the levels of stress and anxiety reported by a significant number of female students in relation to their schooling and their beliefs that their efforts, albeit above what is perhaps required, are still not enough to achieve socially defined expectations.

The results also indicate that a sizeable minority of students (up to a quarter) exhibited maladaptive motivational tendencies. Evidence in support of this interpretation can be found in the percentages of students' agreeing with the statements: 'I tend to give up easily with my schoolwork' and 'you have to be clever to do well'. Here gender differences were also identified: males and females selecting in directions consistent with other research into maladaptive styles (see, for example, Craske 1988; Thompson 1994). Significantly more males believed that 'you need to be clever to do well', a characteristic familiar in self-worth protection, which is more common in males. Such students are unsure of their ability but believe that success requires ability (being clever/smart). Thus, being seen as not having ability can be perceived as an assault on one's self-image—more so than being seen as badly behaved or just not doing the work. In this world view, it is 'better not to try, than to try and fail'. Such individuals are aware of the power of effort but also recognise that being seen to make effort in order to succeed (or in the worst case scenario making effort and failing) indicates that they lack ability, which would lower their self-worth.

In contrast, more females than males said that they tended to give up easily with their school work, a characteristic more commonly associated with learned

helplessness, which is arguably more prevalent in females. Like self-worth protective students, these students believe that ability is all important but that they lack it. As a result, individual effort is seen as wasted because they believe they have little control over their lives and, as such, expect to fail. Faced with a problem, they will tend to give up easily, as failure is felt to be inevitable.

Turning to specific aspects of the curriculum just under two thirds of all students report that they enjoy reading, writing and taking part in class discussions and around three-quarters find it easy to follow written instructions. There were significant differences here between males and females in respect of enjoying reading and writing, a finding consistent with other work examining this area (e.g. Millard, 1998; Arnot *et al.*, 1998) and which may, in part, explain differences between the performance of males and females in the different elements of GCSE assessments.

The Stresses of Schooling and an Uncertain Future

The vast majority of students said they enjoyed going to school, and very few considered it a waste of time. Less than half of all students would rather have a job than go to school; at the same time almost two-thirds were looking forward to the day that they started work. It would appear that whilst most of these students are happy with their current situation, they still look forward with some enthusiasm to becoming workers. At the same time, the thought of coping with the world of work and the responsibilities of adulthood was a real concern and was strongly reflected in many of the open comments. For example one student said:

I worry about whether I will enjoy my job and what if I don't. It might be difficult to change. I may have a family then what would we do for money? (male student)

Anxiety about their lives, and the stress related to them, was not limited to thoughts about the future but also focused on more immediate concerns. Almost two-thirds of all students declared that they often felt bored or fed up at school, and this was not limited to low-achieving students. Furthermore, around half of all students said they often felt stressed at school and a very similar number were worried about their futures. The concerns of a relatively large part of the sample, including higher achievers, may reflect an increased belief among the group of the 'necessity' to achieve high (perhaps unattainable) standards. It is not unusual to assume that young people, at this stage in their personal and social development, inevitably experience these negative emotions and that coping with such stresses should be seen as part of growing up. However, this needs to be considered in the context of other issues such as external pressures and the availability of appropriate social support. Another student said:

They (teachers) only have time to talk to the best achievers and

athletes: The rest of us are ignored—no matter how hard we try.
(female student)

Turning to gender differences, more female students enjoyed going to school and fewer would rather have a job than go to school than their male peers. However, more females also reported often feeling bored and fed up at school. Furthermore, more females also reported feeling stressed at school than males, and the differences reached statistical significance. Again, accepting that young females experience more stress (or are more likely to report it) does little to help them to cope with it. If raising expectations and performance results in greater socio-emotional difficulties, then educationalists might need to consider how to help female students to become better copers. One might question whether the social pressure of achieving academic success is weighing on young females' thinking to an inappropriate degree and, to some extent, this appeared to be reflected in their concerns and anxieties about the future.

Scrutiny of the open comments from students revealed qualitative differences between males and females. Whilst most female students expressed concerns about getting a job in the future and about the need to do well in their exams, most male students concerns were about getting a job—very few mentioned their impending examinations. Typical of male comments were the following:

I am worried that it will be difficult to get a job when I leave school.
There is a lot of talk on the news about high unemployment.

I am really worried about getting a job when I finish (school). If I can't get one what will I do?

In contrast, typical comments from females included reference to more immediate obstacles:

I worry a lot about getting my grades and getting a good job I will enjoy.

I am worried about getting my GCSE grades and that they won't be enough to get me into sixth form because I need at least A levels to get the job I want.

Getting their choice of career right was also an important and current worry. As one female student put it:

I think it is worrying that you have to make (careers) decisions so early in your school life as you may make the wrong decisions. (female student)

A common reference among both groups was to the need for their planned job to satisfy both their social and emotional needs—to be both enjoyable and fun.

More males than females would rather have a job than go to school (see Table I), and a number of them referred in their open comments to how, when

they became workers, they would be treated with respect and given opportunities to engage in decision making and risk taking. Female students, however, were more convinced that they had learned a lot about the world of work whilst at school and that such learning would be important in helping them to secure a job in the future. Almost two-thirds of students were also worried about their futures. Other concerns about the future included anxieties about the relationship between career success and financial security. Female students reported more frequently than male students that they were worried about what would happen to them in the future:

I'm frightened that if for some reason I don't get the job I would like I don't know what else to do. (female student)

I am worried that my life will not be as much fun and as easy as it is now. (female student)

... if you don't (get a good job) then you have nothing e.g., lots of food, lots of flash clothes, cars, clubbing. (male student)

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills form part of the key skills agenda. Students were asked about their perceived social competence in communicating with adults, working as part of a team and how they coped with meeting people for the first time. We were also interested to see whether students discriminated between interacting with adults in the workplace (on work experience, for example) and their teachers.

Around two-thirds of all students claimed to have had no difficulty asking their teachers to explain things they did not understand, listening to advice, or seeking help from adults in general. A larger proportion felt happy working as part of a team and found it easy to work with adults in general. Just under half felt awkward when they met people for the first time. The bulk of the sample was quite positive about their social competence; however, a sizeable minority gave cause for concern. Similar numbers to those who found it difficult to approach teachers (around a third) also found it difficult to ask for help from adults in general when they did not understand something. When examined further, however, it was found that about a quarter of all students had difficulty asking both their teachers and other adults to explain things that they did not understand. In order to respond effectively to these difficulties, it is perhaps important to distinguish between those who were generally anxious about asking adults for help in any context, from those who just found it difficult to talk to teachers. The former raises concerns about general difficulties in social problem solving, whereas the latter concerns the quality of classroom relationships. A number of students highlighted some of the latter, many referring to teachers not treating them fairly:

I think teachers are unfair in the way that they try to frighten you about

the future. I know life is difficult but they could try and help you to think more optimistically ... talk to us about having to work hard rather than using fear all the time. (male student)

Others suggested that sometimes teachers got their priorities wrong:

Teachers are too negative towards students. They tell us off about wearing short skirts or shirts out but don't take time to talk to us about our academic work. (female student)

Students hold clear expectations of how teachers should behave and about what constitutes legitimate activity. Many felt teachers focused too much on directing student behaviour and not enough on listening to their concerns about their learning and about preparing them to cope with the future as well as about the levels of support they offered. Interestingly, the views males and females held on all items in this section were very similar and differences failed to reach significance.

Discussion

It is assumed that students with more positive attitudes towards school will have enhanced motivation towards their school work and improved academic performance. Research into secondary school students' attitudes towards schooling has, however, produced contrasting results. Barber's (1994) study suggested students were quite negative, whilst Blatchford's (1996) suggested a more optimistic picture.

The findings from the present study indicate that, overall, most students are positive in their thinking about themselves, their schooling and their futures. At the same time, and for the most part, they have some anxieties about guaranteeing positive personal and social identities for themselves in certain aspects of their lives. In terms of self-efficacy, the present sample were generally positive about their personal agency, believed that they could cope with most problems given time and effort and could also deal with unexpected events. Whilst males were more confident about their problem solving skills and dealing with the unexpected, they expressed more uncertainty than females about other aspects of self-regulation. Male students were more likely to rely on luck and believed others made the real decisions about their future.

Female students reported feeling more stressed, fed up and bored both at school and in relation to career orientation. It may be that this anxiety arises from their perceived social pressure to become more competitive in order to be 'successful'. Whilst enhanced academic performance is likely to increase career opportunity, other elements of personal and social functioning need to be considered. Female students in the present study expressed concern about career opportunity. Whilst one might expect some negativism in this respect among students least likely to enjoy academic success, such feelings have been identified among academically successful females. Lucey & Walkerdine (1996)

found high-achieving girls identified early career planning as a cause of stress and similar findings were observed in the present study. Nor are these negative feelings limited to female students. A national survey of 13,000 teenagers aged between 13 and 15 years from 65 schools in England and Wales revealed that over half often felt depressed and had feelings of low self-worth (Francis & Kay, 1995). A further 16% admitted to feelings of loneliness. Indeed, around a quarter of the boys and just under a third of the girls said that they had contemplated suicide. The higher numbers of girls reporting depressive symptoms is in line with other findings such as those of Petersen *et al.* (1991).

In responding to such concerns, schools would need to match increased performance demands with social and organisational support to ensure effective coping for students, something that has received attention in industrial environments but rather less so in schools.

Two significant minority groups in the present study deserve particular attention. One consists of those students, both males and females, whose attributions for success and failure have been shown to work against their academic achievement. Students who appear to be attributing success to luck and failure to lack of ability, both of which are outside their control, and who at the same time do not recognise the value of effort in achieving success, are probably developing maladaptive motivational patterns. In the present study, up to one-quarter of the sample were potentially in this group. Contemporary accounts of motivation highlight the need to identify qualitative differences between individuals, notably in terms of their cognitive and emotional responses to success and failure (Weiner, 1992) and on the role of self-efficacy in this process (Schwarzer, 1992). In the present study, students were asked what they thought and felt about what they do, as opposed to using academic performance measures alone. As Rogers *et al.* (1998) pointed out, motivation is a multi-faceted concept, and its measurement is not best served by using unidimensional judgements. Future studies should examine student perceptions alongside academic performance in order to generate a more accurate picture of motivational styles in order to facilitate more appropriate intervention.

A second, significant minority identified in the present study consists of those students who say that they have difficulty communicating with either their teachers and/or adults in general. In responding to the social needs of young people, schools should perhaps ask how well the development of students' social competence is encouraged and monitored. Taken in relation to the above findings, a pattern can be tentatively identified, which links self-efficacy, stress and motivation, and which has practical implications. Enhancing students' personal functioning requires attention not just to their improved intellectual and practical competence but to social and emotional issues, including communication and working with others. Whilst employers might see such interpersonal skills as virtually universal essentials for most contemporary occupations, the teaching of them, in a system seemingly preoccupied with performance in specific national curriculum subjects, is problematic. Whilst most schools would probably argue that social development is part of their policy and practice,

assessing its effectiveness should include a student perspective, since students have a crucial role in determining whether or not such objectives are being met.

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Appendix 3.7: Item 7

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Pupils under pressure: Coping with stress at school. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp. 118-132). David Fulton Publishers.

CHAPTER 9

Pupils under pressure: coping with stress at school

Roland Chaplain

I am always tired, pissed off and have a constant headache, which results in me being even more pissed off!

This opening comment came from a girl in year 11 who was sharing her feelings about preparing for her final terms in school. It reflects quite colourfully the language of stress and coping used by young people. She went on to say:

I hardly spend any time with my family since I am always working. My parents seem to understand and my mum gives me support but they both think I spend too much time working which I have no choice out of. I only really go out on Friday night with my friends and sometimes I am even too tired from a week's work. Recently I have worked non-stop for the whole weekend, spending 11 hours on Sunday on a Geography project without stopping for lunch and only with short breaks.

Despite feeling this way she was still positive about her achievements at school ('I am happy with the work I have done') but then continued:

I have become really depressed with my life since it seems too boring and I don't ever have anything to look forward to. I don't even want to go skiing in half term with my family, which I love doing, as I am worried about how I will get all my work done. Holidays are just for work and so they just seem worse than school time. If I am not working I am worrying about the work I should be doing. So I get depressed and the pressure is just too much. Quite often I cry if I am scared about something and think about what is the point? I don't think that the teachers realise how close many of my friends (mainly girls) come to killing themselves. I think that many people just want to give up. The only thing which I think about is getting good GCSE grades and I can't look any further.

Most studies of stress in schools focus on teachers, and there is a wealth of data available but, as Dunham (1989, p.16) said, 'stress in pupils has aroused less specific concern', even though school-related stress has a

considerable influence on children's lives (see Schultz and Heuchert, 1983). Where studies of young people have been carried out, the emphasis has tended to be on their reactions to extreme events (see, for example, Gamezy, 1986). Interesting and important as such studies might be, they offer little to teachers in classrooms dealing with children who are coping with the hassles of everyday life.

In relation to studies of teachers' work we know that not all stress is linked to extreme events and researchers have recognised the importance of the cumulative effects of stress. Disruptive behaviour is a major source of stress (see Borg, 1990) and, as the Elton Report (1989) indicates, teachers' concern about disruption relates mainly to everyday minor behaviours (such as talking out of turn) rather than to serious misbehaviours. The argument of this chapter is that the phenomenon of stress is similar for pupils. Antonovsky (1979) suggested three key sources of stress: cataclysmic life events, major life events and daily hassles. While some young people may experience cataclysmic or major life events in their out-of-school lives and occasionally in their in-school lives, they are as vulnerable as teachers to stress resulting from everyday difficulties. Young people are able to talk about feelings associated with stress and how they try and cope with it. They know when they feel upset or angry, fed up or worried. These commonsense understandings are important because they give us an authentic insight into the structure of stress whereas more rigorous research-based definitions can circumscribe the phenomena. The language young people use to describe stress is, not surprisingly, different from that of their teachers. They talk about being 'stressed out' and they talk about people 'bugging you'; some people 'wind them up' or make them 'upset' and these phrases are associated with feelings of anger. In contrast, the term 'fed up' usually relates to feelings of depression or helplessness (see Chaplain and Freeman, 1994); it is an umbrella term which can reflect a range of feelings – from being tired and unwilling to a state of clinical depression. Adults' interpretations of what children mean when they say they are 'fed up' can be inaccurate.

In one of our satellite studies (see chapter 8) a group of male pupils identified as disengaged and on the whole underachieving were asked whether and how often they felt fed up in school. 22% said that they felt this way all or most of the time and 69% were fed up some of the time. The latter responses were often qualified by statements such as: 'it depends on...'; the evidence suggested that it can depend on the subject, the teacher, examinations and whether things happening outside school are impinging on their work and relationships in school. Such a picture is

familiar rather than novel. What was perhaps of most concern was that 42% of the sample of disengaged male pupils said that they first started to feel fed up with school when they were at their primary schools.

Adults' ratings of the nature and severity of stress experienced by children often differ markedly from the ratings made by the children themselves (see, for example, Yamamoto and Felsenthal, 1982). Attempting to find explanations for other people's experiences can mask complex emotional issues. The developmental dynamics of adolescence are often seen by adults – including professionals – as a time when behaviour patterns can be put down to 'hormones' or 'natural challenges to authority'; people say, 'It's just a phase they're going through' and adults commonly believe that adolescents 'will grow out of it'. Such perceptions may lead adults, including teachers, to become less of a source of support or a buffer from stress than young people desire.

To illustrate the scale of stress in secondary school populations at a national level, a recent survey of 13,000 teenagers aged between 13 and 15 years from 65 schools in England and Wales revealed that 53% often felt depressed and had feelings of low self-worth. A further 16% admitted to feelings of loneliness. Just under a quarter of the boys and under a third of the girls said that they had contemplated suicide (Francis and Kay, 1995); such statistics give cause for serious concern.

Stress, coping and social support

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that stress results from a transaction between the appraisals made by individuals and the environment in which they find themselves. The appraisal is in three stages: first, whether or not the potential stressor represents a *threat* to the individual; second, what response is required in order to cope; and third, reappraisal of the effectiveness of the coping response adopted. Chaplain and Freeman (1994) argue that many of our coping strategies are activated automatically, and are made up of responses which we 'overlearn' (by repeated use) as we develop. Stress occurs when we become consciously aware of having to cope – that our automatic systems are not working. In their model the relationship between stress and coping is made explicit. However, while individuals develop ways of coping effectively using their own psychological and physical resources, they are also dependent on support from their social environment (for example, school organisation) and the availability of social support (friends and family). In simple terms *what you do to cope* depends on the interaction between

what you are and who you perceive is available to help you.

Part of coping effectively at a personal level requires individuals to have a self-confident belief in their ability to deal with a range of stressors. Self-efficacy is concerned with individuals' belief in their competence to accomplish specific tasks – a basic need to feel effective in their interactions with the world. An individual's level of self-efficacy is a useful predictor of ability to cope with stress (see Jerusalem and Schwarzer, 1992). Individuals with a low sense of self-efficacy tend to have low self-esteem, are anxious and feel helpless; in contrast, those with a high sense of self-efficacy tend to undertake more challenging tasks and they expect to succeed. This is of particular relevance to teachers, since children with a low sense of perceived control over their lives are unhappy, anxious and eventually become depressed. The salience of self-efficacy in the context of this chapter will become clear.

We know that individuals differ in their reactions to events commonly thought to be stressful. We are also aware of how we cope better at different times of the day and on some occasions better than others, something which research into stress (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994) finds very difficult to explain:

It is not simply that as individuals we find different experiences more or less stressful, but also we may vary considerably in our capacities to cope with broadly similar situations. (p.16)

Social support is recognised as an important component in helping individuals to cope with stress. Recent research has suggested that different types of social support are appropriate for helping people to cope with different types of stress, including emotional, self-esteem and instrumental (see Cutrona and Russell, 1990). An awareness of the most appropriate type of support and how to provide it is important to teachers concerned about helping young people to develop effective coping strategies. Schools provide different types of support through, for instance, institutional frameworks such as rules and rituals; through interpersonal support from teachers and other pupils (including emotional support from pastoral care and friendship, self-esteem support through recognition of personal worth, and instrumental support such as help with learning). To be effective, however, it is essential for the support to be perceived as *available* and *appropriate* by the pupils.

This chapter focuses on pupils' accounts from the *Making Your Way Through Secondary School* study (see chapter 1) of their experiences of stress and how they cope. The data suggest two broad bases for analysing stress and coping: 'institutional' and 'interpersonal'. Institutional sources of stress will be discussed in terms of:

- Structural – pressure generated by school organisation and management including policies, facilities and rules;
- Curriculum – subject demands, workload and teaching styles.

Interpersonal sources of stress will be discussed in relation to:

- Teacher-pupil relationships;
- Peer-group relationships.

The data will be used to illustrate the relationship between the sources of stress in schools (in the form of everyday hassles), the nature and availability of social support for pupils, and differences in the way potential sources of stress are appraised by pupils and the effects of this appraisal on pupils' self-efficacy.

Institutional stress and support

We recognise that in any organisation some people will experience pressure some of the time. In secondary schools pupils are in transition, both in terms of their academic learning and their social development. When they join a secondary school they move from a social frame based on the classroom to a frame based on the school as a whole. As they progress through school pupils often experience, particularly moving from year 8 to year 9, some sense of the contradictory nature of institutional life: they are told that because they are older they should act more responsibly – 'All the teachers have been telling us how we've got to be more ready for work...we should set examples to, like, the year 7s' (Y9, M) – and yet at the same time they have to conform to seemingly trivial rules.

Of course, institutional structures are designed to provide safe, secure and predictable frameworks for the pupils to help them to cope. Gaining a balance between care and control and learning is difficult, as Emler (1993, p.246) points out: '...Doing well at school could...be a function of the child's adjustment to the peculiar requirements of the bureaucratic regime which he or she encounters there, accommodation to the routine and discipline of a formal timetable and to the authority of teachers'.

Rules, rituals and routines

Pupils in years 7 and 8 were aware of the differences in institutional requirements between themselves and older pupils. Many year 8 pupils said things like this: 'You get more privileges in the upper school...here it's like a cage' (Y8,F); 'Yeah and you have to lock your coat up...and

you're not allowed to get it at lunch time...That means in winter you have to freeze to death...because they won't unlock the doors. That's stupid' (Y8,F). They were also apprehensive about asking teachers to unlock doors because '[teachers] don't like doing it, because it's a lot of bother'(Y8,M). From the school's perspective (and from the pupils' when they understand what is at stake) security is an important issue. In many settings the response is to identify secure zones but this strategy could create other difficulties for the young people whom the school is trying to protect. Pupils were aware of such issues: 'You either leave your coat in the cloakroom where it gets nicked or in a classroom, and then you can't go back in the classroom to get it'(Y8,F). These were tensions which pupils wanted eliminated and they themselves came up with a solution: 'We've been asking for lockers lately'(Y8,F), a change that would allow them some degree of autonomy while at the same time providing security.

Feeding large groups of people simultaneously can also generate stress – for both the provider and consumer. Pupils commented quite frequently on the organisation of school dinner which was not always experienced as a pleasant social occasion: 'the dinner system's stupid...you have to eat your dinner in two seconds and get back to class'(Y8,F). Some pupils, in the same school, could not understand why, if they are 'swamped in the dining room', there was a rule about 'not eating outside': as one commented, 'It is a bit stupid'. The lunch-time wait was not seen as stressful by all pupils. For some it had an enjoyable and social aspect: 'We all sit round in a circle...trying each other's shoes on...it's right good. We all like the dinner lady' (Y8,M).

Freedom of movement around school can be hierarchical, and pupils often perceived the rules as unjust: 'I felt angry about things...pupils aren't allowed to go through the main doors, we have to go all the way around' (Y9,M). There were other comments about movement restrictions: 'There are up and down stairs; you go up one side and down the other...[if you]...find you're in the wrong place...[then]...you have to go all the way around again'. Whereas pupils were restricted, 'teachers can just go anywhere they want. It just seems a bit annoying' (Y9,F). Poorly-maintained facilities can be a source of stress for some pupils. In one school, for example, the building itself was depressing: 'It's horrible; all the walls are shabby and tables are falling apart' (Y8,F). In another school badly-maintained toilets caused some distress: 'They are always dirty and there are no locks on the doors...you have to bring a friend with you to hold the door' (Y8,F). However, despite many of the small hassles that the institution generated, at a comparative level this school provided

security and support for many of its pupils which was recognised and appreciated, 'It's better than... [other school]...which is...horrible...Everyone [there] smokes and swears' (Y8,M).

Curriculum organisation and teaching style

As they move through school, changes to the organisation of the curriculum can create stress for pupils. They may also feel uncertain about the social support that is available from teachers. In the primary school pupils had one teacher for most of their lessons whom they knew well. At secondary school, however, they may have a form tutor who does not teach them ('you don't really know them that well; they are just registering you'); they can also be bewildered by the fact that 'teachers write reports on you...[and]...you can tell they don't actually know you' (Y9,F). During year 9 the increased pressure of work began to become more of an issue for many children; at the same time they felt teachers demanded more in terms of their conduct: 'Teachers are more strict...' but behave so because they are 'worried about you for next year' (Y9,M).

In year 9, as they moved towards options, they were aware of the potential loss of social support from established friends placed in other groups:

Like on a Wednesday we have got Technology lessons all morning and where our class is split in half, so some of my friends I don't see all morning. And then after lunch I have got Spanish and then German and then, I think, Maths and they are in a different Maths set. And so you see them for about ten minutes in the morning and then you see them at lunch times and break times but that is about it. (Y9,M)

Some pupils found that having to join different groups placed demands on their interpersonal skills and was a source of considerable anxiety: 'I am scared that I don't know who is going to be in my class' (Y9,F). There were changes to the way in which subjects are taught, 'You get separated from your class, you're in different sets' (Y9,M). It is worth noting that social support groups are often affected by academic status. Established social groups can disappear as a result of organisational structures, such as 'setting'. These divisions can be exacerbated by teachers who unwittingly, or otherwise, relate differently to groups perceived as high or low achievers (see chapter 8). For some, 'setting' signalled an inevitable, and not always welcome, change in social groupings which created crossed loyalties: pupils had to decide whether to identify with friends or to be 'more respectful to the teachers'(Y9,M) in order to stay in the top set. Sets also served to separate former friends and thereby

potentially removed a source of social support: 'We don't see each other much because they are in lower sets' (Y9,M). A clear distinction between 'more able' and 'less able' pupils became more apparent in year 9 interviews. Some comments reflected inferences pupils were making about their position in the academic and social order. One pupil, when discussing the effect on individuals of being labelled as being in the lowest set, questioned the need for five categories of ability: 'We shouldn't have so many sets'. More sets meant you could be lower down the ladder, like descending the steps to a dark basement: 'Because kids boast and stuff when you're in the fifth set'. His solution was to reduce the number of 'steps': to have 'one top one, one second and one third for the bad people' (Y9,M) – but clearly the stigma of being in the lowest set would remain.

However, feelings about setting were individualised, which meant different perceptions of the source and availability of social support. For some of the more able pupils, separating classes on the basis of ability was perceived as fair and supportive: 'I think it is a good thing...cos some people haven't the ability...' (Y10,M). Furthermore, it relieved pressure on the less able and helped them to cope: 'People with limited ability weren't getting anywhere – our teacher likes to push them hard...they didn't pick it up...Now they're in a lower set' (Y9,M). However, some pupils in the higher sets felt that pupils placed in lower sets would consider it an unpleasant experience which would lower their self-esteem: 'They think it's really bad and that they are rubbish' (Y9,F).

Being in a higher set and being confident of maintaining a place there had, not surprisingly, a positive effect on self-worth, a feeling that you are highly valued by teachers: 'I think you are thought better of...by teachers' (Y9,F). For others the pressure of maintaining a place in the top set created anxiety, since failure in *one* exam could result in setting off an unwelcome chain of events. You would receive inferior quality teaching – 'you won't get taught as well' – which would inevitably lead to overall failure 'that will affect basically the rest of your school life' (Y9,M).

However, feelings associated with being in a lower set were also varied and not necessarily negative. For some, there was some relief in being grouped with others of similar ability since it lessened the threat to their social identity: 'Last year...we were with...right brainy people and Mr [teacher] went right fast...but this year we're all t' same' (Y9,F). For others it was viewed as embarrassing and humiliating. Appraising the effects of 'setting' as stressful or supportive was clearly subject to individual differences, particularly for those in the lower sets. It is

important to say that being in the lower set was, for some pupils, a respite from the pressure of learning in environments where they felt disadvantaged because of their own perceived lack of ability or their teachers' lack of awareness of, or inability to address, their individual learning needs.

While the content and style of teaching in almost all subjects was criticised by at least one pupil, modern languages attracted many of the most negative responses. Most of the criticism was in the form of angry comments about not understanding what was going on, of helplessness and humiliation. The following comment exemplifies the tone of the responses:

I don't understand this and you know I'm just sat there with a blank page most of the time and I have to wait for her to come over and tell her that I don't understand. That can be a bit embarrassing sometimes. (Y9,M)

General dissatisfaction with how pupils were taught included lessons that were lacklustre: teachers whose teaching style made the subject seem 'boring', or were themselves perceived as a 'boring person'. Being bored with your work led to a lack of activity which Dunham (1984) suggests is often as likely to generate stress as is overwork. For a few, this feeling extended to all aspects of schooling: 'It's just boring. I hate all the lessons and I don't want to come' (Y10,F). This statement came from a pupil who had enjoyed school up until year 10. She went on to admit to coping with boredom by truanting, although, having been caught, restricted this to lessons rather than whole days, which made it harder to detect. Coping with being bored included both active responses, such as being disruptive ('everyone just messes around'), and passive responses, such as avoidance ('wagging school'), but such off-task activity was not necessarily viewed by the pupils as a positive outcome. Most expressed a desire to learn but felt their access was denied because of teachers' inability to teach effectively, or because of their own lack of self-efficacy, which the teacher was there to help them develop.

A number of pupils expressed anxiety and frustration about teachers perceived as reluctant or unable to teach effectively: 'He doesn't know what he's talking about' (Y9,F). Where this happened, the comments were far more explicit and appeared to indicate a feeling of being prevented from learning and/or being treated unjustly; this made pupils feel angry:

He doesn't really explain anything. He mutters under his breath so no one knows what to do. (Y9,M)

He'll write on the board and talk about something, and he'll say 'Right. You can start now'...Usually no-one knows what you're supposed to be starting...He's not even nice about it. (Y9,F)

Pupils offered suggestions as to what teachers should do in order to relieve stress and help them cope with learning in schools:

I'd sack [teacher] to start with. I'd try to make sure that all teachers can actually teach...that everyone's got an interesting way of teaching...not necessarily the same way...but...to get all the ideas across. (Y9,F)

Stress and support from interpersonal relationships

The importance of social support for adolescents, from their social environments and social connectedness, has been acknowledged as providing a buffer from the effects of stress and for enhancing their self-esteem (see Hirsch et al., 1990).

Teachers

The responsibility teachers have, or should have, to provide social support is very evident in the comments of the pupils. For some pupils, it was the perceived lack of support from teachers which caused them most stress: 'You get up in a morning and think, God I can't handle school today...it's not so much the lessons but the teachers' (Y9,F). While adolescence is often viewed as a period of adult de-idealisation (see Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986), young people continue to turn to adults for advice and social support. As we saw earlier, pupils expect teachers to take an active interest in them as human beings and they can feel more susceptible to stress and anxiety if this does not happen. Teachers' interest in their well-being appears to be an important ingredient of many pupils' social networks and, more especially, support. To many pupils taking an active interest means treating them with respect. By year 8 they were quick to criticise teachers who did not treat them with respect: 'Well, some teachers talk to you as if you are really inferior to them' (Y8, M). Believing significant others perceive and treat you as inferior has a direct and negative effect on self-image and self-efficacy, and hence on coping. This pupil went on to explain *how* some teachers distanced themselves from him and treated him as inferior and irrelevant: 'They just don't get to know you, they just read out instructions'. Pupils expected teachers to make an effort, to take the time to communicate what was required of them and to have a human touch: 'I don't like his attitude to the class...He's not friendly and he won't help you' (Y9,F). Some teachers, it appeared, in attempting to communicate with and support pupils, fell foul of invading pupils' private space by trying to be 'streetwise' – as one pupil put it, trying 'to speak with the same kind of

words that *pupils* use', which resulted in them 'ending up looking stupid'. These failed attempts to be 'with it' in order to communicate and support have been observed elsewhere (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994). Pupils often view this as unacceptable since it undermines their expectations of teachers' authority.

Pupils' self-efficacy can be reduced by teachers' attempts to enhance motivation. Comparison between classes is often used by teachers to develop a sense of 'healthy competition'. Research has shown, however, that for some groups, usually those who perceive themselves as lacking academic ability, such comparison can have the detrimental effect of lowering their self-image and reducing their efforts. For one of our groups, comparison with another class by a particular teacher was perceived as de-motivating:

She always says we are rubbish and we never do anything well...all she ever says is 'the other group has done this...and you are *just* doing this, aren't you rubbish?' I don't think people will respond to it. (Y9,F)

In some cases, pupils' self-perceptions become so low they develop learned helplessness (see Seligman, 1975) which is characterised by behaviours such as difficulty in coping, depression, and a belief that they have little ability. Effort is of no use since they do not feel in control of their lives. The development of learned helplessness is a cause for concern since it is hard to break once established and has been found to continue into adult life.

For some pupils in our study, certain teachers created an unsupportive negative climate in their classrooms. Telling groups of pupils that they are 'the most boring to teach' was reciprocated by pupils 'being less willing to talk to her anyway' (Y9,F). Such behaviour is likely to maintain a negative feedback cycle. The consequences are that both teachers and pupils experience stress through reduced mutual support.

Peers

As pupils move through their secondary education peers begin to occupy a more central role in their lives. Peers provide social support in times of distress or when individuals are in conflict with adults. But, in contrast, they can also be a source of stress through bullying or social isolation. Young people are under pressure to conform to the conduct rules of teachers and of peers, which may conflict (see Emmerich et al., 1971). For some pupils there are difficulties in maintaining their relationships with and support from adults and children without 'betraying' one or both. This could lead to them isolating themselves from both, thereby exacerbating their difficulties:

I don't get on with my family anymore, they think I'm being a moody teenager...I'm not! What I'm doing in my bedroom is working...the only time I see my friends out of school is on Friday night...I often think I have no life and...there is no point carrying on. I don't think teachers understand what we are going through and have little sympathy for us. (Y11,F)

It was evident from comments by pupils in this study that their peer support was often inconsistent. However, during early adolescence at least, many pupils have limited social insight and social comprehension and this can lead to communication difficulties and misinterpretation of other people's motivational intent. As a result, pupils 'fall in and out of relationships' (Erikson, 1968). Girls seemed particularly vulnerable:

They [Ester and Natasha] are right horrible. And now Jean [a former friend] says she's not going to hang around with me and Anne, Joan and Glynis any more. She's going to hang around with Ester and Natasha. (Y8,F)

We don't like her because she sucks...she came back to us but then she went back to [another group of girls]...they told her what they thought of her so she came back to us. We wouldn't mind if she hung around with us all of the time but she keeps hopping around. (Y8,F)

Some pupils suffered an assault on their self-image when openly mocked in the classroom by more academically able groups: 'They were right horrible saying, "Oh we don't work with yaw" [mock posh accent]...they treat us like we're really stupid' (Y8,F). Others perceived their more capable peers as selfish in not providing instrumental support by sharing their knowledge and skills: 'They all hang around together and they never help us, because they are the brainy ones' (Y9,F).

Sadly, for some there seems to be no one to whom they feel they can turn for social support: 'I really hate everybody else in that class. They are the most boring people I've ever met in my life' (Y10,M). While it might be easy to discard such a statement as reflecting a temporary state, for a few, social isolation – self-inflicted or otherwise – can be a profoundly disturbing issue and lead to feelings of hopelessness. Social isolation as a consequence of limited social competence and anxiety has been recognised by educational researchers, most recently through research into victims of bullying (see Stephenson and Smith, 1989).

Improving schools to improve pupil coping

In this chapter we have examined the balance between the sources of stress and support for coping offered to pupils through school structures and interpersonal relationships. We have emphasised the importance of

recognising individual appraisal when attempting to determine whether or not an event is perceived as stressful. Schools differ in their ability to provide the optimal conditions to help pupils to cope with stress; some are clearly more effective than others in this respect. Schools which generate stress for pupils may do so as a result of attempting to provide safe and efficient places to work and learn. Many of the institutional structures which pupils in this study perceived as stressful were introduced by adults who genuinely believed they were acting in the pupils' best interests. The stress generated is an unintended consequence. However, it is inevitable that in managing large institutions there will be some conflicts between providing for the needs of the individual and the needs of the institution. It is essential, therefore, that the intended functions of a structure are made explicit to all those involved.

In an earlier study (see Chaplain and Freeman, 1994) we asked pupils and staff in one institution about their understanding of the meaning of various everyday routines, such as lining up before meals, pastoral counselling and reward systems. We found that the two groups had very different interpretations of the meanings of these routines. Lining up, for example, was perceived by pupils as making them feel safe, whereas the staff saw it as a mechanism for exercising control over the group. Where there is a lack of shared understanding of the intended function of a school structure, it is likely to generate stress for both parties.

Secondary schools are organised around an examination system, the salience of which is transmitted formally and tacitly from early on in a pupil's career, and school structures reflect this. To maximise learning pupils are often 'setted' which we have shown can remove an important source of social support. In some cases pupils saw it as divisive and harmful to relationships and this could lead to the creation of subcultures that provided the social support denied by the formal institution. Given current concerns about school attendance and social behaviour, it seems reasonable to ask if the unintended consequences of such structures need to receive more attention.

Our pupils made it clear what they expected from teachers to improve their coping and learning. They had to take an interest, teach competently and have good professional social skills. The message was clear from both high and low attainers, although they differed in what they believed needed changing. Teachers are an important part of pupil social support but to help pupils develop effective coping they need to be sensitive to the conflicting and wide-ranging pressures on pupils from their parents, peers and other teachers. One of the difficulties in providing social support is that inactive, depressive and ungrateful people, those most in

need, are seen as the least socially attractive (see chapter 8). As a consequence, this group tends to receive less support from others. In schools this group can include less able, aggressive and socially withdrawn pupils. Their behaviour tends to make the provider frustrated and helpless and less likely to want to give support; they also receive negative messages from teachers and peers, both of which can exacerbate an already low level of self-perception (see Dunkel-Schetter and Wortman, 1981).

While some of these difficulties can be overcome by pupils' developing their personal coping styles and social competence, there is a clear message for teachers. Although pastoral systems usually provide social support, *all* teachers can play an important role in providing an appropriate balance of instrumental and emotional support to pupils to enhance their self-efficacy and outcome expectancies, and thereby enhance coping.

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Appendix 3.8: Item 8

CHAPLAIN, R. (1996). Making a strategic withdrawal: Disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils. In J. Rudduck, R. Chaplain, & G. Wallace (Eds.), *School improvement: What can pupils tell us?* (pp.101-115). London: David Fulton Publishers.

CHAPTER 8

Making a strategic withdrawal: disengagement and self-worth protection in male pupils

Roland Chaplain

Teachers get on my nerves. When I do a good piece of work they put a red line through it!

Asked 'Is there any point in working hard in school?' one pupil (Y9,M) gave the above response. The pupil was perceived by his form teacher as having a 'low level of motivation' towards school work. From the pupil's perspective whatever he did was not valued: when pupils believe that teachers do not value their work it tends to lower their self-concept; the pupil quoted above scored very low on the self-concept scale he completed.

This chapter is concerned with how male pupils perceive their self and social identities. It also looks at teachers' constructs of disengaged male pupils and how they think pupils see themselves. Explaining a pupil's lack of motivation to achieve is not simply related to ability but is influenced by personal and interpersonal processes, as Thompson (1994) points out:

All too familiar to educators...is the student who consistently underachieves despite an apparent ability to cope with the demands of his or her studies. Such behaviour may cloak a pattern of self-worth protection in student achievement motivation. (p. 259)

The motivation to protect their sense of self-worth results in pupils using a range of tactics to avoid damage to their self-esteem. While such tactics are effective in the short term, 'the enduring consequence is underachievement' (ibid.). Self-worth protection, or the general tendency to establish and maintain a positive image, draws together the relationship between success (or failure) at school, self-image and social value. Furthermore, Covington (1992) highlights the relationships between ability – that quality highly regarded in education – and feelings of self-

esteem and personal worth. He goes on to suggest:

It is not surprising that the pupil's sense of esteem often becomes equated with ability – to be able is to be valued as a human being but to do poorly is evidence of inability, and reason to despair of one's worth. (p. 16)

There is considerable evidence to illustrate the effects (intended and unintended) of having high and low levels of expectation about the competence of others. Most research into these effects, in school contexts, was inspired by the work of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and there can be few teachers who have trained since that time who are unaware of *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. This book reported the effects of teacher expectations on pupil performance. Although the study was criticised (Elashoff and Snow, 1971), the idea of teachers effecting a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' grabbed the hearts and minds of many interested commentators of the time.

Most research into teacher expectations has been concerned with the *positive* outcomes of the process – looking at the 'Halo' effect: that is, bias that can lead teachers, on the basis of some irrelevant characteristic, to rate some individuals more highly than they actually merit. Research into the *negative* effects of having low expectations, the 'Golem' effect (see Babad et al., 1982), has tended to be studied by simulation rather than naturalistic observation. Interest in the effects of teachers' expectations continues, both among researchers and policy makers (see, for example, Carr and Kurtz-Costes, 1994; Alexander et al., 1992). To illustrate its potential in the development of disengaged, underachieving and anti-school pupils we shall turn to a model produced by Harris and Rosenthal (1986) to help unravel the process. Attention to this model can provide a framework for proactive (rather than reactive) interventions. The model argues that there are three components to the teacher expectancy process:

1. forming impressions
2. communicating our beliefs
3. effects on others.

We form impressions about pupils on the basis of our understanding of how they should behave and are behaving. Such understandings are important in explaining how we categorise and respond to other people. Social psychologists argue that we carry implicit models of people around with us, often unconsciously, that contain stereotypical attributes of personality that we believe others possess. Certain traits are central to forming impressions from which we infer a whole range of other traits or behaviours. These impressions are held about social groups (such as

football supporters), types of people (such as introverts), and individuals. Rosenberg et al. (1968) suggested that these models have two key dimensions: mental ability and sociability, and within each dimension we hold 'good' and 'bad' examples. As teachers, we might have a hypothetical model of the 'ideal' pupil: attentive, clean, considerate, respectful, hard working, intelligent. It is against such a model that we measure other children and predict their likely academic or social behaviour. As a teacher, the ability to predict the likely performance ability of a pupil is a salient skill.

The second component of the model is the transmission of these beliefs to pupils, through what we say, how we say it, and the postures and gestures which accompany the language. Particular combinations of these behaviours project either a positive or a negative classroom climate. Harris and Rosenthal (1986) show, for example, that both the *quality* and *quantity* of interactions between teachers and engaged or disengaged pupils differ.

Thirdly, there are the short and long-term outcomes for those involved. The way in which messages from teachers are received and interpreted by pupils affects their motivation, performance, attitude and social behaviour. There is a large body of evidence which shows how pupils develop effective (and ineffective) motivational styles influenced primarily by causes they *attribute* to their past successes and failures (see Weiner, 1992). Those who think their successes are due to their ability and their failures to lack of effort are likely, if repeated over time, to develop effective styles. Conversely, those who think their failures are caused by their lack of ability and put their successes down to luck are likely to develop ineffective styles. Thus, the pattern of explanations individuals develop determines their subsequent willingness to maintain effort – or to give up! Pupils who interpret messages about their performance and behaviour in a negative way are also likely to infer a range of other beliefs about themselves, and teachers, which are likely to lower their self-esteem. In response to uncertainty about their ability, and to maintain positive beliefs about themselves, they may adopt tactics based on other areas of personal strength to persuade others, not necessarily teachers, to hold them in positive regard. Such endeavours might include disengagement from learning tasks by direct action (such as disruption) or by indirect action (such as work avoidance). The type of feedback which teachers provide is considered to be central in influencing the attributions their pupils make about their learning. In this chapter we will examine the data from the *Disengagement and Male Underachievement* study using the three components from Harris and

Rosenthal's (1986) model as a framework in order to determine where in the process educators might intervene.

How we carried out our study

From the data in the *Making Your Way Through Secondary School* study (see chapter 1), we identified a number of individual pupils who, during the course of their school careers, were in danger of becoming disengaged from learning and schooling. We decided, therefore, to look at the issues in more detail in three other comprehensive schools, part of a TYEE Consortium in the North of England, which had all expressed interest in disengagement and underachievement among male pupils.

This research looks at how disengaged pupils perceive themselves: in terms of their competency as learners; in relation to others; and what they perceive as obstructing their engagement with learning. These perceptions are believed to be important in understanding the self-worth motive. In addition we were interested to see if these perceptions were common among all disengaged pupils and if they differed from those of engaged pupils.

In each school we asked teachers to identify a group of male pupils, from years 8 and 9, whom they perceived as disengaged from learning and/or schooling, and others in the same years who were thought to be engaged. We do not know whether teachers chose pupils who were 'moderately/occasionally disengaged' or 'very/frequently disengaged'; there were certainly references among the disengaged group in each school to 'the others' who were characterised as being more disruptive and more inclined not to attend school than they were. This may in fact be the case, or it may be a device used by the pupils for protecting their self-worth and social identity.

We gathered data from pupils by semi-structured interview in one school and questionnaire (based on the interview schedule) in the other two schools. Some pupils, although in school on the day, opted not to attend for interview and the final numbers across the three schools were 32 disengaged pupils and 27 engaged pupils. The interviews were conducted in one day with three researchers each interviewing six or seven pupils. The questionnaires were sent directly to the other two schools and distributed by teachers. Anonymity, for those completing questionnaires, was ensured by providing each pupil with an envelope which was returned sealed to their teacher who then returned the whole bundle to the researchers. In addition to the interviews and

questionnaires, all three groups of pupils were asked to complete a scale designed to measure their *self-concept as a learner*¹. The scale consists of 13 items that are positively framed (for example, I am usually eager to go to lessons) and 13 that are negatively framed (for example, I give up easily in school work). We also asked teachers to complete an *inferred self-concept scale*² in which they were asked to say how they thought each pupil perceived himself. Teachers were asked to rate each pupil's sense of self-worth, to make judgements about how they related to others, and how they perceived teachers. The object of administering these scales was to ascertain, firstly, if and how engaged and disengaged pupils differ in their feelings about themselves and, secondly, to provide some insight into if and how teachers differentiate between the two groups of pupils.

How we see them: teachers' models of disengaged boys

We invited interested teachers from the school in which we conducted the interviews to send us their thoughts on disengagement. The responses of the 25 who replied were interesting – not the least because of the differences in perception. Some thought that it was a relatively recent phenomenon but teachers of long experience saw it as a familiar problem, mainly affecting adolescent working-class boys. Also interesting was the tendency in the teachers' responses to locate the source of the problem within the pupils themselves, in their family background or in their community. (This tendency for people to 'externalise' responsibility for problems is familiar – see for instance, Totman, 1982; Lawrence and Steed, 1986.) Most of the teachers attributed responsibility to 'within-pupil' factors. These factors were concerned with *anti-social tendencies* (such as behaviour problems); *intellectual capacity* (for example, low ability or lack of effort); with *personality* (for example, low self-esteem); and with *stage of development* (for example, adolescence). Parents were also held responsible in some cases, being perceived as 'uncaring' or 'overprotective'. There was, however, a core of common ground in that a number of teachers built their explanations around the idea of disengaged pupils protecting 'self-esteem' and needing to maintain their 'social identity' within the peer group. They noted that 'maintaining street credibility' required indifference on the part of male pupils to routine requirements. It was not 'cool' for disengaged boys to be seen to be paying serious attention to school work or homework. 'Young men', said

one teacher, 'have to be coaxed to work', whereas girls accept the need more readily and without loss of face (see chapter 7). And teachers acknowledged that because most girls were more receptive they tended to get more help in class. But some teachers saw, beneath the tough or nonchalant exteriors, young men who had 'a desperate need for friends, for confirmation'. None recognised a desire in these pupils to succeed academically and only one felt that negative messages from teachers might be a contributing factor. More women than men suggested that the need to maintain the 'macho male stereotype' was a key factor in disengagement.

Teachers said that by year 10 pupils were aware how hard academic work was becoming; the less academically inclined 'realise that school is coming to an end...and this frightens them' – particularly those who still have problems with the basic skills of reading and writing. Aware of their shortcomings in these important areas some become 'insecure and scared'. Clearly, as some teachers pointed out, those with a poor attendance record (whether the result or the cause of disengagement) do not know how to catch up, may 'feel they are failing' and disengage as a way of masking their fear of failure; in short, they avoid the situation which is the source of failure. However, there is evidence to show that teachers' perceptions of children's abilities, self-concepts and motivations are too general and heavily biased by academic achievement levels (see Carr and Kurtz-Costes, 1994).

Getting the message across: teacher–pupil communication and disengagement

Harris and Rosenthal (1986) argued that in order for teachers' beliefs about high and low-ability pupils to have an effect on achievement and behaviour, they need to be transmitted (verbally and non-verbally) and be *accepted* by the pupils. Children can, it appears, accurately detect the differences in teacher communication to high and low achievers from a very early age (see, for instance, Babad et al., 1991). In this section we take up this theme which seems, from our data, to be a pivotal factor in pupils' attitudes towards school and learning and in their sense of identity and self-worth.

Adolescent pupils have a very strong sense of justice and the disengaged pupils were particularly ready to write or talk about incidents where they thought that they had been treated unfairly. Teachers 'not being fair' usually meant getting the blame for something you hadn't

done or being suspected of bad behaviour just because you'd behaved badly in the past. A disengaged pupil commented:

There are some [teachers] who like everyone else and they take it out on me. Well, everyone will be talking in class and if I am talking then they'll take it out on me and no one else...Just one of those things...they get on to me and no one else.

Some pupils felt that it was so difficult to change the image that the teachers had of them that there was little point in trying to reform and settle down to work. Not surprisingly, while two thirds of the engaged pupils thought teachers were fair to them, two thirds of disengaged pupils thought teachers were *not* fair to them. The more engaged pupils acknowledged that teachers sometimes picked on pupils with a reputation based on past misbehaviour: 'It's like if you've done anything in the past wrong they keep you in mind, and anything done, they'll blame you'. Another engaged pupil commented: 'I noticed people being victimised'; and a third mentioned a pupil who used to get into a lot of trouble when he came to the school (he'd changed schools several times) and even though now 'he's calmed down like, Mr [teacher] just picks on him'. Engaged pupils were also upset by 'unfair' treatment being 'dished out' to them; they felt aggrieved, for instance, about being bracketed with disruptive pupils and punished *en masse* for what only one or two had done.

The disengaged pupils were also sensitive to what they saw as teachers neglecting their interests in favour of the girls. Indeed, one pupil said quite explicitly that he had lost interest in school work when he saw that teachers were giving girls more help than he received. There are several comments, from different pupils, on this theme:

Some of them [teachers] seem to edge towards the girls I would say...They're sort of kinder to girls. If there's a small job to be done...or a special job to be done, usually it's the girls who get it.

A few of them [teachers] are sexist. It's all, like, some blokes favour the lads, some blokes favour the girls.

They're not very fair to anyone except the girls.

The disengaged pupils were clear in expressing their dislike of being humiliated by teachers in front of their peers. One pupil commented on teachers who deliberately picked on pupils whom they expected not to know the answers and made them look stupid in front of the class. They also felt that teachers took no notice of what they were trying to say – in short, they disliked teachers who did not take them seriously, even though *they* acknowledged that they had not always taken learning seriously. Pupils of this age (13 to 14) don't like to be treated as

'inferior'; they don't like it if teachers 'try to make you look small'; they don't like being judged 'by what your appearance is like'. As we can see, a lot of these comments are to do with image and with sense of self.

Behind the 'I'm not bothered' front adopted, like a bullet-proof vest, as a form of self-worth protection were many pupils who said, in a one-to-one interview (or in response to a questionnaire) that they would really like to do well in school and receive the support of their teachers, not only with their work but also with sorting out some aspects of their social lives. The 'authenticity' of the teacher was, not surprisingly, seen as important by both engaged and disengaged pupils. Pupils chose to talk to teachers whom they felt would understand them, who were likely to listen, who might be ready to share a joke, who wouldn't let them down and whose own style was not too distant from that of the pupils. A disengaged pupil explained why he talked about things with a teacher he liked and trusted: 'He understands what you feel, I think it's because all the things you've done, he's already done when he was younger.' Another disengaged pupil talked about his form tutor, whom he felt comfortable with:

I've been with her three years and I know her like dead well. When we have PSE and Circle Time and that's really good...she's relaxed about it; she gets mad when she wants to but she's usually...Like...I'm late for registration when we've been playing football at dinner and so she'll let that go, and if I'm late three times, she'll ask me if something is wrong at home and that. She'll keep close to everyone and there's quite a few people in the class whose mums and dads have split up during the three years and she's always helped them.

On the other hand, some disengaged pupils felt that they couldn't talk to teachers about things that worried them because they would be embarrassed or because they felt that their trust might be betrayed. Some pupils were put off seeking help from teachers because such a move did not fit their nonchalant image: 'It's OK for girls, not for boys' and 'Not me, because I'm not that sort of...I don't like getting involved with teachers, you know...anything personal like that. It's just me'. And if pupils did want to talk things through with their teachers they preferred privacy: 'A tutor is the last person you tell, because you have to say it in front of everybody else in your group and considering this is the person you are supposed to tell...There is no one else'.

It seems that the presence of teachers who are prepared to listen, who are understanding, who are approachable, who are fair, and who do not seek to humiliate pupils is a crucially important aspect of school life. And while engaged pupils are as ready as disengaged pupils to comment critically on teachers who are unfair, it is the disengaged pupils who more

often, according to their accounts of the situation, claim that they are being treated unfairly and who receive more negative messages from teachers. The consequent loss of self-esteem can also come from situations involving the peer group. A number of disengaged pupils (those who tended to be withdrawn and socially isolated rather than the noisily and 'collaboratively' disengaged) said that they had experienced being bullied and other forms of harassment. One pupil said that he had been called 'fat bastard'; another recalled a very painful period: 'Everyone used to call me queer and gay and everything, all of the time...I just tried to ignore them but they just took all my friends off me...'. Clothes and possessions seemed to feature quite a lot in the incidents of harassment – what one pupil referred to as 'snob stuff'. Pupils said that name-calling and bullying were reasons why pupils in their year group were fed up with school and confirmed that the major targets for this kind of abuse were 'people who aren't very well off'. What is at stake here is how pupils feel about themselves. One said, 'Nobody likes me'; another referred to 'stupid people who don't like me even if they don't know me'. It is not easy for pupils to seek help from teachers in these circumstances without risking further loss of self-esteem.

Across the three schools, both engaged and disengaged pupils thought that they should be treated in a more adult fashion, or with more respect, once they were teenagers. More of the engaged pupils suggested that reciprocity was the right thing to aim for: 'If we behaved better then teachers would treat us with more respect', or, from a slightly different angle, 'If we were treated more like adults we'd behave more like adults'; and, again, 'Yes, we are getting older and more mature so if they treat us with more respect we would probably treat them with respect'.

The picture that the pupils draw suggests that they are aware of their difficulties – a picture, consistent with the self-concept scale results, which shows that disengaged pupils tend to have a poor self-image in relation to academic work. The pupils also show a learned distrust of teachers in general (although they are positive about the qualities of those teachers whom they do respect). While the overall degree of alienation may not be extreme, there is clearly a problem as to how teachers can intervene to help and support pupils who have constructed the situation as one in which teachers, and not the pupils themselves, are a major source of their difficulty with school work.

Examining the effects: how engaged and disengaged pupils see themselves and how teachers think pupils see themselves

The third component of the model – the effects – are discussed in this section. Given the relationship between self-concept and achievement we elected to compare the self-concepts of engaged and disengaged pupils. Although the data suggested that both engaged and disengaged pupils wanted, in the main, to do well at school, overall there were differences³ between the two groups in the way they perceived themselves as learners and in the way they tackled their school work. Central to the motive to protect self-worth is the relationship between wanting to do well in order to be perceived in a positive light, uncertainty about how and if this can be achieved, and the dynamics of failure-avoiding behaviour. A comparison of scores from the pupil completed *self-concept as a learner scale* for the engaged and disengaged pupils showed that the scores of the disengaged pupils were significantly lower on every aspect of the scale. The disengaged pupils felt that they had greater difficulty in particular with *task orientation* and with more abstract *problem solving* tasks. They were more likely to experience difficulties with writing, coping with tests and doing homework. They were less likely to feel good about their school work. The disengaged pupils also indicated that they had a tendency to give up more easily in school work, to do things without thinking, to make mistakes because they didn't listen, and to give up if they didn't understand something. The responses to the *inferred self-concept scale* (completed by teachers) indicated that they believed disengaged pupils had more negative perceptions of themselves, of themselves in relation to others, and of teachers.

Comparing the overall results from year 8 and year 9, pupils' ratings of themselves were not statistically significant (and we therefore treated them as one group). However, engaged pupils in year 9 tended to score higher than those in year 8. It would appear that their positive self-images improve as they grow older. In contrast, pupils who had low perceptions of themselves (disengaged) in year 8 are likely to find those negative feelings strengthened by the time they reach the end of year 9. (Here we are, of course, extrapolating data from two separate year groups and not looking at the same pupils over time.) This suggests that as pupils move towards the end of their school careers the differences between the engaged and disengaged groups are likely to become more marked. This result is mirrored, but more strongly, in the scale completed by teachers. As the more motivated groups improve their academic performance, their self-concept, so teachers think, is likely to be enhanced; and as the

less well-motivated pupils fall behind, teachers believe that their self-image becomes increasingly negative.

We can summarise our observations about how disengaged pupils perceive themselves and others – based on the data from the self-completion scales, from the interviews and from the questionnaires – in the following way:

1. *Perceptions of themselves*

disengaged pupils:

- have lower self-concepts and self-esteem than engaged peers;
- have characteristics that tend to make it difficult to achieve academically; these include: 'giving up easily at school work', 'impulsiveness', 'difficulties in understanding their work', being embarrassed if asked questions publicly or singled out for special attention;
- are more likely to be fed up with school on a regular basis.

2. *Perceptions of school work*

disengaged pupils:

- find homework difficult, given they are often already struggling in class;
- dislike subjects with a high proportion of writing (e.g. English);
- dislike subjects where they do not understand (esp. modern languages);
- have increased anxiety about their ability, as they near exams, because of earlier poor performances.

3. *Relationship with peers*

disengaged pupils:

- are more likely to have been involved in bullying incidents;
- feel under pressure from their immediate friends if they exhibit achievement behaviour;
- are perceived by many of their engaged peers as a hindrance and annoyance to their own classroom work.

4. *Relationship with teachers*

disengaged pupils:

- perceive teachers as generally unfair to *pupils*, but particularly unfair to them;
- believe that teachers express negative behaviours towards them both verbally and non-verbally;
- would like a teacher they could trust to talk things through with;
- consider teachers to be largely responsible for their failure at school.

5. *Perceptions of the future*

disengaged pupils:

- show high levels of anxiety about their future chances in the working world;
- despite negative messages from school want to persist and have some examination success;
- see a direct relationship between examination success and getting a job;
- are more likely to plan to get a job at 16.

What can be done to make things better?

We asked all the pupils involved in the study how they felt schools could be improved for those who were 'fed up' or who were disengaged. Both engaged and disengaged pupils were constructive in their suggestions. They said that school work needed to be made more interesting, that pupils should be given more opportunities to find things out for themselves, that classes needed to be smaller 'so the teacher will be able to get round better and help more people'. Some pupils asked for more active learning, 'with more group work and things'. Pupils said that teachers needed to learn to listen to pupils and needed to explain things more. Some pupils thought it would help if there were more choice – more opportunities for them to exercise control over content or pace of work. And some – mainly those who were not so engaged with more academic study – made suggestions that reflected their ambivalence towards school work. They attended school but they wanted more, and longer, breaks between lessons; another proposed a ten o'clock start and one suggested putting an extra hour on each day so that everyone could have Friday off! On a more realistic note, one pupil thought the timetables should be adapted 'so that each day had something to lighten the mood'. Another thought that it should be compulsory to attend 'the important lessons, like maths, history and English, so that they still get some education', but that outside the core curriculum pupils should choose what they wanted to work hard at.

There were several recommendations that referred to the behaviour of teachers, including, predictably, teachers being fairer to pupils, teachers respecting you more, less continuous teacher talk, teachers being a bit more friendly, teachers joking a bit more and teachers giving positive and supportive attention to 'us boys more often'. Pupils put off by lessons which involved a lot of writing (and there were a number who mentioned this) wanted more alternatives for 'people who don't enjoy writing or drawing'. Pupils who were not making good progress with their learning wanted more support teachers who could spend more time with them. Some pupils wanted 'less stressful exams and tests [that] put pressure on [us]'. They also wanted better measures to deal with bullying and name-calling. One pupil suggested bringing together all the pupils who were not motivated and 'ask them what they want to be changed. Yeah, what they want. Then tell them what they *could* have...and find out what they would like out of those options'.

There were a couple of pupils who believed things could not be changed: one said 'School's run how school's run'; he went on: 'School

shouldn't fit in for individuals; individuals should fit in with school...so if they choose not to stick with school, it's them isn't it, it's not me. So I'm not worried about them'. This was perhaps a less generous comment than those made by many of the pupils who responded to our questions. Another pupil defended the school's approach saying, 'It's not the school. The school does their best to help them, talk to them. If they are in trouble they put them on report and they do well while they're on report. It's just that they stop once they're off'. Here there was a sense of the higher-attaining pupils beginning to distance themselves from groups or individuals in their year who were stopping them working or getting them in trouble – another possible blow to the self-esteem of the pupils who were most at risk.

In this chapter we have examined the data from three perspectives: teachers' implicit models of the disengaged; disengaged boys' explanations and interpretations of how teachers relate to them; and the effect that 'messages' from teachers have on pupils' sense of self-worth as learners and on their social identities.

The starting point for improvement concerns teachers. Being proactive in preventing the development of negative cycles calls for teachers to appraise their implicit models of disengaged pupils. This would require them to examine their causal explanations of pupils' behaviour and reflect on the messages that they are communicating to pupils. Thompson (1994) reminds us of the importance of teachers in this process:

Whilst it might be assumed teachers are in a prime position to actively shape their pupils' perceptions of their successes and failures, there is evidence that this potential is either largely unexploited or (more seriously) distorted in its application. (p. 266)

The second point concerns changing the ways in which vulnerable pupils think about their successes and failures. Perceptions of ability are central to the argument. Ability is a highly-valued asset in education and is perceived as a stable characteristic. Being seen to have ability is usually associated with having a positive self-image. Pupils, unsure of their ability and trying to protect their self-image, often conclude it is better not to bother trying rather than to try and fail. If pupils make a real effort to succeed which ends in failure, this can lead to feelings of shame and lower their self-perception.

To help pupils overcome these difficulties and develop a more effective motivational style requires intervention at two levels. The first is the need to teach and encourage these pupils to think differently about the reasons for their successes and failures – to reconsider their

understanding of the relationship between ability and effort. The second relates to classroom organisation or, more specifically, the use of non-competitive learning structures. Effective interventions using these strategies with pupils have been reported (see, for example: Covington, 1984; Craske, 1988; Thompson, 1994).

Comparatively little attention has been given to looking at how pupils' explanations and advice might be utilised to improve their learning in schools – but some of the messages are clear. They are about relationships and respect – what Hargreaves (1982) called the 'dignity' of young people. Indeed, the present study has some grounds for optimism. Not only does it offer an agenda that can be acted on; it also suggests that, despite having difficulties in adjusting to the culture of schooling, most disengaged pupils still want to work hard. It is to the credit of those pupils who know they are not doing well in school – know there are things they don't understand, know they haven't a proper command of the strategies for learning effectively – that so many of them still struggle on in what they often perceive as a difficult and unsupportive environment.

Notes

¹The measure used was a modified version of the Self-Concept as a Learner Scale (Purkey, 1967). The modifications were to reduce the number of items from 50 to 25, and to anglicise the language (the original version is American). One new item was added (*I am able to influence decisions which affect my school work*) to measure the amount of control students felt they had over their learning: what psychologists call 'locus of control'. 13 items were positively framed (e.g., *I am usually eager to go to lessons*) and 13 were negatively framed (*I give up easily in school work*). The scale was subdivided into four sections: motivation (9 items); task orientation (8 items); problem solving (4 items); class membership (4 items). The overall scale was found to be statistically reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$).

²This was a modified version of an existing measure: the Inferred Self-Concept Scale (Combs and Soper, 1963). There were 15 items in all, which were broken down into three sections each containing five items. The teacher was asked to rate how he/she thought: the students felt about themselves as individuals (e.g., adequate-inadequate); as they related to others (e.g., unimportant-important); and their perception of teachers (e.g., hindering-helpful). A modification was made to the title of the final section. In the original scale respondents are asked to rate how they consider the student perceives 'others'; in our version they were asked *specifically* about how they consider the student perceives teachers. The overall scale was found to be statistically reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$).

³All scores between the different groups (engaged-disengaged, year 8-year 9, and schools attended) were compared statistically using analysis of variance. All scores for engaged and disengaged differed and the differences were statistically significant. Differences between year 8 and year 9 scores and between the three schools were not statistically significant. A more detailed account of these findings, including results of the statistical analysis, will be published elsewhere (Chaplain, in preparation).

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Appendix 3.9: Item 9

CHAPLAIN, R., & Freeman, A. (1994). *Caring under pressure*. London: David Fulton Publishers. (166 pages).

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