

Commencing the Teaching Journey - How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First- Year Teachers

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Please note also that this research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

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Abstract

Commencing the Teaching Journey: How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First-Year Teachers

Over the next decade the Australian school teaching workforce will see many senior teachers move into retirement, with young early career teachers replacing them. As a result, developing a better understanding of what these teachers face when commencing their careers is important. This thesis explores the impact that time as a construct has on the professional and personal lives of First-Year Generation Y (FYGY) secondary school teachers in New South Wales (NSW).

The study considered time as: a resource with its associated connection to workload, as a context for the experience of a phenomenon, and as a process in regard to the different stages or phases that the participating FYGY teachers encountered as they began their careers.

An interpretive qualitative approach was employed with situated learning theory underpinning the research. Data collection took place through a series of lengthy interviews that involved ten participants in a relational sharing process that occurred at three separate points during their first year of teaching. In analysing the data, eleven themes related to time were inductively derived and these were used to focus discussion on what young beginning secondary school teachers think, feel and experience when situated in their first year of teaching. Narrative inquiry was used to document what the participating teachers encountered and experienced, with their stories providing the means to explore important issues and concepts. Finally, the study considered what can be done, in light of the specific characteristics that FYGY teachers exhibit and the professional supports made available, to assist them as they begin teaching, so there is a stronger likelihood that they will commit to long-term careers in schools.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Aims

1.1 Problematic

The aim of this research was to explore the impact that time as a construct has on the professional and personal lives of a group of first-year teachers who are in the Generation Y demographic. I considered time as a resource with its associated connection to workload, and time as an experience and a process in terms of the different stages or phases that these young first-year teachers encountered as they began their teaching careers. Also considered was time as a measure of where the teachers were professionally with regard to the journey they had travelled in their first year of teaching. Hence time has been treated as an analytical device to explore the lives lived by First-Year Generation Y (FYGY) teachers and the following questions were investigated:

- 1) What do young first-year teachers think, feel and experience as they begin their teaching journey?
- 2) What can be done in terms of their unique characteristics to assist them as they negotiate their new career path?

1.2 Rationale

In positioning myself as the researcher conducting this study, it is important to understand how my career background has been significant. I have worked for the past twenty-five years as a high school teacher with the NSW Department of Education (DoE), but for the last ten of these years I have been employed specifically as a teacher mentor in a variety of primary and secondary schools in Sydney's western and south-western suburbs. This has involved me in working closely with, and supporting and guiding, numerous temporary and permanent beginning teachers through their first few years of teaching. Whilst undertaking this role, I have noted anecdotally how the first year of teaching in particular presents many concerns and challenges for recent graduates of teacher education programs. In addition, I have observed that the first year of teaching can present both similar and dissimilar experiences for newcomers to the profession. Furthermore, it was often the case that time, in a range of ways,

became the focus for mentoring discussions, but what I found was that perceptions and attitudes towards time differed widely between various individuals. This has led me to develop the research questions that are listed above, as well as focus my study on considering how the first year experience impacts specifically on Generation Y beginning teachers, with further relevant information supplied below.

Retaining beginning teachers is an issue that has caused concern in recent years both within Australia and internationally (Plunkett & Dyson, 2011, p. 33). Furthermore, one of the biggest challenges facing school leaders relates to hiring and retaining a new generation of teachers (Coley, 2009, p. 20). In New South Wales (NSW) over half of the teaching service will soon reach retirement age (Fogarty, 2011, p. 20) and many of these teachers will be replaced by newly qualified teaching graduates. Steps have been taken to support these beginning school teachers who are in their first year of teaching, with a number of states around Australia putting policies and procedures in place to support novice teachers. For example, in Victoria first-year teachers in state schools appointed to long-term contracts are allocated a 5% decrease in workload, whilst in the Australian Capital Territory they are provided with a similar decrease in workload as well as fifteen release days (Barnard, 2016, p. 21). Until recently in NSW, only early career teachers appointed to permanent positions in state schools and who have not yet attained their accreditation at the Proficient level were provided with additional release time. However, from 2017 this additional release time will also be made available to temporary teachers who are employed full-time for 12 months. These beginning teachers are given two hours in their first year, with one hour of release time also provided to an assigned mentor (Barnard, 2016, p. 19). However, it is well documented (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Prescott, Louviere & Burke, 2011, p. 60; Renard, 2003, p. 62; Anhorn, 2008, p. 15) that many teachers in their first year of a full-time teaching position feel overwhelmed. They experience much difficulty managing the heavy workload that confronts them and are exhausted by the physical, mental and emotional challenges and demands that they encounter in doing their job. Consequently, this has a significant impact on their personal and professional lives which often causes them to call into question their long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Indeed, it has been widely acknowledged that the “high cost of

teacher turnover and the replacement of new teachers” (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 36) is a serious concern.

The focus of my study was on the construct of time and how this is experienced, managed and perceived by FGY teachers. Frequently new teachers comment that time presents a range of problems for them, particularly in their first year of teaching. This has led me to focus on this specific area, with the intention of better understanding how the construct of time as a resource, experience, measure and process impacts on the professional and personal lives of young first-year teachers. Elbaz (1983) has discussed how in schools, time is perceived as both a commodity (1983, p. 125) and as a setting or frame (1983, p. 126). From reading this and other relevant literature, as well as collecting my own data, it has become apparent that time can be viewed firstly as a finite resource which is needed by new teachers so that they can complete the necessary tasks associated with their roles. Furthermore, time is an experience, with time spent in the classroom, in the staffroom, at home preparing lessons and even time spent away from school all being relevant when examining the lives of FGY teachers. Finally, time as a measure and a process is significant too because the experience of being a first-year teacher is evolving and thus is different at various points during the first 12 months on the job. Also considered was the pressure that time places on young first-year teachers and how this influences their wider lives and multiple identities. Hence my study has investigated how time impacts on all aspects of FGY teachers' lives, including the way it affects them as an individual and as a partner. I considered the amount of time the teachers dedicated to their teaching duties and how this fitted in with their lives outside of work (both during school terms and when on holidays) as well as their perceptions of how much time it took to be an effective teacher. FGY teachers' perceptions of time with regard to a number of aspects of beginning teaching were examined: how time in the job constructs/impacts their identity and the challenges related to time experienced during school hours and over the first year of teaching.

It is necessary to understand the lives and experiences of Generation Y teachers because, as Nias (1989) did with primary school teachers in England in the 1980s, my aim is to present a living picture of what teaching is like now for Australian FGY

teachers. By completing this research from the perspective of its practitioners, I, like Nias (1989), have captured the lived realities of teaching (p. 2) for members of this particular group of teachers as they commence their new occupations. Also by allowing these FYGY classroom practitioners to voice their thoughts, feelings and stories, they were given the opportunity to better understand themselves as professional workers. In addition, teacher educators and school leadership teams are able to gain a greater appreciation of what FYGY teachers encounter and experience.

Since my research has focused on the construct of time and how it relates to FYGY teachers' professional and personal lives, it has clearly delineated findings concerning work/life balance as experienced by FYGY teachers and also provides findings regarding further time-related aspects facing participants. This focus has made the research different from previous studies. It is distinct because it is based solely on the all-important first year of teaching and it is also unique as it has focused on examining the lives of FYGY teachers through the lens of time. Other recent studies such as those undertaken by Anhorn (2008), Ewing and Manuel (2005), Hudson, Beutel and Hudson (2009), McCormack and Thomas (2003), Plunkett and Dyson (2011), Renard (2003) and Schuck et al. (2011) have predominantly focused on 'early career teachers' which pertains to those who (regardless of their age) are in their first few years of teaching. This research is different because it specifically focuses on what young newly qualified teachers experience in that crucial first year of teaching.

The ten teachers selected as participants in this research were in their first year of a permanent teaching appointment in separate state high schools in NSW, Australia. This differs from recent Australian research undertaken by Sullivan and Morrison (2014), as they conducted interviews with early career teachers, not exclusively those in their first year of teaching. Also, their participants were drawn from South Australia and Western Australia (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 607). Furthermore, to qualify for my study, the participants had to belong to the Generation Y demographic, having been born in the mid to late 1980s or 1990s, and as a consequence were in their twenties or early thirties at the time of data collection. My aim in undertaking this research was to provide the teaching and research communities with greater insight into what FYGY teachers think, feel and experience as they begin their teaching journey and, from this,

to gain a better understanding of their needs, as well as their vulnerabilities. The focus on Generation Y is due to this being the age demographic at present of young teachers in schools.

The potential new knowledge to be gained from conducting research of this nature was seen to be of benefit to those responsible for preparing teachers and those charged with supporting them when they start teaching, as well as first-year teachers themselves. Furthermore, it should prove useful for employing authorities because the study has set out to explain how positive rather than negative experiences for FYGY teachers could be facilitated. Understanding how to support FYGY teachers is valuable so that employing authorities can minimise the opportunity for burnout and/or attrition to occur. In addition, the study has endeavoured to shed light on the ways in which FYGY teachers can be encouraged to commit to long-term careers in schools, which is vital if we are to effectively manage the projected transitions that will take place in the teaching workforce and ensure that a degree of stability is maintained. Currently 52.4% of permanently employed teachers working in NSW DoE schools are aged over 45 years. Also, future “projections show a clear increase in the proportion of teachers aged under 44 and a corresponding decrease in the 45 and over group” (NSW DOE *Teaching Workforce Supply and Demand Report*, 2015, pp. 5-6). In light of this, the importance of conducting research of this type which explores what Generation Y teachers experience in their first year and how time as a construct impacts their lives cannot be underestimated.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, with Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 articulating the location of my study in relation to the current literature and its theoretical positioning. Also the research design, methodology and methods used are explained in these chapters. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 analyse the study’s findings in relation to specific themes related to time and the narratives shared by selected participants, along with the visual metaphors that they chose at three separate points during their first year of teaching. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 discuss and interpret the findings in regard to significant implications for FYGY teachers, teacher educators, early career teacher

support staff and school leadership teams. These chapters also critically explore the experiences of those participating in this study and how these impact on the personal and professional lives of each individual. Finally, Chapter 8 presents the conclusions drawn from the study, and provides recommendations concerning various practices and initiatives associated with better preparing and supporting beginning teachers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Whilst the experiences of early career teachers have been given considerable attention in recent years (Adoniou, 2014; Anhorn, 2008; Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke & Louviere, 2013; Burke, Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Louviere & Prescott, 2013; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; McCormack & Thomas, 2003; Renard, 2003; Schuck et al. 2011) there has not been much discussion concerning the specific experiences of first-year teachers in the Generation Y demographic. Furthermore, there is little literature on the construct of time and its impact on this cohort of teachers. In this chapter I examine and critique the relevant literature and analyse its relevance to the research being undertaken. Due to the specific focus of this study being on time and its impact on the lives of FYGY secondary school teachers, the reviewed material contains research-based documents, and policy-related professional articles, derived from a variety of sources. Where professional publications are cited their context will be explained accordingly.

The broad areas of focus in this review are as follows. Firstly, I discuss the origins of the demographic phenomenon that is *Generation Y* and consider whether people identified as belonging to this group have common features that characterise the group. Secondly, I explore what it is that teachers generally encounter when they are in their first-year of teaching. Then I consider how and why the induction programs and mentoring processes encountered by teachers beginning their careers are important. Furthermore, I explain the ways that schools and their specific organisational structures have an impact on the lives of FYGY teachers. Finally, I focus on the concept of time with discussion of how it is perceived, treated and valued by FYGY teachers, and consideration given as to why this is an area requiring further research.

2.2 The Who, What and Why Concerning Generation Y Teachers

To begin, attention needs to be directed towards the actual concept of what 'Generation Y' is and how it can be defined. This is important because Generation Y

first-year teachers are the focus for this study. However, a degree of scrutiny needs to be applied as to whether or not such a label can be justified.

In recent times this generation has been given different names such as *Generation Y*, the *Millennials* and the *Net Generation*. It is interesting to note that this generation makes up 20% of the world's population. It is claimed that this generation was raised in the context of being the most child-centred generation in history (Reilly, 2012, p. 2, p. 6). Other claims about them are that as children they generally were loved, protected and encouraged to believe in themselves and all that they did (Keengwe & Georgina, 2013, p. 51). As a consequence, they are identified as confident, technologically advanced, possessing a sense of entitlement and as not fearing change but rather welcoming it (Reilly, 2012, p. 3, p. 9). The fact that they tend to be creative, innovative and generally want to get ahead in their careers in a short period of time was noted in a report about the changing nature of the teaching workforce (Williamson & Meyer-Looze, 2010, pp. 1-2). Also they expect to be praised more consistently (Richardson, 2011, p. 16), have higher levels of assertiveness and are expert multi-taskers (Richardson, 2011, p. 18). They believe that technology makes them more efficient and consequently they prefer to work smarter rather than harder (Reilly, 2012, p. 4). In addition, they are less likely to read and are more visual preferring YouTube-style videos that are short and easily accessible (Richardson, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, they learn by doing, are often forthright and admire people with innovative ideas rather than authority (Reilly, 2012, p. 5, p. 8).

In defining to whom the term 'Generation Y' refers, Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan and Russell (2012) use the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of Generation Y being those people born between the years 1982 and 2000, and their research presents a slightly different perspective regarding Generation Y. This perspective acknowledges that this generation has on occasion been characterised as being treated as special by their parents, growing up with so much choice that they regard this as a right, being pragmatic and rational with a strong career orientation, not respecting authority, having short attention spans, and being poor finishers who lack patience and persistence (Schuck et al., 2012, pp. 27-28). However, the point is made that when "each characteristic attributed to a particular generation is analysed in depth, the

picture that emerges is almost invariably complex and ambiguous” (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 34). What does become clear is that regardless of the generation, there are important personality traits that are common among the young and these include self-esteem, self-centredness and confidence (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 35). Hence, it is more appropriate to view people of all generations as being more narcissistic when they are young (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 34). Consequently, what I am asserting here is that it is not the focus on Generation Y that is important. Rather, the focus should be on the unique and specific characteristics of young teachers, including those people in Generation Y. As the teachers participating in this study were all born between 1982 and 2000, and consequently are part of the Generation Y age group, it is appropriate for my research to use this terminology when discussing the participants’ experiences as young first-year secondary school teachers.

In adding further to the development of a clear understanding of what is involved in being a part of Generation Y, the following points are made. Keengwe and Georgina (2013) commented that Generation Y expect immediacy in all that they do and in general are extremely independent, "blunt, highly expressive, looking for and expecting instant gratification, easily bored, team oriented, craving the spotlight and expecting to be rewarded for their efforts" (p. 52). Furthermore, McQueen (2011) explains in a guide written to assist people interacting with those aged from their mid-teens to early thirties that Generation Y were raised in a time when children were regarded as ‘special’, ‘unique’ and ‘wonderful’, and as a consequence they now exhibit high self-esteem and confidence because of “the constant encouragement they have received throughout their lives” (p. 45). Whether or not this occurred with other generations is not significant to this discussion. What is pertinent is that we accept that young teachers in their twenties can in many cases be described as ambitious, confident, self-focused, socially aware, tech-savvy, multi-taskers who have much in common with the attractive but misunderstood butterfly because they are a “beautiful and creative creature that is flexibly multitasking its way through life, leisure, school and work” (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 105). However, this has led to some labelling Generation Y as being “intellectually flighty” and “unable to sustain prolonged engagement” (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 105). The intention of my research has been to

shed light on the extent to which these characteristics can be attributed accurately to FYGY teachers, as they make their way in the world of schools.

Hence, it has been established that whilst caution needs to be applied when labelling young people, including the first-year teachers participating in this study, as 'Generation Y', it is appropriate to do so. This is because a sufficient amount of literature exists to justify the use of such a term, but it does need to be reiterated that it is being used merely as a label to describe a particular group of people who are currently between 17 and 35 years of age. This research, unlike other studies already completed, has focused deliberately on young first-year teachers, with each participant being aged between 21 and 30 years old.

2.3 The Experiences of First-Year Teachers

Eminent researchers (Halford, 1998; Renard, 2003; Anhorn, 2008; Jones and Youngs, 2012) in the field of early career teacher induction, support and retention, have reported that the first year of teaching frequently presents beginning teachers with a range of challenges and their experiences are often negative. This occurs because too much is expected of teaching graduates by school communities and too little support is provided to them by school systems. In this section, I review the relevant literature in this area.

Teaching is a profession that "eats its young" according to Halford (1998, p. 33) because first-year teachers get minimal support but are expected from their first day on the job to do the same tasks that veteran teachers complete, and as Anhorn (2008) argues, they must assume the same responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues (2008, p. 15). Furthermore, Jones and Youngs (2012) state: "from the onset, the novice teacher often faces the same duties and expectations as a veteran teacher but must simultaneously navigate the unfamiliar terrain of teaching without experience or practical knowledge to fall back on" (p. 9). As a consequence, this takes an emotional toll on beginning teachers and leads to premature burnout.

In addition, first-year teachers have to spend more hours searching for appropriate teaching resources, planning units and lessons, marking and grading student work

(Renard, 2003, p. 63) and this places enormous time pressures on them both professionally and personally. Furthermore, whilst full-time first-year teachers are dealing with this taxing and burdensome situation, they also have to demonstrate to their colleagues and supervisor/s that they are working towards meeting accreditation requirements and achieving specific levels of proficiency and professional competence. For example, in NSW DoE schools it is expected that teachers who are “employed full-time are expected to demonstrate the standards at Proficient Teacher by the end of the second year of their appointment” (NSW DoE *Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Procedures*, 2016, p. 5). Also, some first-year teachers have to move house for the first time (often to an unfamiliar rural and/or geographic location) when taking up their new teaching appointment and are therefore disconnected from friends, family and other support networks. Furthermore, teaching is not a profession that provides any ‘downtime’ to its employees. New teachers are expected to give much of themselves to the role and it is all the more challenging because what they do in their classroom is always ‘on display.’ As a result, they are constantly scrutinised by students, parents, supervisors and their more experienced colleagues, and hence there is never any time to take it easy - the job is characterised by a constant intensity. Hence the concept of ‘time off’ is not applicable for those beginning in this profession because there is always work to be done at school and at home (Renard, 2003, p. 63; Barnard, 2016, p. 16). Consequently, it comes as no surprise that the combination of these factors leads to a general sense of anxiety, as noted by Stevens, Parker and Burroughs (2007, p. 2), who found that teachers who exit the profession within their first seven years frequently cite stress and fatigue as reasons for leaving the classroom.

One of the few researchers who focused on the experiences of teachers specifically in their first year is Lang (2001). Her study involved studying seven first-year primary school teachers in New Zealand and was conducted through a survey that involved the teachers answering the following three questions at the end of their first year of teaching: ‘Has teaching started getting any easier for you yet? What things helped you survive? What things can you identify now, that you would have liked to have had included in your pre-service teacher education programme at university, that would have helped you survive?’ (Lang, 2001, p. 87). Lang (2001, p. 88) found that her first-

year teacher participants had difficulty coping with the long hours of work and maintaining the high energy levels required to do the job. She also reported that they went through several stages or phases, which in itself reveals another time construct, and Lang noted that the “survival” stage can last throughout the whole first year of teaching (Lang, 2001, p. 85). The findings of this small scale study are supported by McCormack and Thomas (2003, p. 126) whose research involved the use of questionnaires that were completed by 248 teacher education graduates in NSW. Interviews then were conducted in small focus groups with randomly selected participants. What these researchers focused on were the types of induction experiences that first-year teachers received (McCormack & Thomas, 2003, p. 128). Their participants expressed that there was a lack of ongoing support from school executives and they felt that as newly qualified teachers they were obliged and pressured to undertake too many responsibilities in their first year of teaching (McCormack & Thomas, 2003, p. 132). To remedy this, the authors argued for first-year teachers to be given a reduced teaching load and for professional support to be provided to them through quality induction programs, so they can successfully move through the survival stage (McCormack & Thomas, 2003, pp. 135-136).

Expanding on the notion of different stages experienced in the first year of teaching, Sullivan and Morrison (2014) cite Huberman (1989) to describe how across professions the early career phase is a time of discovery and exploration, but also one of survival (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 604). Bullough (2009) cites Ryan (1986) who discusses four emotion-laden stages that beginning teachers go through, with “fantasy”, “survival”, “mastery” and “impact” underscoring each particular developmental phase. He explains that the *fantasy* stage is characterised by “unrealistic optimism” with the novice teacher imagining what teaching will be like, with images of teaching being representative of the best teachers they ever had and “of being loved and confirmed by students” (Bullough, 2009, p. 38). First-year teachers often begin their careers in this stage. However, they quickly progress into the *survival* stage as they begin teaching, with discipline and management problems overwhelming them and they feel “profound vulnerability coupled with both fear and hope” but unfortunately vulnerability dominates the mood (Bullough, 2009, p. 36, p. 38). Then as the first-year

teacher progresses and they learn the craft of teaching, their self-confidence grows and they see that their actions have positive effects, which helps to build their resolve and they move into the *mastery* stages. However, in the first year of teaching many novices do not progress beyond the survival stage. Mastery usually only comes in the second or third year of teaching and after that, with increased experience and reflection on their teaching, they enter the *impact* stage. Since this is the case, it is important that our attention be turned to the fact that first-year teachers “often report that learning to teach is exhausting, emotionally and intellectually challenging” and the influence of the first year of teaching can be career-long (Bullough, 2009, pp. 39-40). Consequently, whilst we wish for our first-year teachers to experience “eudaimonia” as Bullough (2009, p. 35) calls it and which involves teachers being happy and flourishing in their roles, it is difficult for this ideal to be translated into a reality.

Clearly, the stages that first-year teachers move through are significant and have been researched quite extensively, but this study seeks to investigate whether these phases apply specifically to Generation Y teachers. Lang’s (2001) interviews with first-year teachers identified the struggles recent teaching graduates had in surviving that beginning year, with “tiredness, stress on personal and family relationships, and the lack of balance in their lives between work, domestic responsibilities, and leisure activities” being mentioned by the participants in her study (Lang, 2001, p. 85). This reveals how significantly work/life balance is impacted upon in the first year of teaching and highlights how and why the issue of time is likely to be important to FGY teachers.

The above studies indicate that a significant issue for early career teacher retention is the amount of work that teachers have to do in their first year of teaching and the lack of time available to get this work done. Furthermore, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that this work needs to be completed whilst they are still finding their feet as new professionals, and it has to be done within unrealistic timeframes that make no concessions for the beginning teachers’ lack of familiarity and experience with what they are expected to do. This has led to researchers of early career teacher retention arguing the case for schools to hold more realistic expectations of their beginning

teachers (Schuck et al., 2011, p. 15) because “newly-appointed teachers often are overwhelmed by workload and role complexity” (Schuck et al., 2011, p. 60). This issue was also considered from a teacher wellbeing perspective by McCallum and Price (2010) in a study that focused on the importance of keeping early career teachers physically, mentally and emotionally well. The authors argued that teaching is seen as a short-term career due to the stress and heavy workload that causes many beginning teachers to leave within their first five years (McCallum & Price, 2010, p. 21).

In light of this discussion of the challenges encountered by teachers in their first year of teaching, it is important to consider the specific experiences that FGY teachers have. This is because it needs to be ascertained whether they too are affected, and if so to what extent, by this issue of being overworked in their first year of teaching and receiving inadequate levels of support. Consequently, one of my main purposes in conducting this research has been to exclusively investigate the significance of this issue for FGY teachers.

2.4 The Importance of Induction and Mentoring

The participation and involvement of beginning teachers, and in particular those who are in their first year of teaching, in school-based induction programs and mentoring processes, has been considered by a range of international and Australian researchers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Burke, Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Louviere & Prescott, 2013; Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010; Plunkett & Dyson, 2011; Sullivan & Morrison, 2014). Consequently, I have included such research in this review.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) discuss research done in the United States on induction and mentoring support programs for beginning teachers and they make the point that one of the main factors underpinning the decision of beginning teachers to depart the profession is a “lack of adequate support from the school administration” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 202). They note that induction and mentoring support programs are important to both improve the performance of beginning teachers and to prevent the loss of human capital that occurs when teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 203). They then emphasise that in recent times there has been an

increase in both the number of beginning teachers and their rates of attrition, which has led to a degree of instability (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 204) but “induction for beginning teachers and teacher mentoring programs ... have a positive impact” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 225).

Australian research conducted by Burke et al. (2013) investigated the most important factors keeping teachers in the profession involved using Best-Worst Scaling of 258 early career teachers' responses to an online survey. The research uncovered similar results to Ingersoll and Strong (2011) regarding the importance of mentoring. It provided a strong recommendation that mentoring and staff induction programs be made available to beginning teachers (Burke et al., 2013, p. 266). However, this study did not focus specifically on Generation Y teachers and also considered teachers in their first five years of teaching. This raises the question of whether FYGY teachers also regard mentoring and induction programs as crucial, an important aspect of my research, which considers the lived experiences of FYGY teachers and the associated factors that have a positive and/or negative influence on these experiences. In NSW, there are three school sectors: Independent, Catholic and Government, with NSW Government schools being the largest. In the latter, all newly-appointed permanent teachers (regardless of age) are expected to be provided with an induction program and regular mentoring (NSW DoE *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy*, 2014). So it is worthwhile to consider how the support programs provided specifically to this study's FYGY teacher participants have impacted on both their professional and personal lives.

When teachers take up their first teaching appointment they enter a period of intense transition and mentors often play a significant part in assisting them through this process. Cumming-Potvin and MacCallum (2010, p. 308) state that “the aim of mentoring is to provide assistance during a transition period ... so that the mentee gains expertise, social learning and mastery over everyday practices” and at its basis, a mentoring program “involves developing trust and closeness.” My research examines, as an additional focus, the impact that mentors have in the transition process experienced by FYGY teachers. Furthermore, my research has examined the attributes and qualities of mentors who interact well with FYGY teachers and has considered the

mentoring practices that work best for them. In this regard, Coley (2009) points out that it is imperative that plans are developed for mentoring new teachers (p. 20) and he comments that “Generation Yers need face time ... and expect it” (p. 21). They are looking for supervisors who serve as a mentor and coach, and work best with managers who are “pleasant and easy to get along with, understanding and open-minded” (Coley, 2009, p. 21). This point is supported by Plunkett and Dyson (2011) who conducted an Australian study in which the majority of participants belonged to Generation Y and were beginning teachers in rural Victoria. They found that these teachers’ “understanding and concept of what leadership is ... did not relate to traditional styles of leadership centred on ‘the superior’ ... being in control” (p. 34). They valued leaders to whom they could relate, and who provided them with feedback, guidance and mentoring. Consequently, these studies indicate that FYGY teachers view mentoring and mentors somewhat differently from other early career teachers and they shed light on the extent to which various traits and practices exhibited by leaders and mentors are viewed as being desirable by FYGY teachers.

The research literature supports the notion that providing mentoring to first-year teachers is useful and productive, but it does need to be acknowledged that mentoring “can be a challenging endeavour requiring significant investments of time and energy” (Rowley, 1999, p. 20). Also, mentoring as a form of teaching is “emotionally loaded” and characterised by “delightful highs and distressing lows” (Bullough, 2009, p. 34). Furthermore, the mentoring role often is not well understood and role conflict and ambiguity have been linked to tension between the support and assessment responsibilities of mentors which “may produce confusion and uneasiness and heighten feelings of vulnerability for both mentors and mentees” (Bullough, 2009, p. 41). This is because mentors find themselves engaged in an “ongoing and emotionally taxing triage, responding as they can to what are often insistent and contradictory demands with too little time to do what they believe needs to be done” (Bullough, 2009, p. 41). Consequently, it is important that we appreciate that mentor-mentee relationships are inevitably complex and fragile and “challenging emotionally” (Bullough, 2009, p. 42) because it is not only first-year teachers who face the challenge of forming a new professional identity. Mentors also experience a transition that

involves “serious emotional work and labour, which profoundly affects personal well-being” (Bullough, 2009, p. 44). In NSW there is an expectation that first-year teachers receive mentoring support. My research unravels the complex interrelationships that exist between first-year participating teachers and their mentors and considers the effects, both positive and negative, that this coupling has in terms of its impact on the personal and professional lives of FYGY teachers.

Recent research undertaken in Australia by Adoniou (2014), examined what fourteen young teachers experienced through their first sixteen months of teaching and found that the first year “knocked the wind out of their sails” as they came to terms with “the overwhelming sense of responsibility and sheer exhaustion that fills every day” (p. 20). Added to this was the realisation for some of the participants that no one cared about their ideas. Adoniou (2014) goes on to argue that teacher employing authorities need to go beyond just inducting new teachers into the *system*, with school leaders, senior staff and colleagues purposefully asking young teachers: “What kind of teaching do you want to do?” (p. 20). This will prevent them from choosing to leave teaching “because they care too much to stay” (p. 20). This study considers the impact that current induction and mentoring practices and processes had on recent teaching graduates who entered permanent full-time employment within NSW state schools.

To sum up, the research literature supports the premise that the participation of beginning teachers in school-based induction programs and in mentoring processes is pivotal to ensuring their ongoing development and continuing success. However, the delivery of these programs and processes is often complex and variable. Consequently, a positive impact on the personal and professional lives of beginning teachers should not necessarily be assumed. Furthermore, the experiences specifically of FYGY teachers might not be the same as those experienced by previous generations of beginning teachers. My research investigates this situation further.

2.5 Organisational Factors Related to Schools

Providing guidance and support to beginning teachers, and specifically those who are in their first year of teaching, can often be problematic. This is due to the various

organisational contexts and structures that exist within individual schools. Each school is a separately functioning organisation that has its own workplace culture and context, and FGY teachers are immediately immersed in this when taking up their new appointment. Appreciating the nature and significance of these organisational factors is pertinent to the research that I have undertaken.

It has been established that beginning teachers face many significant challenges when they make the transition from pre-service teacher to the profession and this period is “characterised by feelings of stress and being overwhelmed” (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 604). This is an intense but also a remarkably complex process that involves the first-year teacher as an individual functioning within an often very complicated organisation. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) make the point that “hardly any phase in teacher careers has received more research attention than ... the first years as a beginning teacher” but much less attention has been given “to the fact that beginning teachers also become members of an organisation” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, pp. 105-106). They argue that it is the case that moving from teacher education to actual professional practice is so difficult for many newly qualified teachers that they experience what they call “praxis shock”, which refers to the first-year teachers’ confrontation with the realities and responsibilities of being a classroom teacher (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, p. 105). Their data revealed that beginning teachers were looking for self-affirmation but had to deal with vulnerability, as well as the highly visible nature of their job which has already been raised as an issue (Section 2.3). Furthermore, “there are often also meaningful events in teachers’ private lives that affect their feelings of professional competence” and they feel vulnerable because they “want to do a good job and heavily invest time and energy in their work” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, pp. 110-111).

The importance of organisational factors in the lives of early career teachers has been argued by Burke et al. (2013). This study investigated 31 factors that were significant for beginning teachers in regards to influencing their decision to remain in the profession and it ranked them according to relative importance. It is noteworthy that all of the factors appearing from third most important to ninth most important (i.e. *collegial support, professional collaboration, support received during the first year,*

executive support, staff culture, school climate and pedagogical support) reflected areas based on specific school environments and opportunities for collaboration and support (Burke et al., 2013, pp. 265-266).

Clearly, what can be extracted from this discussion of organisational factors is that the way that a novice teacher 'fits' into their specific organisational context when appointed to a school has serious ramifications in terms of retention and attrition. This suggests that the provision of a school workplace that promotes professional collegiality, collaboration and support is needed for teachers starting their careers. In fact, Burke et al. (2013) call for the establishment and continuing of programs that support beginning teachers, such as the NSW DoE Teacher Mentor program (p. 267). However, this program was discontinued at the end of 2013 and a new model of support was implemented from the start of 2014 with the rollout of the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) reforms. These reforms will be discussed in more detail later in Section 2.6 of this chapter.

Jones and Youngs (2012) acknowledge that the organisational context which beginning teachers experience in their first teaching assignment does play a role in their decisions to stay. How these teachers experience these conditions and the ways in which this translates into interpretations of their job environment are important, because they form the basis of their decisions about whether they should stay in teaching or leave (Jones & Youngs, 2012, p. 1). Jones and Youngs' research advances the notion that new teachers' emotional responses to their daily work are strongly related to their job perceptions and sense of self-efficacy. "Teachers who feel more efficacious in their daily work are likely to experience greater levels of satisfaction with their jobs and be more committed to their positions" (Jones & Youngs, 2012, p. 2). As a consequence, the likelihood of burnout is reduced and there is a clear association between positive emotional experiences and beginning teachers' plans to stay in teaching, with teacher emotions being linked to a commitment to stay (Jones & Youngs, 2012, p. 7). Therefore, the first year of teaching is a priority for study, as the link between the daily work experiences of FYGY teachers and the associated emotions and feelings that these generate are clearly connected to teacher commitment and retention.

Commencing work as a teacher is intense and complex, but it is well established that teachers work demanding and very long hours (Drago, 2001, p. 25). Furthermore, it is commonplace for teachers to experience physical, mental and emotional exhaustion and/or to be subject to constant self-examination and self-doubt (Nias, 1989, p. 205). My research explored the degree to which FYGY teachers are experiencing such feelings because it investigates how time impacts on their personal and professional lives. In addition, I have investigated whether the demanding and insistent nature of the occupation has created a situation where schoolwork intrudes into various aspects of teachers' wider lives, which consequently would impact on the other identities that participants have apart from being a teacher.

The role that emotions play in the lives of first-year teachers also needs consideration, because as Schutz and Pekron (2007) state, "the classroom is an emotional place" (p. 223) and "teaching tends to be an emotional profession" (p. 232). Bullough (2009) also comments that: "teaching has always been intensely emotional work" (p. 33). Furthermore, the emotional dimension of teachers' lives is so significant according to Gobby and Karnovsky (2015, p. 34) that future educators need to be equipped "with the knowledge and skills that they require to not only facilitate learning, but also to cope with the emotional dimension of their work" because teaching is "an all-engrossing emotional endeavour. The emotional labour of teaching is an unspoken given in teachers' daily work, as much as lesson planning, content knowledge and pedagogy ... Given this emotional maelstrom, it's unsurprising that teachers experience burnout". Consequently, first-year teachers enter a world where they are expected to invest so much of their selves into their work, and this means that their identities are continuously developing as a result of the experiences and emotions that they encounter within their specific school context. Furthermore, unpleasant emotions such as anger, stress and anxiety have been linked to teachers' decisions to drop out or experience burnout and these have contributed to high rates of teacher attrition (Schutz & Pekron, 2007, pp. 236-237). Developing a better understanding of the emotions experienced by FYGY teachers has been achieved through conducting this research, as I have thoroughly examined the ways in which these emotions are processed and dealt with by this specific group of teachers.

In summary, it is clear that the impact of specific organisational factors related to schools, along with associated beginning teacher emotional responses, are significant. The nature and importance of these factors and responses needs to be investigated when researching the personal and professional lives of FGY teachers.

2.6 The Significance of Time

The concept of time is significant for FGY teachers because in terms of their personal and professional lives, it can be considered to have an impact as a resource, an experience, a measure and as a process. Developing a better understanding of how FGY teachers as a specific group perceive, treat and value time is important, as the first year of teaching often presents them, as it has for previous generations of beginning teachers, with a range of challenges.

Many first-year teachers struggle when making the transition from student teacher to classroom practitioner, with time as a construct presenting them with numerous challenges (Halford, 1998; Renard, 2003). However, it needs to be ascertained if this is also the case for more recent teacher education graduates who are entering our classrooms as FGY teachers.

The issue of time as a construct will be dealt with at greater length in Chapter 3, but it is important that some of the issues surrounding time, and its impact on the lives of first-year teachers in general, are considered now because the literature indicates that early career teachers experience problems and concerns in relation to time (Halford, 1998; Renard, 2003.) This is the case because time is a precious resource that very often is lacking in the lives of these teachers. However, unfortunately due to their lack of experience, the problem is compounded by the fact that teaching tasks usually require them to invest greater amounts of time. Halford (1998) makes the point that “time is the fundamental resource for effective teacher support programs” (p. 35) because novice teachers cannot draw upon previous experience when completing the required teaching tasks and hence everything becomes more time consuming for them. Renard (2003, p. 63) takes this further when stating, “the things that new teachers find most problematic are the things that come with time” because new

teachers have to assume the same responsibilities and duties as seasoned professionals, and they are expected to carry out those duties with the same level of expertise and within the same time constraints. Consequently “new teachers ... spend more hours planning units and lessons, grading papers ... they often find themselves overwhelmed with work, both at school and at home ... yet we continue to ask them to do all of the ‘extras’ that veterans do” (Renard, 2003, p. 63). What Renard (2003) has advocated is that new teachers have their load lightened, to help them concentrate on their classroom teaching performance. In effect, “we must buy them the time they need to become the teachers we want them to be” (Renard, 2003, p. 64). She further argues that new teachers need to be gradually introduced to their full set of duties, with mentor and supervisor support, so that they are not overwhelmed. Also the teaching loads and work schedules of new teachers should be adjusted so they are set up for success rather than failure (Renard, 2003, p. 64).

The research literature indicates that often what is expected of teachers in their first year of teaching is very demanding. As a consequence, many education authorities that employ first-year teachers, like the NSW DoE, have begun to provide funding for the allocation of additional release time to newly-appointed teachers, and it is now widely accepted that first-year teachers are entitled to additional time off class. It is interesting to note that the teachers who participated in this research project were all first-year teachers employed in a permanent full-time capacity by the NSW DoE in 2014, so therefore they were the recipients of the latest initiatives generated by the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) reforms offering support to and providing additional release time for newly-appointed permanent teachers. These reforms mandated that from the start of 2014 all permanent beginning teachers appointed to NSW DoE schools would have reduced teaching loads across their first two years of teaching. This involved being provided with the equivalent of two hours per week of additional release time in their first year and one hour per week in their second year. Also, schools provided the equivalent of one hour per week of additional release time to an experienced teacher who offered dedicated mentoring support to the beginning teacher in their first year of teaching.

The discussion I have presented up to this point strongly suggests that first-year teachers have, in the past, found it very difficult to cope with the demanding workload and frequently had a sense of anxiety about their professional competence (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 7). Furthermore, it has been acknowledged by educational researchers and employing authorities that another complication for first-year teachers is that, in addition to navigating their way through an enormous workload, they also often have to demonstrate a specified level of efficiency and successfully complete accreditation requirements within the first 12 to 24 months on the job. For example, this is expected if they are employed in a full-time permanent capacity with the NSW DoE, which is the largest employer of beginning teachers in Australia.

This multi-layered and intersecting issue of time for beginning teachers also emerged out of the research conducted by Schuck et al. (2011). The *Retaining Effective Early Career Teachers in NSW Schools* study was commissioned on behalf of the NSW DoE and was a four and a half year research project that tracked a cohort of final year pre-service teacher education students through their experience of teaching from 2006 until 2010. It stated that “one of the difficulties most commonly reported by participants in this study was the amount of work they had to do in their first years of teaching in addition to finding their feet as new professionals ... schools need to be encouraged to set more realistic expectations of their early career teachers” (Schuck et al., 2011, p. 15). The recommendations made were based on evidence gathered through survey and interview, and it was evident that workload or the time and effort required to teach effectively was one of the ten most important factors influencing early career teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession, with the provision of a reduced teaching workload being seen as a significant factor influencing beginning teachers to stay in teaching (Schuck et al., 2011, pp. 8-9). Furthermore, so taxing was the first year of teaching that it was recommended that the process of accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers be carried out in the second year of teaching (Schuck et al., 2011, p. 16). (Please note that the NSW Institute of Teachers was later incorporated into the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and this organisation has most recently become the NSW Education Standards Authority). However, it does need to be stated that Schuck et al.’s study was conducted before the

implementation of the NSW DoE's *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) blueprint for educational reform and the associated 2014 *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy and Procedures* documents. The implementation of these policies has increased the amount of additional release time available to permanently appointed first-year teachers to two hours per week, with one hour per week of release also being provided to a dedicated mentor. In addition, the beginning teacher is also provided with one hour per week of additional release time in their second year of teaching.

Lang (2001) discussed how in New Zealand, a high proportion of teachers leave the service within the first five years of their careers and for beginning teachers, "how they survive the first year, if they do, can be a significant factor in decisions about remaining in the profession" (Lang, 2001, p. 86). Also Hudson, Beutel and Hudson (2009) noted in their study that the only teacher participant who had a satisfactory induction experience, was the one who had additional release time allocated to them because this allowed them to deal more effectively with their demanding workload. As a result, the authors of this study advocate that both mentors and mentees (beginning teachers) need to be given a reduced workload (Hudson, Beutel & Hudson, 2009, p. 60). This supports the findings of Anhorn (2008) and Halford (1998) who state time is a "hot commodity" for first-year teachers (Anhorn, 2008, p. 17) and "time is the fundamental resource for effective teacher support programs" (Halford, 1998, p. 35). Anhorn (2008) explains how the beginning teachers who participated in her study all commented on the issue of a lack of time and she stated that it would be beneficial if first-year teachers were given additional time to observe fellow teachers and discuss their teaching with their colleagues (Anhorn, 2008, p. 21).

Recent studies therefore have presented a strong case for FYGY teachers to be given additional release time, so they can cope with the demanding nature of their specific occupational context when they commence teaching. This time allocation has occurred in the last few years with initiatives such as the NSW DoE's *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) reforms arising from research indicating that workload was a significant reason contributing to the early resignation of beginning teachers (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 5).

It is therefore of interest to understand what FYGY teachers are currently experiencing in relation to time, and the effect that these experiences are having on their professional and personal lives. Are the additional resources, like the provision of more time off class, having a beneficial impact on the lives of FYGY teachers? My research considered if the lived experiences of FYGY teachers are changing and possibly improving with the implementation of initiatives such as the provision of additional release time. However, this study goes beyond considering time merely as a resource. It also considers the significance of time in terms of it being an experience, a measure and a process. This has been done so that a clearer picture can be ascertained of the challenges that young secondary school teachers currently encounter in their first year of teaching.

2.7 Conclusion

What can be concluded from this review of relevant academic and professional literature is that the considerable time pressures placed upon early career teachers impacted on both their professional and personal lives, causing many to feel negative and reluctant about committing to a long-term career in teaching. However, what needs to be asked now is: Does this situation still exist and is it the case for FYGY teachers? Is time still such a significant issue in the personal and professional lives of FYGY teachers, particularly in NSW where time release is now available? Asking these types of questions is important because as Lang (2001, p. 96) reiterates, the voices of beginning teachers in their first year are significant and need to be heard so that we have a more informed understanding of their experiences and needs.

In light of recent projections that large numbers of FYGY teachers will enter the profession over the next decade, it is vital that we retain them and encourage their commitment to a long-term teaching career. This is because as Keengwe and Georgina (2013) point out, they are a very promising generation, as “they want to learn, they accept and appreciate diversity; they are team-oriented; they are confident in who they are; they believe in giving to others; and they believe that life is always improving” (p. 57). Consequently, as teachers they have much to offer and contribute towards supporting and bolstering the provision of quality educational experiences for

the children and teenagers of today. However, bringing this aspiration to fruition is made more complicated because as McQueen (2008) presented in a report delivered at an Australian Secondary Principals' Conference, Generation Y teachers do not necessarily value career loyalty and longevity in the same way as previous generations of teachers have (p. 7). In addition, Plunkett and Dyson (2011) found in the research they conducted with Generation Y beginning teachers that the nature of teacher employment was “impacting on the decisions to remain in the profession” (p. 43) and causing many to not view teaching as a long-term career. They also unreservedly acknowledged that: “losing new teachers early in their career is neither desirable nor sustainable” (Plunkett & Dyson, 2011, p43).

Thus, regardless of the underlying reasons, career longevity does not appear to characterise FYGY teachers and the circumstances surrounding this need to be better understood because it has serious implications for the future of the Australian teaching profession, with a large number of impending retirements likely to occur in the next ten to fifteen years. As a consequence, the experiences of FYGY teachers in relation to time need to be better understood, which is the primary aim of the research that I have undertaken here. To facilitate the exploration of this phenomenon an interpretive qualitative research framework was adopted and this will now be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

One key idea arising from the literature review is that teachers who are part of Generation Y have characteristics typically associated with young people in general. Another key point is that the first year of teaching is the most challenging because quite often too much is expected of beginning teachers and not enough support is provided. However, offering mentoring and induction programs has proven to be beneficial. Furthermore, the impact that time has on the lives of FYGY teachers is significant in a number of different ways.

My research was guided by the following questions:

- 1) What do young first-year teachers think, feel and experience as they begin their teaching journey?
- 2) What can be done in terms of their unique characteristics to assist them as they negotiate their new career path?

When considering these questions, time as a construct features prominently. This is because it acts as a process and impacts on beginning teachers, through being a resource, serving as a measure, and framing their perceptions of the first year of teaching. Therefore, time became the analytic framework which enabled these questions to be investigated. The study's participants in their interviews discussed the importance and effect of being given additional release time in the first year of teaching, as well as how and why the passage and experience of time, influenced their personal and professional views towards their new careers as secondary school educators.

3.2 Theoretical Position

In this section I consider the theoretical basis and position of my research project. In doing so, the approach taken in this study is described and discussed with reference made to the paradigms embraced and theory applied. Also, the different perspectives of time are considered, along with the notion of identity in relation to FYGY teachers.

The research undertaken was qualitative, interpretive and subjective in nature (Opie, 2004). The study was conducted in the field and this allowed for a holistic overview to be gained from the inside, with the intention to identify specific issues or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6) related to what it is that young first-year teachers encounter when managing their day-to-day lives in the period of their first appointment. By gathering qualitative data, I was able to put emphasis on their lived experience and deduce the significant meanings (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) that FYGY teachers placed on events, processes and structures that they encountered in their personal and professional lives.

At this point, I note the work of Heshusius (1994) in regard to the management of subjectivity and objectivity. He argues that we need to turn toward a “participatory mode of consciousness” (Heshusius, 1994, p. 15) because a participatory mode of consciousness provides the “ability to temporarily let go of all preoccupation with self and move into a state of complete attention” (Heshusius, 1994, p. 17). Furthermore, participatory consciousness “reflects a holistic epistemology that replaces the traditional relation between ‘truth’ and ‘interpretation’ in which the idea of truth antedates the idea of interpretation” (Heshusius, 1994, p. 18). Rather the two can merge into “a larger and more complex reality in which reality is seen in ways invisible before” (Heshusius, 1994, p. 18), and this allows one to successfully study the world itself. It is the world of FYGY teachers that has been given due and full attention through this research project.

The paradigm embraced and which characterises my epistemology is that of the rationalist’s view of knowledge as being based on experience and insight that is essentially of a personal nature (Opie, 2004, p. 13). The perceptions of each of the individual teachers who participated in the study were explored in relation to what they experienced in their first year of teaching and ‘constructivism’ was applied, because in this study I worked collaboratively with the participants to create meaning and this came “into existence in and out of ... engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). In essence meaning was “not discovered, but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9) and this research involved constructing and interpreting accounts of participants’ subjective experience and pursuing general understandings of

phenomena (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 585). Furthermore, the intention was not to provide one or more definitive answers but rather to open up possibilities for new questions and ways of thinking (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 585).

Theories of Situated Learning underpinned this study. Learning as a concept involves its participants in undergoing various processes. Lave and Wenger (1991) propose that learning is a process of participation in communities of practice and the mastery of knowledge and skill assists newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As a consequence, notions of identity are tied to participatory engagement in communities and “people construct professional identities in relation to context and experience and in relation to one another” (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 37). What is being argued here is that the process involved in becoming a full participant in a school teaching context starts in the first year of teaching and with it comes the process of identity formation. The stories that FYGY teachers tell are powerful and highly representative of their experiences. As a consequence, their narratives convey important ideas (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 34) in regard to their needs and vulnerabilities because they frame human experience (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 37).

Time is a crucial explicative factor for many of the most influential learning theories which have emerged since the last century and almost all of the approaches that have dealt with educational phenomena have incorporated time as a key issue (Barbera & Clara, 2014, p. 105). Consequently, in completing this research, I considered time as a construct for its value as an analytic framework.

There are three dominant temporal perspectives regarding time: *clock time*, *socially constructed time* and *virtual time* (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 237). According to Duncheon and Tierney (2013), ‘clock time’ relates to time being viewed as a universal, measurable construct dictated by the clock. ‘Socially constructed time’ recognises that people may not interpret time in uniform ways and perceptions of time will vary depending upon various sociocultural processes (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 237). ‘Virtual time’ recognises that the recent proliferation of information and communication technologies and their integration into numerous aspects of daily life

has transformed the way people experience and make sense of time (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 237). This last construct of time appears particularly relevant to the lives of Generation Y teachers, as they are more likely to adopt and use a range of information and communication technologies in their professional and personal lives. I expand on this below.

With the proliferation of mobile learning, time is now seen as malleable. This is because mobile devices and technologies "are eroding established notions of time" (Traxler, 2009, p. 7) and whereas previously our social and business relations had to be organised and synchronised by absolute clock time, we can now renegotiate meetings and events on-the-fly (Traxler, 2009, p. 7). In addition, mobile learning has the potential to transcend spatial and temporal restrictions and enable the individual to be more flexible with fixed notions of linear time being softened and more easily negotiated (Kearney, Schuck, Burden & Aubusson, 2012, p. 4; Schuck, Kearney & Burden, 2016, p. 13). This situation has created a new temporal paradigm of virtual time (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 252) which is particularly relevant to my study, as the participants were teachers who were part of the Generation Y demographic, and they are the most likely group to be adopting, accessing and utilising mobile devices and technologies in their personal and professional lives. As Royle, Stager and Traxler (2014) have noted, current mobile technology is popular ... is pervasive and ubiquitous ... is robust, reliable and cheap, and meanwhile both social and personal" (p. 31). Thus the extent to which these young teachers (who are digital natives living lives infused by technologies) view and use time differently from their older school colleagues, as well as their general perceptions of and attitudes towards time, are highly relevant for this study. As Generation Y is often immersed in digital technology, they may think about punctuality, time management and multitasking in ways that vastly differ for older teachers. A 'redefinition' of time as a construct has been ushered in with the new temporal paradigm of virtual time (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 263). I have taken this into account in this research, because "increasing tension between the linear structure of clock time and the absence of temporal structure created by ICTs" (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013, p. 264) is now prevalent in contemporary society. How these tensions regarding time are navigated by young teachers is highly pertinent, as

this could impact on both the nature and quality of their interactions with older colleagues. For example, deadlines are very much a part of the work that teachers do and teaching programs, class reports, marking allocations and assessment schedules come with set timeframes for completion. Therefore, a study investigating the construct of time for FYGY teachers should provide valuable information on how these teachers work in a system where time is generally perceived in different ways.

A theoretical understanding of time can be further developed by considering the different perspectives of time that exist. Elbaz (1983) noted that teachers have two perspectives of time. The first perspective is time “as a commodity, almost a form of currency” (Elbaz, 1983, p. 125) that needs to be well spent with as many learning activities crowded into the available time as possible. The second perspective of time does not transform it into a commodity, but rather views it “as a kind of setting or frame within which certain kinds of interactions between persons take place” (Elbaz, 1983, p. 126). For example, with the first perspective, the view would be that if a teacher is to get to know the students in his or her class better, then they must spend a significant amount of time together. In contrast, the second perspective would suggest that this same teacher would not necessarily get to know their students better by simply spending more time with them. Rather this would be dependent upon the nature and quality of interactions that occurred between them. These two perspectives of time - time as a commodity and time as a setting - have both been taken into consideration when analysing the data collected in this study and when drawing conclusions concerning how time impacts on the personal and professional lives of FYGY teachers. However, I would argue that an extra dimension can be added which involves viewing time as a process that provides opportunities and supports growth for FYGY teachers to develop their professional and personal identities. Time is an important resource for FYGY teachers and it provides them with a frame or location to operate within, but time also acts as a process because it has the capacity to bring about development and change in regard to the lives lived by FYGY teachers.

Further discussion regarding the concept of identity is appropriate at this point. Identity “speaks to how others think about us, the *me*, as well as how we think about ourselves, the *I*” (Falk, 2009, p. 71). However, it must be appreciated that “there are

layers of separate identities - individual, social and societal ... thus our identity can be defined as something that is always *situated* in the immediate realities of the physical and socio-cultural world” (Falk, 2009, p. 72). FYGY teachers are young people who have been recently educated at school and university, and when they are in their twenties they find themselves propelled into teaching contexts that harbour much uncertainty and involve them in demonstrating specific attitudes, ways of relating to others and ways of presenting the self and hence “identity-making takes centre stage as young people strive to manage these complexities” (Stokes & Wyn, 2009, p. 42). Reilly (2012) asserts that Generation Y understand that it is important to have a balance in life and “they are not willing to sacrifice their lives for work” (p. 3). Thus they feel strongly that they must have “time for friendship, relationships, leisure and enjoying life in the present” (Stokes & Wyn, 2009, p. 43) and this is fundamental to their identity. However, as previously argued in Section 2.3, the first year of teaching is very demanding in terms of time and workload complexity. This therefore is a source of potential tension for FYGY teachers as they try to find an appropriate work/life balance, and again highlights the impact that time has on their lives.

To further expand this discussion of identity, Schutz and Pekron (2007) view teacher identity as an “overarching construct including beliefs, goals and standards ... we think of identity as the ways teachers perceive themselves” (p. 226). Furthermore, “what teachers know of themselves, their perception of the characteristics and nature of the teaching profession, and their beliefs about their roles are all interrelated in forming teacher identity ... how teachers view themselves in their professional role influences their beliefs about pedagogy, how they portray themselves, and it guides their actions and emotional experiences” (Schutz & Pekron, 2007, p. 227). Consequently, teacher identity and emotions are inevitably related to each other because teacher identity is often conveyed and expressed through emotions. This appears particularly relevant in the first year of teaching as young teachers develop their identities through the interpretation of their experiences within their specific school context. Thus these teachers’ identities not only influence their actions and emotions, but also their professional identity formation (Schutz & Pekron, 2007, p. 227). This connection between emotions and identity needs to be understood from the perspective of FYGY

teachers, and my research attempts to unravel the intricate complexities that exist in this regard.

The notion of identity can be taken a step further when we view FYGY teachers' participation in the social practice of a school community as an evolving form of membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). This is because they gain the required teaching knowledge and skills whilst participating on the periphery as a beginning teacher, but as the first year progresses the development of their knowledgeable skilled identities (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 55) occurs in practice whilst situated both inside and outside of the classroom and staffroom. However, this is inherently problematic because as newcomers become more experienced there is "conflict between the forces that support processes of learning and those that work against them" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57). Veteran teachers can be of great help to first-year teachers with useful guidance often being provided, but they can also be a hindrance by being overly critical or cynical. How this affects FYGY teacher identity and motivation can best be explored through the sharing of personal narratives which provide the opportunity for participants to "make the culture of practice theirs" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95). Participation at multiple levels is entailed in membership in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98) and it is by examining both the professional and personal lives of FYGY teachers that the implications of this membership can be understood in terms of their identity formation. FYGY teachers must grapple with the question of what it means to be a teacher at school, at home and in the wider community. How do they establish and maintain their professional identities when situated in the first year of teaching and how does this impact on the lives they live outside of school? Furthermore, the complex issue of time demands so much from them that it impacts on all aspects of their professional and personal lives. In the first year of teaching, the newcomer is thrust into an extremely demanding role as a classroom practitioner and experiences dramatic changes in terms of knowledge, skills and discourse. In addition, FYGY teachers develop their identities as young professionals whilst being newcomers to the community of practice. In the process they contribute to change and evolution within the school, and in due course become members of the teaching community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 122).

Another layer of complexity is added when considering the later work of Wenger (1998) who discusses how workers organise their lives with their immediate colleagues to get their jobs done. In doing so, workers develop or preserve a sense of themselves that they can live with while fulfilling the requirements of their employer. They create a practice to do what needs to be done (Wenger, 1998, p. 6). However, teaching is different to other occupations in that it is commonly associated with a sense of vocation, which permeates both the practitioner's professional and personal life, and identity formation takes place within this context. If we are to consider the work that FYGY teachers do in their first year of teaching, as well as the learning that they experience, as being characterised by the notion of legitimate peripheral participation, then it is necessary to consider how these FYGY teachers change in the way they participate in their specific community of practice and how this leads to identity transformation (Wenger, 1998, p. 11). What teachers learn in their first year of teaching, when they are newcomers going through a process of inclusion, involves the evolution of practices and the development and transformation of identities (Wenger, 1998, p. 13).

It is interesting to note that Cumming-Potvin and MacCallum (2010) also used situated learning theory to underpin their research on intergenerational mentoring practice because in practical terms it offered "explanations about how social interactions played out" (p. 316). Situated learning theory, which is influenced by socio-cultural theory, has been drawn on to underpin my research because it provides a framework to discuss what FYGY teachers experience when they start their careers. It serves in effect as an entry point for the researcher to develop understanding of the social and situational aspects of learning, and how this is done through "the concept of community of practice" (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010, p. 310).

By using situated learning theory as a framework to position the research I have undertaken, it has been possible to conceptualise how the first year of teaching may lead to full participation in a community of practice. Furthermore, the tensions related to time that arise from young full-time classroom practitioners' experiences when commencing their careers are explored in this study, along with the way that these tensions impact FYGY teacher identity.

3.3 Research Methodology

This section considers the research methodology that was applied when undertaking my research project and the reasons for using it. Subsequently, I justify the use of narrative inquiry through discussion of the relevant literature. Also, some potential researcher and participant benefits are explained.

Narrative as a research methodology has become an increasingly popular method of inquiry because in an academic context it involves the researcher as a storyteller (Holley & Colyar, 2009, p. 680). The aim of this research is to understand and represent the experience of FYGY teachers, where experience is defined as a storied phenomenon and narrative research is a methodology that allows for inquiring into storied experiences. "Lives are lived, told, retold and relived in storied ways on storied landscapes" (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009, p. 598). In addition, Noddings and Witherell (1991) state that we learn from stories and more importantly they allow us to come to understand ourselves and others. Stories are tools of enchantment that can be used to explain phenomena (1991, p. 279). Furthermore, narratives create explanatory frameworks and illuminate the particular experiences of individuals (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 37). As a consequence, I argue that the best way to explore the lives lived by FYGY teachers is by using narrative inquiry because when their stories are lived, shared and told, we have the means to understand their experience. Narrative research focuses on stories told by individuals about their lives and involves a 're-storying' process with the researcher seeking to understand the lived experience of an individual or small group (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 468). In my research project it has been applied to understand the lived experiences of participating FYGY teachers.

Narrative researchers gather descriptions of actions and events as 'data' that are then used to generate stories. These stories explore "individuals' understandings of their experience ... to help them make sense of their lives" (McCormack, 2004, p. 220). Furthermore, narrative research is "designed to understand the perspective of the storyteller in the context of his or her life" and its intention is "to capture individual representations of phenomena that are event and experience based" (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 469). Therefore, a narrative inquiry approach is suited to

researching the lives lived by FYGY teachers because their stories in effect facilitate a “way of knowing” and the data collected can be “framed” and “rendered” through an analytical process that is “artistic as well as rigorous” (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 577).

To fully appreciate what FYGY teachers experience in regard to the construct of time, it is important to carefully consider the stories they tell. Furthermore, what must be examined are “the narrative fragments and storied moments shared by those participating in the study and reflect upon the narrative unities and discontinuities” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). The narratives shared by the FYGY teachers in my study delve into time related issues that are of concern to them. Their narratives thus reveal both the individual and the collective aspects of experience, because the young teachers’ stories act not only as a mirror that reflects what they are experiencing but also as a window (McCormack, 2004, p. 233) that provides the means to observe, view and better understand what it is that they are experiencing.

Similarities exist between writers who compose works of literature and those who engage in narrative research. It is important to note that narrative research typically has the basic elements found in novels with the main characters often experiencing “epiphanies” (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 470). Furthermore, the central ideas of narrative - plot, character, scene, place, time and point-of-view feature prominently in this methodological approach, with the focus being on how the participants’ contexts make a difference (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 26-27). Also, literary texts are often multi-layered. Like authors, narrative inquirers must make themselves aware of the many layered narratives at work in their inquiry space and imagine narrative intersections, as well as anticipate possible narrative threads emerging (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 70). There is a reflexive relationship at work in the construction of narratives of experience, with the connection of living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 71). What this means for my research, is that there was a need to acknowledge the inherent complexity of the lives of FYGY teachers. They are adults who have lived through childhood, the teenage years, as well as the education process; having studied in primary schools, high schools and universities at a particular point in time and it is in this context that they are situated as they embark on their teaching careers. What they

experience is a complex and often contradictory workplace that can at times be friendly or hostile, creative or critical, structured or chaotic, nurturing or unsupportive, flexible or rigid and kind or harsh. How the FGY teachers navigated this unpredictable landscape and the impact it had on their professional and personal lives is reflected in the stories they shared.

A benefit for the study participants was that the actual process of narrative inquiry may have helped them to experience positive growth and transformation and to “make sense of life as lived” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 78). Consequently, it is possible that the FGY teachers who participated through the telling of their own stories, were able to better see and understand themselves and their world, and to make better sense of self and experiences over time (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 469). Furthermore, it has proven not only to be cathartic and liberating for those participating in narrative inquiry to tell their stories, but they also continue to discover and “come closer to wisdom” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280) as they go through the process of telling and sharing their stories. The young teachers participating in the research I conducted were given the opportunity to tell and share their stories and, like other participants in studies that have used narrative inquiry, this possibly assisted them to “construct their own understandings of their profession” (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 38).

Stories can be powerful research tools. They “provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280). Furthermore, narrative research and inquiry provides the “best qualitative approach for capturing detailed stories of life experiences” (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 470) and it greatly helps to improve understanding and make meaning out of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 80). Thus since it is the case that everyone has a voice and therefore a story to tell, it was logical for the narrative inquiry methodology to be employed in this research project. In fact, it can be argued that teachers are natural storytellers by virtue of what they do each day in their classrooms and FGY teachers deserve to be given the opportunity to voice their unique stories. In addition, it is important to note that the concept of narrative is viewed as powerful by Generation Y because as McQueen (2008, p. 8) convincingly argued, a story can take

an idea or principle and put it into the context of human experience. This notion can therefore be applied to the FYGY teachers participating in my study, as they were given the opportunity to contextualise their own lived experiences when reflecting on the narratives that they shared. Furthermore, as has already been pointed out, the issue of time and the importance of work/life balance features prominently in the lives of FYGY teachers, so providing them the prospect of giving their storied experiences a voice was not only worthwhile but also very necessary.

To sum up, the use of a methodology that incorporates narrative inquiry was viewed by the researcher as highly appropriate, as it encompasses a range of features that have helped me to achieve the aims and objectives of the study that I have undertaken. In addition, in a number of varying ways this research has proven beneficial for all involved.

3.4 Research Design

In this section, I elaborate on the research design adopted in this study. I discuss how interviews were used to collect the relevant data from the FYGY teacher participants. Also, the role played by narrative inquiry and the ways in which it was supported through the use of visual metaphors are explained.

Narrative inquiry is a way of “documenting the human experience” (Holley & Colyar, 2009, p. 680) as well as a “a form of living” which “is embedded in the idea of retelling stories and reliving lives” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 89). This makes it a suitable fit for my research, which has involved an exploration of how time impacts on the professional and personal lives of FYGY teachers. In addition, by analysing the stories of these young full-time secondary school teachers it is then possible to “speculate on what might be changed and with what effect” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280) so that their lives and what they experience in their first year on the job can be better understood, and can supplement the knowledge already established concerning FYGY teachers.

Narrative inquiry supports the development of the relationship between researcher and participant (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009, p. 599). This relationship was fundamental

to ensuring the success of my research project. Through conducting three separate lengthy interviews with FGY teachers, a strong supportive bond formed, with what was told, as well as the meaning of what was told, being shaped by the relationship (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 94). Furthermore, in conducting the three interviews in March/April, June/July and September/October the participating FGY teachers were given the opportunity to share, vent and voice what they were experiencing in relation to time at three different points in the year. By allowing them to tell their stories and listening to the narratives that they shared, they were given “a powerful sign of regard - of caring” which goes to the core of why we teach, learn and research, that being “to improve the human condition” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280).

As already mentioned, to facilitate the research process, the data were gathered through the use of interviews with a self-selecting group of FGY teachers (how they were self-selecting will be explained later.) I was in effect the instrument of data collection and was solely responsible for conducting all of the interviews and transcribing them. The interviews were recorded using an unobtrusive audio recorder and they were stored digitally for future reference. I enlisted the use of photographs as stimulus material in the interviews and encouraged participants to use these photographs to elicit visual metaphors about their experiences. Visual metaphors can serve as a powerful tool to explain and interpret, as well as provide insights into the lived experiences (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 470) of research participants. Visual metaphors help to clarify our understanding of individual experiences by “making the abstract concrete and accessible” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 279) and they also have proved to be helpful in the creation of narrative form (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 163).

The participating FGY teachers were invited to choose an appropriate visual metaphor from a set of photographs (see Appendix 2) that I provided. The table below summarises what each of the images depicted (Table 1).

Table 1: Visual Metaphors

Image Number	Description
Image 1	A sunrise or sunset over an expanse of water.
Image 2	A person successfully climbing a snowy mountain.
Image 3	A person walking a tightrope or railing.
Image 4	The pages of a book folded to form a heart shape.
Image 5	A path splitting off into two directions thus forming a crossroads.
Image 6	A person studying a complex textbook.

These images were discussed in relation to how they reflected the teachers' current experiences in relation to time at various points within the first year of teaching. The visual metaphors became the stimuli for narratives that were "powerful in providing insights into the lived experiences" (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 468) of the FYGY teachers.

When choosing the images for the research, more neutral images that were not too obvious or clichéd were chosen. Furthermore, the images could be perceived as being positive or negative, depending on the viewer's perspective. They were used as focal points in the interviews as each teacher was asked to relate to those images that were most relevant at a particular point in time. So these symbolic visual images had an important research purpose, because they ensured that the "unifying themes" (Coulter & Smith, 2009 p. 585) that emerged in the data analysis process were carefully tied to the concrete details that made up the everyday lives lived by newly-appointed FYGY teachers.

As suggested by other narrative researchers like McCormack (2004, p. 233), the participants were involved in the interpretive process because at each stage of interviewing, the participating FYGY teachers were offered the opportunity to engage in member checking the transcribed interviews, on a voluntary basis. More than half of the participants consistently member checked each of their interviews. Also, the participants were invited in subsequent conversational interviews to comment on the

storied accounts that they had previously shared. This process further served to enrich the narratives composed and ensured that the data collected accurately reflected the story that its teller wanted to relay. Furthermore, a strong relationship between researcher and participant was built on the foundation of honesty, with a clear sense of trust cultivated through the data collection process.

The following figure summarises the data collection and research design process applied when conducting this study (Figure 1).

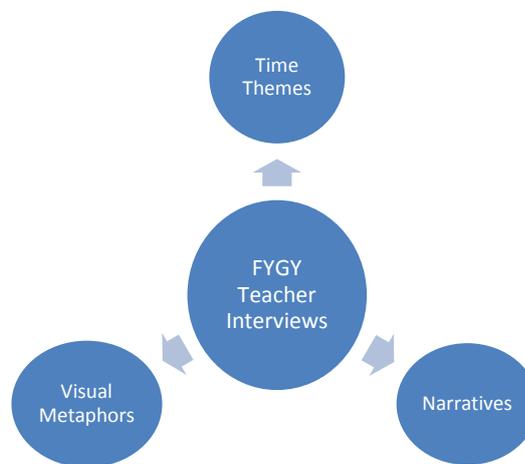


Figure 1: Data Collection and Research Design Process

3.5 Participants

Number and Criteria for Selection

There were ten FYGY teachers recruited to participate in this research project. The following criteria/requirements for selection were applied:

- 1) Participant had to be part of the Generation Y demographic (i.e. born between 1982 and 2000).
- 2) Participant had to be commencing their first year of employment as a teacher in a permanent full-time capacity.

The participants were self-selecting in that they were asked to volunteer to be a part of the project. Having ten FYGY teachers participate made the study viable and manageable, and still provided sufficient scope for the research questions to be adequately addressed.

Process of Recruitment

It was originally intended that I would recruit the participants for this research project from the final year teacher education student cohorts at a number of universities based in Sydney, but it soon became evident that this would not be a feasible way to recruit potential participants. Late in 2013 academic staff at several universities in NSW were asked to share information about the study and my contact details with their students. In addition to the University of Technology Sydney, the following universities were contacted: Western Sydney University, the University of NSW, the University of Sydney and Macquarie University. Whilst most lecturers were cooperative and passed the relevant information/details on to their students, there was extremely low interest generated with only a very small number of students expressing a desire to participate in the study. Of the three who did volunteer, none were suitable as participants because they had not been appointed to full-time permanent teaching positions. It became clear that I needed to speak directly with potential candidates, so that the benefits of participating could be explained and any questions could be addressed. Consequently, other means and opportunities for participant recruitment were undertaken. Fortunately, these proved to be successful and they are outlined below.

Firstly, eight participants were recruited from a group of NSW DoE Teacher Scholarship and Aboriginal Employment Scholarship recipients who attended a Networking and Orientation Day on Thursday 23 January 2014. These participants were required to serve out a bonded period of three years of service at their appointed schools and prior to commencing their new positions, they attended a workshop I delivered on New Teacher Induction Processes and Procedures. After the session, they were invited to express interest in participating in the study. Secondly, one participant was recruited from a NSW Teachers Federation Beginning Teachers' Conference that was

held on Saturday 22 March 2014. At this conference I presented a seminar on Planning/Programming and Classroom Management, and on its completion participants were invited to express an interest in participating in my study. The final participant was recruited from the existing network that I had established through my experience working as a teacher mentor for the NSW DoE. However, for ethical reasons, only one teacher met the criteria of not currently being mentored by me nor working at a school that I was connected with, and so this individual was invited to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling was used as the subjects for this research were selected on the basis of their suitability. Consequently, the participant group were relatively homogenous and representative of the sorts of young teachers coming through universities and being employed to work in secondary schools. All who qualified were invited to participate in the study. They were aged between 21 years and 30 years at the beginning of the research project and all were permanently employed with the NSW DoE. As such, they had access to the provision of targeted support through such initiatives as the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (NSW DoE, 2013) additional release time which is provided to all first year permanent full-time teachers. None of the participants had previously been employed as teachers, having just left university a few months before. However, some of the FYGY participants did work in a very limited capacity as day-to-day casual teachers at the end of the previous year (i.e. in late November and early December 2013) after they had completed their university studies, but before they commenced their first year of full-time teaching at the start of 2014. Regardless, none were engaged in completing any type of sustained teaching duties or roles before becoming part of this research project (i.e. they were not involved in lesson planning, unit programming, assessing student work, reporting on student progress etc.)

Participant Profiles

The participants reflected the cultural diversity of Australian society with two being from a non-English speaking background, one being Aboriginal, and the remainder having an Anglo/European heritage. In terms of gender, there were three male

participants and seven female participants which is a ratio similar to the wider population of teachers working for the NSW DoE, with currently 26% of teachers being male and 74% of teachers being female (NSW DoE Teaching Workforce Supply and Demand Report, 2015, p. 7).

The participants' schools were located in metropolitan and non-metropolitan sites throughout NSW and all were working in state education institutions. Some of the participants were employed in comprehensive high schools whilst others were working in single-sex schools. None were teaching in remote or rural locations. The participants were teaching a range of subjects with two teaching Science, two teaching Mathematics, five teaching English and one teaching Technology (Industrial Arts).

The specific details concerning each FYGY teacher are supplied in the table below (Table 2), along with further information about the individual contexts of each participant. Pseudonyms are provided for each teacher.

Table 2: Participant Details

Participant	Age	Teaching Subject Area	Appointment Type	School Location	Recruited Through
Amy	23	English	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation
Cory	29	Science	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney South Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation
Darren	22	English	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation
Nelly	26	Industrial Technology	Aboriginal Employment Scholarship	Town Outside Newcastle	Orientation Day Presentation
Kendall	23	English	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney North Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation
Nicole	23	Mathematics	Teacher Education Scholarship	Suburb in Newcastle	Orientation Day Presentation
Mario	26	Mathematics	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney South Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation
Emily	23	English	Targeted Graduate	Sydney North Western Suburbs	Known Previously
Louise	30	Science	Targeted Graduate	Sydney Western Suburbs	Beginning Teacher Conference
April	21	English	Teacher Education Scholarship	Sydney South Western Suburbs	Orientation Day Presentation

Amy was working in a Year 7-10 secondary comprehensive school. She had been given a permanent appointment but initially was occupying an 'above establishment'

position at her school. This meant that initially there was no existing position for her at the school and so she was given half of a fixed teaching load and the remainder of her allocated teaching periods were made up of casual relief which involved taking classes of absent colleagues. However, at the end of Term 2 and before her second interview this teacher was allocated a full teaching load in her subject area. She previously had completed an Honours degree in Education.

Cory was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. He had been given a permanent appointment and was teaching within his subject area, but he was under load which meant that he had not been given his full allocation of teaching periods and as a result was required to do some casual relief periods when required. He was not teaching any senior classes. Cory had another career prior to entering teaching.

Darren was working in a boys' only Year 7-12 secondary school and had been given a permanent appointment. He was teaching a full load within his subject area and was not currently teaching any senior classes.

Nelly was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. She had been given a permanent appointment but she too was currently occupying an 'above establishment' position. However, in this case she was replacing a teacher who had taken extended leave for the year. She was teaching mostly within her subject area but was also assigned to teach one class outside of her faculty, a Year 11 Applied Mathematics class. She was underload, so was required to take some additional casual relief periods when needed. She also had another career prior to entering teaching.

Kendall was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. She had been given a permanent appointment and was teaching a full load entirely within her subject area and had one senior (Year 11) English Studies class.

Nicole was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. She had been given a permanent appointment and was teaching a full load entirely within her subject area, but was not currently teaching any senior classes.

Mario was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. He had been given a permanent appointment and was teaching a full load entirely within his subject area,

but he was not currently teaching any senior classes. He had another career prior to entering teaching.

Emily was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. She was a targeted recruit (i.e. recommended by the Department after interview as a high performing graduate) who had been given a permanent appointment. She was teaching a full load entirely within her subject area and had one senior (Year 11) Standard English class.

Louise was working in a girls' only Year 7-12 secondary school. She also was a targeted recruit who had been given a permanent appointment. She was teaching a full load mostly within her subject area but was also allocated a Year 8 Agriculture class to teach and this was a subject in which she was not trained. She also was teaching two senior classes (Year 11 Biology and Year 12 Chemistry). She had a career prior to going into teaching.

April was working in a Year 7-12 secondary comprehensive school. She had been given a permanent appointment and was teaching a full load entirely within her subject area and had one senior (Year 11) Standard English class.

3.6 Research Methods

I will now explain the timing and methods used for data collection throughout the course of this research project. Each participant was asked to engage in three separate long conversational style interviews that were semi structured and ran for approximately 20-30 minutes in duration. The interviews occurred at three separate times throughout the first year of teaching with interviews occurring in March/April 2014, June/July 2014 and September/October 2014. Since this research was longitudinal in nature, it was anticipated that the participants would exhibit "changing interpretations" and this did occur over the period of the full year. This served to both "filter" the narrative construction and allow it to "finish" (Coulter, 2009, p. 610).

In total, thirty interviews were conducted with the ten FYGY teacher participants (the interview instruments used can be seen in Appendix 1). This involved them in being asked specific questions concerning managing workload, handling job demands, coping

with challenges, identity formation, job satisfaction, commitment to career, structures for professional support and issues with students and/or staff. Furthermore, they were encouraged to share significant and/or relevant narratives, as well as discuss specific visual metaphors that reflected their current situations. Provision was made for more time to be made available if required. However, it needs to be noted that this only occurred to the point of data saturation and when it was the case that nothing new was being contributed the data collection ceased and the interview was wound up.

Participants were given the option of conducting the interviews in person or through telephone mediated interactions and they themselves chose which format was to be used. As a consequence, of the thirty interviews conducted, nine were done in person and twenty-one were done over the telephone. Each interview was transcribed soon after completion and all relevant information provided was examined carefully. The data collected were then analysed using the broad analytic theme of time. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.7 Research Analysis

In this section, I discuss the approach taken when analysing the study's findings. This involved a number of different elements, with appropriate time related themes being established through considering both the related literature and the data collected. Also the narratives shared and visual metaphors chosen by a selection of the participants were considered closely.

After the data were collected, I used the construct of time as an analytic framework to identify any time themes in the data. These time themes were discussed with my research supervisors to check for inter-researcher agreement. The next step was to interrogate the associated literature to uncover if these themes had arisen in other research. From this process an alignment was gained between what the data revealed and what arose in the literature, with regard to time being used as an analytical framework.

In effect, what was established after considering the data collected from my study's participants and reviewing the relevant literature pertaining to the experiences of

early career teachers, was that first-year teachers were impacted by a range of time pressures. It is on this basis that the origins of eleven time-related themes emerged: Time Shortage/Demands, Time to be Me, Just in Time Support, The Gift of Time, Time to Grow/Become, Juggling Time, Serving Time, Authority of Time, Time in Conflict, Dismissal of Experience/Time and Stages of Time. These each reflect to varying degrees the three perspectives of time discussed in Section 3.2 (i.e. time as a commodity, time as a setting and time as a process). Each of these time-related themes is explained in more detail below.

Time Shortage/Demands originated from the data collected and literature (Halford, 1998; Renard, 2003; Anhorn, 2008) that indicated that first-year teachers find it very difficult to cope with the amount of work that they are required to do when employed as full-time teachers. It was included because my study casts light specifically on how young teachers who had recently graduated from NSW universities cope with the amount of work that they are required to do when appointed to a teaching position in a high school.

Time to be Me originated from the data collected and authors like Stokes & Wyn (2009) who have argued that young people attribute high levels of importance to the need to have time for themselves and maintain a healthy work/life balance. It was included because it was necessary to ascertain the extent to which young teachers made it a priority in their first year of teaching to make and have time for themselves.

Just in Time Support originated from the data collected and literature (McCormack & Thomas, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Burke et al., 2013) which indicated the importance of first-year teachers having access to mentors. The degree and extent to which these mentors were making a difference to the lives of young first-year teachers needed to be considered and that is why I included this category.

The Gift of Time originated from the data collected and the fact that in recent years many school systems have accepted that first-year teachers have little experience and so need more time to complete the tasks that are required as part of their new occupations. As a result, giving additional release time to first-year teachers has become established policy for many education systems around Australia, including the

NSW DoE (Barnard, 2016). Consequently, the ways in which the additional release time was made available to the FYGY teacher participants has been included here as an area of focus.

Time to Grow/Become originated from the data collected and the notion that for many young teachers their first year of teaching represents a very significant period of change and with this comes the opportunity for growth, improvement and the development of their professional identities (Schutz & Pekron, 2007). The extent and ways in which this occurred were considered through this specific category and hence it was included.

Juggling Time originated from the data collected and the notion that Generation Y are adept at and capable of balancing their varying time commitments (McQueen, 2011). Consequently, it was included to provide insights into whether FYGY teachers can actually juggle their time successfully.

Serving Time originated from the data collected and the idea that often young people are not prepared to commit to doing something for a long period of time, as they get bored easily and constantly seek new challenges (Schuck et al. 2012; Keengwe & Georgina, 2013). Consequently, in my research it was applied to the first-year teacher participants because each of them were in permanent full-time teaching positions with the NSW DoE, so the degree to which they were prepared to commit to these positions was considered.

Authority of Time originated from the data collected and the fact that most state secondary schools have a well-defined and clear hierarchal structure with principals at the top followed by deputies, then head teachers and senior teachers, and very often it is the first-year teachers who sit at the bottom of this hierarchy. However, Generation Y often do not respect authority figures in the workplace (Reilly, 2012) and so this theme was included because it was important to ascertain how young teachers interpreted and reacted to this power structure and if and how it impacted on their work as teachers.

Time in Conflict originated from the data collected and the notion that sometimes divergent views of employees can emerge in the workplace, and this situation can apply to teachers working in schools. How these views are received, processed and responded to, particularly when they are experienced by and/or have an impact on young first-year teachers, was an area that was deemed useful to include. This is because it has been established that Generation Y often feel entitled to freely express and have their views listened to and respected (Richardson, 2011; Twenge, 2013).

Dismissal of Experience/Time originated from the data collected and the concept suggested by authors like McQueen (2008), that Generation Y often do not regard the length of time served in a position as something that should necessarily be respected and/or admired. Hence the extent to which FYGY teachers acknowledged and valued other teachers who had served for longer periods of time was included as an area for consideration.

Stages of Time originated from the data collected and the notion that teachers (regardless of age) move through different periods in their first year of teaching (Lang, 2001; Bullough, 2009). Since my research consisted of three interviews occurring near the start of the year, at the middle point of the year and towards the end of the year, it was considered important for these different points in time to be analysed because they offered specific reference points in regard to time, for each of the FYGY teacher participants.

Once the analytic framework of time themes was established, I then used these themes to more closely interpret and analyse the data, and this was an ongoing process with the themes frequently revisited. This occurred through discussing and workshopping at regular intervals with my supervisors, so that other perspectives could be garnered and researcher agreement attained. Any disagreements about categorisation of data were discussed with them and resolved collaboratively through returning to the data and checking there was shared understanding about the data categorisation. Also some themes were slightly refined and/or modified when the data suggested that this was necessary.

As already explained, the first-year teacher participants were questioned about what they were experiencing, as well as how they were reacting to what they encountered. In addition, they were encouraged to share narratives and discuss visual metaphors that epitomised and encapsulated how they were thinking and feeling at specific points in time during their first year of teaching. The individual stories told by the participants were analysed with particular attention paid to specific examples that were representative of wider issues and concerns for FYGY teachers. Taking this two-pronged analytic approach of narrative inquiry and time theme analysis allowed me to comprehensively explore the lives lived by a small group of young first-year teachers who were appointed to full-time permanent teaching positions in NSW state secondary schools.

Studying closely the selected narratives of four participants: *Nicole, Louise, Darren* and *Emily*, allowed for extensive analysis and comprehensive discussion to take place. The reason for including the narratives of these four participants was because their stories were particularly interesting: each had different types of experiences as they moved through their first year of teaching. (Nicole's first-year teaching journey was for the most part positive and successful, however, Louise's was largely negative and overwhelming. On the other hand, Darren found the early stages of his first-year teaching journey to be challenging but this improved as the year progressed. In contrast, Emily's first few months of teaching were encouraging and she felt optimistic about her new role but this situation deteriorated as the year progressed.)

Furthermore, the visual metaphors chosen by these four participants were analysed closely, as they served as a valuable tool which complemented other findings, and further facilitated the development of a rich understanding of the FYGY teacher experience.

To summarise, a combination of deriving the themes inductively from the data and reviewing the relevant literature was employed to establish an analytical framework. This was coupled with closely analysing participant narratives and visual metaphors. A selection of these narratives were selected as they presented interesting cases. Such an approach allowed for critical interpretation and a thorough evaluation of the FYGY teacher experience in a sample of NSW secondary schools.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I adhered to strict ethical standards when carrying out this research, with the appropriate university ethics committee approval being sought and granted (as seen in Appendix 3) well before beginning any recruitment of participants or conducting fieldwork. Also, the participants were assured that if any sensitive issues were raised then they would be handled in an appropriate and highly confidential fashion. Furthermore, coding and pseudonyms were used at all times to protect the participants' identities. By doing this it was guaranteed that the research was conducted in the ethical manner required, and consequently the study was successfully able to explore the impact that time had on the professional and personal lives of a small group of FYGY teachers. Through asking what these young classroom practitioners thought, felt and experienced as they began their teaching journey, insights were gained regarding what needed to be done to assist them in these early years of teaching.

As a narrative inquirer, my strong ethical stance ensured that the relationships formed with the participants involved in the study were characterised by an ontological commitment (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009, p. 600) to relational ethics of the highest order. Also, the relational elements of the researcher/participant discourse were meticulously exercised and prioritised (Coulter, 2009, p. 609) so that the opportunity for ethical issues or concerns to arise was very much minimised, and all participant responses were treated with the sensitivity and understanding required.

3.9 Benefits of Conducting the Research

The young teachers participating in this research project potentially benefitted in two ways. Firstly, they were given the opportunity to 'tell their story.' Secondly, and most importantly, their 'story' was heard. Consequently, my research has enhanced the established knowledge that the academic and education communities possess in regard to what FYGY teachers experience. In effect this contribution has, as Coulter (2009) notes, brought "us closer to understanding the everyday lives of school people in vivid, experiential ways" (p. 611). Furthermore, the productivity costs associated

with staff turnover and the “possible compromisation of student learning” (Plunkett & Dyson, 2011, p. 33) are acknowledged, so any insights that lessen such turnover are valuable. I also note the tremendous potential of FYGY teachers to make a difference to the lives of students, as asserted in a report written by Williamson and Meyer-Looze (2010, p. 4).

3.10 Conclusion

My aim in conducting this research was to explore the impact that time as a construct has on the professional and personal lives of young first year secondary school teachers, with ten participants being interviewed at three separate stages of their first year of teaching. The theoretical framework underpinning my study involved the application of situated learning theory, as the FYGY teacher participants were admitted into and moved towards full participation in a professional school-based community of practice. Each participant was interviewed at three separate points of their first year of teaching, and their thoughts, feelings and experiences were shared and discussed. The results gathered through this process were then analysed according to significant time themes that emerged from the data collected and relevant literature, and this was complemented by the use of narrative inquiry which involved the stories and visual metaphors chosen by specific participants being examined closely. Aligning each of these in such a fashion thus ensured that the impact of time on the lives of a small sample of FYGY teachers in NSW secondary schools could be thoroughly and rigorously addressed.

Chapter 4: Findings - Analysis of Themes Related to Time

4.1 Introduction

As noted in Section 3.7 Research Analysis, a set of time themes derived from the data collected and literature served as analytic categories. These themes were as follows: *Time Shortage/Demands*, *Time to be Me*, *Just in Time Support*, *The Gift of Time*, *Time to Grow/Become*, *Juggling Time*, *Serving Time*, *Authority of Time*, *Time in Conflict*, *Dismissal of Experience/Time* and *Stages of Time*. Findings pertaining to these themes were grouped, using these themes as categories in the analysis, and indicated a range of time-related issues raised by the FYGY teachers who were participants in this research project.

The table below summarises the occurrence and frequency in which the relevant time themes were raised by each of the participants in their three interviews, and I discuss each of these themes in the following sections of this chapter.

Table 3: Occurrence and Frequency of Time Themes

Time Themes	Darren	Cory	Mario	Nelly	Kendall	Nicole	Amy	Louise	Emily	April
Time Shortage/Demands	3	4	4	4	2	0	3	7	3	6
Time to be Me	1	2	3	5	4	4	3	7	3	5
Just in Time Support	3	4	6	3	3	4	3	5	5	4
The Gift of Time	2	3	3	5	2	3	3	3	3	3
Time to Grow/Become	2	3	3	4	3	6	3	2	5	5
Juggling Time	1	2	3	3	1	5	3	2	2	4
Serving Time	1	2	3	1	1	2	4	3	3	1
Authority of Time	2	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1
Time in Conflict	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	3	0	1
Dismissal of Experience/Time	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	0
Stages of Time	3	4	4	0	2	4	1	1	5	3

4.2.1 Time Shortage/Demands

This theme concerned perceptions of the FGY teachers regarding the amount of work that they were required to do. It also included views about the amount of time that the teachers had to expend in completing tasks associated with their new jobs. The data indicated that for some in the group, the time demands appeared extremely onerous.

Time shortages and demands became evident in the data collected through the interviews with nine out of the ten participants, but it affected them to differing degrees. For Darren and Mario, it was something that they experienced in their first or second term of teaching but by later in the year they were finding it to be less of an issue, as they found ways to balance their work and personal lives. However, for Louise and Emily, the shortage of time was something that existed throughout their whole first year of teaching and was an issue that caused them a considerable degree of stress. For example, Louise stated in her third interview:

I think that Term 3 is the most stressful term because that is the term where Year 12 graduates, and as a beginning teacher I think that I felt that I was unfairly treated regarding giving me a Year 12 class, and so as a result that has definitely made me more stressed out and I mean in the last term there has been no difference in my work hours, and in fact it has probably increased to more than 60 hours a week because of preparation for the Year 12 HSC exam, so I do feel overwhelmed.

It was also interesting to note that all of the participants did expect their first year of teaching to be very busy and they anticipated that they would have to work long hours. For example, Darren in his first interview stated: "From my experience on prac., I knew that teaching was a draining job that required long hours, so I did expect to have to work hard." However, Nelly and April commented that they were surprised at just how much work they were expected to do and how long teaching tasks took to

complete, with April actually saying in her second interview: "There is never enough time, never enough of you, never enough energy, never enough resources and I've been noticing that quite a lot lately and I hope that the day might come when I have enough of everything."

Cory and Amy expressed a strong sense of frustration at having to complete specific tasks associated with their jobs, which they felt were meaningless and a waste of their time. For example, Cory said in his second interview: "I hear that the Department is the largest employer of teachers yet they have every teacher designing every program every time a lesson is taught. This seems impractical. So that in itself is frustrating."

All of the participants acknowledged that having a balance between their personal and work lives was important but the extent to which they were successful in achieving this varied. One strategy that was adopted by six of the participants - Darren, Cory, Mario, Nicole, Emily and April - was to spend longer hours at school, with them working onsite for nine or ten hours a day, but then not taking any work home with them. This ensured that the job did not consume all aspects of their lives. In addition, five of the participants - Darren, Cory, Nelly, Kendall and Nicole - were using the strategy of giving themselves at least one full day off from schoolwork over the weekend. Darren, Cory, Nelly and Nicole were in fact deliberately not doing any schoolwork on the weekends, and so in effect were allocating themselves uninterrupted personal time which supported them in achieving a healthy work/life balance. It is interesting to note that these participants appeared to cope better than others with their first year of teaching and they appeared to exhibit lower stress levels. For example, Darren said in his first interview: "Also, I have been trying to get most of my work done at school and then not do too much at home. As a result, even though I'm putting in 10 plus hour days, I do think that I am managing my new role quite well." In contrast, Louise, who was not giving herself dedicated time off in the evenings or over the weekend, commented that her excessive workload had impacted on her wellbeing and mental health. She stated in her second interview: "So I think that this kind of pressure that I am having is making me feel not very steady in terms of my mindset because there is too much stress going on in last couple of months and it is not working out."

4.2.2 Time to be Me

This theme became evident when the participants were questioned at each of the three interviews about the impact that their new jobs had had on their personal time. All were of the view that having and accessing personal time for themselves was something that was important to them and it was discussed in three distinct ways:

- 1) five of the participants spoke about how they were not getting adequate time for themselves,
- 2) seven of the participants explained how they needed to make time for themselves,
- 3) two of the participants commented that they found it very hard to switch off when taking time for themselves.

What remained clear to all of the participants was that time spent away from doing schoolwork was something that they valued.

Firstly, five of the participants - Darren, Mario, Louise, Emily and April - spoke about how the time-consuming nature of their jobs had caused them to be so busy that they were not getting enough personal time for themselves. For example, Louise in her first interview stated:

It is so hard and tiring having to organise lessons and experiments for all of my classes and I feel that the quality of my life is suffering because it is so physically draining being a teacher. The job is very demanding in terms of the amount of time I have to spend doing schoolwork and I did not anticipate or expect that it would be so difficult and stressful.

However, for three of these participants - Darren, Mario and April - they were able to deal with the time consuming nature of their jobs as the year progressed, and it became a less significant issue for them as time passed. This can be seen in the comment made by Mario in his second interview: "Before I was always doing schoolwork, but at least now on weekday evenings I have more time for myself. I have structured things now so that I have personal time and I have work time." However,

for the two remaining participants - Louise and Emily - the lack of personal time was something that affected them throughout the year and caused them a considerable degree of stress. It had an impact on their health, with Emily stating in her second interview that the amount she has had to work "has been really detrimental to my health and I got really sick at the end of last term. You are always going to be exposed to flus and things, but I also think that it was my body telling me that I was pushing it too far."

Also significant (and as already mentioned in Section 4.2.1) was that seven of the participants - Darren, Mario, Cory, Kendall, Nicole, Amy and April - spoke about how important it was to allow time for themselves, so as they could effectively manage their jobs and cope with the pressure and demands that come with being a first-year teacher. Kendall mentioned in her second interview that she was making sure that she had time for herself "so I don't do heaps of work on the weekends because otherwise I'd go stir crazy."

Finally, two of the participants - Nelly and Emily - commented that whilst it was obviously very important that they allowed themselves personal time and did not let their jobs consume all aspects of their lives, they found that when they did give themselves time and were at home relaxing or going out with family and friends, it was hard to switch off and not think about their schoolwork. For example, Nelly in her first interview said:

Before I started teaching, people warned me about the amount of work that I would be required to do but I did not think that it would be as hard as it actually is. I used to have an office job in the public service that I could just do and then completely forget about when I went home, but teaching is not like this. I am always thinking about it and then I feel guilty when I am at home relaxing.

4.2.3 Just in Time Support

During the interviews the participants were asked about the support structures that were available and/or had been put in place at their respective schools to assist them as they undertook their new jobs. The young teachers involved in this study were questioned about the extent to which they received support from their mentor and/or colleagues, as well as whether or not the timing of this support was appropriate, that is, was provided when needed.

The participants' responses reflected *Just in Time Support* in a range of ways. Five of them - Darren, Nicole, April, Cory and Nelly - spoke about how they received useful support from their mentors and/or faculty colleagues. However, the other five participants - Mario, Kendall, Amy, Louise and Emily - explained how the support that was provided was either unhelpful or non-existent.

Three of the participants - Darren, Nicole and April - discussed how their mentors had provided them with support that was beneficial and April in her first interview commented, "I have an excellent mentor who is a strong advocate for me." They each emphasised how their mentors had been approachable and were for the most part available for them when needed. In addition, these mentors provided these participants with sound advice that was impartial and showed they had the interests of their mentees at heart. For example, Nicole in her second interview stated: "I have my mentor who is in another faculty and ... she remembers what it was like to be first year out, and she tells me certain things, like remember to take it easy and it doesn't matter if some things don't get done."

However, for Nelly, her mentor had been both helpful and a hindrance. This is because he had encouraged her to complete useful professional learning activities and provided her with classroom management strategies to use with a challenging class. In addition, he had spoken up on her behalf when needed but he had also pushed her to assist him with writing research papers, which as a first-year teacher she did not have the time to do.

What also emerged from the data was how valuable the support of faculty colleagues, other than mentors, is to FYGY teachers. Four of the participants - Cory, Nelly, Nicole and April - discussed how they had received beneficial and ample support from other teachers in their staffroom and this had made their jobs much easier to navigate, as these staff members could help them with content related issues, as well as provide teaching strategies that were specifically focused on the subject that they were teaching. For example, Cory in his first interview stated:

I have been told that the first year is difficult but it has been okay so far and I have been given support from my faculty which has made it easier. Having this type of help from my peers is very valuable and in my opinion the support of faculty colleagues is very important.

What became evident was that those participants, who were receiving support from both their faculty colleagues and a mentor who often was not teaching the same subject as them, experienced fewer difficulties as they were receiving support from a number of sources.

In contrast, three of the participants received no real support from a mentor for most of their first year of teaching. Mario was simply not allocated a mentor until the end of Term 3, when the year was three quarters complete, and he really needed support early on, in particular when he was in his first and second terms of teaching. He stated in his third interview, "For the first three terms I think that I was the only new permanent first-year teacher in the school and I don't think they knew how to support me." Similarly, Kendall was not allocated a mentor until the end of Term 2 (when the year was halfway through) and she, like Mario, really needed guidance at the start of the year. Further, Kendall did not receive any real support from her mentor because she did not feel that she could trust this person. She said in her third interview, "I think that my concern is maybe the level of trust I have in that person." For Amy and Louise another problem arose: they did get allocated mentors but the mentors were also their supervisors. Amy felt that her mentor/supervisor clearly had no understanding of the role that a mentor should play, stating of her mentor in her third interview, "I

mean she has just been very unsupportive and aggressive, and it has made my first year of teaching very negative.” Louise was less negative as she felt that her mentor/supervisor was not completely unhelpful.

In addition, three other participants - Cory, Louise and Emily - discussed how their mentors had been unhelpful for a variety of reasons. Cory in his second interview spoke about how “I do have a mentor. There are a lot of New Scheme Teachers at our school so there are a lot of people that have this person as their mentor - more than a dozen people. So they are quite busy” and this made the mentor somewhat unavailable. Also, he and Emily each spoke about how their mentors were not able to provide them with worthwhile feedback. In fact, Emily said of her mentor in her third interview, “Say like sometimes you might have behaviour issues and other mentors could offer advice as to what I could do, but they (my mentor) can’t offer me any advice.”

Overall, mentors and to a lesser extent faculty colleagues played an important part in providing the FYGY teacher participants with a variety of support structures. However, their benefit was lost when the support provided was inadequate or not provided when needed, that is, was not ‘just in time support’.

4.2.4 The Gift of Time

This theme was established to investigate perceptions of the time allocation that was supposed to be provided to all new permanently appointed first-year teachers in NSW state schools, as per the DoE’s *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy (2014)*. Participants’ responses in the interviews overwhelmingly indicated that the provision of this time when undertaking their new jobs, was something that they valued and for many of them it was very much needed.

All participants viewed being given additional release time from class as being beneficial to them, but its impact was dependent on how it was delivered and consequently this ‘gift’ was experienced in different ways by the participants. What did become evident, as the interviews were conducted, was that those who received the additional release time early on benefitted from its allocation, regardless of the way in

which it was provided. However, for those who received it later, the benefit was lost and its impact was diluted. Also, the data revealed some interesting but largely inconclusive evidence in relation to the most ideal ways in which to allocate the extra time provided, and this will be further explained towards the end of this section.

Five of the participants - Darren, Cory, Nelly, Nicole and April - were given their additional release time either at the start of the year or by the start of Term 2. Each of them discussed how being given this extra time off had been really good, as April commented in her third interview: "I really value those (release) days and they are really helpful. They allowed me to really look forward to having just the relief from face-to-face, and they gave me time to work on the actual planning side of things." The time off gave them more time to plan lessons and cope with the various demands of their new teaching job. Furthermore, the additional release time helped their personal situations because it meant that they were able to get more work done at school and therefore they had less to do at home. In fact, Darren even commented in his second interview that being given the extra time off had allowed him to leave school an hour earlier, which was advantageous because:

If it had stayed the way it was in Term 1, with me staying till 5.30 each day and then also trying to catch up on this and that at the same time, then maybe my thoughts might have been different. But seeing how things have improved with this over the last term then that definitely confirms that I want to stay in teaching.

Therefore, being given the gift of time in the form of extra time off class had made Darren and the other four participants view their new positions much more positively.

However, three of the participants - Mario, Amy and Louise - were not given the additional release time that they were entitled to at the start or near the beginning of the year, but rather considerably later. Amy and Louise were allocated the extra time off in the second half of the year (i.e. Term 3). In Mario's case, he was not allocated it until Term 4 when the year was almost over. Each of these participants spoke about

how the time off was beneficial and they were grateful to receive it when they did eventually get it, but they each believed that they needed it earlier. Mario stated in his third interview:

They have been a bit disorganised in terms of how to allocate the release time but I think that they have now worked it out with giving me the eight release days ... But I think it is unfortunate because I would have needed those eight days in Terms 1 and 2 rather than Term 4.

These three participants expressed a strong desire to leave their current teaching roles as soon as they could, whilst others who did receive the additional release time closer to the start of the year expressed a much higher level of satisfaction with their jobs, and many of them spoke about how they wanted to remain in their positions for longer than the period that was required for their scholarship commitments.

The data also revealed various views about how best to provide the additional release time for first-year teachers in state schools in NSW. Essentially, the extra time off was provided in one of two ways: either as regular free periods that were integrated into their teaching timetables or as full days off class. Nicole was provided with the extra time as periods off and she said in her third interview that she was "using it well" but she did comment that perhaps it would have been useful to be given whole days off, as this would provide a longer block of time to get things done. This view was supported by April who was given the time as whole days off, and this was really beneficial in her opinion because as she explained in her third interview, if it was given as free periods that were "timetabled in, then they'd just get lost in photocopying and doing that day to day stuff." However, Kendall had been given both types of release time and she made the point in her third interview that having free periods integrated into her timetable was better, as this time "helped in getting marking done, getting planning done, tidying up my desk, sometimes it is also just a chance to decompress and de-stress and take a bit of a breath." She then explained in the same interview that having full days off is not as good as periods integrated, because the teacher has to prepare the work that is to be left for a relief teacher, and she found that "when I take a day off

the kids go crazy and you lose the consistency." Finally, it was interesting to note the case of Emily who had been allocated her additional release time in the form of six days off, however, she had only been able to use two of these days to complete her own work; on the other days, she had been expected to complete faculty programs. In fact, she stated in her third interview that this occurred so as "to make sure that I've got stuff to give to everyone else!" It could be argued that, in this case, the participant's additional release time had been misused by her supervisor and faculty colleagues. This unfortunately created anxiety for Emily, and a sense of resentment towards the other teachers in her staffroom was apparent in her interview.

4.2.5 Time to Grow/Become

This theme concerned the ways in which the participants' new jobs did or did not provide them with opportunities to develop themselves and refine their skills as young teachers. *Time to Grow/Become* emerged in the data collected for all ten of the participants but in three distinct ways.

Firstly, three of them spoke about how through being given the time and opportunity for professional development they could grow as teachers. Secondly, three of the participants spoke about how they have grown in their roles as time progressed because they invested their own time into improving their professional skills and ability to do the job. Finally, four of the participants discussed how their current positions were not giving them the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, and this was having a negative impact on their career development.

The three participants - Darren, Nicole and April - who had been given the opportunity in their first year of teaching to grow in their new teaching roles and develop professionally, felt positive about their schools. April said in her second interview: "Yeah, I'm still feeling very positive about being here (at this school) and I really like the culture of this school and the staff are good, and I do still really enjoy my job." Furthermore, Darren explained in his second interview how:

I was approached about peer coaching and basically now once a cycle we have figured out a time that we can meet and now we talk about my teaching and

how I can go forward with it ... we talked about stuff like instead of having a seating plan, having kids seated in pairs, so they have a person that they sit next to because I don't have my own classroom ... and also verbal and nonverbal cues to get kids to stop talking. And I think that in a way I'm kind of glad that it's happening and she's my mentor.

These three participants had benefited from being given the additional release time and each had effective mentors whose contribution to their development had been completely positive. Furthermore, each expressed the desire to remain at their schools well beyond the periods that they were bonded for. Each spoke about how they looked forward to continuing to work with the students at their school and support them in their learning and development into young adults.

Mario, Nelly and Kendall spoke about how they had grown professionally in their new positions but this had occurred largely as a result of their own efforts and willingness to invest their personal time. Mario received very little assistance by way of a mentor or additional release time, however, he chose to use the few free periods that he had to proactively develop his skills as a teacher. He said in his second interview that, "I have used my own free time to visit other classes and see more experienced teachers teach and that has given me a lot of help and feedback. So I have been active myself on that front." Kendall also had virtually no help from a mentor but she realised that she needed to develop her behaviour management skills and invest energy and time in her more difficult classes, so she did her own research and worked out the most appropriate teaching strategies to use and this led to her experiencing considerable success with her more challenging students. She said in her first interview:

I've been looking at a lot of books on behaviour management, as well as online, because I'm searching for ideas and strategies that will help me to better manage my classes. I want to develop better control and have more confidence

in the classroom, so I feel that it will help by doing study and research in this area.

Finally, Nelly did have limited support from her mentor but she independently reflected on her progress and realised that she needed to learn as much as she could about the different subjects in her faculty. Also, she realised that she needed to build her resilience and look at the big picture. In fact, she said in her third interview: “I know that I have to build up my resilience ... and ... I do feel that I still want to develop my skillset.” This highlights how these participants showed a great deal of initiative and worked out on their own how they could best develop themselves as teachers.

Finally, four of the participants - Cory, Amy, Louise and Emily - viewed their current positions as not providing them with adequate levels of career stimulation and/or the opportunity to develop themselves professionally as teachers. This made them unwilling to commit to staying at their schools for more time than they were obliged to and for some of them, they even expressed the view that their positions were holding them back from achieving their career goals. Amy in particular was feeling very uninspired and unstimulated by both the students and staff at her school, and so because she was not feeling a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment, she had decided to leave her job at the end of the year. She stated in her second interview:

I don't find teaching that stimulating I guess. I mean it is not just the students, I try to make everything creative and I try to push them to give them things that are sometimes above their ability to try and get intellectual stimulation for them and myself. But also just talking with my colleagues, there is nothing that interesting that will keep me there. It is all pretty boring. Without sounding disrespectful, it is not really I guess what I thought teaching would be.

Cory spoke about how he wanted to continue teaching but to work at a different school. He said in his third interview:

I really want to utilise the skillsets that I have and I can't see myself being able to do that at the school that I am currently at. And that is why I want to move to a different type of school, so I can utilise all of those skills and take teaching to a level that I enjoy more.

These four participants felt, quite strongly, that it was obligatory for their new jobs to provide them with interesting opportunities and prospects for personal development.

4.2.6 Juggling Time

This theme was reflected in the data when the participants responded to questions about how effectively they were balancing the various demands involved in completing their jobs. Also when they discussed the degree to which managing competing interests affected them.

Nine of the ten participants demonstrated that they were, at one or more points in the year, capable of successfully juggling time and completing all that they had to do for their new jobs. This indicates that the young teachers participating in this study were more often than not capable of managing all the work-related tasks that they had to do in their first year of teaching.

Only Louise consistently mentioned across the three interviews that she could not successfully juggle her time, and she stated in her third interview that: "There is too much to do in too short a frame of time ... For me as a beginning teacher it is very difficult to cope because the very experienced teachers are struggling and it is quite crazy, so I am not the only one." However, six of the participants - Darren, Nicole, Nelly, Kendall, Amy and April - discussed how they were able to, for most of their first year of teaching, successfully juggle their time. For example, Amy in her third interview stated that she was working efficiently and ensuring that she used her free periods effectively to get schoolwork done. "During the week I am at school from 7.30am till 3.30pm and I don't do that much outside of these times ... I have tried to make sure that when I did have a free session or period that I was getting as much work as I could get done."

Mario, Cory and Emily commented that sometimes they were able to juggle their time well but at other times they found it hard to do so. Mario acknowledged this in his third interview when he said: "I try to use the time when I don't have a class ... It has improved a lot and I am using my time better but I was not prepared for how much work was required." Also the ability to juggle time was something that steadily improved for two of these participants - Mario and Cory - as the year progressed but for one of the participants - Emily - the converse happened. In Emily's first interview she seemed to be juggling her time reasonably well.

I don't loathe having to do my work and I accept that it is more difficult now because I'm in the first term of my first year of teaching, but as I said things will improve in the future as I gain more experience. And as I continue to teach, I will develop more resources and therefore have less lesson preparation to do. Also, I will know how all of the school procedures and systems work and as a result will be able to perform my duties more quickly and efficiently.

However, as the year progressed it became evident that Emily was unable to manage all that was required to be done in her new position. In fact, she stated in her second interview that: "I'm really feeling the pressure of the workload. I know that last time you and I had a conversation about the amount of time that I was working and whether it was sustainable and it is not, because I feel like I lose a sense of myself ..."

4.2.7 Serving Time

This theme was revealed in the data when the participants discussed how long they intended to remain in their current teaching positions. Also when they explained the factors involved in their decisions about the amount of time that they would spend in their new jobs.

As explained in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5), eight of the FYGY teachers participating in this research project were scholarship holders with the DoE. This meant that they were required to serve out a bonded period of three years of service at their appointed

schools and if they did not serve out this bond, then they would be required to repay a pro rata proportion of the funds that they had received whilst studying. The remaining two participants were recommended or 'targeted' graduates who had achieved high university grades, commendable practicum reports and performed well in DoE employment interviews, and so were offered permanent positions ahead of those on the employment list. Unlike the other participants, these two individuals were not contractually locked into their jobs but they were, like most DoE employees, appointed on probation for a twelve-month period and could only achieve their proficient level accreditation after working for twenty-four months as school teachers. Therefore, all of the participants in this study were *servicing time* of a defined one-year probationary period, as well as a mandatory two-year accreditation period, but for eight of the participants who were scholarship recipients they were also serving a three-year bond period of time.

All of the participants discussed matters related to *servicing time* at some point in one of their three interviews. They largely fell into one of the following two categories: those who were looking at staying beyond the period of time that they were required to be at their current schools and those who would only commit to staying at their current school for as long as they deemed to be necessary (i.e. to satisfy probation, accreditation and possibly bond requirements.) However, one of the participants - Amy - decided to not serve the period of time required by her accreditation and bond, as she intended to leave her school and resign from the DoE at the end of her first year of teaching. The impetus for her refusal to serve the time required for her accreditation and bond periods can best be summed up by her comments that she gets bored at school, and does not feel that this situation will improve. For example, in her first interview she stated:

I have already reconsidered the teaching profession after this first term of teaching. I originally thought that I would definitely stick at it for at least three years but now I have decided that I will only do it for the rest of this year and then reconsider my options. What I would like to do is go back to university and

do my PhD and then perhaps work in research or lecturing ... to be honest I'm not finding teaching to be very stimulating intellectually. I get bored at school and that is why I've taken on the additional roles, like debating coordinator, as I'm trying to make the job more interesting ... however, because I'm currently in a Year7-10 school I do not feel that this situation will improve and as a consequence there is nothing keeping me in this job.

She then went on to say in her third interview that:

I have done so many different things throughout the year at the school to stimulate myself in so many different ways and I have done this to keep myself in the profession, and it is just not enough. And it is not really the level of stimulation that I need and it is not the amount of stimulation that I need to fully attain what I can in life, so I am going to start actively pursuing the PhD course.

As a consequence, Amy was prepared to repay her employer a considerable sum of money (approximately AU\$13 500 of the AU\$20 000) that she had received from her scholarship.

However, not all of the participants were like Amy. Four of them - Darren, Nelly, Nicole and April - who were also scholarship holders and hence bonded in their positions, indicated that they were prepared to stay beyond the three years required and actually spoke about how they really liked their jobs and the schools that they were working in. For example, April stated in her third interview: "When I first learnt about the bond I did think ... I'd only stay for the three years, but fortunately for me it is the case that I love it ... and for the moment and the foreseeable future I'm pretty happy in the classroom and I can't see that changing too much." Also, Darren in his third interview after being asked if he would be happy to stay at his school beyond the mandatory three-year bond period responded: "Yeah definitely. I feel like I have a lot

more to do there with my teaching, coaching and seeing out the Year 9, and if I get the Year Coordinator job then I will definitely stay for a longer time before I move on.”

What was similar amongst these four participants was the fact that whilst their first year of teaching was not without its challenges, it was characterised overall with more positive rather than negative experiences.

Five of the participants - Cory, Mario, Kendall, Louise and Emily - did express the view that they were *servicing time* in that they only intended to remain at their current schools for a set period of time which they deemed was necessary. For Cory, Mario and Kendall, they each indicated that they would only remain in their positions for the three years required by their scholarship agreements and then they would move on, with Mario stating in his second interview quite unequivocally:

I think that it is at the moment my decision is to finish my three-year commitment to this school, and then I think that after the three years I will either move to another school or I might leave the profession ... but I will not stay at this school more than the required amount of time.

On the other hand, the non-bonded participants - Louise and Emily - revealed that they wanted to stay at their schools for at least one or two years, so that they could complete their probationary period and possibly get their accreditation. In fact, Louise stated in her first interview:

I do not feel that I will be teaching long-term. I will maybe stay with it until I get my accreditation done but ... I do not feel that I can cope with the amount of work that I have to do and it is just so physically demanding and I do not see this changing in the future, so as a result I cannot see myself teaching (at this school) for more than one or two years.

Emily appreciated that the first year of teaching would be difficult and so she was determined to serve this time period as a minimum before deciding whether or not to

move on. She also discussed how she had worked hard to get through university to become a teacher, and so she was not prepared to give up on this before she had committed what she felt was an appropriate amount of time and she said in her third interview: "I think you need to give it at least a second year. It is not something (teaching) that you work so hard for and then just give up because things get hard."

What was similar about these five participants - Cory, Mario, Kendall, Louise and Emily - was the fact that they each had encountered frustrations in undertaking their new teaching positions. Also their experiences were largely negative.

4.2.8 Authority of Time

This theme became evident when analysing the data through the way that the FGY teachers participating in the research often commented in their interviews that because of their youth and lack of experience in the job, they were perceived by students and/or staff as having less power and authority.

The notion of *authority of time* was mentioned by all ten of the participants in two main ways. In the first instance, what was discussed by seven of the FGY teachers was how the students often did not take younger teachers as seriously as older teachers, however, two of the participants broadened this to also include other staff and members of the school community having less respect for younger teachers because they were obviously inexperienced. The other way in which this theme became evident was through two of the participants discussing the notion of power relations and how older teachers, who often were in executive positions, had more authority than them, so they felt that the contributions that they made as younger teachers were devalued.

The participants who mainly spoke about how the students treated younger teachers in a less serious way were: Cory, Mario, Nelly, Nicole and April. They all made the point that being a younger teacher did provide the advantage of being able to connect with their students and relate better to them, as they understood the technology that teenagers used, appreciated the music that teenagers liked and in general they were not that far removed from the experience of being a teenager themselves. For example, April stated in her third interview:

So I think that has been an advantage ... in that I can have conversations with students and I can say that it wasn't that long ago that I was actually your age, and I remember what that was like. And I guess that being young ... has given me an opportunity to say ... I know what you are going through.

However, the issue is with students in general, and in particular with those that are not well-behaved, with the situation being aptly explained by Nicole in her third interview: "the kids who aren't as well behaved it becomes quite difficult because you don't have the age and experience, so they don't respect you as much. So when it comes to the discipline, age is definitely a disadvantage." This clearly indicates how whilst there are some advantages in being a younger teacher, students did sometimes view these teachers as having less authority.

In addition, this lack of respect for younger teachers was not expressed only by students. Others within the school community also did not appear to take them as seriously. Kendall in her third interview stated that: "there is an element that other teachers don't respect you as much because of your age" and her being new, as well as young, was one of the reasons which led to her feeling alienated from her staffroom. Furthermore, Louise in her third interview mentioned how she felt that her older colleagues could not appreciate the bond she had with her students. "They don't realise how we younger teachers can get close to the students ... they don't feel so happy that I can work like that, so that is probably the one disadvantage." She felt that her older colleagues resented her capacity to connect with her students. Also, Emily in her third interview spoke about how it was not just the students who took younger teachers less seriously. Other teachers and parents could stereotype and judge a teacher's skills and abilities based on their more youthful appearance.

What also became evident, when analysing this theme, was the situation that younger teachers often felt that they had less authority and their views carried less weight because they were young and inexperienced. Two of the participants - Darren and Amy - raised this, with Amy in her third interview speaking about how as a young teacher "you have a different outlook ... and that can be a great thing in a school, but the

negative is that because you are so young ... people don't give you as much of a chance or they don't really listen to you because they don't see you as experienced." This highlights how some younger teachers can feel that the contributions that they can make to a school are not valued by their colleagues because they have not been teaching for a long enough period of time.

4.2.9 Dismissal of Experience/Time

Interestingly, given their concerns expressed in Section 4.2.8, about the lack of recognition they got due to their ages, the FYGY teachers also expressed age-related perceptions. Five of the FYGY teachers involved in the research - Cory, Nelly, Amy, Louise and Emily - were dismissive of the experience and/or amount of time that their mentors or others at their schools had accumulated.

These participants were all in their first year of teaching and so had considerably less experience than most of the other teachers, but they often had high expectations in regard to what their more experienced colleagues could and should provide them with. Furthermore, this often translated into a sense that they were entitled to be provided with well-defined levels of support and in this study, half of the participants made it clear that they did not value the support that they were offered. Cory and Nelly were prepared to dismiss the time served and experience accrued by their mentors and chose instead to get support from other sources in their schools. Amy, Louise and Emily also dismissed the support offered by their more experienced mentors, but they instead chose to rely on themselves and not seek support from elsewhere within their schools.

Three participants - Amy, Louise and Emily - were clearly dismissive of the experience that their mentors possessed. Amy's mentor was also her supervisor and as she explained in her second interview:

I did not really agree with this because I don't feel comfortable about having someone like this be my mentor ... this person has been at the school for quite a long time, almost 23 years, and they are not very supportive and they really

don't know how to support new teachers within the school, and so I just don't go to her for help.

Amy clearly did not view her supervisor/mentor's longstanding career at the school in a positive light and instead appeared to look upon her lengthy experience as being indicative of someone who had stagnated in their position.

Like Amy, Louise also had her supervisor as her mentor and she too was uncomfortable with this arrangement but she did not feel that she was in a position to express her concerns. Louise said in her second interview that "there is nothing that I can do. I can't tell anyone about this ... because if I do then I will get into trouble and there is so much politics ... so I will just have to rely on myself." Therefore, she also chose to deal with her problems herself, however, unlike Amy, Louise was less critical of her mentor/supervisor and this came through in her third interview. "She is not totally unhelpful ... she has been helpful ... with reports and things like that" but "she does not have content knowledge" which "is a problem." This indicates that this participant clearly had high expectations of her supervisor/mentor and when she was not supported at all times, she was prepared to be critical of them.

Finally, there was Emily who had clear expectations in regard to what her mentor should provide her with, and when these were not realised, she became dismissive of the experience and time served in the job by her mentor. Emily clearly felt that because her mentor had been in the job and had considerably more experience than her, they should have been able to provide her with solutions to the problems that she was experiencing.

4.2.10 Time in Conflict

This theme emerged in the data gathered for three of the FGY teachers participating in this study. It became evident because in their interviews they discussed how their teaching positions had created conflict with significant others, either at their schools or in their personal lives.

The three participants who experienced conflict as a result of spending time in their new jobs were Kendall, Amy and Louise, and this conflict largely reflected tensions that existed between these young classroom practitioners and their head teachers and/or other members of their faculty. With Amy, this tension extended further to the school's senior executive with her expressing the view that she strongly disagreed with a number of the decisions made by the principal. Louise discussed how her relationship with her partner ended as a result of them having conflict over the amount of time she had to commit to her job. *Time in Conflict* largely represents the way that these three participants' experiences were modified or impacted upon as a result of being in conflict with supervisors, fellow staff members or partners.

In the second interview, Kendall stated that she was avoiding the staffroom and as a result was doing as much of her schoolwork as possible at home. She made it very clear that she was deliberately leaving school as early as possible in the afternoons, so as she was not in the staffroom and therefore could avoid potential conflict. Kendall noted how the students were no longer the problem but rather her faculty, and she was feeling a lot of pressure now coming from the staffroom. This was because there was a lot of hostility in the faculty and this had made the staffroom a very unpleasant place to be.

There are some people who are great but there are cliques within the staffroom that exist and one that is powerful, and if you get excluded then you don't feel very welcome. You don't feel much enjoyment in being there and that is partly why I leave at 3.30pm and do more work at home, so then I can avoid confrontations (Kendall, Interview 2).

Kendall also explained in her second interview how her relationship with her head teacher had been difficult and stressful but she was being supported by her principal. She stated: "there have been a lot of problems in the faculty which are trying to be handled ... so I have my principal's but not my head teacher's support and negotiating that ... workplace political situation ... is very tenuous." Thus for Kendall the first year

of teaching presented her with workplace relationships that were complex and often involved conflict, and it was interesting to observe how she navigated these.

Like Kendall, Amy indicated that she too felt uncomfortable in her staffroom and she said in her first interview:

When I'm in the staffroom I find it hard to work because it is noisy and I feel that I'm being checked up on and watched by other teachers. This has made me feel negative about working at school and so I've been opting to do schoolwork at home, because I feel more comfortable and can work more efficiently and without interruption.

This demonstrates how for this participant time spent in the staffroom was not pleasant or productive for her. Much of this could be attributed to the fact that she had not been made to feel accepted in the faculty and as a consequence was avoiding spending time there. Furthermore, this situation continued throughout Amy's first year of teaching, and in her third interview she shared how when doing planning with her head teacher and another English teacher she was not treated with professional respect, as her views about project based learning were not listened to.

I disagreed with them on their understanding of what project based learning is ... and I tried to explain the whole philosophical concept of it and how ... it involves the students needing to be given choices ... I also explained that it was more about their discovery ... and my head teacher turned to me and just said 'it is poetry or essay writing - you pick.' It was like I wasn't really being listened to ... if your opinion differs ... then they can become quite aggressive, like my head teacher who gave me an ultimatum ... It just makes me feel like I don't want to be here.

Amy felt that because she was new to the school and her head teacher had been there for more than twenty years, this gave her the right to not listen to or respect Amy's views, especially when they differed from her own. As a consequence, Amy felt powerless, disrespected and unappreciated, and therefore she avoided being in the staffroom.

Contributing to this was the fact that Amy was also in conflict with the school's senior executive and had lost faith in their ability to respond appropriately to situations and make sound decisions. In the second interview she explained how a boy in her Year 9 class had on his way to school seen a woman collapse and he rendered first aid and performed CPR on the woman. Amy was most impressed with this and felt that:

It was an extraordinary achievement for a boy in Year 9 and I asked him if he told our principal or deputy principal, so he could be recognised for such an extraordinary feat of bravery and he said that he had told them. Anyway, I retold the principal in front of the boy and ... the principal's response was just 'yeah that is good' and that made me feel so disheartened by the fact that the management, people who are meant to be leading the school, when they hear about these things that their students are doing it is kind of brushed off, there isn't any celebration within the school.

Thus Amy was disappointed by the lukewarm response of senior executive staff to students' positive actions and deeds, and this further contributed to her negative view, which in turn made her feel that it is not worth committing time and energy to the school. Amy clearly "found it very difficult to agree with the senior executive and their decisions" and she felt that their "expectations of what the students could do is constantly seen in the negative. They think that our students are dumb ... they don't recognise the potential of our students and ... their own staff in helping ... build up the school" (Amy, Interview 3). Hence this created conflict for her and contributed towards making her want to leave her position.

Like Amy, Louise was also in the position of having her supervisor as her mentor and this was something that became a source of conflict for this participant. Louise also experienced conflict with her head teacher. In the second interview she explained that "I don't think that I am following a good leader" in that her immediate supervisor (the Head Teacher Science) was "someone who I don't have respect for" and "it is very hard to work for someone that you don't respect." Also, in the second interview Louise discussed how she had now been allocated a mentor, but it was her supervisor who had taken on this role and in the participant's opinion this person is "quite irresponsible, as she had a week off before the holidays and she actually told me that we are supposed to team teach Chemistry but she told me that she has not taught that subject for a long time and that I am on my own." This particular situation reflects how in many ways there is a conflict of interest present because Louise clearly needs help but cannot get this from the person who is leading her faculty. Furthermore, she cannot talk to her mentor about this situation, as her mentor is also her supervisor and it is she who is the source of the problem.

Later in the year Louise spoke again about how her time spent as a first-year teacher involved conflict, however, in this case it involved someone outside of the school. She went through a relationship breakup with her partner and in her opinion this was a result of the excessive and demanding nature of her job. She said in the third interview that her partner:

Didn't really understand what high school teachers do and they don't understand how it is a lot of work, and it is very highly emotional sort of work and it takes a lot of time ... they can't understand how it can be that busy ... I have had to go through quite a bad breakup with my partner because he could not understand the hours that I had to work ... and do all that for my job.

Thus Louise's job caused her to experience considerable conflict with her boyfriend and this proved to be very detrimental for their relationship.

To sum up, when considering the findings associated with this time-related theme, it is clear that a significant number of the FYGY teachers in this study experienced conflict when spending time in their new roles. The nature of this conflict differed, occurring either in the workplace or personal life, however, it was a by-product of the participants undertaking their teaching positions.

4.2.11 Stages of Time

This theme was established to capture data from the three distinct points in their first year of teaching at which the FYGY teachers involved in this study were interviewed. It contained data from these three different stages, on how the teachers were feeling towards their new jobs and how these positions were impacting on their personal and professional lives. Consequently, this section deals with time in a more literal way, as it concerns the actual timing of the interviews with the FYGY teachers and what they were experiencing and how this had impacted on their perceptions of teaching at that point in time. Furthermore, this section also summarises what each of the participants experienced throughout their first year of teaching and as a result the findings presented here are unlike the other themes already dealt with. However, the information is included so that a full and comprehensive picture can be ascertained of the experiences had by each participant.

In this study, FYGY teachers were interviewed at three specific stages of their first year of teaching, with the first interviews being conducted in March/April, the second interviews being conducted in June/July and the final interviews being conducted in September/October. What became apparent through conducting the interviews according to this linear time structure, was that four of the participants - Darren, Mario, Nelly and April - found the beginning of the year to be the most challenging, which was probably unsurprising. However, for Cory, Louise and Emily, their situations actually deteriorated as the year progressed with the distinction that for Cory, by the end of the year, he was feeling more positive about his job. For Kendall, Nicole and Amy, the *stages of time* in which the interviews were conducted had a negligible impact on each of their individual outlooks towards teaching. The findings related to this theme are now presented and discussed in these groupings of participants,

according to whether they felt that their jobs had improved as the year progressed, or instead became more challenging, or whether there was no discernible distinction at the different stages of the year. For the sake of brevity, the FYGY teachers' comments have been extensively paraphrased.

First-year teacher participants who initially experienced most challenges: Darren, Mario, Nelly and April

Four of the participants - Darren, Mario, Nelly and April - found the early months of their new careers to be the most challenging. In the first interview, Darren discussed how he was working ten or more hour days and he was feeling run down and drained. He was finding it hard to have a reasonable work/life balance and had had to give up a second job due to the demands of his new teaching role. In the second interview Darren was working about nine hours a day and not doing schoolwork on the weekends and overall he felt it was becoming easier. He was getting the hang of things and understood how the school ran, so was asking fewer questions and in general he was feeling more comfortable in the role and felt that the job was more manageable in terms of the amount of time that had to be committed. He also felt that he was having a positive impact on his students. In the third interview Darren was working about eight hours a day and still not doing any schoolwork on the weekends. He felt that he had achieved a good work/life balance and as the year had progressed he had become a more mature and competent teacher. He also indicated that he wanted to remain at his current school for at least several more years.

Mario in the first interview discussed how he felt that he was constantly short of time and he was working more than ten hours each day of the week and doing another eighteen or more hours over the weekend. As a result, he was feeling stressed and had found teaching to be very challenging. He felt that he had underestimated how difficult the job actually was and even though he was working very hard, he still felt disorganised. Fortunately, Mario's situation had improved by the second interview and he was working more efficiently. He had structured his life so that he had designated work time and personal time. During the week he was now working about nine hours a day and getting most of his work done at school, which meant that he was having the

evenings to himself. He was still doing schoolwork on the weekends but not as much, and he was now feeling more positive about his teaching and more confident and comfortable in the role. In the third interview Mario indicated that he was still working about nine hours a day during the week but doing less on the weekends. He felt that he was using his time well and that he had overcome many challenges, but he was adamant that he would not remain at his current school beyond the three years required because this school had a negative culture and he had not been well supported there.

Nelly in the first interview discussed how she was working nine to ten hours a day and was doing another eight hours on the weekends. She was feeling positive about her new job but she did not anticipate how much work was involved. She was getting her additional release time integrated into her timetable and was receiving excellent support from her supervisor. In her second interview Nelly commented that she was still working about ten hours a day but no longer working on the weekends. She felt that the amount she was doing was reasonable but acknowledged that the students drained her energy and demanded a lot of her time. In the third interview Nelly discussed how her job had become much more manageable now and she felt more relaxed. She was still working about ten hours a day during the week and sticking to not doing any schoolwork on the weekends. She was feeling positive about her position and had decided to stay in teaching for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, she had experienced positive breakthroughs in her first year of teaching, such as getting many students in her Year 10 Graphics class to elect to study the subject for the Higher School Certificate.

April in the first interview explained how she had experienced difficulty with time management and she felt somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of work that she had to do. She was working about eleven hours a day during the week and doing another four or five hours over the weekend. She was hopeful that the investments of time that she was making now will pay off in the future and the job will become easier. She also spoke about how she wanted to teach long-term and was passionate about being a teacher. In the second interview April explained that she was working slightly less (about ten hours a day during the week and doing one or two hours of schoolwork

over the weekend) so there had been some improvement in terms of her work/life balance. However, ultimately she wanted to try and work smarter, not harder, and she made it clear that she was committed to teaching and educating young people, as well as making her students critical thinkers. She also commented that she really liked the culture of her school and was feeling very inspired and positive about her position. In April's third interview she stated that she was still working about the same amount but sometimes felt that she was not working hard enough, however she had reassured herself that she was working as hard as she possibly could. At this point, she made it clear that she was very happy teaching and being at her current school, and stated that she would definitely stay beyond the three-year time period that she was bonded for.

First-year teacher participants whose job situation worsened: Cory, Louise and Emily

In the first interview Cory discussed how the time spent on completing his new job had impacted on his personal life but he was trying to have one day off completely on the weekends and have some time for himself. He was working ten or more hour days during the week and he was trying not to go without sleep. Furthermore, he was feeling satisfied with his new position and coping quite well with the demands of the job. In the second interview Cory explained that whilst he did expect to be spending a lot of time on completing his teaching duties in his first year, he did not think that the amount of time that he had to commit to the job was reasonable and he was finding it much more challenging now to have a satisfactory work/life balance. He had lost sleep doing reports and was seeing his friends much less often, but he did indicate that he would stick with teaching for at least the next few years. In the third interview Cory discussed how his job had become more manageable and he was attempting to get all of his work done whilst at school. He felt that he was now more efficient and tasks were not taking as long to do because he had more experience. Also he had come to the conclusion that he did want to teach in the future but not at the school that he was currently at. He would see out his bond but after this time period he wanted to teach elsewhere.

Louise in the first interview discussed how she was working fourteen to fifteen hours each weekday, and doing another twelve hours over the weekend. As a result, she was

feeling like she was married to the job. She was extremely overwhelmed by her new position and was under a lot of pressure. Having two senior classes, including Year 12, had been demanding physically and mentally and she was looking at continuing to teach for maybe a year or two because otherwise it would impact very negatively on her life. In the second interview it became clear that Louise's situation had not improved. She was continuing to feel highly stressed and was still working extremely long hours. She even explained that she had tried to access help from her employer's counselling service but was too busy to make an appointment. In the third interview Louise spoke about how she was still feeling very overwhelmed and Term 3 had been the most stressful. She was continuing to work extremely long hours and she could not balance her personal life and her work life. At this point in time, she expressed the view that she did love teaching, but definitely did not want to stay in her current school, as the workload was just too demanding.

Emily in the first interview explained that she was working about ten or eleven hours a day during the week and doing about eight hours over the weekend. This had impacted on her personal life and she did not expect to be doing as much work as she was, but she did feel that things would get easier in the future. In the second interview it became clear that Emily was not coping so well with the demands of her new job. She was really feeling the pressure of the workload and had become ill at the end of Term 2, and she believed that this occurred because she was pushing herself too hard. She was also finding it very difficult to balance her work and personal life, and she explained that because she was doing things for the first time, like reports, that they took more time to complete. Furthermore, she spoke about how teaching was a balancing game with you always walking a fine line with preparation, managing students, getting on with colleagues etc. In the third interview Emily commented that she was still working about the same amount but felt overall that the amount of work she has had to do has been too much. In addition, she made it clear that at this point she did not want to remain in her position, but would not make any firm decisions about her future until she had finished her second year of teaching. In her opinion, her faculty colleagues and head teacher had taken a lot from her, but did not give much

back and the amount of work she has had to output in her first year was unfair and this had put a lot of pressure on her.

First-year teacher participants who experienced little change: Kendall, Nicole and Amy

In the first interview Kendall discussed how her personal life had not really been impacted by her new job and she was trying not to take too much schoolwork home with her in the evenings. She was working about nine hours a day during the week and often intended to do schoolwork on the weekend, but this usually did not eventuate and she would spend the time relaxing instead. She was finding the students' behaviour to be challenging and emotionally draining. Also she commented that her current school was not intellectually stimulating and she was not putting much effort into her lesson preparation. In the second interview Kendall talked about how she was leaving school a little earlier but doing more work at home in the evenings and on the weekends, but she was still making time for herself. In the third interview Kendall discussed how she was working about eight or nine hours a day during the week and doing another two hours of schoolwork on the weekend. She was stopping herself from feeling overwhelmed by switching off at home and doing her own creative writing. Her biggest issue was the strained relations in the staffroom and this had made her not want to stay beyond her three-year bond period and perhaps even not remain in teaching.

Nicole in the first interview discussed how she was working about ten hours a day during the week and doing some work on the weekends but not a great deal. She felt that her new teaching job was not impacting on her personal life and she was making sure that she had time to go to the gym and get enough sleep. She was finding the job to be manageable and quite rewarding. In the second interview Nicole pointed out that she was working less now (about nine hours a day) and taking the weekends off completely. She was doing most of her work at school and not having any trouble balancing her work and personal life. She stated that she wanted to remain at her current school for a longer period of time and envisaged being there for six to eight years. In the third interview Nicole spoke about how she was still working about nine

hours a day during the week and keeping her weekends schoolwork-free. She felt that she was working efficiently and having a good work/life balance. She was clearly content in her role and very much looking forward to continuing to work as a teacher in the future.

Amy in the first interview indicated that she was working about nine hours a day during the week and doing three or four hours of schoolwork over the weekend. She was very aware of the danger of burning herself out, so was avoiding taking too much work home with her. She also mentioned at this early point that she would only stay in her current position until the end of the year because she was not being intellectually stimulated and her school did not have senior students. In the second interview Amy discussed how she was doing about the same amount and achieving quite a lot because she can manage her time better than other teachers. She felt that she was achieving a good work/life balance because she was not allowing teaching to consume her. She also again mentioned that she wanted to leave her job at end of the year and do a PhD. In the third interview Amy stated that she was still ensuring that she was not doing too much schoolwork at home. She felt that she was working efficiently and using her additional release time well, but she was wasting time on unnecessary administrative tasks that had been imposed on her by the school's leadership team. At this point she made it clear that she was very unhappy with her current position and felt that a negative culture existed at the school. As a result, she was adamant that she would be leaving her job at the end of the year and doing her PhD.

This section summarises what each of the participants experienced at three separate points in their first year of teaching, and on interpreting the findings associated with this time-related theme, the following can be noted. It was to be expected that the participants would experience the most challenges at the beginning of their first year of teaching and things would steadily improve as the year progressed. However, this did not prove to be the case for all of them. For a significant number, their situation actually became worse as the year continued and this was somewhat unexpected. Also noteworthy was the fact that for some of the participants, the specific point in time (i.e. beginning, middle or end of the year) had very little impact on their experiences and perceptions of teaching.

4.3 Conclusion

The time themes that I have presented in this chapter collectively reveal the following. Firstly, the young first-year teachers participating in this study did not always struggle with the amount of work that they had to complete and the time demands placed upon them by their new jobs were not always excessively taxing. However, for four of the FYGY teachers in this study, this was not the case, indicating that it is worth investigating why some struggle to cope whilst others experience a smooth transition when undertaking their new teaching positions. In addition, the findings uncovered in my research indicate that the FYGY teachers who participated had high expectations about the sorts of support that they should receive from their schools. Also, they did not necessarily remain quiet and toil away in their classrooms unheard but rather were prepared to speak up if they felt that their colleagues, mentors, supervisors and/or principals had exercised poor judgement or treated them in what they believed was an unfair manner. Furthermore, the young teachers who participated in this study appeared to be less motivated by job security and viewed career stability in a more negative light.

Chapter 5: Findings - Analysis of Narratives and Visual

Metaphors

5.1 Overview

In this chapter I analyse the narratives of four participants. The stories told by each of these selected participants about their experience of being a first-year teacher and the significant incidents that took place will be shared in their own words. However, it does need to be noted that for continuity and a sense of flow the participants' narratives have been slightly adjusted and/or modified. The reason for including these participant narratives is because their stories are particularly interesting, rich and diverse. Furthermore, they embody four different ways that FYGY teachers experience time and the specific narratives chosen capture the various dynamics and complexities experienced by young novice teachers as they move through their first year of teaching. I also analyse the visual metaphors chosen by these same participants, as these images offer another medium that further facilitates the development of a rich understanding of their first year experience. The images serve as a valuable tool that offers a focal point for discussion and in effect provides a window through which we can view the lives of young beginning teachers.

In previous chapters it has been argued that individuals live storied lives on storied landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 24) and the use of visual metaphors can serve as a powerful tool to explain and interpret, as well as provide insights into the lived experiences of individuals (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 470). Hence this chapter will tell, interpret and illustrate the life experiences as lived by a sample of FYGY secondary school teachers located in NSW.

5.2.1 Introduction to Teacher Narratives

Four of the ten FYGY teachers participating in this research project were purposively selected here. They are Nicole, Louise, Darren and Emily. The reason for selecting these particular participants was that their stories highlighted different aspects of the first-year teachers' experiences and they presented some of the most pronounced

examples of significant incidents that appeared to have an impact on FYGY teachers' lives. Nicole's experience of being a young novice teacher was predominantly happy and successful and she was the participant who exhibited the least distress and in fact thrived in her first year of teaching. In contrast, Louise's experience of her first year was mostly unhappy, stressful and negative and in each interview she expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with her new position. In addition, whilst it was expected that the journeys of these FYGY teachers would become easier as the year progressed, it soon became evident that this was not always the case and contrary to expectations, some of the teachers found that their jobs actually became harder as the year went on. This situation was very much reflected in the experiences of Emily. In contrast, for Darren the year started off with a number of serious challenges, but things improved markedly and he ended the year feeling considerably optimistic and quite relaxed and content in his new teaching job. Therefore, these four narratives demonstrate four different experiences of being a FYGY teacher.

5.2.2 Nicole's Narrative

In the first interview, conducted towards the end of Term 1, Nicole's narrative involved explaining how early in the year she had gone on a Year 7 camp for three days, and she spoke about how this had allowed her to make good connections with the students, which helped her to build a strong rapport with them. In the second interview, conducted at the end of Term 2, Nicole shared the story about how a student from her school, whom she did not teach, had seen her the previous evening, when she was out having dinner at a local Mexican restaurant, but this did not make her feel uncomfortable which surprised her. In the third interview, conducted at the start of Term 4, Nicole's narrative described how she feels almost completely accepted at her school and has had her sense of belonging reinforced by the fact that many students approach her and are keen to talk to her when she is on playground duty.

April 2014

Well, there is a story that I could share but it is not sort of about my teaching, but rather about how I went on a Year 7 camp for three days. I was a bit hesitant about

going at first, as I was new to the school and didn't really know the other teachers who were also going on the camp. Also, I didn't really have much of an idea about what the students would be like when they were away from school, so I was a bit nervous about going. However, it turned out to be a fantastic experience! They had a ball and so did I! Also going on the camp really helped me to make connections with the kids. I got to see them outside of the classroom and we got to have a laugh together when doing the ropes activities and playing games and stuff. It was great also because when I came back to school it was so much easier to have discussions with these kids and build a rapport with them. Therefore, going on the camp has meant that it's now actually easier to get these students to focus on their Maths work in class because we often talk briefly about camp at the start of a lesson or during a lesson, and have a bit of a laugh when something funny that happened is mentioned, then I say okay let's get back to work now and they do so happily. Having this little chat every now and then actually makes them settle down more quickly because they see me as a person and not just as their Maths teacher, so they focus more on their work and want to do it because they liked spending that time with me. So what I'm getting at is by going on the Year 7 camp I have been able to relate better to the kids in my Year 7 class, as I find that I have a much better rapport with them than I do with the kids in my other classes. Like my Year 8 class, they are much less responsive and keen to answer questions and I feel that this is the case because I've not had a chance to spend time with them outside of the classroom and do fun things with them. However, I'd have to say that this is starting to change a bit because I attended a school swimming carnival the other day, which gave me the opportunity to talk to these kids outside of our regular maths classes and they are now also starting to be a bit more friendly towards me.

July 2014

This story actually happened to me today and is about something that happened outside of school, but it is still connected in a roundabout kind of way to my teaching. Over the last two terms that I've been at the school, I have been talking to other kids in the playground or at sport and I don't actually teach them, but they still come up and speak to me and we have a bit of a chat. Anyway, I had this one kid, a boy in Year 10 who came up to me when I was on playground duty at recess and say to me: "Did you

enjoy your dinner last night at the Mexican restaurant?” Now I realise that Newcastle is not a huge place, so it is possible that I’ll see kids around when I’m going out, but I used to think before that if something like that was to happen, then that would completely freak me out, because I don’t know who they are, but they know that I’m a teacher at the school and that could make things a bit awkward, as they’ve seen me when I’m outside of school and I’m not being a teacher. However, what surprised me was when this boy did come up and say this to me, it didn’t bother me that much. I think I was alright with it because at the end of the day we share the same environment, and Newcastle is a relatively small place, so it is to be expected that I may bump into students outside of school when I’m out and about and yeah, this is just part of life, so there is no point getting stressed about seeing kids around when you’re outside of school. I suppose it really is just about being relaxed and accepting that you’re a teacher but a person too, and you have a life outside of school, so seeing kids at the shops or in restaurants is no big deal.

October 2014

Well I’m not sure that this counts as a story, but I have started to realise from being in the school now for over three terms, that a lot of the kids have started to recognise me and they know who I am. Like when I go to other Year 7 classes (apart from my own) they remember me from the Year 7 camp and I remember some of their faces but I don’t know them, however, they know me and I think that this is a good thing as it will help me in the future because there is a good chance that I will probably have these kids in years to come, as they progress through the school into Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Also the other kids who are not in Year 7, they have seen me around too when I am on playground duty and they come up and talk to me, so that makes it so much nicer because you see a bunch of kids and you can have a chat with them and that is just so much better than the kids looking at you as if you are just some unknown teacher walking around the playground. So, I suppose what I’m getting at is I’m feeling more like I’m a part of the school and I’m not an outsider anymore. I feel more established, and like more at home in the school, because I’ve made a name for myself and that has definitely made my job a lot more enjoyable and easier.

What these three connected stories from Nicole reveal is a narrative which explores how she capably navigated her new role and life as a teacher, both within and outside of school. They highlight how she successfully established relationships with the wider school community, and these assisted her greatly in the development of both her professional and personal identities. Consequently, she was able to make a very a successful start to her new career.

5.2.3 Louise's Narrative

Towards the end of Term 1, Louise had her first interview. In this she shared a story about how she really wanted to get a permanent role with the DoE, as it offered job security and this was something that she very much valued, however, the length of time that it took for the DoE to appoint her to a specific position was frustrating and made her feel hesitant and uncertain. At the end of Term 2, Louise had her second interview. In this interview, she described how she is in contact with a large number of other Science teaching graduates from the University of Sydney, as they were on a group Facebook page, and she commented that virtually all of the other teachers on this page felt the same way that she did about their teaching jobs, with their positions being very stressful, demanding and challenging. As a result, many were looking for other positions, including opportunities overseas. This story highlights how Louise wanted to emphasise that what she was experiencing as a young first year out teacher was not unique to her and in fact many other novice teachers like her were in similar situations. At the end of Term 3, Louise had her third interview. At this point, she told a story that was more focused on her personal life, but it was still very much connected to her position as a school teacher. This is because the narrative was about how she had endured a relationship breakup (as did another female teacher who was also in her Facebook group and in a similar situation to her) due to her partner not understanding why she had to do so much schoolwork in the evenings and on weekends. This caused her to have little time for him, and this ultimately led to them separating.

April 2014

I think the story I'd like to share is about how I ended up getting my current full-time permanent position with the Department of Education. I was working in some private colleges doing tutoring but these were all temporary positions and I really liked the fact that the Department of Education was going to offer me a permanent position. Anyway, it took a very long time for the Department to actually get organised for this position and in fact it took about four months altogether! Now but I have a lot of regrets about taking the job. I took it because it offered me security but they made me wait so long, and this made me feel very bad. Now I have security because I'm in a permanent job, but I am not happy because there has been a lot of uncertainty and pressures in my new position and I'm not sure if I can manage to do all that the school expects me to do, as I have to teach all of my classes, including Year 11 and Year 12, and I have to work on my accreditation. So I suppose what it is, is that I really did not like the long amount of time that was involved in getting this permanent job that I've now got, and now I feel that I'm under a lot of pressure with lots of work and deadlines put on me constantly, and this has made me think that it perhaps would have been better to just stick to doing my temporary tutoring jobs in the private colleges because these were much more easier to handle.

July 2014

Well the story I'd like to tell now is about how I know lots of other beginning teachers who are feeling the same as me, as they are also feeling very unhappy and stressed about their jobs. I know this actually as a fact because I am on a Facebook group which consists of all the new Science teachers from Sydney University who have graduated over the last few years. Anyway, we always talk about stuff on Facebook that is happening to us at our schools and so many times what they are saying is the same as what I am experiencing. Everyone feels so overworked and sad about their jobs, and you know there is probably about twenty other teachers who are in the same position as me! All of them have had enough and are ready to quit and so many are looking for other jobs, including jobs in other countries, because they are finding it very hard to cope with everything that they have to do in their positions. You see, especially for

Science teachers, we are forced to do more work as we have to prepare so many different lessons and organise our labs for experiments, as well as teach so many different subjects, like I have to teach Science, Biology, Chemistry and even Agriculture! So you can't blame us Science teachers for looking for better job offers that we can get from overseas, as these positions are more attractive because you don't have to do so much work! Basically what I'm saying here is that there are many other teachers like me who are also considering leaving their jobs, as we just feel that the way we are treated and the amount of work that we are having to do is just not worth it. Other countries seem to appreciate Science teachers more, but here in Australia the schools don't see how hard we have to work and they don't recognise that we are having to do more work than teachers who teach other subjects. So because of this I think lots of young Science teachers, like me, will start quitting their jobs soon.

September 2014

Okay I think the story I'd like to tell now is more about my private life, but it is still connected to my job. It is to do with the fact that, a lot of girls I know who are also high school teachers like me, that we are not able to balance our personal lives with teaching. This is because me and another girl who is also in the Facebook group, we have gone through relationship breakups because we don't have time for our partners. I think this has happened because a lot of the time our partners don't really understand what high school teachers do, and they don't understand how it is a lot of work and it is very highly emotional sort of work and it takes a lot of time. So I guess people who are not in teaching don't really understand. They just think that as school teachers we just work 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock and we just teach from a textbook. They can't understand how the job can be that busy and they think that we have a lot of holidays. They also don't understand how teaching is so personal and it really affects us a lot emotionally. I have had to go through quite a bad breakup with my partner because he could not understand the hours that I had to work, and because I was always doing schoolwork we stopped having a lot of communication. He just could not understand why I had to work so hard and do so much for my job. Anyway, we ended up splitting up a few weeks ago and I am still feeling very sad and upset about this.

When considered as a single narrative, these stories from Louise highlight the significant and detrimental impact that her new teaching position had on all aspects of her life. The heavy workload and high level of anxiety that she experienced revealed how the first year of teaching can be negative and unenjoyable. For Louise it culminated in the breakdown of her relationship with her partner, and this incident would only further reinforce to her that choosing teaching as a job has come at a huge personal cost. It also would obviously lead to her questioning whether this was the right career choice for her. Further, it appears that Louise's is not an isolated case, and her experience is not uncommon amongst other FYGY teachers because they too find it difficult to balance their heavy workloads with their personal relationships.

5.2.4 Darren's Narrative

In the first interview (conducted midway through Term 1) Darren shared the story about a difficult student in his lower ability Year 8 class who suddenly started to breakdance during a lesson. Darren was unsure as to how to respond to this and at first thought of perhaps scolding the boy and imposing some type of punitive punishment, but he then changed his mind and decided to be more flexible and adopt an alternate discipline approach that was more positive. In Darren's second interview (conducted at the end of Term 2) he told a story that was not focused on students but rather the school's administration, as he described how the deputy principal lost the paperwork that he had prepared and submitted for a soccer excursion that he was organising, and it unfortunately had to be re-done which was quite frustrating for him. Darren in his third interview (conducted at the start of Term 4) told the story about how his Year 8 class were really stressing him out with their poor behaviour, but he got advice and guidance from the Head Teacher Science, who also taught the same class, and subsequently he developed his ability to manage this group of students and in the process became more relaxed with them and tolerant of their behaviours.

March 2014

Well, there is a story that I'd like to share about a student that I teach in my low ability Year 8 class who I would describe as being very 'random', because he does something

new every lesson. Anyway, this kid never stays in his seat and the other day I had him sitting and working for the first twenty-five minutes of the lesson, which made me very happy, but suddenly he got up and started to breakdance in front of the class and started doing a handstand and spinning around on his shoulder. I thought well I need to stop this because it's dangerous and I should probably scold the boy and tell him that what he was doing was not appropriate, but instead I let his 'performance' run its course and then I spoke to him in an encouraging and positive way about his interest in hip-hop music and dance. Anyway, this proved to be a bit of a breakthrough moment for me with this student because up to this point he was usually very loud, but now he has quietened down and become more settled in class. What I have worked out from this is that as a teacher you have got to be flexible and ready for anything, because very often out of the blue things happen, and the way that you react to these incidents is very important. I have learnt this on the job and nothing I did at university could have taught me this. I think that by getting out there and doing the job of teaching, that it has now become easier for me to work out how to handle different types of students and situations, and to be honest what I have learnt over the last few months is that sometimes you just have to take a risk with the kids and try different ways to handle things.

July 2014

Okay, the story I'd like to tell now is still about school but it is not to do with my classes, it is more about how other stuff happens in schools that can be a bit frustrating. You see I was organising a variation of routine for a soccer excursion and there is this big long document that you have to fill out, with a risk assessment in it and I was filling all of that out and getting all of the cover done and getting it all approved by the executive. Anyway, it got sent back after the first lot of checks had been done and it then went to the Deputy to get fully approved and somehow it went missing on her desk. It basically disappeared and was lost, so my head teacher came back and told me that this had happened and said that I'd have to do all the paperwork again! As you can imagine, this was pretty frustrating but I suppose it showed me that you can never be totally one hundred percent prepared for everything as a teacher. You always have to plan for the unexpected to happen and even if you try and cover all bases you should

not expect that things will always go smoothly. And you know the funny thing was that as it turned out the day before I was meant to be taking the boys out for the soccer game, well the Deputy found the first copy of the paperwork that I'd done, but of course this was too late as I'd already done all of the documents again! Apparently she'd put it into somebody else's pile of papers and it got buried in there. So yeah, what I've noticed more as the year has gone along is that working in a high school there is what happens in the classroom, but there is also a lot admin stuff that has to get done, and with teaching I've learnt that I have to be flexible and prepared for things to go wrong.

October 2014

Okay, well I'd like to come back to my Year 8 class, the same challenging class that I talked about in our first interview, and yeah, I'd like to tell you another story about this class but instead of focusing on one particular student's behaviour I'd rather talk about the class in general. You see in Term 2 and for much of Term 3, I was getting very stressed out about their behaviour and I'd come out of the lessons that I had with that class feeling very shaken up and stressed because I wasn't able to teach them and they weren't wanting to learn. So yeah, whilst my other classes were going alright, this class was getting me down and stressing me out, which in turn was making me feel a bit negative towards my teaching. However, I spoke to one of the other teachers who also is teaching the class and she is the Head Teacher Science. Anyway, she told me to plan out the work in little chunks and now with that class, the only expression that I can use, is I just roll with the punches and that is sort of appropriate because they are kind of a violent class! I suppose what you could say is that with the class there is more give and take between the students and me. I just draw a line with what they do and am more lax with that class in terms of what gets done. So that has really helped me to stress less and now (in Term 4) I'm feeling like I've got a much more positive attitude than I had before and I'm feeling really good about my teaching now.

As an ongoing narrative we can see connections between these three stories. What they reveal is Darren developing in his first year of teaching an understanding that there is a need for flexibility and resilience as a teacher, with this applying to his

dealings with individual students, challenging classes and completing administrative tasks. Once he accepted the need for flexibility and resilience, teaching became much easier and more satisfying for him.

5.2.5 Emily's Narrative

In the first interview, conducted towards the end of Term 1, Emily told a somewhat similar story to that shared by Darren in his first interview, as she spoke about how she responded in a less conventional way to a challenging student in her Year 7 class and this had a positive outcome. In Emily's second interview, conducted early in Term 3, she again shared a narrative that involved challenging student behaviour. However, the incident described and its outcome was neither positive nor negative. Rather it was a more matter-of-fact description of how a student in her Year 8 class was being defiant, and then when sent out of the classroom and spoken to by the teacher, the pupil became emotional and started crying. There were clearly other issues affecting the student outside of this specific incident which had obviously affected her. In the third interview, conducted early in Term 4, Emily told the very distressing and emotional story about how a Year 9 student in her rollcall class had committed suicide. Whilst doing so, she broke down in tears and the interview had to be halted.

March 2014

Okay, well I had this one particular incident with my low ability Year 7 class where I was going through an assignment, and there is this difficult girl in the class who started to mock me by imitating the way I was saying the word "tick." (I was explaining what marks were awarded for specific sections of the task and the ticks showed where these marks were allocated.) Anyway, after she had repeated the word "tick" and imitated the way I had said it for the third or fourth time, I decided that I could not ignore it any longer so I responded, however, I did so in a non-confrontational way and turned what the girl was saying into a bit of a game which the whole class joined in on because I just said, "Yes that is right, if you wrote that you got a 'tick', let's all say the word 'tick' together" and the class did, so then the student who was mocking me didn't do it anymore because what she had intended to do was stir me up, but when she found

that she was not getting any mileage out of this she stopped her bad behaviour. So, I suppose this story is relevant to me because it shows how by using an alternative strategy to manage a defiant student I got a positive outcome and this made me feel good about how I'm developing my classroom management skills.

July 2014

Well I'm not sure if this counts as a narrative, so you can discard it if it doesn't, but my view of teaching has changed a lot over the last six months. I think that you often get caught up in the idea that high school teaching involves you in standing up at the front of the classroom and teaching the relevant content to different classes. Then along the way you develop a rapport with your students, but I feel like the job is actually a lot more about dealing with welfare issues. So for example, there was one recent incident that happened with my Year 9 class. There was a student who was being very challenging and she wouldn't engage with myself or do the work that I set. So I sent her outside of the classroom, because obviously we were getting nowhere and she was just causing a scene and distracting the other kids in the class. So when I went outside to ask her as to why she was behaving in the way that she was, she broke down in tears. Now this was not something that I expected because this girl is pretty tough, but she just started sobbing. Anyway, I tried to find out why she was so upset but she wouldn't open up, so I just let her stay outside of the classroom for the rest of the lesson. So I suppose what this story shows, is the more human side of teaching, in that I think people often forget about how the job of being a high school teacher means that you have to deal with lots of emotional teenagers and often they react in ways that you don't expect.

October 2014

Well the story that I would now like to tell must be kept completely anonymous and you cannot mention the school I'm at, because it is about a very sad thing that happened to a student at my school. (The interviewer at this point assured the participant of complete confidentiality.) This girl was in my Year 9 rollcall class and she ... she ... committed suicide. (On stating these words Emily became very upset and started crying.) It happened at the end of Term 3 and it has really affected me because

this was a girl who I saw every day at school and she killed herself. This incident has made me think about how your soul is so important and you just don't realise that it affects you as much as it actually does ... I still can't believe that it happened and she is gone. It is just so tragic ... I'm sorry but I don't think that I can talk about it any further. (The interviewer at this point reassured Emily that this was completely acceptable and stopped the interview. He then offered her information about counselling services that were available to DoE employees.)

By combining these three stories into a single narrative, it becomes evident that each of Emily's stories are about her interactions and relationships with students and how these proved to be challenging and difficult to deal with. As a first-year teacher, she found the issue of student behaviour and welfare to be quite a burden for her. Emily realised as the year progressed that her role went beyond teaching her subject, and whilst she had anticipated that it would not be an easy job, she did not expect that it would be so taxing emotionally.

5.2.6 Conclusion to Teacher Narratives

Through analysing the narratives shared by Nicole, Louise, Darren and Emily at three separate points as they moved through their first year of teaching, and then considering how and what their stories reflect in terms of the lives lived by FYGY teachers, a number of points have become apparent. Firstly, Nicole's stories revealed the importance of forming and sustaining relationships and getting involved in whole school activities. Her positive first year teaching experience highlighted how for young education graduates to make a successful transition into the role of secondary school teacher, they need to be prepared to embrace opportunities to interact with students outside of the classroom. This helps to build rapport, and they need to be relaxed, welcoming and open when students approach them, as this will help to establish the teacher's reputation in a favourable way in the school. Secondly, Louise's stories emphasised how vital it is for FYGY teachers to be given the time and support that they need, at both the systemic level and the school level, so they are not overworked and the demands of their jobs do not have a negative impact on their personal lives. However, it is interesting that in her narratives the students did not feature in any way.

As a teacher, her focus appears to be more on the organisational aspects of her job and the volume of work required to be done. Thirdly, Darren's stories highlighted how it is necessary for young first-year teachers to be resilient and flexible when responding to situations that arise in schools, and how crucial it is that these teachers receive sound advice and support from their colleagues. Successfully managing student behaviour was a focus for him, as was the need to be able to handle administrative frustrations. Finally, Emily's stories illustrate how critical it is that FYGY teachers be made aware of and sufficiently prepared to deal with the fact that they will be confronted with welfare issues that can be intense, and as a result they need to be emotionally resilient. It is important that they value relationships and care about the students that they come into contact with, but caution must be taken so as this does not have negative consequences for them in terms of their mental wellbeing.

In addition, more general points for consideration across the four narratives have been raised. In the first instance, the experiences of this group of beginning teachers do not always conform to expectations because a degree of disparity existed in regard to how they experienced the first year of teaching. Furthermore, in juxtaposing the experiences of specifically selected young teachers, as done here with Nicole and Louise and Darren and Emily, it became evident that often there were more differences as opposed to similarities that existed between the participants, even though all of them were first-year teachers from the same Generation Y demographic and they were all working in state secondary schools in NSW. Each had significantly unique and varied experiences, which teach us different lessons.

5.3.1 Introduction to Teacher Visual Metaphors

The use of visual metaphors (as shown in Appendix 2) added a further means of analysing and understanding the experiences of the FYGY teacher participants, as these metaphors provided a stimulus for response and a means of promoting discussion. They helped to paint an evocative picture that shed more light on the meanings of the data gathered. Furthermore, the points and assertions that I make in this chapter become more compelling because, as will be seen, the images chosen and discussed by the participants add a further dimension to the findings uncovered

through the previous analysis of the narratives. In going about this process what becomes obvious is that whilst there were six visual metaphors that could be chosen by the participants, the four FYGY teachers discussed in this chapter predominantly chose three of the images. The images chosen being walking the tightrope/railing, the diverging paths/crossroads and the sunrise/sunset. How and why these visual metaphors are relevant and important will be discussed, as well as how they add greater depth to what was uncovered in the participants' stories.

5.3.2 Nicole's Metaphors

In the first interview Nicole identified with the crossroads image and tightrope image. These were applied to her classes by describing that she wanted to build rapport with her students, but she did not want to get too close and allow them to get away with too much, as she was worried that this might lead to them going down the wrong path. "I have a challenging Year 10 class that I feel I'm walking a fine line with because I want to be friendly and get them onside, but at the same time I do not want to be too friendly and ... put up with crap from them in terms of their behaviour." She then also chose the crossroads image "because with some classes I have ... got them off to a good start, but I am concerned that I may get them offside by being too harsh on them ... Alternatively, if I let some classes get away with too much then they too will head down the wrong path." What these visual metaphors highlight is the way that the participant appreciates the importance of finding opportunities to develop positive relationships with the students in her classes. However, balancing this and not becoming too friendly with her students is an issue, as she does not want to jeopardise the authority that she is trying to establish as a teacher.

In the second interview Nicole chose the sunrise/sunset visual metaphor and explained that this was relevant to her because she felt settled and happy with the way things were working out.

I'd have to say that my favourite picture at the moment is actually Image 1 (the sunrise/sunset) partly because having moved to Newcastle it is a completely different environment, and every time I drive home I see a really cool sunset

because I leave school at about 5 o'clock and staying back so late means that I can get on top of everything.

Choosing this visual metaphor demonstrates how the participant is feeling pleased and satisfied with how her new job is working out.

The visual metaphor that Nicole chose in her third interview was climbing the mountain and it reflected how she felt that she had made significant gains and been successful in her first year of teaching. Hence she was feeling very positive about what she had achieved. "I think that the snow one where the guy is standing on top of the snow ... because now after Term 3 I feel that I am making quite a bit of progress with my students." What this metaphor highlights is how Nicole has made a good start to her career and developed her reputation in the school as a capable teacher. This has provided her with a solid foundation on which she can build future success.

5.3.3 Louise's Metaphors

In the first interview Louise chose the crossroads image as best representing how she was currently feeling towards her occupation, as this indicated that she was looking at other alternatives to teaching because the job was just too demanding. "I would choose Image 5 (the crossroads) as best representing my current feelings and attitudes towards teaching because I'm feeling very tempted to take an alternative path away from teaching and move down the path towards a job in the corporate world."

Therefore, it can be seen that at this early stage she is not strongly committed to her position and this could explain her sense of dissatisfaction with teaching.

In the second interview Louise then chose two visual metaphors as best representing her current thoughts and attitudes towards her new role, and the images selected were the crossroads and the sunrise/sunset. The crossroads image was chosen because she was still very much considering leaving her job whilst the sunrise/sunset image was also nominated because this represented her passion for teaching. She made the point that she really enjoys being a teacher but the excessive workload is wearing her down and she is finding it difficult to cope with the demands of the job. "I

think that teaching is my passion ... but the kind of experiences I am going through now has made me question my ... position, and the sunset is like I'm happy with teaching ... but the amount that I am working is making me feel very sad." Thus whilst Louise had chosen similar images to Nicole, they did not evoke positive connotations for Louise but rather were associated with her wanting to leave teaching, as it is so time consuming and they reveal her fading passion for the job.

Louise in the third interview chose again the crossroads image but now she was not considering leaving teaching. She had come to the conclusion that this was the right career for her, but she did want to look for "better" teaching opportunities in other schools either locally or overseas.

I know that I have chosen and had the right career all along, except for the fact that I was so busy, so the crossroads is more about ... having to decide on whether I go to another school, or do I do something else and teach in schools in other countries ... I have to decide as what I have now is difficult and I'd like it not to be as hard.

In this case the visual metaphor has evolved to represent how she has realised that she wants to continue teaching, but her current position is simply too demanding and consequently she wants to find another job in a school that places less demands on her time.

5.3.4 Darren's Metaphors

In the first interview the visual image chosen by Darren was predominantly the tightrope/railing, as this metaphor represented how he was under pressure and the job was challenging. He stated that this image was "representative of how I am feeling overall as there are lots of ups and downs and I am still trying to learn lots of things, like all of the kids' and teachers' names." What this visual metaphor encapsulates is how Darren is feeling insecure at this early stage of his first year of teaching.

In the second interview the visual metaphor that Darren mainly focused on was again the tightrope/railing, but he did state that the image of someone doing reading/study was also relevant. This was because his desk had become cluttered with lots of student work to read and mark, as well as reports to write and edit. However, he did state that:

It was still very much a tightrope sort of thing, but less, with the tightrope kind of getting a bit wider, so I feel like I'm getting a handle on things and a better idea of how the school is running and a better idea of what procedures to follow. I'm also getting to make a lot more individual decisions on my part, as I've found that I am asking my head teacher things less and less and I'm getting the hang of what to do and what not to do.

What has become evident here is that whilst teaching does still have challenges and frustrations, Darren is now better able to manage these and he is able to take them in his stride. Overall, things are becoming easier for him and the tightrope getting wider symbolises this situation and his development of confidence and satisfaction with his new role.

In the third interview it was interesting to note that Darren chose a new metaphor to represent his experience of teaching. The visual image nominated was the sunrise/sunset, as he felt that he had now developed maturity and competency, and become a more professional teacher. The tightrope/railing image was still evident but it had less significance for him now. He chose the sunrise or sunset image because he had noticed that he had become more professional as a teacher.

I have more of a grasp on especially the admin side and the teaching part, so I feel like the sunset represents me as an immature teacher whilst the sunrise shows me as a more mature and professional teacher. However, the tightrope image is still a part of it but again it is still getting wider.

Therefore, the image chosen reveals how Darren is gaining more confidence as a teacher and has become comfortable and relaxed in his position.

5.3.5 Emily's Metaphors

In Emily's first interview she chose two visual metaphors to represent how she was currently feeling towards her new job. She focused on the crossroads image, as this illustrated how she had to constantly make lots of choices each day about behaviour management. She also chose the sunrise/sunset image because each day was fresh and new to her, and she was feeling optimistic about being a teacher. She stated that she chose:

The crossroads image because each day at school I have to make many decisions that involve me in choosing what direction to go in, and this is in particular the case with behaviour management, because students can often be challenging and I constantly have to decide how I will respond and with this comes the fact that I have to make a decision regarding the best way or ways to deal with misbehaviour.

In addition, Emily chose the sunrise/sunset image "because I treat each day that I'm teaching as being fresh and new, and I feel that there is always a silver lining regardless of the challenges that teaching presents." What is important here is that with Emily choosing the sunrise/sunset visual metaphor it is clear that she is feeling optimistic about her future as a secondary school teacher, as she has been able to have some good outcomes when difficulties arose in the classroom.

In Emily's second interview she again chose two visual metaphors, with the climbing the mountain image as well as the walking the tightrope/railing image being nominated. She chose the mountain image because of the fact that she has survived and had some little victories. She commented that these do not happen often in teaching, so they should be appreciated and ultimately just by surviving in the job then this needs to be considered a victory.

Those small wins don't happen often and ... when they do you almost have like an overflow of joy ... I don't know if you have heard the expression that 'survival is victory' but sometimes that is what it feels like at the end of the school day - I have made it through!

The tightrope/railing image was also chosen because teaching was very much a balancing act. "I feel like it is always a fine line and you have to just try and keep it all together, or you are just trying to keep it on the straight and narrow without having to fall off." What is noteworthy here, in particular with Emily's choice of the tightrope/railing image, is that her view of teaching is now much less optimistic and she is currently viewing teaching as being a more challenging and demanding job. So much so, that she is now just happy to survive each day and remain in her position.

In the third interview when Emily was asked about which visual metaphor she would now choose to represent her view of teaching, she only nominated one and that was the crossroads image because she was at this point questioning whether she wanted to be a teacher. Furthermore, she made it clear that she was feeling very unhappy in her role "because you honestly never know what the day is going to be like and sometimes if I am being very honest, I don't want to be here." The image now being nominated by Emily highlights how unpredictable teaching can be and the participant is questioning whether or not she wants to remain in the profession. Clearly Emily is feeling increasingly drained, challenged and worn down by her teaching position.

5.3.6 Conclusion to Teacher Visual Metaphors

On reflection, what has become evident through closely considering the visual metaphors chosen and discussed by Nicole, Louise, Darren and Emily, was that there was a strong correlation between certain images and the experience of being a FGY teacher. Overall, the tightrope/railing represented the job's challenges and how it involves balancing competing demands and pressures. When these pressures and demands become too much, invariably the FGY teachers would choose the crossroads image, as it represented the desire to consider alternatives to pursuing teaching as a

career. However, when the FYGY teachers were feeling pleased and satisfied in their new positions, then they would frequently choose the sunrise/sunset image as being representative of how teaching was providing them with fulfilling and positive experiences.

Nicole and Louise respectively experienced the highest and lowest levels of success and satisfaction when in their first year of teaching. As a consequence, it is noteworthy that by Nicole's second interview, she had nominated the sunrise/sunset image because by this point she felt content, comfortable and relaxed in her new job. However, Louise consistently chose the crossroads image throughout all three of her interviews and this verified how at no point in her first year of teaching did she feel that her current job was manageable or sufficiently rewarding to do long-term. On the other hand, Darren's and Emily's experiences revealed distinct reversals in terms of their attitudes and feelings towards their new positions as teachers. Darren chose the tightrope/railing near the beginning of the year and still chose it in the second interview, but at this point the tightrope was "becoming wider" for him, with the job becoming more manageable and satisfying. This was so much the case that by the end of the year he had chosen the sunrise/sunset image, because he was feeling very positive and committed to his new career. However, the reverse occurred with Emily, as she was feeling optimistic at the start of her first year of teaching and so chose the sunrise/sunset, but she had progressed to the tightrope/railing in the second interview, as she found her position becoming increasingly challenging and draining. Then by the third interview she had serious concerns and reservations about continuing in her role and subsequently nominated the crossroads image.

Hence, as expected, the three main images chosen by these participants - the tightrope/railing, the crossroads and the sunrise/sunset - were reflective of the experiences that they had as FYGY teachers. The visual metaphors selected in effect illustrated what the first-year teachers shared in their narratives/stories.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter I focused upon four participants who were specifically chosen because their experience of being FYGY teachers provided a sample of the different experiences of the larger group of participants. The incidents that Nicole, Louise, Darren and Emily shared and the images that they discussed, revealed the distinct highs and lows involved in being a FYGY teacher, and how individual situations can change quite dramatically as a teacher moves through the first year of teaching. The narratives that they told and the visual metaphors that they nominated provided the means for a rigorous examination of the lives lived by this particular group of FYGY educators. Furthermore, the insights gained from undertaking this analysis were then discussed so that a sophisticated understanding of what young teachers encounter in their first year could be attained.

Essentially, I have found that FYGY educators often find the physical and emotional demands of teaching to be a serious challenge, and if these are not adequately managed then these demands can drive them away from their chosen career. Also FYGY teachers frequently are passionate about the work they do in their classrooms with students. However, management issues, administrative processes and the nature of the support provided to them can often become a source of tension and conflict that almost invariably has a negative impact on their level of commitment to the profession. These findings will be considered in much greater detail in the ensuing Discussion chapters with Chapter 6 focussing on the time themes and Chapter 7 the insights gained from analysing selected participants' narratives and metaphors.

Chapter 6: Discussion - Evaluating Time Related Themes

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss and evaluate the eleven time related themes identified and described in Chapter 4. In the process, I will highlight how in this study, unlike findings from the research undertaken by authors in the field such as Renard (2003), Anhorn (2008), Halford (1998), Lang (2001) and Schuck et al. (2011), workload was not a key issue for some of the FYGY teachers who participated. Nor were the time demands placed upon them by their new jobs found to be excessively taxing by all the participants. However, there were parallels to the findings in the research studies mentioned above for some of the research participants; factors such as workload and lack of time did have a strong impact on these participants' personal and professional lives. Consequently, I consider why this is the case, with my discussion focusing on the reasons why some of the FYGY teachers failed to effectively manage the demands associated with their new teaching positions, and contrasting this with those who flourished in their new roles as classroom practitioners. What has become apparent is that the first year of teaching was experienced quite differently amongst the young teachers in the study, and this seemed to be dependent on three main factors or situational dimensions:

- 1) The provision of capable mentors for FYGY teachers: whether they had productive support provided by an approachable and helpful mentor and/or were consistently offered assistance by faculty colleagues.
- 2) The need for the faculty/school to provide a positive staff learning environment: whether the FYGY teacher was appointed to a school and/or faculty that had a supportive staff learning environment and whether they were provided with additional release time.
- 3) The FYGY teacher's commitment to achieving a healthy work/life balance: how committed as an individual they were to ensuring that they maintained an effective work/life balance.

The following figure (Figure 2) summarises and illustrates these three dimensions.



Figure 2: Situational Dimensions Influencing FGY Teacher Experiences

These three factors/dimensions emerge when the time themes are interpreted and analysed. They establish a frame of reference to better understand the experiences of FGY teachers who are appointed to full-time permanent positions. However, it does need to be noted that the ten participants in this study were all employed by the NSW DoE in state secondary schools and their experiences when positioned in their first year of teaching were diverse. This diversity of experience is celebrated in this research but claims and generalisations regarding FGY teachers are avoided, as the data were drawn from a relatively small sample.

6.2.1 The Provision of Capable Mentors and Productive Support

This situational dimension encompassed the three time themes: *Just in Time Support*, *Dismissal of Experience/Time* and *Authority of Time*. In the first instance, it related to the quality of mentoring and/or collegial support offered to the FGY teacher participants in this study. The remaining discussion in this section is focused on the FGY teacher attitudes towards the quality of the direction, guidance and advice

offered to them by experienced teachers and those who occupied senior positions within their respective schools.

Just in Time Support

The time theme, *Just in Time Support*, related to the provision of mentors and other support structures for FGY teachers. The participants in my study were each employed in a full-time permanent capacity by the NSW DoE at the start of 2014. As a result, according to this organisation's *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy (2014)* and *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Procedures (2014)*, the FGY teachers participating in this research were entitled to receive funded mentoring support for the equivalent of one hour per week. This is provided in the form of release time allocated to a dedicated mentor. Consequently, the FGY teachers involved were questioned in each of their three interviews about the appropriateness, impact and extent of the support provided by mentors and/or colleagues at their schools. This evoked a mixture of responses. Four commented that they received useful support from their mentors and/or faculty colleagues, but the other six explained how the support that was provided was either not beneficial or non-existent.

To expand on this further, the findings indicated that three of the participants - Darren, Nicole and April - unequivocally felt that their mentors had provided them with support that was valuable and that the timing of this support was appropriate. However, Nelly had mixed feelings about her mentor because whilst he did offer her some support in certain areas, she felt that he did not have her best interests at heart. Then another three of the participants - Cory, Louise and Emily - expressed the view that their mentors were not helpful because they believed that these individuals were incapable of providing effective advice and/or were too busy. Finally, three of the participants - Mario, Kendall and Amy - were allocated mentors very late in their first year and so they were of little benefit, or they felt that their mentors were simply unsuitable for the role as they did not possess the qualities required. Overall, what this highlights is that for the FGY teachers participating in this study, it was the case that the majority (seven of the ten) were dissatisfied with the mentors whom they were allocated and the quality of mentoring support that they received.

Cumming-Potvin and MacCallum (2010) have argued that mentoring involves providing assistance during a transition period so that the newcomers can gain expertise, social learning and mastery over everyday practices. Furthermore, they suggest that mentors need to develop trust and closeness with their mentees (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010, p. 308). Obviously from the point of view of the majority of FYGY teachers participating in this study, their mentors were somewhat unavailable, unsuitable or incapable of providing sound advice. Furthermore, the literature indicates that Generation Y teachers expect their leaders and mentors to be pleasant and understanding (Coley, 2009, p. 21) but clearly this was not the experience of a number of the participants in this study, with Amy's supervisor/mentor being a case in point.

What needs to be considered though are the reasons why the provision of mentor support for young first-year teachers is so problematic. Rowley (1999) points out that mentoring is a challenging endeavour that requires significant investments of time and energy (p. 20). A significant point is made by Bullough (2009), who discusses how the role of mentor is often not well understood and this can create confusion, conflict and tension (p. 41). Furthermore, the relationship between mentor and mentee can often be complex and emotionally challenging (Bullough, 2009, p. 42).

The findings from this research project have highlighted some of the issues associated with the provision of support from mentors, but what was also revealed was the value of the support of other faculty colleagues in the lives of first-year teachers. Four of the participants - Cory, Nelly, Nicole and April - discussed how they had received excellent support from other teachers in their staffroom and this had made their jobs much easier, as these staff members could help them with content related issues, as well as provide teaching strategies that were specifically focused on the subjects that they were teaching. The provision of this type of support was obviously less formal in nature and was often provided by more than one person. However, the value of this informal support was emphasised by some participants. Both Cory and Nelly made the point that they gained more value from the support provided by their faculty colleagues, than from their mentors.

A particularly important finding was those participants who were receiving support from both their faculty colleagues and their mentor (who often was not teaching the same subject as them) experienced fewer difficulties because they were receiving support from a number of sources, with Nicole being an obvious example. As a FGY teacher, she received timely and appropriate support from a range of sources and this contributed greatly towards making her first year of teaching very successful.

The results yielded from this study indicate that these FGY teachers value good quality formal mentoring support and when provided, it leads to fewer problems and issues arising. But its implementation is not consistent across all state high schools, even though NSW DoE policy guidelines mandate that it must occur. What became apparent was that there was a considerable degree of variation amongst the study's ten participants in regards to the provision of mentoring support. Another important finding that emerged was the significance of having support from both a mentor and faculty colleagues. Such an arrangement is enviable because it ensures that both formal and informal mentoring support structures are provided to FGY teachers. However, it also became evident that it was important for the staff members who were providing support to be knowledgeable, easy-going and approachable. They also need to have the capacity to empathise with and understand the issues that their mentees are experiencing. In addition, it became clear that it was not appropriate for the beginning teacher to have their supervisor also perform the role of mentor. Finally, the mentor needs to be available and have the capacity to provide sound advice, as well as be someone whom the FGY teacher can trust.

Dismissal of Experience/Time

The time theme, *Dismissal of Experience/Time*, was not mentioned by all of the participants when they were interviewed. Rather only five of the FGY teachers - Cory, Nelly, Amy, Louise and Emily - actually discussed it in some way. Regardless it still warrants close analysis because it represents how younger teachers can often be dismissive of the experience and/or amount of time that significant others at their schools, such as mentors, have accumulated in the teaching profession.

What was common amongst all five of these participants was the fact that as the year progressed, it became evident that a sense of respect for their mentors did not develop and consequently their relationships were strained and problematic. What this indicates is that these FYGY teachers were much more likely to be dismissive of the experience gained, and time served in the job, by their mentors when it was perceived that the relationship they had with them was unsatisfactory. Also, these beginning teachers did not automatically have respect for their mentors just because they had been teaching for a significantly longer amount of time than them. Rather it had to be earned and to do this, their mentors had to meet their expectations.

To explore the possible reasons for these attitudes surfacing amongst five of the FYGY teacher participants, the relevant literature needs to be considered. Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) have claimed that people in the Generation Y demographic have short attention spans and a tendency to be poor finishers due to their lack of patience and persistence (p. 3). McQueen (2011) has also stated that they have short attention spans and low concentration, but they are well adapted to a world that is overloaded with information (p. 105). Given this, it could be argued that Generation Y do not hold the investment of large amounts of time into any one particular enterprise as necessarily something that is to be admired. As a consequence, unlike other generations, they do not always look favourably upon those individuals who spend long amounts of time in the same position and therefore it is probable that they would be dismissive of the experience gained by these people.

The findings of the research conducted here reinforced this assumption, even though it was not necessarily fair to the mentors assigned to support these participants. For example, in the case of Amy, she did not view her supervisor's/mentor's longstanding twenty-three-year career at the school in a positive light, but rather looked negatively upon her lengthy amount of experience. This was because, in her opinion, this person had done the same thing for a very long time and hence had stagnated in their position. This supports McQueen's (2008) argument that younger teachers do not value career loyalty and longevity in the same way as previous generations of teachers have (p. 7). In a similar vein, Richardson (2011) has stated that Generation Y teachers "threaten to be less committed than earlier generations to making a career out of

teaching” (p. 15) and in my study this was exemplified by Amy who had already decided, after spending less than one year in her teaching position, that it was time for her to embark on a new career.

Amy’s dismissive attitude towards experience and time spent on the job was also revealed to a lesser extent in the responses of four other participants - Cory, Nelly, Louise and Emily. Cory and Nelly were prepared to dismiss the time served and experience accrued in the profession by their mentors, but these two participants chose instead to get support from their faculty colleagues which they both valued greatly. So in effect they were not dismissing experience, but rather seeking the most beneficial support for them from other teachers within the school. In contrast, whilst Louise and Emily also dismissed the support offered by their more experienced mentors, they instead chose to rely on themselves and not seek support from elsewhere within their schools.

In my research, I found that the participating FYGY teachers were more likely to view the length of time served and experience of older teachers in a negative light. This can be attributed to these participants being less likely themselves to be committed to the notion of doing the same job for a lengthy period of time. For the ten FYGY teachers participating in this study, it appeared that they did not automatically respect school staff who had been in the profession for many years. Rather they were of the view that these people had to earn their respect. What was also revealed by five of the participants was that they had clear expectations and a sense that they were entitled to receive effective support from their mentors. However, when advice and guidance were not forthcoming, or not provided in the manner or to the standard that they expected, then it was much more likely that these teachers would become quite dismissive of the time served and experience possessed by the older teachers who were mentoring them. Furthermore, mentors who did not appear to have their interests at heart, or were unable to provide them with solutions to the problems that they were currently experiencing, were also quickly dismissed and the experience that they had accumulated was disregarded.

Authority of Time

The time theme, *Authority of Time*, was consistently identified by all ten of the participants in this study and was largely associated with their own perceptions concerning the amount of authority that they had in their new schools. It emerged from the FYGY teachers' responses to interview questions where they, rather unexpectedly, discussed how because they looked young and therefore had obviously spent less time in the job, they felt that they were treated with less respect by their students and/or fellow teachers. However, what was particularly interesting was the position adopted by the participants, as they were quite accepting of this situation.

This was somewhat surprising, as it has been reported widely by a number of authors such as Reilly (2012) that Generation Y has lost respect for authority figures and in the workplace they "believe that everyone, including the boss, has to earn respect" (p. 8). Also generally they admire "family, friends and people with innovative ideas over people with a title or years in the company" (Reilly, 2012, p. 8). Furthermore, Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) have claimed that Generation Y does not "respect authority, expertise, science and traditional sources of knowledge" (p. 3). Therefore, it seems incongruous that the ten participants involved in this research project would all simply accept that their young ages and minimal time in the job have created the situation where they are treated with less respect than other older teachers in the school. However, many of them, such as Cory, Nicole, Nelly, Mario and April, did counter this perceived disadvantage with the view that it was an advantage being a youthful teacher because they could more easily connect with their students and relate effectively to them, as they had a much better understanding and appreciation of modern technology, music and so on.

Some of the participants also felt that it was not only the students who took younger teachers less seriously than older teachers. Other staff, sometimes including those in executive positions with more authority than them, did not necessarily value the contributions that they could make as younger teachers. Kendall, Louise, Emily, Darren and Amy each described how they encountered this situation.

It appears that a significant number of the young teachers participating in this study felt themselves that they had less authority and their views carried less weight because they were young and relatively inexperienced. This somewhat unexpected finding is in many ways a paradox because as authors such as McQueen (2011) have argued, for “Generation Y respect is not bestowed - it must be earned” (p. 73) but here we have FYGY teachers who appear to be unwilling to challenge the status quo and who were prepared to simply accept the fact that since they have spent less time in the position of classroom practitioner, they will automatically have less power and influence. Furthermore, it is an interesting juxtaposition that the participants in my research appeared to only apply this view to themselves and not to other staff in their schools. This was uncovered in a number of different examples where the FYGY teachers did not respect other teachers in their schools who had spent more time in the job, and often this experience was viewed in quite a dismissive fashion. However, they were willing to accept that because they were new to the role and had little experience - it was to be expected that they would be treated with less respect. Clearly this was somewhat of a paradoxical situation, as the FYGY teachers viewed themselves as having less power and influence because they had not spent much time in their current positions, but they did not apply this thinking in reverse in relation to other staff at their schools who did have many years of experience.

To understand why such a situation might arise, it should be acknowledged that there are power structures operating in the secondary school context and these are very much based on an individual’s length of time spent in a teaching position. This may be something that FYGY teachers are not willing to personally challenge, particularly if they are appointed to secondary schools that do not have a welcoming culture, and even though they may perceive this *authority of time* as being inequitable and/or unfair. However, accepting their lack of seniority is not in opposition to the views of authors such as McQueen (2011) and Ivanova and Smrikarov (2009) who have argued that Generation Y do not respect experience or seniority. This is because the FYGY teachers participating in this study did demonstrate this viewpoint, with the only difference being that they did not apply the same perspective to themselves.

To sum up, this study found that the quality of guidance and support provided to FGY teachers by mentors and/or faculty colleagues was an important factor impacting young teacher attitudes and perceptions of and towards their new positions. Furthermore, the time spent in the job by more experienced teachers did not automatically warrant respect from the study's participants, with it frequently being the case that this lengthy experience was viewed in a negative light. However, FGY teacher attitudes towards their own perceived levels of authority within the school were in some cases contradictory. Regardless, the overall sentiment reflected in participant responses was that respect was not a given but had to be earned, irrespective of the number of years that teachers had spent in the job.

6.2.2 Working in a Positive Staff Learning Environment

In this section, the factors pertaining to the provision of a positive learning and working environment for FGY teachers are discussed. In doing so, the following time themes are relevant: *The Gift of Time*, *Time to Grow/Become*, *Serving Time* and *Time in Conflict*, and these are considered in terms of what the participants in this study experienced in their respective schools when situated in their first year of teaching.

The Gift of Time

The theme, *The Gift of Time*, collected data about whether the FGY teachers had been given access to extra time off class and the effect that this had had on their personal and professional lives. This question was asked because each of the participants involved in the research project was in their first year of teaching and employed in a full-time permanent capacity by the NSW DoE. Therefore, they were all entitled to additional release time as per this organisation's *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy (2014)* and *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Procedures (2014)*, which explicitly make provision for these teachers to receive additional release time that was the equivalent of two hours per week. The NSW DoE's decision to provide first-year teachers with extra time off class was informed by research undertaken by authors such as Halford (1998), Renard (2003) and McCormack and Thomas (2003) who conducted studies with teachers from the Generation X

demographic. They argued that for beginning teachers time was a fundamental resource because as novices they do not have the ability to draw upon previous experience when completing required teaching tasks. Thus the execution of their duties was in effect more time consuming for them (Halford, 1998, p. 35). In fact, McCormack and Thomas (2003) argued that for first-year teachers to successfully move through the survival stage they need to be provided with the resource of time in the form of a reduced teaching load (2003, p. 135). Consequently, it has been acknowledged by a number of employers of teachers Australia wide, including the NSW DoE, that first-year teachers should have their load lightened so as to help them manage the demands associated with their new positions (Renard, 2003, p. 64). Consequently, questioning each of the participants about whether or not they were provided with additional release time and the associated ramifications of this was integral to this research, as it sought to ascertain how important the provision of extra time off class is for FYGY teachers. However, whilst all of the participants welcomed and strongly supported being given additional time, it was the case that there was a considerable degree of variability evident in terms of whether and how the gift of time was received by the first-year teachers involved in this research project.

What became obvious was that those who received the additional release time early in their first year benefitted from it the most. Also the benefit was felt regardless of whether it was provided in the form of fewer lessons to teach in their timetable, or as whole days of relief that they could access when needed throughout the term. Those who received the additional release time later in the year did not find it to be as beneficial and its impact was diluted.

Five of the participants - Darren, Cory, Nelly, Nicole and April - were given their additional release time either at the start of the year or by the start of Term 2. Each of these FYGY teachers commented that being given this extra time off had helped them professionally, as it gave them more time to plan lessons and complete tasks associated with their teaching, like marking. Furthermore, the extra time off class assisted them personally because it allowed them to achieve a healthier work/life balance with more time available to spend with family, friends or pursuing leisure activities, which, as has already been established, is important to Generation Y. Hence

the importance of provision of additional release time, as advocated by a number of authors such as Halford (1998), Renard (2003), McCormack & Thomas (2003) and more recently Schuck et al. (2011) and Jones and Youngs (2012), is confirmed in this study.

However, allocating release time later in the year did not have the same positive effects for the FYGY teachers in this study. Three of the participants - Mario, Amy and Louise - were given the additional release time very late in the year, with Amy and Louise being allocated the extra time off in the second half of the year (that is in Term 3). In Mario's case he was not allocated it until Term 4 when the year was three quarters the way through. With each of these participants, the late provision of additional release time meant that it was far less beneficial to them. They each expressed the view that they were frustrated by this because they needed this time much earlier in the year. First-year teachers require additional release time because they have to spend more hours searching for appropriate teaching resources, planning units and lessons, marking and grading student work (Renard, 2003, p. 63) and this need is felt most acutely early on in their appointment to the role. It therefore is not surprising to discover that Mario, Amy and Louise, who received their additional release time considerably later in the year, each expressed a strong desire to leave their jobs. In contrast, this was not the case with those who did receive the additional release time closer to the start of the year and they displayed higher levels of job satisfaction. Hence this research adds further to the literature, as it not only confirms how important the provision of additional release time to FYGY teachers is, but also establishes that this extra time off must be provided promptly so that its benefit is maximised.

Another contribution that this research makes is in the area of how best to go about providing additional release time to first-year teachers. There has been very little written in regards to how best to make this time available to first-year teachers. The participants in this research project were provided with their entitlement of extra time off class in two ways: either as free periods that were integrated into their teaching timetables or full days off class. Some expressed the view that they felt that it was more useful to be given whole days off class, as this provided longer blocks of time to get tasks done. On the other hand, others felt that it was best to be allocated fewer

periods to teach, as this made their teaching load more manageable and they were not required to spend time preparing lessons for the casual teachers. Perhaps a good compromise would be for first-year teacher additional release time to be provided as a combination of fewer teaching periods and whole days off class, as this harnesses the benefits associated with both approaches.

Overall, this study's findings have revealed various issues associated with the provision of additional release time to beginning teachers, but what remains constant throughout is the point that giving extra time off early in the year to novice educators is beneficial for their development and wellbeing, as it allows them to better manage the demands of their new positions. Research undertaken by Sullivan and Morrison (2014) uncovered similar results through their finding that providing extra release time "led to coping and thereby provided a sense of relief and support" (p. 612). Furthermore, this research confirmed that some school leaders provide extra time off from face-to-face teaching to help beginning teachers manage their workload and to enable strategic professional learning opportunities (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 613).

Time to Grow/Become

The theme, *Time to Grow/Become*, became evident when the participants spoke in their interviews about the ways in which their new positions as secondary school teachers did, or did not, expose them to positive learning environments that provided opportunities for collegial support and professional development. This is important to Generation Y because as McQueen (2011) has suggested, what drives this demographic at work is not high pay or job security, but rather flexibility, variety and the opportunity for further training (2011, p. 103). Time must be invested if one is to develop new skills as a classroom practitioner and therefore self-improvement possibilities should be made available to first-year teachers. However, as noted previously in Chapter 4, participant responses indicated that this expectation was often not met. Four of the participants discussed how their current positions were not giving them the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, and this was in effect having a negative impact on their career development, whilst another

three of the participants made the point that any personal and professional growth that they experienced came about because they invested their own time in improving their teaching skills and ability to do the job. However, three other participants indicated that their new positions provided them with the time required and opportunity for professional development, so that they could grow as teachers and refine their craft.

Three participants - Darren, Nicole and April - discussed how at their respective workplaces they had been given the opportunity in their first year of teaching to grow in their new roles and develop professionally. They spoke about the fact that the schools that they were appointed to had positive learning cultures that provided them with the opportunity to talk with their peers about their teaching. There clearly was a sense of appreciation evident, as these FYGY teachers were made to feel valued as young professionals. This led to a strong sense of reciprocation, as these three first-year teachers all expressed the desire to remain at their schools well beyond the periods for which they were bonded. This situation probably came about because they were offered a work environment that welcomed collaboration, valued employee input and facilitated empowerment and it is these things that McQueen (2011) argues motivate Generation Y to give their best at work (p. 103).

Not all of the participants were employed in schools that provided these types of supportive, welcoming and positive work environments. Four participants - Cory, Amy, Louise and Emily - viewed their current teaching positions as not providing them with adequate levels of career stimulation and/or the opportunity to develop professionally as teachers. This made these FYGY teachers unwilling to commit to staying at their schools for more time than they were obliged to, and some went so far as to state that their current positions were holding them back from achieving personal and professional goals. They described their work environments as uninteresting, uninspiring, unstimulating and unfulfilling. Furthermore, they expressed the view that their schools were not giving them the opportunity to develop their skillsets and take their teaching to a higher level. It could be argued that these participants had expectations that were too high. Twenge (2013) has claimed that Generation Y is beset with "overconfidence" and have "unrealistically high expectations" (p. 67). So perhaps

it was the case that this specific group of teachers simply expected too much from the schools that they were appointed to. Also, they did not seek opportunities themselves for self-improvement and growth but rather felt that the responsibility for this lay elsewhere.

However, an important factor in the circumstances of these four teachers - Cory, Amy, Louise and Emily - was that they did not appear to have effective mentors, who might have directed them to self-improvement opportunities, whilst the other three - Darren, Nicole and April - did. This would seem to indicate that for FYGY teachers, it is the mentor that they have at their school who is pivotal and provides the impetus for them to feel that a sense of opportunity for growth and development exists in their new work environment.

Then there were three participants - Mario, Nelly and Kendall - who stated that they had grown professionally in their new positions, but this had occurred largely as a result of their own efforts and willingness to invest their personal time. What was noteworthy with these three FYGY teachers was that they too had little guidance or help provided by their respective mentors. Regardless, each one of them was prepared to take responsibility for their own professional development, with Mario using his free periods to observe more experienced teachers, whilst Kendall did her own research on how to meet the needs of her more challenging students and Nelly set about building her resilience and learning about other subjects that were being taught in her faculty. Thus it could be argued that the lack of sound mentoring can be overcome if FYGY teachers demonstrate initiative and are prepared to commit personal time towards their professional development. But this begs the question: are we then not expecting too much from these novice educators as they embark on their new careers?

What the findings from this study indicate is that FYGY teachers are very much aware, and in fact expect, that their jobs will give them the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally. For those who are well supported in their schools by the existence of a positive learning environment and an effective mentor, then this expectation will be met and they will exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction as a result.

However, for those who are not so well supported, they may choose to independently seek out development opportunities but often this does not occur, and as a consequence, these FYGY teachers may choose to leave their teaching positions, and even the profession entirely, if they are not given what they feel is a satisfactory amount of career support, stimulation and opportunity to grow and develop.

Serving Time

When each of the FYGY teachers participating in this study were questioned about their commitment to their new positions, the theme *Serving Time* emerged, with a number of factors operating that had considerable influence over the decisions they each made. However, as indicated in Chapter 4, the one variable that was constant for eight of the FYGY teachers - Darren, Nelly, Nicole, Cory, Mario, Amy, Kendall and April - was that they were scholarship holders with the NSW DoE. This meant that they were required to serve a minimum three years at their appointed schools and if they did not fulfil this obligation, then they would be required to repay a proportional amount of the funds that they had received whilst studying. In contrast, the other two participants - Louise and Emily - were not contractually locked into their current positions for any set time periods but they, like all new employees with the NSW DoE, were subject to a one-year probation period and a two-year accreditation period. Therefore, it could be argued that all of the participants in this research project were 'serving time' according to a number of defined periods.

It has been suggested by McQueen (2011) that Generation Y is more likely to view work as a means to fund their lifestyle and they are much less likely to associate their identity and status with the work that they do (p. 103). Furthermore, other authors have discussed how Generation Y teachers in particular are not afraid of change or innovation and hence "are comfortable making numerous career moves in efforts to advance their career" (Williamson & Meyer-Looze, 2010, p. 2). Richardson (2011) also supported this point, stating that Generation Y teachers think that three or four years of teaching is "plenty" and after this amount of time they might consider moving into another job (p. 18). This seems to indicate that not only are Generation Y teachers less likely to define themselves according to the occupation that they are in, it also is

probable that their intention is not to spend lengthy amounts of time as teachers in the classroom. This research therefore presents an important opportunity to further the discussion concerning the attitudes presented by FYGY teachers towards serving time in their new positions.

Authors such as Keengwe and Georgina (2013) have discussed how Generation Y expects immediacy in all that they do and want instant gratification, as well as get easily bored (p. 52). Also Twenge (2013) has claimed that they are often not prepared for hard work and the challenges required to succeed (p. 68). Furthermore, Schuck et al. (2012) have discussed how some members of the younger generation often appear to be unable to sustain prolonged periods of engagement, particularly when this involves them in facing challenges and hardships (p. 105).

Consistent with the literature cited above, five of the participants - Cory, Mario, Kendall, Louise and Emily - were only prepared to serve the minimum time periods that specifically applied to them, with the scholarship holders in this group - Cory, Mario and Kendall - stating that they only intended to remain in their current positions for the three years required. The other two non-bonded participants - Louise and Emily - were only prepared to commit to serving a maximum of two years in their new roles, which corresponded to the period required to achieve accreditation. But it was interesting to note that Amy, who was bonded to the DoE, indicated in her interviews that she was not prepared to serve her accreditation and bond period, and consequently she had made the decision that she would resign at the end of her first year of teaching. In Amy's view, her job was boring and did not give her gratification, so she was prepared to pay a substantial financial penalty rather than serve the time required. This participant's actions demonstrate what McQueen (2011, p. 103) has asserted, as Amy has prioritised job flexibility, variety and opportunity over monetary loss. However, it is important to note that Amy did not have an effective mentor and her faculty colleagues were not particularly supportive, and this same situation applied to Mario, Emily and Kendall. Furthermore, Cory and Louise expressed the view that their respective mentors provided inadequate support. What this seems to indicate is that in relation to serving specific time periods, for the ten FYGY teachers participating in this study, mentors, and to a lesser extent support from faculty colleagues, do play

an important role in ensuring that young educators are more likely to persevere with their initial positions.

This point is further reinforced by four of the participants in this study actually being prepared to stay beyond the three years required by their bond periods, and these teachers - Darren, Nelly, Nicole and April - all commented that they liked their jobs and the schools that they were working in. On closer examination of their situations, what became evident was that each was the recipient of useful support and sound guidance from mentors and/or faculty colleagues. It appears that a link may exist between the provision of effective support and mentoring, and FYGY teachers demonstrating preparedness to serve set time periods in the job. This stands in contrast to claims made by McQueen (2008) and Reilly (2012) that Generation Y teachers do not value career longevity and loyalty like previous generations, and they do not have long-term plans for their careers.

Consequently, what can be emphasised in relation to this finding is that we cannot generalise the characteristics of Generation Y to all young teachers. Other factors are important to them, like having an effective mentor. Hence the importance of capable mentors and the provision of sound advice and support must be reinforced, as this study has found that this has the potential to improve career attitudes and perceptions that FYGY teachers have towards their new occupations.

Time in Conflict

The time theme, *Time in Conflict*, was not discussed by all of the participants, with only two of the FYGY teachers (Kendall and Amy) in this study actually commenting on it in their interviews. It became evident when Kendall and Amy each were in conflict with other staff at their respective schools and as a result chose to minimise the amount of time they spent working in their respective staffrooms, so they could avoid tension with their colleagues.

It has been asserted that young people today are more prepared to speak their minds. McQueen (2011) has stated that Generation Y have a reputation for being brash, self-confident, self-reliant and sometimes arrogant (p. 189). Furthermore, Twenge (2013,

p. 66) and Richardson (2011, p. 18) have claimed that they have high levels of assertiveness and confidence in their own abilities. Also Reilly (2012) has made the point that they are forthright (p. 8). These traits were evident in many of the FYGY teachers participating in this study, but Kendall and Amy were perhaps the two who exemplified them the most. Given this, it was not surprising to discover that these two participants found themselves in conflict situations with other staff at their schools, as they both were articulate and assertive individuals who were prepared to speak their minds. From the start of the school year, Kendall was critical of her faculty's programs and assessment policies, which brought her into conflict with her head teacher and other teachers in her department. Also Amy was very critical of her head teacher's capacity to provide guidance, support and leadership. Furthermore, she was openly disapproving of the decisions made by the school's senior executive.

Conflict manifested itself in a way that was related to time, as these two participants explained that they wanted to avoid spending time in their staffrooms because of the strained relationships with their supervisors and other members of their faculty. According to Kendall this situation only became worse as the year progressed because the head teacher and other teachers in the English department had formed a clique, and were hostile towards her and another new teacher who was also critical of the faculty's programs and assessment policies. Amy did not feel that she was being treated with professional respect by her supervisor/mentor and faculty colleagues throughout her first year. Consequently, these two FYGY teachers found their staffrooms to be unpleasant and stressful places, so they both used the same strategy of avoidance and minimised the amount of time that they would spend working in their respective staffrooms. What is relevant here is the fact that both Amy and Kendall, as FYGY teachers, experienced conflict in their new positions and this had implications in terms of how they utilised their time and where they chose to spend their time. Also worthy of mention is the fact that for both Amy and Kendall, it was the case that their respective faculties did not provide them with what they considered a positive learning environment.

In summing up, what became evident through this study in relation to the situational dimension of a positive learning and working environment being provided to FYGY

teachers, was that the allocation of additional release time was greatly appreciated by the participants. However, this was not implemented consistently for all ten of them. Also, mentors played an important role in ensuring that schools provide newly-appointed teachers with a positive learning environment. Furthermore, being given the opportunity to develop and grow was not experienced collectively by the study's participants, and those that were not provided this opportunity found this to be a source of conflict and tension, with the result being that these FYGY teachers' feelings of negativity towards their new positions were exacerbated.

6.2.3 FYGY Teacher Commitment to Achieving Work/Life Balance

At this point, the situational dimension that concerns the achievement of a satisfactory work/life balance for FYGY teachers will be discussed. The time themes that are relevant here are: *Time Shortage/Demands*, *Time to be Me*, *Juggling Time* and *Stages of Time*, and these will be considered at length, with a focus being placed on the importance attributed by each of the study's participants towards factors which made their individual experience of the first year of teaching sustainable and manageable.

Time Shortage/Demands

The time theme, *Time Shortage/Demands*, was mentioned by many of the FYGY teachers participating in this study but being short of time and having difficulty managing the demands associated with their new positions was not as widespread a concern as had been anticipated. Such a situation varied from studies conducted previously by authors such as Halford (1998), Renard (2003), Lang (2001) and Schuck et al. (2011). The first three of these authors conducted research with teachers who were from the Generation X demographic but all four found that many first-year teachers were overwhelmed by all that was required of them. In my study, this situation did not resonate strongly with all of the FYGY teachers participating. Rather they were affected to differing degrees, if at all, by time shortages. For example, Nicole did not, at any time throughout her first year of teaching, experience difficulty managing her time or the demands associated with her new job. Furthermore, a significant number of participants, like Darren and Mario, indicated that time shortages only really

impacted on them in the early stages of their appointment (that is in the first or second terms) and as the year progressed they found it much easier to balance their work and personal lives. However, for other participants, such as Louise and Emily, the shortage of time was something that existed throughout their first year of teaching and was an issue that caused them a significant degree of stress and concern. In addition, other participants such as Cory, Nelly and April, felt at certain points, a considerable degree of frustration regarding the time-consuming nature and overall amount of work that they had to do as first-year teachers.

A finding that emerged from the interviews was that all of the participants strongly valued their leisure time which is a characteristic associated with Generation Y (Stokes & Wyn, 2009, p. 43). They also all felt, like Reilly (2012, p. 3) found, that it is important to have a balance between their personal and professional lives. Similarly, McQueen (2011, p. 102) asserts that for Generation Y “work/life balance is not simply a nice idea - it is a top priority” and this viewpoint was reflected in the comments made by many of the FYGY teachers involved in this study. To ensure that a balance was achieved, six of the participants used the common strategy of spending longer hours at school, with many working onsite for nine or ten hours a day. They then opted to deliberately not take any schoolwork home with them, as they felt very strongly that they must avoid allowing their jobs to consume all aspects of their personal lives. In addition, five of the participants used another time related strategy that allowed them to avoid having their new jobs compromise their leisure time and this involved giving themselves at least one full day off from schoolwork over the weekend. Hence in effect they were allocating themselves uninterrupted personal time which supported them in working towards achieving a healthy work/life balance.

What this indicates is that the FYGY teachers in this study were very much aware of the need to have a healthy work/life balance but recognised that this is difficult to achieve when you are starting out in the profession. As a consequence, some will lock in specific periods for personal time and they are prepared to self-impose work practices that restrict them from doing too much schoolwork when they are at home in the evenings and/or on the weekends. Furthermore, this research revealed that those young teachers who did allocate themselves set times for work and leisure were

able to better manage the time demands associated with being a first-year teacher. Overall they coped more effectively and had a balanced outlook towards their new positions, which in turn allowed them to express higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of frustration. Thus the ten FYGY teachers participating in this study were all acutely aware of the need to ensure that the demands placed upon their time were addressed effectively, so that any negative impact was minimised. However, this goal was not successfully achieved by all of the participants.

Time to be Me

The importance of the time theme, *Time to be Me*, cannot be underestimated because the participants (whilst differing in the degrees to which they achieved a satisfactory work/life balance) were all of the opinion that having personal time was important. However, this is not unique to Generation Y. Petty (2013) has suggested that Generation X also “desired balance” and were reluctant to commit long hours to their jobs (p. 57, p. 64). Therefore, time spent away from doing work has been valued by young people for many years and they often aspire to achieve this goal. However, Reilly (2012, p. 3) has pointed out, Generation Y is, unlike previous generations, less likely to sacrifice their personal lives for work, a claim reinforced by Stokes and Wyn (2009, p. 43) who state that fundamental to the identity of young people today is the need for them to have time for friendship, relationships, leisure and enjoying life in the present. In addition, McCallum and Price (2010, p. 21) and Ewing and Manuel (2005, p. 5) have argued how the heavy workload that many beginning teachers experience is a significant contributing factor that makes them want to leave within their first five years of teaching, and thus resign prematurely from the profession.

Three of the ten participants in this study - Nicole, Kendall and Amy - always allowed themselves personal time and so this was not really an issue for them. However, this was less clear-cut for three other participants. For Darren, Mario and April, the opportunity to have time dedicated to oneself, away from schoolwork, developed and improved as they became more familiar with and capable of fulfilling the specific requirements associated with their new positions. On the other hand, Louise and Emily

were affected throughout their first year of teaching by a lack of personal time and this caused them a considerable degree of stress.

Access to personal time is not experienced in a similar way by all of the participating FYGY teachers. For some it is a cause for considerable consternation, but for others it is not really an issue because they adopt strict guidelines for themselves which ensure that their schoolwork does not encroach on their personal time. However, for a significant number of the participants it is an area that evolves as the year progresses. While initially they struggle with finding time for themselves, this situation does improve as they become more competent in their new roles. The implication is that early on in the first year of teaching there is, for some, difficulty experienced with allowing time for themselves but this situation improves as time passes. It appears that the FYGY teachers participating in this research clearly appreciated the importance of having a reasonable work/life balance, so they made the achievement of this a priority. However, not all of the participants were able to attain this and they exhibited heightened levels of dissatisfaction as a result.

Juggling Time

The time theme, *Juggling Time*, became evident when the participants were questioned about their capacity to effectively balance the various demands associated with their new positions and the degree to which they could manage the competing interests that affected them in their first year of teaching. In essence, the FYGY teachers participating in this study were asked in each of their interviews about how successful they had been both personally and professionally in juggling their time. What became evident in relation to this was that all but one of the FYGY teachers (Louise) was able to capably manage their time during part of the year, or throughout the entire year.

Six of the participants - Darren, Nicole, Nelly, Kendall, Amy and April - discussed how they were able to, for most of their first year of teaching, successfully juggle their time and what this confirms is that Generation Y, as has been suggested by McQueen (2011), have as children and young adults lived increasingly busy lives (p. 45) and this has made them, as argued by Richardson (2011, p. 18) and Schuck et al. (2012, p. 105),

very adept at multitasking. It therefore is not surprising to discover that in the research undertaken here, six of the FGY teachers demonstrated this capacity. However, for three of the participants - Mario, Cory and Emily - this was not something that they could do consistently throughout their first year of teaching. Also in the case of Louise, she was notably unable to balance the demands on her time all through her first year.

Regardless, the fact that only one of the participants in this study could not manage their time at any point throughout their first year of teaching seems to confirm the view that young teachers currently are more skilled than their predecessors at balancing their time. They also appear to have a greater awareness of how important it is for early career teachers to manage their time. In addition, perhaps because they are part of the Generation Y demographic they have a greater propensity for multitasking. Furthermore, possessing this skill has meant that for the most part they are able to meet the personal and professional demands associated with the new classroom practitioner roles that they are undertaking. The fact that eight of the participants, by their final interview, indicated that they were experiencing success in regard to managing their time highlights how most of the participating FGY teachers were able to efficiently organise the time required to fulfil their work commitments. This occurred whilst still ensuring that an adequate amount of time was made available for themselves, their families and their friends.

Stages of Time

This study set out to interview ten FGY secondary school teachers at three distinct times, to document what these classroom practitioners were feeling and experiencing at each stage of their first year of teaching (*Stages of Time*). Previous research in this area, conducted by Lang (2001), focused on teachers from the Generation X demographic. She reported that first-year teachers went through several stages or phases but the “survival” stage can last for some teachers throughout the whole first year of teaching (Lang, 2001, p. 85). However, for others it may only last a few months and they then progress onto the “consolidation” stage (Lang, 2001, p. 86). Bullough (2009) has also written about the different stages that beginning teachers go through. He has argued that they begin teaching in the “fantasy” stage where they have

optimistic but unrealistic images of what teaching will be like, but once they actually start teaching they quickly move into the “survival” stage where they remain for quite some time, as they grapple with discipline and management problems and experience a sense of vulnerability (Bullough, 2009, p. 38). However, as time passes and they learn the craft of teaching and develop self-confidence, they move into the “mastery” stage (Bullough, 2009, p. 38) which is very similar to the “consolidation” stage as discussed by Lang (2001).

The findings of this study turned out to be slightly different to those reported previously in the literature, as not all of the participants followed the predicted stages. What did occur was that by the time of the first interview all of the participants had been teaching for at least six weeks, and it appeared none were still in the *fantasy* stage. Furthermore, it is not clear whether any of the participants ever experienced this *fantasy* stage. At the time of the first interview most of them had entered the *survival* stage and were experiencing a range of challenges, as they came to terms with the demands of being a full-time secondary school teacher. Thus Darren, Mario, Nelly, April, Cory, Louise and Emily were all located at the survival stage and they remained there until their next interview. However, it is at this point that there was a degree of deviation to what would have been anticipated according to the literature, as things did not steadily become easier for all seven of these participants as the year continued to progress. In fact, for Cory, Louise and Emily, their situation actually became worse as the year went on because each of them commented in their second interviews, that their teaching positions had presented them with more demands on their time than they had anticipated, and for Louise and Emily, there was no further improvement and they remained very much at the *survival* stage for the remainder of the year. In contrast to this was the case of Cory. His situation did improve because he indicated in his third interview that by this point in time he was managing the time demands associated with his job more effectively and it appeared that he was moving toward the *consolidation/mastery* stage. Fortunately for Darren, Mario, Nelly and April, their progression through the stages of time did conform to expectations. They each indicated in their second and third interviews that things were steadily improving as the year progressed, and their new positions were becoming more manageable in

terms of demands on their time. Hence as is typical with many first-year teachers, they spent a significant number of months in the *survival* stage but in the second part of the year they moved to the *consolidation/mastery* stage. In light of these findings, what can be asserted from this study, is that in regard to FGY teachers it cannot be instinctively assumed that they all will move through the *survival* stage and proceed to the *consolidation/mastery* stage in the first year. Rather there is a strong possibility that some FGY teachers may in fact regress and their individual situations will not necessarily improve as the year progresses.

However, what was particularly notable and unexpected, was that the experiences and perceptions of teaching of three of the participants - Kendall, Nicole and Amy - were not dependent on what time of the year it was. These three FGY teachers were, in relation to the whole group, the most strongly committed to maintaining a reasonable work/life balance. They were not prepared to compromise this at any stage of their first year of teaching. Consequently, all three seemed to be quite adept at managing their time regardless of whether or not they were experiencing a particularly busy period at school. This determination to refuse to allow the demands of their new jobs to have a negative impact on their personal lives was shared, and they did not move through the various stages of time as would be expected. Instead their interview responses consistently indicated that there was virtually no variation in regard to the level of demand associated with their new teaching positions. Hence in this study of ten FGY teachers, it became evident that a significant number of participants were firmly committed to achieving a healthy work/life balance throughout all stages of their first year of teaching.

To summarise this discussion of the factors associated with achieving a healthy work/life balance, it can be stated that in overall terms the FGY teachers in this study did not struggle to achieve a reasonable balance between their personal and work lives. A large number of the participants were able to effectively manage competing demands as they spent more time in their new positions. In fact, as the year progressed, the majority of them were able to put effective strategies into place to ensure that teaching did not become all consuming, and interestingly, a significant number of the participants were able to do this throughout their entire first year.

However, it does need to be acknowledged that a few of the participants were unable to achieve a reasonable work/life balance, and consequently they demonstrated heightened levels of unhappiness and job dissatisfaction.

6.3 Conclusion

It appears that the participating FYGY teachers in my study did not always conform to the expectations raised in the related literature and their experiences with regard to time did vary. The time demands placed upon them by their new jobs were not necessarily handled in like ways. In addition, the levels and types of support that they required were often not uniform. Furthermore, the nature and degree of commitment to their positions and the teaching profession in general was fairly disparate. However, I would argue that what is of much greater consequence is the framework that emerged, as this can be used to better understand the different experiences in the first year of teaching. The three main factors or situational dimensions influencing this framework are: 1) the significance of capable mentors for beginning teachers, 2) the need for the faculty/school to provide a positive staff learning environment that includes the timely provision of additional release time and 3) the FYGY teacher's commitment to and determination to achieve a healthy work/life balance. My research indicates that these were the main determinants of the overall FYGY teacher experience when appointed to a full-time permanent position in a range of NSW state secondary schools. It appears that the degree to which this experience was predominantly positive or negative was dependent on the applicability of these three factors/situational dimensions to the FYGY teacher's specific context.

Chapter 7: Discussion - Evaluating Participant Narratives and Visual Metaphors

7.1 Introduction

Whilst my research focused predominantly on time and its impact on the personal and professional lives of FYGY teachers, there were other factors that emerged from the narratives and metaphors shared and discussed by the participants. I analysed this data in Chapter 5 and the findings illustrated that young educators often find the physical and emotional demands of teaching to be a serious challenge. If these demands are not adequately handled, then they can drive young teachers away from their chosen career. Also, FYGY teachers frequently are passionate about the work they do in their classrooms with students. However, behaviour management issues, administrative processes and the nature of the support provided to them can have an impact on their level of commitment to the profession. The findings also support that the building of relationships with students, colleagues and the wider school community is fundamentally important for the success and wellbeing of young teachers as they move through their first year of teaching. In this chapter I will discuss these findings in greater detail.

In addition, I consider related findings that emerged from the interviews conducted with other participants in the study - Kendall, Amy, April and Nelly - because this supplements and adds further depth to the discussion of the four focus teachers - Nicole, Louise, Darren and Emily, which featured in Chapter 5. Findings are discussed with reference to relevant literature on early career teachers. The discussion is structured to focus on four main areas that were apparent from the findings: 1) building relationships, 2) focusing on self, 3) gaining confidence/competence and 4) the importance of emotional strength. The focus on the teachers' experiences contributes to research in the area: Buchanan et al. (2013) argue that investigating the experiences of early career teachers provides insights that can enhance teacher

education programs and better prepare teachers for the jobs that they are being trained to undertake (p112). These areas will be further discussed along with their implications in the final chapter of the thesis (Chapter 8).

Before discussing the four main areas identified, I consider some of the key ideas regarding resilience. This characteristic or attribute either featured prominently or was lacking in the lives of the FYGY teachers who were participating in this study, and it underlies all four areas. In my research, resilience has been used as a framework to make meaning of what FYGY teachers experience. Resilience involves “dynamic processes” that are the “result of interaction over time between a person and their environment” (Mansfield, Beltman, Price & McConney, 2012, p. 358). Evidence of resilience is seen in “how individuals respond to challenging or adverse situations” and considers the particular characteristics and “personal strengths” of that individual (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 358). This is significant in terms of the selected participants’ narratives and metaphors, and what these indicate about the journey that the first-year teacher is undertaking.

These individual teacher journeys can be briefly outlined as follows. Nicole’s stories about positive interactions with students, and her choice of the sunrise/sunset image, highlighted the importance of forming and sustaining relationships and embracing whole school activities that provide the opportunity to build relationships with students and staff. Essentially her capacity to build relationships and cope with the stresses and demands of the job, as well as be “flexible” and “adaptable” and in essence “bounce back” (Mansfield et al, 2012, p. 361) established her as one of the teachers who demonstrated high levels of resilience. In contrast, Louise revealed a distinct lack of the characteristics associated with high levels of resilience. Her self-focused stories and her consistent choice of the crossroads image reflected her inability to be positive and optimistic, as well as her failure to appreciate that teaching requires a willingness to give much of oneself. Darren’s stories about managing student behaviour and handling organisational requirements, as well as his repeated choice of the tightrope image, illustrated how the provision of sound collegial advice and support was very important to him as a FYGY teacher. This along with his preparedness to seek help, and take advice from colleagues, as well as not “sweat the

small stuff” (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 361) were critical to the development of his classroom practice and teaching skills, and reflected his capacity as a first-year teacher to develop resilience both personally and professionally. Finally, Emily’s stories, with their strong focus on student concerns and her choice of the tightrope and crossroads images, highlighted how it is necessary for FYGY teachers to be caring and invested in their jobs. However, they must also be emotionally and mentally strong and avoid “taking things too personally” (Mansfield et al, 2012, p. 365). Resilient teachers should be reflective and have the ability to distance oneself emotionally from specific events or situations.

It is interesting to note that Mansfield et al. (2012) in their study of how graduating and early career teachers perceive and conceptualise their understandings of resilience, suggested that future research in this area use “other methods of data collection, such as in-depth interviews” (p. 366). They also concluded that there was a need for future research “to examine the process of resilience ‘in action’ and shed light on how resilience is manifested by individuals in context” (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 366). My research has done this, with the following discussion continuing and adding to the academic dialogue concerning the importance of resilience and its implications in the lives of young secondary school teachers when they begin their careers. I will now discuss the four areas of building relationships, focusing on self, gaining confidence/competence and the importance of emotional strength.

7.2.1 Building Relationships: Building Capacity

The work of secondary school teachers is very much based on and around the formation of and development of sound relationships. Teaching, like many occupations, involves participation in a community of practice where newcomers develop their knowledge and skills as they are immersed in the socio-cultural practices of a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Furthermore, professional identities are constructed in relation to context and to what is experienced when relating to one another in the workplace (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013, p. 37). It is important for teachers to establish productive relationships with their students, teaching colleagues, administration and support staff, executive staff, parents and carers when they take up

their new positions. This study's findings have illustrated how essential it is for FGY teachers to appreciate the need to build these relationships. Teacher capacity is slow to develop if the educator has difficulty managing the wide range of relationships that they are confronted with when undertaking their new jobs. In fact, it has already been noted that teacher resilience involves "complex" and "dynamic processes of interaction" and it is "evidenced by how individuals respond to challenging or adverse situations" (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011, p. 195).

Much of Nicole's success as a young first-year teacher could be attributed to the way that she was very open and proactively sought to establish and develop relationships with her students, other teachers and the school community in general. Within her first few weeks on the job, Nicole had volunteered to attend a Year 7 camp and she actively sought out opportunities to interact with students when on playground duty and at school events such as swimming carnivals. She also willingly stayed back after school and very much valued the extra time spent there, as this gave her an opportunity to work with and learn from other teachers in her faculty. Her preparedness to look beyond the classroom and her recognition of the need for teachers to have a whole school perspective led to her both embracing opportunities and being embraced as part of the school. This gave her a strong sense of belonging which made her feel comfortable, supported and satisfied in her new position and her chosen metaphors reflected a sense of accomplishment and celebration of her successes as a teacher.

My research findings indicated that Nicole was one of the few participants able to successfully establish and nurture each of the different relationships that she formed as a FGY teacher. Other participants found this aspect of the job to be quite challenging, and there was a strong correlation between job satisfaction levels and the FGY teacher's ability to build relationships with significant others at their schools. For example, Kendall found it very hard to establish positive connections with her head teacher and faculty colleagues; however, she was able to form a strong bond with the school's principal and managed to cultivate a positive rapport with the difficult classes that she was teaching. This provided a degree of satisfaction and made her feel somewhat happy about her new job, but her inability to form good relationships with

other teachers in her faculty left her feeling quite negative, and consequently she would only commit to teaching at the school for the minimum amount of time required.

What these cases highlight is the pivotal nature of initiating and building positive relationships with key members of the school community when commencing teaching. FGY teachers need to be adept at getting along with a range of different people in the school, and they must be encouraged to actively seek out opportunities to build productive and harmonious connections. By doing this, as Nicole has managed to do, FGY teachers will be more likely to develop their capacity as a teacher and they will experience positive professional growth. On a personal level they will feel more relaxed and satisfied in their new positions, as they will not be expending their energies dealing with conflict and negative relationships that often are stressful and hinder development. The role that teacher resilience plays is evident, as it can be seen how the high levels of career success and personal stability demonstrated by Nicole can be linked to her capacity to build connections and successfully deal with the job's associated pressures and demands. Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011) in their review of the literature on teacher resilience suggested that "resilient teachers are those who are confident, proactive and professionally reflective" and these are all attributes that Nicole possessed. However, they also note that the "onus for enhancing resilience seemed to be on pre-service programs and employers" (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011, p. 194). Hence Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011) advocate that it is not just up to the individual teacher to develop these characteristics but rather these attributes should be nurtured and supported by the teacher education courses offered by universities. School-based induction and professional development programs need to further consolidate these characteristics in FGY teachers.

7.2.2 Focusing On Self: The Generation Me Teacher

It is the case that all individuals are self-focused to a degree but there is some evidence that the Generation Y demographic is more self-focused than the Generation X and Baby Boomer Generation that preceded them. Twenge (2013) has gone so far as to label this demographic as *Generation Me*, as they "are significantly different from

previous generations” because they have higher levels of self-esteem, assertiveness, narcissistic personality traits and are “increasingly likely to believe they are above average in attributes such as academic ability, writing ability, intellectual self-confidence and drive to achieve” (p. 66). In addition, Richardson (2011) states that Generation Y are more likely to view themselves as individuals, expect to be praised more consistently and have high levels of assertiveness (p. 16). Much of this has been attributed to the fact that they grew up being the most child-centred generation to date (Reilly, 2012, p. 2, p. 6). They have usually been fortunate in that their parents, teachers and society in general have encouraged them to voice their opinions and they have been treated as individuals from a very young age (McQueen, 2011, p. 45). However, a by-product of this is that some members of Generation Y have the centrality of their own needs as an important personal frame of reference, and it therefore stands to reason that in a study of FGY teachers some of the participants, due to the era and nature of their upbringing, could perhaps display this trait. In the research undertaken here, it appears that this was the case with Louise and consequently it has to be asked how FGY teachers who demonstrate this attribute can be adequately supported so that their outlook and expectations can be effectively managed. This is important for the long-term future of the profession because numerous Generation Y teachers are now entering schools as replacements for the ever-increasing number of retiring Baby Boomer Generation teachers.

Louise could be considered to be a very self-focused young first-year teacher. This argument is based on her lack of discussion of her students in her narratives, rather focusing on incidents associated with her individual situation. She constantly views things from her perspective only and hence her stories are about how long it took for the DoE to appoint her, how she has had to work so hard in her new position and how her job caused the breakdown of her relationship with her boyfriend. Furthermore, her consistent choice of the crossroads metaphor in each of her three interviews indicates that her students did not feature in her frame-of-reference when reflecting on her experiences at different time points in her first year of teaching. Clearly in Louise’s case, her thoughts were more about what the job was taking from her and less about what she was prepared to give to the position.

Other participants in this study demonstrated a similar self-focused outlook but none did so to the same extent as Louise. A few discussed their new positions from the perspective of what the job did or did not offer them, however, they still managed to acknowledge that teaching classes and interacting with students were fundamental in terms of what they were employed to do. This situation was exemplified by Amy whose first two stories were focused on significant incidents relating to specific students that she was teaching. However, she did also discuss in her interviews how she felt that her position was not very intellectually stimulating, nor academically challenging, and this had led her to conclude that teaching was not an endeavour that would provide her with the levels of interest and satisfaction that she felt she needed or in fact deserved. This prompted her, as outlined in Section 4.2.7, to decide to quit teaching and undertake PhD research. These examples illustrate how FYGY teachers can be inclined to focus on themselves and look at their particular job situations from a self-focused perspective.

This characteristic of being self-focused is interesting, as teaching has traditionally been viewed as a vocation, a profession that operates largely on a sense of goodwill and self-sacrifice. It is common practice for teachers to give up their personal time to ensure that students are provided with experiences and opportunities that enrich their lives. School events such as excursions and camps, formal assemblies, musical productions, performance evenings, sporting competitions and cultural celebrations occur as a result of the investment of additional time and effort by teachers. However, there is no tangible reward for doing this apart from the satisfaction of knowing that the students will benefit from it. Clearly, a sense of loyalty and commitment to the school and its students, as well as preparedness to put personal needs and wants to one side, are professionally regarded as important components of being an effective teacher. However, the findings from this study indicate that perhaps not all FYGY teachers accept this premise, and on entering the profession they may have difficulty reconciling the amount that they are expected to give with what they are actually prepared to give up. This can create career dissatisfaction and in some cases could lead to FYGY teachers choosing to leave their jobs prematurely. It can be argued that one way of addressing this very complex issue would be for school leadership teams and

teacher education providers to be more aware of this possible trait in Generation Y teachers and ensure that individuals, like Louise, are identified and made aware of the notion that fulfilling the role of a teacher will require them to make personal sacrifices and put the interests of others first. Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011) concluded that “self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation” were seen as key protective factors related to teacher resilience. The enhancement of these factors “may serve to reduce high attrition rates” and “ensure that those who stay in the profession do not just survive, but thrive as confident and healthy professionals” (Beltman, Mansfield & Price 2011, p. 196). Getting teachers like Louise who are extrinsically motivated to be less self-focused and encouraging them to be more intrinsically motivated might also ensure a smoother transition for many FYGY teachers. In addition, ensuring that teacher educators fully explain to their students the professional requirements and level of commitment required by the position is important, so that those choosing to become teachers fully appreciate what will be required of them and in light of this make appropriate career choices.

7.2.3 Gaining Confidence/Competence: The Tightrope Is Getting Wider

Many individuals who enter teacher education programs see their entry into the profession as a calling. Buchanan et al. (2013) found that teachers in their study wanted to become good teachers who could help their students learn and they wished to make a significant contribution to following generations (p. 124). What is also interesting is that as their new jobs became gradually more manageable and “they become better teachers, they also become increasingly likely to stay in the profession” (Buchanan et al., 2013, p. 124). However, when newly qualified educators are in their first year of teaching, and in fact in their first few months as teachers, they often find their new positions to be overwhelming because of the heavy workload and the demanding nature of their roles (Anhorn, 2008, p. 15; Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 7; Renard, 2003, p. 62; Schuck et al., 2011, p. 15). They are often challenged not just by coming to terms with the constant lesson preparation, the marking of assessment tasks and dealing with behaviour management issues, but they also must develop their knowledge of the many policies and procedures that have to be followed in their new

schools, as well as develop their understanding of the workplace's culture and the often complex networks of interrelationships that exist between various individuals and groups, not to mention the many teams and committees that are a part of the specific educational institution that they have just joined. As a result, FYGY teachers often feel that they are walking a tightrope as they try to stay on top of everything and balance all of the requirements placed upon them. For some, as the year progresses, they develop their skills and abilities and come to terms with the demands of the job. Hence the tightrope widens for them, as was the case with Darren, and their new positions become easier to manage. This process is greatly assisted when first-year teachers are offered comprehensive induction programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 225; McCormack & Thomas, 2003, p. 135) and access to a good mentor (Coley, 2009, p. 20; Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010, p. 308) but as I will discuss here, there is also a need for the FYGY teacher to effectively manage their personal and professional expectations, as well as reflect on their progress in an honest and realistic way.

Two of Darren's stories were focused on his experiences with managing challenging student behaviour in his difficult Year 8 class, whilst the other described his frustrations with the inefficiencies of administrative processes and the competence of personnel in positions of leadership. However, he was offered effective mentoring support and sound advice from more experienced staff and this helped him to deal satisfactorily with the issues and frustrations that arose in his first year of teaching. Furthermore, as an individual he grew in confidence as the year progressed and with this came the development of higher levels of competency and maturity as a teacher. In fact, he chose the walking the tightrope/railing metaphor in his second interview but stated that it was 'getting wider,' and then by the final interview, he nominated the sunrise/sunset image because he felt that he had grown as a professional into a more effective teacher. Thus his growth as a teacher could not only be attributed to the commendable support and advice that he received from more experienced colleagues, but it appears to be associated with his capacity to honestly reflect on his progress as a teacher and capacity to respond accordingly. For example, with his challenging Year 8 class he realised that his expectations needed to be more realistic and that he must not be too critical or hard on himself. The students will invariably act

out and blaming himself for their behaviour or getting stressed about it was counterproductive. Therefore, what he did was accept the fact that he could only do so much with this particular class and he needed to move forward from this. Darren demonstrated here a considerable degree of professional maturity and in so doing reflected on his work as a teacher in an honest but reasonable and forgiving manner, so that he could continue to grow and experience career success. Having this capacity for reflection is important for FGY teachers and being able to engage in reflective practice is something that should be taught to pre-service teachers (Russell, 2005, p. 203).

A number of other participants in my study experienced positive growth and development as their first year of teaching progressed, and this could also be attributed to their receipt of helpful support and sound advice from colleagues, mentors, supervisors or principals, together with the capacity of the individual teacher to realistically manage their personal and professional expectations. Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss how communities of practice involve “newcomers” being enculturated so that they move from legitimate peripheral participation to more central participation, and this occurs through their interactions with “old-timers” who provide support and access “to information, resources and opportunities for participation” (p. 101). An example of this can be seen with regard to April. She was welcomed into her faculty and provided with good advice and support from her head teacher and other more experienced English teachers. In addition, she was allocated an experienced mentor who helped her considerably in her first few months on the job. However, what also made her first year of teaching successful was the fact that she could honestly reflect on various aspects of her position that were causing her concern, such as her workload or specific behaviour management issues, and respond in a measured and reasonable manner. This can be seen by the way that early in the year, April realised that she had to manage her time more effectively so she could cope with the demands of the job and this would mean that she would have to be less of a perfectionist. Also, she came to the realisation that barriers could be broken down, even with confrontational students, by finding out things about them that they wanted to discuss, such as books by certain authors or sports, and with this knowledge she was

able to build relationships and better manage inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, like Darren, April was also demonstrating the importance of sound reflective practice because in effect she too was using “personal reflection-in-action to interpret and improve one’s teaching” (Russell, 2005, p. 203). This is a skill that can be taught “explicitly, directly, thoughtfully and patiently” by teacher educators rather than just “telling people to reflect and then simply hoping for the best” (Russell, 2005, p. 203).

The findings of this study indicate that whilst FYGY teachers often do experience many challenges and find it hard to balance the demands of their new jobs, they can experience positive growth and considerable success as long as they are provided with sound advice and adequate levels of support. However, it appears that what also is needed, if the tightrope is to truly become wider, is for them to have the capacity to honestly reflect on their progress, as well as manage their expectations in such a way that it allows them to grow and develop. This suggests that support and advice alone cannot create more confident, competent and effective FYGY teachers. Teachers need the capacity to objectively review what they are doing and respond in a logical and well-informed way. It is only by doing this that FYGY teachers can enrich themselves professionally and lay a strong foundation for future career success. Consequently, it is important for comprehensive reflective practices to be taught to pre-service teachers. In fact, Schuck et al. (2012) argue that teacher education programs will only have limited success until they adequately prepare their students to reflect on their teaching. “The preparation for teaching that most beginning teachers receive does not name or provide practice in the learning skills required for learning from experience” (Schuck et al., 2012, p. 145). Hence pre-service teachers need to be taught how to effectively reflect on their teaching. Accurately identifying the extent to which this professional attribute exists in individuals is an area that those who employ teachers also should give due consideration, as cultivating this capacity after employment can be problematic, even when there has been the provision of satisfactory mentors and sound induction programs.

7.2.4 The Caring Profession's Toll: The Importance of Emotional Strength

Teaching is a stressful occupation and this causes many young teachers to leave the profession prematurely in the early stages of their careers (McCallum & Price, 2010, p. 21; Stevens, Parker & Burroughs, 2007, p. 2). However, as already mentioned in Section 7.2.3, it is a profession that often presents as a calling and consequently attracts individuals who are innately caring. The desire to become a teacher is often motivated by the perception that it offers an opportunity to do something that is meaningful and enables one to make a difference to society. This is in itself noble and should be applauded, but the reality very often is that teaching, and in particular teaching secondary school students who are in their teenage years, can be stressful and emotionally draining. This is experienced more acutely when teachers are beginning their careers, as often they are lacking in authority and self-confidence. Also, because they are new to the classroom they are unfamiliar with ways to negotiate and deal with difficult or demanding students. Consequently, the situation that exists for many FYGY teachers is they discover that whilst their classrooms can be vibrant and engaging places of learning, they also can be the location for tense and stressful exchanges with angst filled egocentric teenagers who are keen to challenge their authority. In fact, Buchanan et al. (2013, p. 124) stated that early career teachers “almost universally struggle with the management of the behaviour of their classes, particularly in their first year”. The impact that this situation has on FYGY teachers is significant. This issue was raised in the research by a number of participants, like Emily and Nelly, who found that they were seriously tested and conflicted by the intensity and confrontational nature of the relationships that they formed with their students, and this did take a toll on them both mentally and emotionally.

Emily's narrative clearly established that as the year progressed she found it more and more difficult to process and deal with the emotional challenges presented by the job. This corresponded with her choice of metaphors and she moved from hopeful (sunrise/sunset image) to challenging (tightrope/railing) and then to sadness (crossroads). By the final part of her story she clearly exhibited signs that her new position, and specifically coming to terms with the highly emotive nature of

teacher/student relationships, had taken a significant toll on her. It was evident that it was not possible for Emily to be resilient and maintain her composure in the face of distressing student-related events. However, it needs to be asked why this was the case? Was it that her youth diminished her capacity to look at the events in a more objective way? Did her young age cause her to feel so much anguish? Was it that she simply cared too much and consequently could not put into perspective the events that occurred? In any event, it must be accepted that in this case, Emily's commitment to the relationships that she had formed with her students did have a negative impact on her mental state and severely affected her overall happiness as a teacher. In contrast, Nicole's dedication and commitment to building and cultivating a wide range of school-based relationships had a positive effect on her and gave her much satisfaction.

A number of other participants cited that their interactions with students were a source of concern for them, with Nelly in particular sharing a narrative that was specifically focused on the stressful and draining nature of her relationship with a student. In this story she discussed how, as an Indigenous woman, she had been made to feel very conflicted by the actions of an Aboriginal boy in her Year 11 class because she was of the opinion that he was being treated too leniently by the school, and not subjected to the same disciplinary measures that other non-Indigenous students were. This situation was perplexing and caused her much concern, as she found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that this boy, who shared the same Aboriginal culture and heritage as she did, was so problematic and challenging. It clearly was hard for Nelly to step back and look at the situation objectively. If she had, she would have avoided expending emotional energy on drawing unhelpful comparisons to herself. This, like Emily's situation, was another example of a young teacher allowing their feelings of concern for their students to have a negative impact on their emotional state. Put simply, Nelly was affected personally by what was happening with this boy and this subsequently caused her stress and took a toll on her general wellbeing. FYGY teachers need to strive to be more objective and put a degree of emotional distance between themselves and their students.

The findings of my research provide the basis for arguing that whilst some FYGY teachers are willing to invest much of their emotional energy in their students, doing so is not always in their best interests and can in fact be counterproductive. This is because sometimes these FYGY secondary school teachers are not sufficiently resilient or emotionally mature enough to cope with the challenges and demands presented by their teenage students, and this can take a heavy toll on them. What appears needed in this instance is effective direction and guidance provided by mentors and/or supervisors. First-year teachers like Emily and Nelly, must be identified and supported to adopt a more objective outlook towards the relationships they are forming or have formed with their students. Supervisors and mentors need to ensure that they are provided with effective guidance and counselling, so that they are encouraged to maintain a degree of professional distance because this can serve as a buffer that protects them from the highly emotional nature of their new jobs.

In terms of identifying the attributes which teachers need to possess on entering the profession or that they need to develop in their first year of teaching, the findings of my study corroborate what Buchanan et al. (2013) found in their research on early career teacher attrition and retention. They argued that early career teachers needed to have the following attributes: resilience, ability for reflection, responsiveness, ability to develop relationships and resourcefulness; it was important that teacher education programs and school leaders “focus on developing and supporting” these five attributes, so that first-year teachers will be able to go beyond just surviving but rather will thrive in their roles as educators and will be placed in good stead to become “lifelong members of the profession” (Buchanan et al., 2013, p. 126). Teachers like Nicole and Darren either already possessed or developed these five attributes as they progressed through their first year of teaching and so they moved from surviving to thriving. They were able to build strong relationships, demonstrated high levels of resilience and were sufficiently responsive, resourceful and reflective. However, Louise and Emily never moved beyond surviving in their first year of teaching and this was because they did not develop all five of the attributes listed above. Emily did not have the emotional resilience required or the ability to manage challenging relationships,

whilst Louise was lacking in resourcefulness and she did not have the capacity to objectively reflect on her position within the school.

7.3 Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that through closely analysing the data related to participants' narratives and metaphors, what emerged were four main areas that were significant in terms of the personal and professional lives of FYGY secondary school teachers. To begin, it is important for these teachers to be committed to building relationships with students, staff and the school community in general because this will greatly assist their transition into the profession and furthermore by doing so it is likely they will derive higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, FYGY teachers will develop confidence and become more capable practitioners when they are provided with effective school-based support programs and mentoring. However, to gain the most benefit from these, it is necessary for the FYGY teacher to be able to openly and honestly reflect on their teaching. What is also important is that they should not be too self-focused and/or lacking in empathy, as it appears as though such teachers may exhibit higher levels of job dissatisfaction. Finally, it is beneficial for FYGY secondary school teachers to be emotionally resilient and have the capacity to look after their personal wellbeing because interacting and maintaining relationships with teenage students is demanding, and this can take a very heavy personal toll on them if they cannot exercise a degree of professional distance.

Hence the journey of FYGY teachers would be assisted if they demonstrated and/or developed certain characteristics: the ability to build relationships and not be too self-focused, the capacity to be emotionally resilient and the capability to honestly reflect on their progress. Furthermore, it is important that teacher education programs adequately prepare pre-service teachers so that they appreciate the importance of developing these attributes. Also, at the school and system level FYGY teachers need to be provided with sound levels of support and appropriate mentoring, so that a culture is cultivated that encourages them to critically self-evaluate their practice and to respond in an open and positive way to any advice and guidance offered. Finally, FYGY classroom practitioners do often find the physical and emotional demands of

teaching to be a serious challenge but by working in partnership with colleagues and sharing the load, they can minimise the frequency and impact of negative experiences that stifle the development of their careers. Clearly a joint responsibility exists, as both the individual and the profession need to work together to ensure that young teachers are effectively engaged and strongly supported in their first year of teaching.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Overview

The aim of my research was to explore the impact that time as a construct had on the professional and personal lives of Generation Y first-year secondary school teachers in NSW. The focus on this specific demographic was because, rightly or wrongly, there has recently been much discussion regarding the entry of these young people into the workforce and the impact that they are currently having (Coley, 2009; McQueen, 2011).

In this study, I considered time both from a resource viewpoint and time from an experience viewpoint, as well as time being a process which impacts on the lives lived by FYGY teachers. The ten participants involved were interviewed at three separate stages of their first year of teaching and questioned about what they were experiencing, as well as how they were reacting to what they encountered. From reviewing the relevant literature and critically applying the concepts and arguments raised to the data collected, a number of themes related to time were established and these were considered in relation to the individual journeys that each participant made. The FYGY teachers involved in the study were also encouraged to share narratives and discuss visual metaphors that reflected how they were thinking and feeling at specific points in time during their first year of teaching.

Taking this two-pronged approach to conducting the study allowed me, as the researcher, to comprehensively explore the lives lived by a small group of FYGY teachers who were appointed to full-time permanent teaching positions in NSW state secondary schools. From this exploration, recommendations are made in terms of what can be done to better support and assist FYGY teachers as they negotiate their new career path, with the aim of informing and benefitting not only beginning secondary teachers and their employers, but teacher educators also.

8.2 A Tale of Two FGY Teachers

One way to effectively summarise this research and make recommendations for the future is through revisiting the narrative inquiry approach, and writing composite stories for two FGY teachers after they have completed three terms of teaching. The two teachers will be named Adrian and Jordan and their genders are not significant. What is important is that their narratives are based entirely on the data collected, with the two separate synthesised accounts of the first year of teaching encapsulating all that was uncovered in terms of the typically positive and negative experiences that were documented in my study. However, whilst the most extreme incidents and features are included and these make each story compelling, in reality the narratives for the participants were far more complex and nuanced. I collected all of the highly positive experiences and put them into one single story and then did likewise for all of the very unsatisfactory experiences, so that these two narratives serve as a device to succinctly illustrate the FGY experience as uncovered in this research.

8.2.1 Adrian's Story

I was appointed to a well-resourced school and welcomed into a very supportive faculty. The principal was friendly and my head teacher was approachable, even-tempered and helpful. They both encouraged me to speak to them about any concerns that I had. They also ensured that I had a few buddies in the faculty who would specifically assist me to access programs, locate resources and set assessment tasks. I was allocated a mentor as soon as I arrived at the school. This person was really nice and he was not in my faculty, but this was good because if there had been any problems with the other teachers in my subject area, then I would have been able to tell him about the issues that I was having. My mentor met with me regularly and he assured me of complete confidentiality. I really felt that I could trust this person and he truly had my best interests at heart. In addition, my mentor was always able to offer me useful advice and he ensured that I kept things in perspective. He also ran a comprehensive induction program for all of the new teachers at the school and this gave me an excellent overview of departmental and school policies, procedures, protocols, priorities and we were encouraged to share and discuss issues that we were

having. At the start of the year I did have to deal with some challenging student behaviour, but the good thing was that my mentor and my two faculty buddies were there to help me work through these. They gave me lots of helpful management strategies that I could use when responding to the small number of classroom issues that came up in the first few months of my teaching. They also gave me the opportunity to observe them teaching classes and I found this to be really useful. Furthermore, as soon as I started in the job, I was given regular additional release time in the form of fewer periods to teach on my timetable and further to this, I was given one or two whole days off each term. The fewer lessons to teach each week meant that I had more time during the day to get all of the admin things done and I was able to take a minute to catch my breath. And the days off were great because I was able to use these to prepare teaching resources and do my first few class sets of reports, as well as complete any across-the-grade marking that I was allocated. Being given this time meant that I could actually have a good work/life balance. However, I also put in place some personal strategies that helped me to manage my time effectively. For example, I made sure that I did all of my schoolwork at school and didn't bring work home with me. This meant that I would do nine or ten hours a day Monday to Friday, but when I got home from school in the evenings I could take it easy and unwind. In addition, I found that being calm and relaxed when dealing with all types of people at school also helped a lot. I made sure that I never got upset or frustrated when working with the kids or other teachers or the office staff. Finally, I have to say that getting lots of support from different people at my school made me feel very satisfied with my new position, which in turn made me want to stay there for much longer than I originally thought I'd want to stay. In fact, I am now considering becoming an assistant to one of the school's year advisers because student welfare is an area that interests me greatly, and I really like being there for the kids and want to play a part in their lives as they grow and develop into adults.

8.2.2 Jordan's Story

I was appointed to a pretty disorganised school and have never been made to feel welcome. The principal hasn't really spoken to me apart from informing me that my

mentor would be my head teacher, and this arrangement hasn't worked well at all. This is because my head teacher is a very aggressive and hostile person. He will often yell and get angry when he's under pressure and I don't react well to this because I am quite sensitive. In fact, he has made me cry quite a few times. He never listens to me and doesn't respect my views. When I do try to share my thoughts, I am told not to because I don't have any experience, and I don't know how things are organised and done in schools. The other teachers in my faculty are also quite unsupportive and they rarely share resources or give me any guidance, even though they can see that I'm struggling. Sometimes I even feel that they're watching me and judging me, and then telling the head teacher about how I'm not very good at my job. But they never offer to help or assist me. They just keep saying how everything I want to do may work in theory but not in practice. For example, when I've had classroom management issues come up and I've asked them for advice, they just job me off and say, 'Didn't they tell you at university how to deal with those sorts of kids!' Or they tell me to go and tell the head teacher, but that is no use, as he will just tell me that he's too busy to deal with it and I need to be able to solve my own problems. I think they are all just so selfish and horrible, and I've let them know that I'm not happy, but I don't really think that they care! To make matters worse, there was no induction program run for new teachers to the school and this has meant that I always have to ask the office staff, or whoever I can find, about different school policies and procedures to follow, but a lot of the time these people themselves don't know what to do! Furthermore, I know that I am entitled to additional release time because I'm in my first year of teaching and the deputy has said that I will get it eventually, but they just are too busy to work it out. He did say that I'd probably get it in Term 4 but that is too late. I needed it at the start of the year! I am really struggling to get everything done and I'm working really long hours during the week and on weekends. I'm also not getting much sleep because I bring so much schoolwork home with me every night, and I often find myself up doing it until way past midnight. All of this has put a lot of pressure on me personally and I'm finding myself arguing a lot with my partner and feeling quite down. To be honest, I really just want to quit but I keep telling myself that I need to see it through until the end of the year. I mean, I went to university for four years and to just throw it all in now would be a

waste, but you know I just don't want to be at that school anymore. I'm really stressed out and depressed, and I definitely don't want to keep doing this job for much longer. Perhaps if the kids were a bit less draining and the staff a bit more helpful and nicer, then maybe things would be different, but unfortunately this hasn't been the case for me.

8.3 What the Two Narratives Reveal About FYGY Teachers

The two narratives highlight how time serves as a commodity, as a setting and as a process for FYGY teachers, with each reflecting the relevant time-related themes already discussed extensively in this thesis. Also, although these two stories are amalgams of the experiences of young teachers freshly appointed to secondary schools, they are quite firmly grounded in the findings uncovered through this research. Every part of each narrative was actually experienced by at least one of the participants in this study, and hence the contrasts that became evident were quite stark. The following six points highlight these contrasts, with tales of success or failure for FYGY teachers very much hinging on the provision and/or existence of each in individual contexts/situations.

1) The school's executive staff (principal, deputy principal/s and head teachers) need to be approachable and prepared to provide guidance and support to FYGY teachers. They should ensure that the prevailing school culture is welcoming and accepting of newcomers.

2) The mentors provided to FYGY teachers should be friendly, trustworthy, helpful and knowledgeable individuals who are focused on addressing the specific needs of their mentees and they must be given the necessary time to do this.

3) The FYGY teacher should be allocated one or two buddies within their faculty, with their purpose being to provide subject specific collegial advice that is useful and practical. This could relate to preparing teaching programs and resources, setting assessment tasks and establishing effective classroom practices.

4) A relevant and comprehensive induction program needs to be provided to FGY teachers and this should outline key systemic and school-based policies, procedures and priorities, as well as introduce new staff to key personnel in the school.

5) FGY teachers need to be provided with additional release time promptly (i.e. within the first few weeks of them taking up their new appointments) and it is preferable for this to be provided as a mix of regular timetabled periods off class and whole release days taken once or twice a term.

6) FGY teachers need to develop their professional capacity to be resilient, as well as honestly and critically reflect on their progress, and they need to be capable of finding an appropriate balance between their personal and work lives.

It would be ideal for a FGY teacher to have all six of these points in operation, thus increasing the potential for experiencing high levels of success and ultimately making a commitment to staying in their new positions for lengthy periods of time. However, in reality the situation is far more complex and a range of barriers exist which lead to the FGY teacher experience often being quite challenging, with the first year “knocking the wind out of their sails” (Adoniou, 2014, p. 20). As a consequence, some opt to leave teaching prematurely whilst others remain in the profession but do so unhappily. School leaders play an instrumental role, as they are the “policy interpreters, translators and enactors” who occupy “powerful positions to support early career teachers” (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 616). This is because they manage and mobilise professional supports and resources on behalf of beginning teachers (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 617).

There are significant operational, leadership and collegial costs, conditions and requirements involved in implementing each of the six points listed above, as well as time factors associated with implementation. For example, it is challenging for principals to ensure that their school has a prevailing staff culture that is welcoming of newcomers, as is ensuring that the FGY teachers appointed to their schools are provided with appropriately skilled mentors and suitable faculty buddies. Furthermore, these same principals will need to make sure that there are sufficient funds within their school’s budget to provide the FGY teacher, their mentor and buddies with the

release time required. They need to have other teaching staff available to take the classes of these individuals when they are involved in providing mentoring and support. Thus on the one hand whilst it would be most favourable to have all six of these points at work, on the other hand, bringing each to fruition is not necessarily straightforward.

8.4 Where to Now for FYGY Teachers and their Employers?

To better appreciate and utilise what has been uncovered in this research, it is useful to discuss two domains that can be considered when evaluating the positive and negative experiences of FYGY teachers. These two domains are the personal and the professional domains, with the personal reflecting areas that the teachers themselves need to develop prior to and/or during their first year of teaching. The professional reflects the wider systemic changes that organisations which employ beginning teachers, such as NSW DoE schools, should implement to ensure that these teachers are better supported. However, it does need to be stressed that a shared responsibility exists between the two groups, with young first-year teachers working together with school leadership teams to ensure that their entry into the teaching profession is as smooth and seamless as possible.

8.4.1 The Personal Domain

In their four dimensional framework of teacher resilience, Mansfield et al. (2012) noted that resilient teachers were those who had strong interpersonal and communication skills, were committed to their students, could build and support relationships, did not take things personally, could manage their emotions, were able to set realistic expectations and goals, and could maintain their motivation and enthusiasm (p. 362). In the study I have undertaken, the participant who experienced the most success in the first year of teaching was Nicole. She capably embraced her new role and exhibited all of the above characteristics/traits. However, others did not, or did so but to varying degrees. As a result, the following points can be made in relation to what this research has uncovered specifically regarding the qualities and capacities that FYGY teachers should ideally possess.

For these teachers to successfully commence their careers and develop their professional identities, it is important that they personally are committed to building relationships with pupils, staff and the school community in general. For example, they should, like Nicole, feel comfortable in acknowledging the public nature of their new positions and be prepared to interact in a positive way with all students; including those that they do not teach, when on duty in the playground or at extra curricula events like sporting carnivals. FGY teachers need to develop the ability to work with difficult people or those whom they personally dislike, and act in a mature and reasoned way when confronted with challenges. Therefore, if they encounter older colleagues who may act rudely, or perhaps even be hostile towards newcomers, then they should endeavour to maintain a professional demeanour at all times and always display courtesy and respect.

What is also important is that FGY educators not be too self-focused and/or lacking in empathy. There is a need for this group of teachers to take a broad view of their position and the role that they play. This means they need to carefully consider where they fit into the wider school and be realistic in regard to the impact that they can have. For example, as a first-year teacher who is new to a school, there will be much that they do not know about teaching in general and the specific educational institution that they have been appointed to. Consequently, they must keep in perspective the level of contribution that they can realistically make. There will be more experienced teachers who are already heavily invested in the school, and they may exhibit entrenched attitudes that form barriers to welcoming FGY teachers and the ideas that they bring, as was witnessed with Kendall and Amy's strained relationships with their head teachers. This is obviously problematic and a highly complex situation to resolve, but if FGY teachers are capable of openly and honestly reflecting on their position and role, then they can begin to work towards overcoming these types of obstacles.

In addition, FGY secondary school teachers need to be emotionally resilient and have the capacity to look after their personal wellbeing. This is because (as already mentioned) the development of constructive relationships with a wide variety of staff can prove to be difficult. Also interacting and maintaining relationships with teenage

students is demanding, as was evidenced by Darren and April who frequently discussed strained interactions with particular students or classes. However, both of these participants were able to take a step back from these challenging situations and work towards finding positive outcomes when their classroom authority or management skills were tested. April found areas of interest or commonality and used these to build relationships with defiant students, whilst Darren modified his reaction and approach to the poor behaviour exhibited by his Year 8 class. Hence it is important for FGY teachers to exercise the capacity for objective judgement and to be able to avoid emotive responses. Furthermore, as previously noted by Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 365), they should be reflective and possess the capacity to distance themselves emotionally from specific events or situations.

Finally, FGY teachers need to be committed to and determined to achieve and maintain a healthy work/life balance. This will avoid burnout early in their careers and ensure that they are more likely to commit to working for a substantial amount of time as teachers in secondary schools. The effects of not maintaining a satisfactory work/life balance were clearly demonstrated by Louise, as her personal life suffered greatly due to the fact that she found it difficult to manage the heavy workload. The ramification of this was that in the course of her first year of teaching she began actively seeking employment elsewhere.

In reflecting on each of the above points, it is important for the individual situations and contexts that FGY teachers are presented with to be taken into consideration. Often there is a deficit view propagated, which has an underlying assumption that beginning teachers are lacking and need to be *fixed* so they can develop into “quality teachers” (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 604). Using policies such as merely allocating them extra release time will not *fix* anything and is simplistic, as well as a “limited interpretation of policy” (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 611). This is because it is all too easy to blame the new teacher for shortcomings when in reality there are a wide variety of other factors at work, and it is the interplay of each of these which often contribute towards the causation of negative outcomes and experiences for FGY teachers. In the following section I will explore wider systemic issues that are also having a significant impact.

8.4.2 The Professional Domain

Since the inception of policies which provide additional release time to graduate teachers, they have as such been constructed and reconstructed (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 605). The NSW DoE's *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* (2013) reforms came about after the publication of a discussion paper in 2012 and the initiation of a three-month consultation period which sought submissions from a range of educational stakeholders. From this the NSW state government developed a plan that involved implementing a wide-ranging blueprint to improve the quality of teaching and learning in NSW government schools. It included giving greater support to beginning teachers, as well as strengthening performance management and development processes. It is still currently being implemented with increased support provided for all permanent beginning teachers in their first two years of teaching, and from 2017, temporary beginning teachers will also be afforded additional support when they commence full-time teaching, so long as they are employed for a minimum 12-month period. This has occurred through allocating additional funds to schools so they can provide extra resourcing for staffing, and consequently increase the amount of release time available for first-year teachers. Essentially these newly-appointed teachers are provided with more time off class than regular teachers, with this being the equivalent of two hours per week less face-to-face teaching time. Furthermore, additional funding is provided for another one hour of formal mentoring support to be provided to the first-year teacher by an experienced teaching colleague, with the latter receiving the equivalent of one hour per week less face-to-face teaching time. The DoE's *Beginning Teachers Support Funding Policy* (2014) outlined the four conditions for funding as being: 1) beginning teachers have reduced responsibilities or teaching loads, sufficient to support the development of their skills in the first year; 2) beginning teachers are provided with ongoing feedback and support that is embedded in the collaborative practices of the school; 3) mentoring structures and collaborative practices support beginning teachers and 4) beginning teachers have access to professional learning. Furthermore, the beginning teacher support funding is meant to be distributed to schools as a single payment, as close as possible to the teacher's entry on duty. However, as already discussed, a number of this study's participants, with Mario being

an obvious example, did not receive this additional release time or formal mentoring support until very late in their first year of teaching and consequently its benefit was lost. The following points outline the professional supports that I believe FGY teachers need to be provided with, so that they as individuals entering the profession can develop confidence and become more capable classroom practitioners.

To begin, FGY teachers should be provided with effective school-based support programs and mentoring. The provision of personable and capable mentors for beginning teachers is a necessity, with those chosen to be mentors requiring certain characteristics like high levels of patience and compassion, and most importantly they need to be able to build strong trustworthy relationships with their mentees. They also require specific skills and knowledge, such as the ability to communicate well and a sound understanding of effective classroom management strategies. The school needs to allocate these mentors a sufficient amount of time off class to afford FGY teachers the necessary guidance and support. In addition, helpful staff members within the faculties of the FGY teachers should be designated as buddies. They would supply specific subject related information and assistance to the novice teachers allocated to them. Furthermore, FGY teachers should be provided a thorough school-based induction program which is peculiar to their context, informative and relevant to their needs.

It is also highly desirable that FGY secondary teachers be placed into faculties and schools which offer a positive learning and working environment, with principals and faculty leaders being committed to the cultivation of professional values that are widely shared amongst the entire school staff. This obviously is difficult to guarantee and very much dependent on the culture that already exists within specific educational institutions, but staffing officers and school leaders need to be committed to negotiating and working towards appropriate placements being made to FGY teachers who secure permanent employment. This could possibly be provided through targeted professional learning programs which make principals and executive staff more aware of the ways in which they can make their respective organisations supportive of FGY teachers and their needs.

Furthermore, the timely provision of additional release time to FYGY teachers is essential. This study has shown that their entitlement to extra time off class should be given immediately on their appointment, and used in a way that benefits the first-year teacher and meets their specific requirements. It also should be stipulated that this time allocation is not used for any other purpose apart from providing relief and support to classroom educators who are beginning their teaching careers.

However, as demonstrated by a number of my study's participants, these types of supportive practices are not occurring and there are schools like Jordan's in existence. In ideal circumstances all schools should be like Adrian's because the points listed above are seemingly achievable, however, unfortunately it appears that in regard to implementation, specific issues exist. For FYGY teachers who are employed in schools controlled by large organisations such as the NSW DoE, there very often is a great deal of complexity and even an inherent ambiguity involved in their entry into the teaching profession. Sullivan and Morrison (2014) have argued that school leaders are very powerful in their capacity to enact policy which supports beginning teachers "as they interpret and translate policies on behalf of their school" (2014, p. 606). However, policies and procedures associated with providing greater support to beginning teachers are not always easily put into practice. This is because of the complex ways in which policies, such as the provision of extra release time for first-year teachers are often negotiated and applied (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014, p. 610). Also there are a range of constraints connected to policies when implemented, such as costs and time involved. For example, principals must contend with a variety of pressing financial and management issues when running a large high school. There are child protection incidents, parental complaints, staff grievances, budgeting dilemmas and many other things that require their immediate attention. As a result, ensuring that the needs of FYGY teachers are adequately met may not always be given the highest priority by principals, even though it could be argued that they should be prioritised. Consequently, it is important for the existence of these competing demands to be acknowledged and taken into account when engaging in a discussion of the school-based support structures that are provided to newly-appointed teachers.

8.5 What Can Teacher Educators Do?

Teacher educators also should acknowledge the importance of preparing teaching graduates to be resilient, well-informed and capable individuals who have realistic expectations and can display high levels of empathy. Bahr and Mellor (2016) have argued quality teachers need to possess specific personal attributes such as “having high expectations of all learners, kindness, fairness, humour and a general positive attitude to teaching” and that these attributes can be developed through teacher education programs which enable, demonstrate and model these qualities, as well as provide authentic experiences and opportunities for pre-service teachers (pp. 63-64). Facilitating this process could occur through the offering of courses that require students to undertake readings, tasks and assignments which involve them in analysing contextually relevant early career teacher case studies. These would contain realistic classroom and staffroom contexts, and describe situations pertaining to the employment of novice teachers in a wide variety of schools. Also, tutorials and workshops should include learning activities which involve pre-service teachers in role playing and discussing various classroom/school related scenarios, with these being focused on the development of the attributes and qualities listed above.

An example of a research-based initiative that has recently been developed by Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, Weatherby-Fell and MacNish (2016) to support pre-service teachers is the *BRiTE - Building Resilience in Teacher Education* website and associated program. This provides online modules which help soon-to-be teachers build their skills and understanding of practices that facilitate resilience and the capacity to develop relationships, as well as support their wellbeing and manage their emotions. It is a valuable resource that final year teacher education students should be made aware of and encouraged to access, as it provides a personalised toolkit that will help to better prepare them for the pressures and challenges that they will face in their first year of teaching.

Furthermore, it could be the case that universities provide their secondary teacher education students with longer practicum placements which allow them to be more firmly embedded in their subject faculties. This would provide pre-service teachers

with more exposure to the inner workings and organisational structures that exist within high schools. In addition, they could be encouraged to reflect on how the specific dynamics and interplay of personal and professional relationships create situational contexts, with the focus being on how they, as future FYGY teachers, would react and respond to these if permanently appointed to the faculty and school. However, the practicalities and significant costs involved with requiring student teachers to complete longer practicums must be taken into consideration. This is because the supervisors of these pre-service teachers would be required to supervise them for lengthier periods of time and this would add considerably to their already busy workloads. Also they would have to be paid accordingly for this additional work, which in turn would put further budgetary pressures on universities and the limited funds that they have available to allocate to their teacher education programs.

Forming stronger links between institutions that provide teacher education and the schools that employ graduates in this area should obviously be encouraged. In the United States, Darling-Hammond (2010) has argued that the most powerful teacher education programs are those that require students to spend extensive time in the field working alongside experienced teachers who provide expert guidance. This has come about through the development of professional development schools “that, like teaching hospitals, offer yearlong residencies ... to develop state-of-the-art practice ... These schools also engage in intensive professional learning for veteran teachers and may become hubs of professional development for their districts” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 40). Recently the NSW DoE has reviewed its professional experience agreements with a number of universities/initial teacher education providers and set up *Professional Experience Hub Schools* (2016). This has been done to ensure that high quality professional experiences are provided as part of the preparation of the next generation of teachers, as well as to develop a more consistent and coordinated approach for placing teacher education students into schools. As a consequence, specific schools and universities have established partnerships. For example, the University of Technology Sydney is linked to Bonnyrigg Heights Public School and Turrumurra High School. Under the terms of the agreements that they have entered into, these schools and their university partners demonstrate, develop and share high

quality professional experience, as well as collaborate with other schools to further build expertise.

Finally, in recent times there has been debate concerning the selection of prospective candidates into teacher education programs. The focus of much discussion has been on how universities can attract the best suited and most appropriate students into their teaching courses, with some institutions looking beyond university entrance scores like the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), as this does not capture the personal qualities and mindset needed for individuals to grow and develop into sound secondary school teachers. In this regard, the University of Notre Dame Australia (2013) has, as part of its standard admissions process, always interviewed teacher education applicants deemed to have met minimum entry requirements. At the interview for a place in the School of Education, prospective students are provided the opportunity to evidence their commitment to children, the community and the profession, as well as offer insight into the challenges of teaching in the 21st Century. They are expected to engage in discussion that allows them to demonstrate character qualities suitable for the profession whilst gathering a deeper understanding of the course and expectations. In addition, Clinton, Hattie, Scull and Dinham (2016) have developed the *TeacherSelector* web based assessment tool which the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education uses as part of its selection process to identify candidates for its Master of Teaching programs. This is utilised because it is claimed that it provides a cohesive and comprehensive research-based selection tool that can successfully identify an individual's suitability for teaching and ability to excel in the profession. Both of these initiatives are examples of how some universities have used other means to determine the suitability of prospective students in their teacher education programs.

Looking to overseas for further evidence in regard to recruiting the best students for teacher education programs, Finland's approach has been much lauded. Prospective applicants' high school leaving examination credits are calculated and combined with merits in arts, music and sports. Then they complete a written national entrance exam on assigned books on pedagogy. From this, top candidates are selected and they are interviewed and asked, among other things, why they have decided to become

teachers. This lengthy recruitment process has ensured that successful candidates “have not only good scores and excellent interpersonal skills, but also a deep commitment to teaching” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 19). In light of this, in Australia and more specifically NSW, perhaps interviews and character assessments should also be used more widely to determine if course applicants possess the suitable attributes and the necessary characteristics to become effective members of the teaching profession. However, consideration must be given to the fact that in this country, unlike Finland where teaching “is consistently the most admired profession in opinion polls of high school graduates” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 19) and therefore is a highly sought after vocation, universities cannot be so selective when choosing prospective candidates for their teacher education programs. This is because teaching is not held in the same high regard by society at large, and consequently shortages exist in some secondary teaching areas, such as Mathematics and Science.

8.6 The Study’s Limitations

My study had some limitations. Firstly, there were only a small number of participants involved, with ten FYGY teachers participating in total. Initially it was intended that twelve to fifteen participants would be recruited. However, this did not eventuate because recruiting first-year teachers who fitted the specific criteria of being young and permanently appointed to full-time teaching positions was difficult, as outlined in Section 3.5. Very few students who graduate as teachers immediately secure substantive teaching roles, and as a result they commence their careers doing casual or temporary work in schools. Also there was a considerable level of time commitment involved in being a participant. Each FYGY teacher had to be prepared to participate in lengthy interviews on three separate occasions which were conducted outside of school hours. Obviously such a substantial investment of time did have the effect of discouraging otherwise suitable candidates and contributed in part to there being only ten participants in the study. Nevertheless, the small number did provide rich insights into the experiences of FYGY teachers but these cannot be generalised and attributed more widely to all young novice teachers.

Secondly, another limitation of the study was that the participants were drawn from a relatively narrow field. They were all secondary school teachers teaching English, Mathematics, Science or Technological and Applied Studies, and this largely came about because of two reasons. In NSW there currently is an oversupply of primary educators with it being stated in the NSW DoE (2015) *Teaching Workforce Supply and Demand Report* that there is “more than adequate supply of primary teachers across the state” with 26988 primary teachers currently on the employment list awaiting a permanent position (p. 10, p. 14). Therefore, it is very rare for students graduating in this teaching sector to secure permanent full-time employment. Also this same report confirms that there currently is “more than adequate supply of secondary teachers in the curriculum areas of Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education” with there being 3093 and 3269 respectively of these secondary teachers on the employment list (NSW DoE, 2015, p. 10, p. 14). Furthermore, the supply of “Human Society and its Environment teachers is adequate” with 3223 on the employment list awaiting a permanent position (NSW DoE, 2015, p. 10, p. 14). As a result, a similar situation applies, with newly qualified secondary teachers in these curriculum areas rarely being appointed to full-time teaching roles. Consequently, the majority of suitable candidates that could be identified and invited to participate in this study were from the secondary education sector and they were predominantly teaching the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, as most teaching vacancies at this point in time are confined to secondary schools and these specific subject areas. Furthermore, the majority of participants (eight of the ten) were the recipients of NSW DoE employment scholarships, which could be perceived as an added limitation because these FGY teachers were obligated to fulfil specific service requirements. As noted in Section 3.5, these participants had been paid by the DoE to complete their university studies and in exchange for this they were bonded to serve a minimum of three years in their appointed teaching positions. Having such a high number of scholarship holders amongst the participants was not intended, but given the complexities involved in the recruitment of suitable FGY teachers this was unavoidable.

This leads to another of the study's limitations: all of the participants were employed in NSW DoE state secondary schools, with none teaching in independent or Catholic system schools. Why this situation came about has already been outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5), with the difficulties experienced when attempting to recruit participants being fully explained. To recap, initially very few final year teacher education students responded to my request to participate in the study and those that did were not suitable candidates (i.e. they did not meet the specified age and/or employment criteria). Therefore, prospective FYGY teachers who were to be employed in non-state secondary schools could not be recruited, as I did not have the means to access these potential participants through my existing personal networks working as a teacher mentor in NSW state schools.

The final limitation to the study was the fact that none of the participants were appointed to geographically isolated schools. This occurred purely by chance and it was not my intention to have this particular group of FYGY teachers unrepresented in the research. It simply was the case that those participants who volunteered and qualified to be involved in the study, had been appointed to schools located in Sydney's western and south-western suburbs or large regional centres north of Sydney.

As a result of these limitations, generalisations cannot be made from the findings. However, it is important to bear in mind that the intention in completing the research was to take a snapshot of the unique and specific experiences that these FYGY teachers encountered on their journey from secondary teacher education student to classroom practitioner, with the reader gaining a firmly grounded and realistic sense of what this specific group of teachers experience when situated in their first year of teaching. Consequently, the findings and results uncovered are still highly relevant and important for the educational research and teaching communities.

8.7 Areas for Further Research

In acknowledging the limitations of this study, a number of areas have been raised in which further research could be conducted. To start, it would be helpful if the

experiences of FGY teachers appointed to non-government schools were taken into consideration, as both independent schools and Catholic schools would have their own policies, practices and procedures in place to support first-year teachers (be they young or otherwise) as they make the transition from university to the classroom. Ascertaining further knowledge and developing a better understanding of what teachers experience when appointed to full-time permanent positions in these types of schools would complement the findings and results of this study.

It would also be beneficial if the experiences of FGY teachers in primary schools, as well as geographically isolated schools, are considered. This is because these two specific groups were not represented in this study and it would be useful for their experiences to be given due consideration. In NSW it is frequently the case that teachers appointed to rural and remote locations are employed in DoE central schools and these, like many primary schools in NSW, are often significantly smaller than secondary schools and organised very differently. Therefore, it would be helpful as a point of comparison, if the experiences of FGY teachers appointed to these types of schools were examined.

8.8 The Significance of this Research

My study is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides a snapshot of what FGY teachers may experience when offered full-time permanent appointments to state secondary schools in NSW. It also provides greater insight into some of the issues and/or challenges, as well as successes and/or triumphs that these individuals encounter when they make the journey from teaching graduate to classroom practitioner. In addition, the research I have undertaken has used the lens of time to uncover important factors and dimensions pertaining to FGY teachers and highlighted these through the use of participant narratives.

In effect, time has served as a lens through which we can view the varied and complex lives lived by Generation Y teachers who are in their first year of teaching and this is extremely important. This is because we need to develop a better understanding of how time as a concept, with its numerous implications and associations, impacts on

those who are young and new to teaching. This is due to the fact that over the next ten years increasing numbers of Baby Boomer Generation teachers will retire and they will be replaced by FGY teachers. Therefore, we need to be fully aware of the challenges that this particular group face so that their entry into the profession can be better assisted and supported. By doing this, the foundations can be laid for FGY teachers to make a long-term commitment to teaching, which is essential because it is they who will educate our school students in the years to come.

However, it is open to question as to whether it is reasonable to expect young novice teachers to make a long-term commitment to teaching. Generation Y have been told to expect to have numerous careers in their lifetime, as the participant April confirmed in her final interview: "You know one of the good things about our generation, is that we have been told ... that we can change and retrain many times, and do whatever we like with our careers." This elicits another dilemma concerning time because it raises the following questions: Is the amount of time that they choose to spend in the occupation that significant? Should it perhaps not be that FGY teachers are encouraged to commit to being quality teachers during the time that they are in the profession, with the number of years that they choose to teach being irrelevant? And if being a quality teacher is more important than teaching for a lengthy amount of time, then is it not the case that when starting their careers, they should be provided with targeted support so that the foundations can be laid for this to happen?

School leaders, as well as those involved in supporting beginning teachers, along with teacher education providers, should find the results and conclusions drawn from my study to be of great benefit. This is because the research findings not only have currency and relevance to their specific endeavours, but also are thought provoking and a considerable amount of new knowledge and understanding has been generated from the work undertaken in this thesis.

8.9 Conclusion

It is pertinent that the two composite narratives presented at the start of this chapter are revisited at this point. What needs to be asked is: Why is it not possible for FGY

teachers to be appointed to schools as supportive as Adrian's? Also, do schools as unsupportive as Jordan's actually exist? Obviously the answer to these questions lies somewhere in the middle, with the aim here being to raise awareness and understanding of the factors which are at play in creating such situations for FYGY teachers. This has been done so that those who prepare teachers for the classroom, those who employ them in schools and those who support them when they begin teaching, can work towards making sure that the overall experience of the first year of teaching is considerably more positive rather than negative. Our goal obviously should be for FYGY teachers to be appointed to schools that are more like Adrian's and less like Jordan's, but whether these types of schools actually exist is not important. Rather the focus should be on what can be changed so as to ensure that the needs of our FYGY teachers are effectively met.

My study has used time as an analytical device to achieve a better understanding of how full-time permanently appointed Generation Y secondary school teachers in NSW experience and travel through their first year of teaching. I have shed new light on this area through treating time as a resource, as an experience and a measure, as well as a process in relation to the journey that FYGY teachers make. By considering time in each of these ways and closely analysing the participant narratives shared, readers of this thesis should have come to fully appreciate what some FYGY teachers think, feel and experience as they begin their teaching journey and establish their professional identities as classroom practitioners. Furthermore, my research has uncovered what can be done to more effectively support FYGY teachers so as to ensure that they successfully negotiate their new career path and are provided with the opportunity to become quality teachers now and in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Interview Instruments

NOTE: In the first interviews with the participants, the questions used for each were similar. Consequently, a sample of the questions asked in the first interview has been supplied. However, in subsequent interviews, the questions asked of each participant were based on the responses that they had provided in earlier interviews. Therefore, they differed slightly between the participants, and as a result the questions asked of each participant have been supplied for the second and third interviews.

1st Interview Questions: All Participants

- 1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since you started teaching. In other words, please explain what has been happening to you since you started teaching.
- 2) Using the visual images that have been supplied to you, please choose one or two that best represent your current thoughts/feelings/attitudes concerning your life presently as a school teacher. Then explain why the image or images chosen best represent your experience at this point in time?
- 3) Please comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life? Does one of the visual images supplied here relate to or reflect what you are currently experiencing?
- 4) Is there a particular story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates/epitomises/justifies your current outlook/viewpoint?
- 5) Is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and/or what you expected? To what extent is this sustainable in the long-term? Also are you receiving any mentor support and/or release time?
- 6) In terms of what you have experienced thus far as a school teacher, how likely is it that at this point in time, you will continue teaching in the future and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Amy

- 1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.
- 2) In our last interview you chose the woman walking a tightrope as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that best represents your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 9-10 hours a day during the week and spending about 4-5 hours on school work over the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about a difficult ADHD and ODD boy in your class whom you had a breakthrough with when you praised him for doing a good drawing. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time you did not have a designated mentor? Is this still the case and if you do have a mentor now how helpful have they been and if you don't then how has this been limiting?

7) In our first interview you indicated that you were not being given the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were reconsidering your teaching career and would probably leave at the end of the year to undertake further study (i.e. commence a PhD.) Is this still the case and please explain why you have made this decision?

2nd Interview Questions: April

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the walking the tightrope image and the new dawn/sunrise image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing but felt that the tightrope image was more predominant. Is this still the case or are there other visual images that best represent your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 11+ hours a day during the week and spending about 4-5 hours over the weekend on school work. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about a boy whom you had had difficulty with but you managed to win him over by talking to him about soccer. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you indicated that you were getting excellent support from your mentor. Is this still the case and if it is then how have you found your mentor to be helpful?

7) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time your additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being given to you in full days. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you are feeling quite positive about your position and that you see yourself as continuing to teach in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Cory

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the climbing the big mountain image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that best represents your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working 10+ hour days and spending a lot of time on school work, so much so that it has impinged on your personal life but you did say that this is to be expected in your first year of teaching. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you spoke about how you have avoided yelling at your classes and used other strategies to successfully get their attention. Is there some other story or anecdote from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you indicated that you were receiving additional release time by being underload (i.e. teaching fewer periods) and this was built into your timetable. To what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

7) In our first interview you did not mention whether or not you had been allocated a mentor. Has this situation changed and if you do have a mentor how helpful have they been?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you definitely see yourself as continuing to teach in the long-term and would like to perhaps pursue school leadership positions in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Darren

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the walking the tightrope image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that best represents your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working 10+ hour days and spending a lot of time on school work. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about the boy in your Year 8 class who started breakdancing in the middle of your lesson. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you did not mention whether you had been designated a mentor. Is this still the case and if you do have a mentor now how helpful have they been?

7) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time you were not being given the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you definitely see yourself as continuing to teach in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Emily

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the two paths/crossroads image and the new dawn/sunrise image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or are there other visual images that best represent your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 10+ hours a day during the week and spending about another 8 hours over the weekend doing school work. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about a girl in your Year 7 class who was mocking you and how you did not react in a confrontational way but rather turned what the girl was saying into a game which then stopped her inappropriate behaviour. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time you were getting time off class to work with your mentor. Has your mentor been helpful to you?

7) In our first interview you indicated that you were being given full days off as additional release time. Has this continued and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were feeling really positive about your position and that you see yourself as continuing to teach in the future and in fact have aspirations to be promoted into leadership positions further down the track? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Kendall

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the walking a tightrope image and the doing study/research image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or are there other visual images that best represent your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 8-9 hours a day each weekday doing school work but not doing any work on the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to

time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about how in your first week you did a 'getting to know you' activity with your Year 10 class and you told them that you believed that they could do well and the boys in the class responded quite positively to this. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you did not mention whether or not you had been allocated a mentor. Is this still the case and if you do have a mentor now how helpful have they been? If you don't then how has this been limiting?

7) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time, your additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being given to you as whole days to work on things like your accreditation. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were locked into teaching for the next three years due to your scholarship and you stated that you could not see yourself teaching in the long-term in a school like the one you are currently in, as it is too challenging emotionally and not stimulating enough intellectually. Do you still feel the same way and why?

2nd Interview Questions: Louise

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the crossroads image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing because you see yourself taking an alternative path away from teaching. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that best represents your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 14-15 hours a day during the week and spending about 14-15 hours over the weekend doing school work. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about how the Department of Education took a long time to process your appointment and how you found this waiting period made you feel uncertain and now you have regrets about taking the job. Is there another story from your

personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you did not mention whether or not you had been allocated a mentor. Is this still the case and if you do have a mentor now how helpful have they been? If you don't then how has this been limiting?

7) In our first interview you stated that at that point in time you had not been given the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were feeling quite negative about your position and said that you did not see yourself continuing to teach in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Mario

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the walking the tightrope image and the two paths image as best reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or are there other visual images that best represent your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why the chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working 10-11 hour days and spending a lot of time on school work on the weekend too. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about a difficult class that you played a lining up game with. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you did not indicate if you were receiving any mentor support. Is this still the case and if you do have a mentor now how helpful have they been? If you don't then how has this been limiting?

7) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time you had not been given any of the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that at that point you could not say whether or not you intend to continue teaching in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Nelly

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the person doing study/research image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that best represents your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 10 hours a day and spending a lot of time on school work. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about an Aboriginal student who made you feel quite conflicted because he was being treated differently to other students. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you indicated that you had a designated mentor providing you with support. Please explain if and how you have found this person to be helpful?

7) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time your additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being integrated into your timetable (i.e. you were teaching fewer periods). Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were feeling really positive about your position and that you see yourself as continuing to teach in the future? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

2nd Interview Questions: Nicole

1) Please outline what you have experienced in the last few months since our previous interview.

2) In our last interview you chose the walking the tightrope image and the fork in the road image as reflecting what you are currently experiencing. Is this still the case or are there other visual images that best represent your current attitude concerning your life presently as a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image is an accurate reflection of what you are feeling at this point in time?

3) In our first interview you indicated that you were working about 9-10 hours a day during the week and you said that your job was not taking up too much of your personal time. Please explain if this is still the case and comment on any issues or concerns that you have experienced in relation to time? Are you currently having difficulty managing your workload and balancing this with your personal life?

4) In our last interview you shared the story about how by going on the Year 7 Camp you were able to build a good rapport with your Year 7 class. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

5) Seeing that you are approximately halfway through your first year of teaching, is the amount of time that you are currently spending on completing your teaching duties reasonable and what you expected?

6) In our first interview you mentioned that you were receiving mentor support from the coordinator of new teachers at your school and two faculty colleagues. Have you found this support to be helpful and why is this the case?

7) In our first interview you indicated that at that point in time your additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being integrated into your timetable and you were teaching fewer periods. Has this situation changed and to what extent are you able to manage your time and have some work/life balance?

8) In our last interview you indicated that you were feeling quite positive about your position and said that you see yourself as continuing to teach well into the future but you may not stay at your current school for more than 4-5 years? Is this still the case and why do you feel this way?

3rd Interview Questions: Amy

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9-10 hours a day during the week and spending about 4-5 hours on schoolwork over the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time your mentor was actually your head teacher and this was something that you were not comfortable with. If this is still the case, how has this impacted on you as a first-year teacher?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was going to be given to you when the timetable changed. Has this happened and if it has, how has it helped your situation?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how a boy in your Year 9 class performed CPR on a woman outside of school but this was not really acknowledged by the senior executive. Is there another story that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the crossroads image as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you were actively looking at leaving your job and pursuing a PhD. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are currently feeling?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you did not find teaching in your current school to be very stimulating and you could not see yourself continuing to do it in the future. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: April

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 10 hours a day during the week and spending about 1-2 hours on schoolwork over the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time your mentor was giving you good support. Is this still the case and how helpful overall have they been for you?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being given to you as full days and you have had about 15 days off class in total thus far. To what extent have these days helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about a challenging female student in your Year 9 class who was being very difficult, but in the midst of this you managed to have a nice conversation with her about books she'd like to read and what she wanted to do in the future. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the person walking the tightrope and the person doing serious reading images as reflecting what you are currently experiencing, as you were still feeling a bit vulnerable and having to do a lot of paperwork and reading that comes with being an English teacher. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you were still feeling positive and inspired about being a teacher. You wanted to continue teaching because you felt it was very important for young people to develop a love of literature and become critical thinkers, so they can make sense of the world. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Cory

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working 10+ hours a day during the week and spending time on the weekend doing schoolwork, and commented that this was frustrating and unreasonable. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point you did have a mentor but they were shared with a lot of other teachers. You also mentioned that you wanted to observe one of his more difficult classes. Has this happened and has having a mentor been helpful?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being built into your timetable and you have had fewer classes to teach. To what extent has this helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how you have some Year 7 and 9 classes that are testing the boundaries, which is tiresome, but you also have a good Year 9 class that learn independently and can engage in higher order thinking. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the crossroads and tightrope images as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you came to teaching after having had another career and have found some classes challenging, which has made you toss up whether or not to remain in the

profession. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you did still want to continue teaching but wanted a bit more variety, so would like to progress into a leadership role such as HT Science. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Darren

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9 hours a day during the week and not doing schoolwork on the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that you were being mentored by a female PE teacher and she has helped you with things like behaviour management strategies. Has this continued and has your mentor been helpful?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being given to you in the form of teaching fewer periods (i.e. four less periods per cycle.) To what extent has this helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how the DP lost your paperwork for a soccer excursion and this had to be re-done which was frustrating. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the tightrope image but stated that it was getting wider, as you felt that you were getting the hang of things and falling into a rhythm with your teaching and as a result you now needed to ask fewer questions. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you definitely see yourself as continuing to teach in the future and you were forming good relationships with your students and having an impact, so you wanted to take your Year 8 and 9 classes through to Year 12. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Emily

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9.5 hours a day during the week and spending about 4-5 hours on schoolwork over the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that having a mentor had definitely been helpful. Has this continued to be the case and why?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being provided to you as full days of release time, but at that point you wanted to use the time to observe other teachers. Has this happened and if it has, how has it helped your situation?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how you had to send a student outside for poor behaviour and when you spoke to her she broke down in tears, which showed the human side of teaching and its demanding nature. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the climbing the mountain and tightrope images as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you stated that small wins don't happen much so they need to be celebrated and teaching is very multilayered so you are always having to balance things. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you were indecisive about continuing to teach in the long term because it is a hard job and there is always so much happening, but it is rewarding and good. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Kendall

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9 hours a day (7.5 hours at school and 1-2 hours at home in the evening) during the week and spending about 2-3 hours on schoolwork over the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time you had only just been allocated a mentor and it was someone outside of your faculty. How helpful has your mentor been?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being provided in full days and you had had three (one in Term 1 and two in Term 2) in total so far. How many more release days have you had since then and to what extent has this helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how you gave your Year 10 class a really engaging task that extended them and got fabulous results. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the tightrope image as reflecting what you are currently feeling but it was selected then because you were trying to manage the issues and tensions in your faculty/staffroom. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that the students were not the problem anymore but rather the staff in your faculty and this was causing you to feel that you did not want to continue teaching in that school. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Louise

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were still working an excessive amount of hours (in excess of 60 hours a week) and this was making you feel stressed. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time your mentor was also your head teacher and this has not been helpful to you. If this is still the case, how has this impacted on you as a first-year teacher?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being given to you as full days off and you had had only one at that stage, but were going to be provided with more. Has this occurred and if it has, has it

helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how you are on a Facebook page with lots of other Science teaching graduates from Sydney University and they feel the same way as you. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the crossroads and the sunset images as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you are looking at changing careers because whilst you are passionate and love teaching, the amount of work that you have to do is making you feel very bogged down and sad. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you were not going to continue teaching in your current position. Your intention was to just get through probation and then move on because you do not feel that your head teacher is a good leader. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Mario

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9 hours a day during the week but still spending quite a lot of time on the weekend preparing resources, however, you did feel that this would not continue in the long-term. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time you had not been allocated a mentor but this was going to occur. Has this happened and if you do have a mentor now, how helpful have they been and if you don't then how has this been limiting?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher had not been given to you, but it was going to be allocated in Term 3. Has this occurred and to what extent has it helped you to better cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how there was a student in your class who had been okay for you but he had been difficult for other teachers. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the climbing the mountain image as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you felt that this represented how you were moving forward as a teacher. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you would remain at your current school for the required three years but would not stay there any longer. You may continue to teach in the future in another school, but you could not say this for certain at this stage. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Nelly

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 10 hours a day during the week but not doing any schoolwork on the weekend. Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that you have received excellent support from your head teacher but you did not feel that your mentor had been that helpful or useful. Has this continued to be the case and why?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being integrated into your underload periods and so you were being given fewer casual periods, but you did not have any control over when you get your free periods and this was frustrating. Is this still the case and please comment on the extent to which your additional release time has helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how your junior classes demand a lot of your help and time, but they don't appreciate what you do for them. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the serious study/reading image as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you had to develop your knowledge about so many different subjects that come under the DT/IA umbrella. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you were still feeling positive about your teaching career but you were not sure whether you'd do it for the rest of your working life. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

3rd Interview Questions: Nicole

1a) In our last interview you indicated that you were working about 9 hours a day during the week and not doing any school work over the weekend (unless you had to write reports.) Please explain if this is still the case and discuss your experiences with time and balancing your workload with your personal life?

1b) Now that you are nearing the end of your first year of teaching, how do you feel about the amount of time that you are spending on work related tasks/activities?

2a) In our last interview you indicated that at that point in time your mentor was giving you good support and you were also being helped by two other teachers in your faculty. Is this still the case and overall to what extent has having a mentor and faculty buddies assisted you in your first year of teaching?

2b) In our last interview you indicated that the additional release time that you are entitled to as a first year out teacher was being integrated into your timetable and you were teaching three periods less a fortnight. To what extent has this additional release time helped you to better manage your time and cope with the demands of being a first-year teacher?

3) In our last interview you shared the story about how a student that you didn't teach had seen you at a restaurant and asked you about it, but this did not worry you as you now feel more accepted as part of the school and wider community. Is there another story from your personal or professional life that you'd like to share which illustrates or epitomises your current outlook/viewpoint towards teaching?

4a) As a young teacher, how has your age been an advantage and/or disadvantage?

4b) Reflecting on your first year of teaching, what has been your biggest issue or issues?

5a) In our last interview you chose the sunset image as reflecting what you are currently feeling, as you usually drive home at this time and this makes you feel satisfied knowing that you have completed another day of teaching, so can go home and relax. Is this still the case or is there another visual image that now best represents your current attitude towards being a school teacher? Please explain why your chosen image accurately reflects what you are feeling at this point in time?

5b) In our last interview you indicated that you were now looking at staying at your current school for longer (6-8 years) because it was a good place but you did intend to have a year off in the middle and teach overseas. Is this still the case or not and why? Also, please explain what your plans are for the future?

Appendix 2 - Visual Metaphors Used

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

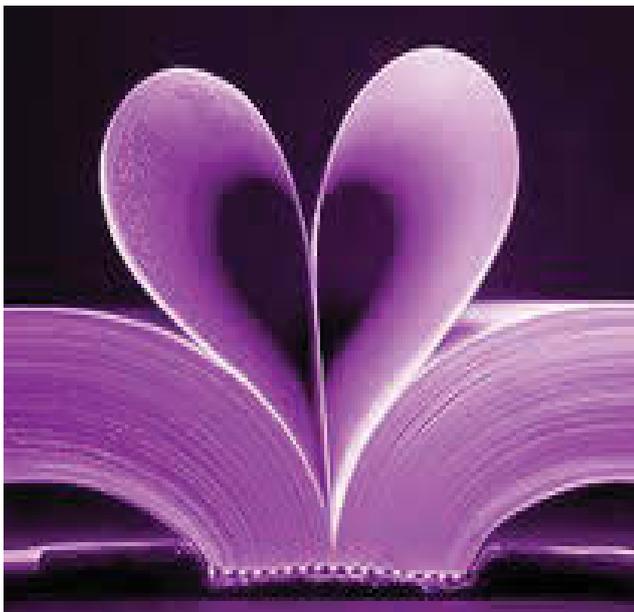
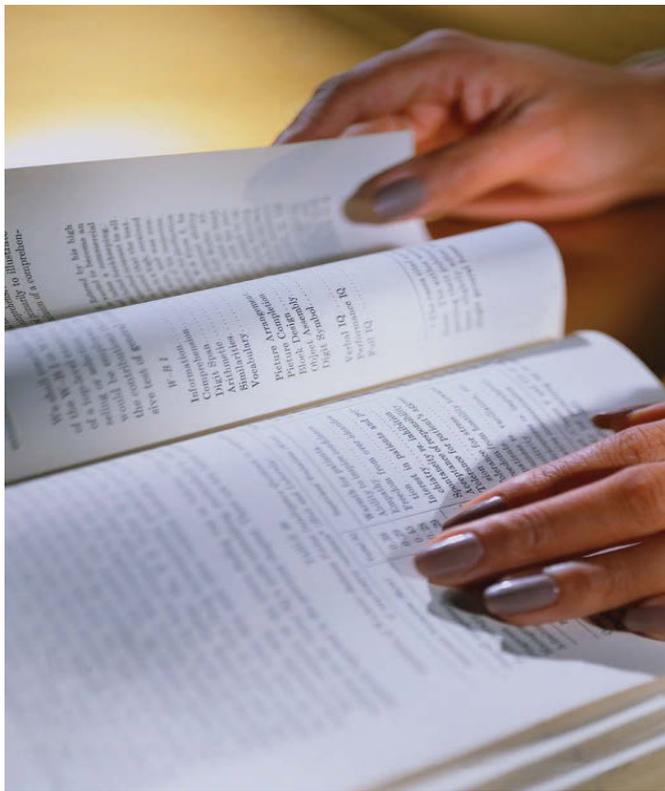


Image 5



Image 6



Appendix 3 - Research Documentation

UTS Human Research Ethics Committee Approval

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your response to the Committee's comments for your project titled, "Commencing the Teaching Journey: How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First-Year Teachers". Your response satisfactorily addresses the concerns and questions raised by the Committee who agreed that the application now meets the requirements of the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). I am pleased to inform you that ethics approval is now granted.

Your approval number is UTS HREC REF NO. 2013000400
Your approval is valid five years from the date of this email.

Please note that the ethical conduct of research is an on-going process. The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires us to obtain a report about the progress of the research, and in particular about any changes to the research which may have ethical implications. This report form must be completed at least annually, and at the end of the project (if it takes more than a year). The Ethics Secretariat will contact you when it is time to complete your first report.

I also refer you to the AVCC guidelines relating to the storage of data, which require that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years after publication of research. However, in NSW, longer retention requirements are required for research on human subjects with potential long-term effects, research with long-term environmental effects, or research considered of national or international significance, importance, or controversy. If the data from this research project falls into one of these categories, contact University Records for advice on long-term retention.

You should consider this your official letter of approval. If you require a hardcopy please contact Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au.

To access this application, please follow the URLs below:

- * if accessing within the UTS network: <http://rmprod.itd.uts.edu.au/RMENet/HOM001N.aspx>
- * if accessing outside of UTS network: <https://remote.uts.edu.au> , and click on "RMENet - ResearchMaster Enterprise" after logging in.

We value your feedback on the online ethics process. If you would like to provide feedback please go to: <http://surveys.uts.edu.au/surveys/onlineethics/index.cfm>

If you have any queries about your ethics approval, or require any amendments to your research in the future, please do not hesitate to contact Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Marion Haas
Chairperson
UTS Human Research Ethics Committee
C/- Research & Innovation Office
University of Technology Sydney
T: (02) 9514 9645
F: (02) 9514 1244
E: Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au
I: <http://www.research.uts.edu.au/policies/restricted/ethics.html>
P: PO Box 123, BROADWAY NSW 2007
CB01.14.08.04 [Level 14, Building 1, Broadway Campus]

Participant Information Sheet

Research Title: Commencing the Teaching Journey - How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First-Year Teachers (UTS HREC Approval Number: 2013000400)

My name is Richard Schiliro and I am a Doctor of Education student at the University of Technology Sydney. My supervisor is Professor Sandy Schuck. I have worked as a high school teacher in NSW for over 20 years and for the last six years have been a teacher mentor, working with early career teachers. I am conducting research on how time impacts on the lives of young first-year teachers and I would like to invite recently qualified teacher education students who are aged in their twenties and beginning their careers as full-time teachers, to participate in a series of three interviews over their first year of teaching. These interviews will involve the research participants in discussing what they experience in that first year of teaching. Participants will be asked to complete three one-hour long semi structured conversational style interviews, in April, July and October 2014. However, as a participant you are under no obligation to complete all three interviews and you are free to withdraw from the research project at any time.

The interviews will be digitally recorded and later transcribed, with the experiences and stories you share being collated and analysed so that the teaching and research communities can become better informed about what young first-year teachers encounter as they start their careers. However, complete confidentiality can be assured because at no time will any individuals or their schools be identified, with all responses being coded. The data will be kept securely with password protection. The data collected will be used for my thesis, but may possibly also be referred to in a future journal article and/or conference paper. Only I, together with my supervisor Professor Sandy Schuck and co-supervisor Dr Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn, will have access to the data collected and once it has been analysed and reported on, it will be kept in a highly secure archive located at the University of Technology Sydney and then destroyed after a period of five years.

The total commitment requested of participants is to complete three one hour long interviews over a period of 12 months and these will take place either by telephone or in person, at a location suitably close to your school or residence. Please note that through the course of being interviewed about your experiences as a young first-year teacher, it is possible, although unlikely, that talking about your experiences might potentially be emotional for you. If so, you may terminate the interview at any point you desire.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project that you would like addressed by myself or my supervisor, then please feel free to contact us at Richard.J.Schiliro@student.uts.edu.au / 0424055197 or Sandy.Schuck@uts.edu.au / (02)95145218. Alternatively, if you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with this research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on (02)95149772 and please quote the following UTS HREC Approval Number: 2013000400.

Richard Schiliro

UTS Research Student

Participant Consent Form

My name is Richard Schiliro and I am a Doctor of Education student at the University of Technology Sydney. I am conducting research on how time impacts on the lives of young first-year teachers (UTS HREC Approval Reference Number: 2013000400) and can be contacted on 0424055197 or at Richard.J.Schiliro@student.uts.edu.au. I am inviting you to participate in this research project, *Commencing the Teaching Journey – How Time Impacts on the Lives of Young First-Year Teachers*.

If you agree to participate, I will invite you to complete a series of **three** interviews. As a participant, you will be under no obligation to complete these interviews and you are free to withdraw from the research project at any time. Please note that these interviews will be digitally recorded. However, complete confidentiality can be assured because at no time will any individuals or their schools be identified. The data collected will be used for my thesis, but may possibly also be referred to in a future journal article and/or conference paper. Only I together with my supervisor, Professor Sandy Schuck (phone (02)9514 5218 or email Sandy.Schuck@uts.edu.au) and co-supervisor Dr Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn will have access to the data collected.

The total commitment I will ask of participants is to complete three one hour long interviews over a period of 12 months and these will take place either by telephone or in person, at a location of convenience to you. Please note that in the process of being interviewed it is possible, although unlikely, that talking about your experiences might potentially be emotional for you. If so, you may terminate the interview at any point you desire.

If you are prepared to be a participant in this research, then please sign the consent form below.

I _____ hereby consent to be a participant in the research being undertaken by Richard Schiliro on how time impacts on the lives of young first-year teachers.

Participant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTE:

This study has been approved by the University of Technology Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher and his supervisor, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: (02) 9514 9772 / Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Richard Schiliro

UTS Research Student