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Active social location in schools: professional development for the whole school workforce?

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Active social location in schools: Professional development for the whole school workforce?

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Introduction and background

The workforce in English schools has changed over recent years. There are more categories of staff to be found in English schools[1] and the relative sizes of the categories have altered. Blatchford et al (2006 and 2007) report that while the number of primary teachers increased by roughly 3% and secondary teachers by 14% the number of teaching assistants in primary schools grew by 153% and those in secondary by 358%. The growth in numbers of staff other than teaching assistants was smaller but still substantial with increases of 69% in primary and 120% in secondary.

Alongside these changes, the Every Child Matters reform programme implies the need to pay attention to the importance of all categories of staff to the welfare of children. It requires all those who have contact with children as part of their work to take some responsibility for providing sufficient support for every child to be healthy and safe; to be able to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to attain economic well being. An important part of this agenda is to put in place an integrated framework of qualifications for all parts of the children and young people's workforce to deliver a competent and regulated children's workforce.

These developments are related to what some have critically referred to as the de-professionalisation of teachers. The terms profession and professional recur in the debates about teachers and the workforce, and feature in this paper. Less often used explicitly, but associated, are notions of professionalisation, new professionalism and deprofessionalisation. We touch on issues raised in these debates such as discourses of professions as having particular knowledge and expertise, the rise of emergent professions and subjection of teachers and other workers to regulatory discourses. Of particular importance is the 'new professionalism', outlined by Dent and Whitehead:

> all workers can be expected and required to aspire to a professionalism. The new professional that is given birth is identified by the discourses that usher it into existence. These discourses speak of the flexible, reflective practitioner, the teamworker, lifelong learner, a person concerned to constantly update their knowledge and skills base …. (Dent and Whitehead, 2002:3)

Despite both the changes in the nature of the school workforce and the changing nature of professionalism, the question of professional development in schools has hitherto largely focused on teachers, although this is changing. For example, while the DfEE paper on professional development in 2000 dealt entirely with teachers, a report on CPD by Ofsted in 2006 does mention teaching assistants. It is worth noting here that Continuing Professional Development has become a standard shorthand term used by policy makers, and by teachers or those working with them. It may serve in the discourse to denote and defend the status of teaching as a profession, but also to indicate

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[1] Table 1 (see appendix) gives an indication of this variety and some of the terminology applied to staff who are not qualified teachers. Those groups are sometimes referred to as the wider workforce or support staff.

requirements and managerial control of their work and progression. In some more recent usage with reference to the whole workforce it has morphed into Training and Development. Part of the development of the greater focus on the whole school workforce and in September 2005 the former Teacher Training Agency became the Training and Development Agency for Schools, with responsibility for co-ordinating the professional development of all school staff in England.

There have been some recent surveys of support staff in general (e.g. NFER, 2008) and a number of studies of the work of teacher assistants in particular (e.g., Kerry, 2005; Collins and Simco, 2006). The development of the wider workforce in schools has however lacked an adequate characterisation of the nature of the practice of workers other than teachers and has tended simply to 'include' them in procedures and approaches to professional development appropriate for teachers (Coldwell et al, 2007). This paper attempts to characterise the position of school workers other than teachers to better understand the distinctive nature of their practice. We focus on Teaching Assistants, Caretakers and Lunchtime Supervisors as three groups which are sufficiently different to enable us to develop a richer theoretical account of identity in the school workforce than has hitherto been available.

We have argued elsewhere (Coldron and Smith, 1999) that a teacher's practice and his or her development of that practice can best be understood as a process of active social location. In this paper, we apply the same theoretical understanding of practice to the work identities of these three groups of school staff. By better understanding the identities that their different positions and associated resources make available, we aim to provide a richer picture and a way of thinking of the work identities of staff in school who are not teachers, one that is not colonised by the ways of thinking about the higher status teacher group.

We draw on data from a number of large studies of the whole school workforce, in particular Coldwell et al (2008) which investigated the Testbed project for the Training and Development Agency (TDA). In that project 45 maintained schools across England were encouraged and supported to develop strategies to enhance training and development for their staff. The arguments we present are our own and do not claim to represent those of the government agencies or departments who commissioned the evaluations.

Theoretical starting points

A substantial literature on teacher identities has accumulated. Based on a review of that literature and the evidence from their large study of teachers, Day and Sammons delineate three interacting dimensions of professional identity for teachers (Sammons et al, 2007): a 'professional identity' relating to traditions of teaching as well as policy steer; a locally situated identity related to the specific school or department; and a 'personal' identity related to life outside the school. We might characterise these respectively as "I am a

teacher"; "I am a member of this school (or department)" and "I am a teacher with this personal history and these aspirations".

In an earlier contribution to this literature, we argued that teachers actively locate themselves in social space (Coldron and Smith, 1999) and in so doing construct particular social identities. Social being/identity as a teacher is a matter of where, within the professionally pertinent array of possibilities, a particular person is located/locates themselves. Those possibilities are conveyed by the subject traditions and the more general pedagogic traditions that they variously embody, by the practices of the various professional communities to which a teacher belongs, and by external practices brought into critical relation to teaching. For any individual the possible identities are necessarily constrained.

That theorisation had implications for the practice and development of teachers. By analysing the relationships that workforce groups have to teachers and a school's agenda we wish to see how that approach may inform understanding of the wider workforce in schools, their roles and identities, and professional development. Shifting the spotlight may also provide a richer picture of the school as a community and of teachers as members of a diverse workforce.

Our earlier focus on teachers ignored their relations with other members of the school workforce. While our analysis dealt with the horizontal positioning of teachers it did not deal with the location of them as an occupational group on the axis of relative prestige. The issue disappeared from our theoretical view for a number of reasons. First, in common with many other contributors to the debate, we were ourselves teachers and instinctively looked out from a teacher's vantage point. And, from the view of teachers in the early 90s, other groups were largely peripheral[2]. Second, and related to this, members of the school workforce at this time were less numerous and were ignored in most policy agendas. Third, we made the unarticulated and, we now recognise, wrong assumption that the identity of those at the top is largely independent of their relation to those below them. In contrast, when we turn our attention to other groups, such as TAs, caretakers or lunchtime supervisors, it is impossible to miss the importance of their position in relation to other groups in the school workforce. In particular, we cannot ignore the relevance of the fact that the work of these categories of staff is considered to have lower relative status in the school community and in the wider social frame (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996).

Sennett and Cobb (1972), in their study of blue collar workers in Chicago, remind us of the importance of the fact that occupational groups are differently valued: *'society forces men to translate social position into terms of personal worth' (p 141)* and *'Every question of identity as an image of social place in a hierarchy is also a question of social value'* (p 267). Iris Young (1990) and

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[2] In general: it is of course true that – for example - technicians in science departments, and SEN support assistants in Special Schools have been important for many years

Nancy Fraser (1996 and 1997) emphasise that recognition and respect is as important a kind of justice as fair distribution.

Respect or belittlement are performed in everyday interactions infused with hierarchical ways of thinking reified in procedures and structures (Bourdieu 1976; Wenger 1998; Young 1990). These positional meanings are policed by ourselves and others as members of the community and so we come to know our place and we are put in our place. This reification and policing is the source of constraint and for each individual certain positions, identities and trajectories are made available and others ruled out. Following Foucault, du Gay (1996) notes *'In other words, a person's sense of who he or she is is constituted and confirmed through his or her positioning within particular relations of power.* (p63)*.*

A full understanding of how this takes place for our three chosen groups and particularly how individuals actively locate themselves within an at once dynamic and relatively intractable set of relationships would need a more extensive and richer set of data than we currently have available but much can be discovered about status-giving practices by considering the public forms that frame and resource (and thereby constrain) these everyday meanings. These public forms are what we earlier described (Coldron and Smith 1999) as inherited social structures and categorisations as distinguished from those a person chooses for themselves. For teaching assistants, caretakers and lunchtime supervisors they include the classical ingredients of stratification studies such as occupational prestige (including educational credentials and remuneration), but also frames of reference that are specific to schools (such as the relation to the core learning and teaching mission of the school) and conditions of service specific to groups in the workforce (such as the presence or absence of a 'career structure'). With these theoretical considerations in mind we look at each of our chosen groups to attempt to characterise their social location.

The positioning of three staff groups

Teaching Assistants

The category of TA covers diverse and changing roles, settings and activities, as can be seen from the range of roles included within this category in Table 1 (Appendix 1). This has been the fastest growing group within the school workforce. It is most often a permanent part-time job with the majority of TAs working less than the full week and, unlike other support staff, most are contracted for fewer than 52 weeks in the year. Most TAs are women but the men who take this role are paid significantly more per hour than women (Blatchford et al 2007).

There is considerable demand for these jobs. Applicants are more likely to be asked for specific qualifications and previous experience. In 2006, 75% had qualifications below A Level and approximately 25% had HE qualifications ranging from a foundation degree to a doctoral qualification although higher

educational qualifications were not associated with higher rates of pay. Average wage rates have increased over the last two years (ibid).

What particularly distinguishes TAs from other support staff is their close relation with teachers and with what we might call the core mission of the school – children's learning and welfare. We can distinguish at least three ways in which this special relationship with teachers and teaching is manifested.

First, and most obviously, it is in the work they do. Blatchford et al (2007) found that of all categories of the wider workforce, they spent by far the most time on direct learning support for pupils. Their roles are by definition closely linked to the work of teachers. Like teachers, they work directly with children with a role that demands continuous concern for their learning and welfare. They take instructions directly from teachers and in order to work as an effective team a mutual understanding must be forged. In practice, because the teacher is formally in the lead, this means that the TA must defer to and follow - or at least engage in negotiation with - the teacher into the same way of thinking about helping children to learn. The road to respect from the teacher with whom they work closely every day, from other qualified teachers (the highest status group in the school) and from the senior managers is to assimilate themselves to the professional identity, culture and practice of a qualified teacher within the constraints of the status and remuneration of a TA.

Their direct impact on the core mission of the school – children's learning and welfare – guarantees that they will be highly visible in the development strategy of the school. Coldwell et al (2007) found that TAs were the focus of most of the Testbed projects and performance management and appraisal processes used with teachers had been extended to include them. More training and development opportunities are made available to them. New opportunities have arisen for professionalisation, qualifications, career advancement. There is now a pathway and hierarchy of career development up to the position of Higher Level TA (HLTA). It is also the case that, as intended, teachers have benefited from the work of TAs (Blatchford et al 2007). The work of TAs has led to this impact in at least two ways, first by directly and indirectly supporting the core teaching and learning work of teachers and second in freeing teachers from some of their workload. TAs therefore are likely to be highly valued by the highest status groups in the school community. As a result, in the Blatchford study, they were:

> …relatively more satisfied than most other categories of support staff in terms of their posts in general, felt appreciation by the school, training and development they had received in their role, and training and development opportunities available to them (Blatchford et al 2007:101)

Taken together, the increased absorption of the working practices and cultures of teachers along with the related satisfaction with their job may explain the finding that 84% of TAs - more than any other category of the wider workforce - were voluntarily willing to work extra hours without extra pay

(ibid). Nevertheless, this expanded, and valued, role that overlaps in skills and responsibilities with teachers, has not been matched with higher rates of pay, or increased hours of paid work and this explains why of all groups they are the least satisfied with their pay.

The second way in which TAs have a special link to teachers is in their available work identities. Whilst classroom and support assistants have been present in primary and special school classrooms for many years, there are no clear traditions of TA identities in the sense we use for teachers in our earlier paper. However, insomuch as TAs respond to the potential of developing a closeness in their professional work to teachers they may adopt some of the identities available to teachers, particularly those that are privileged in externally available training and development, such as HLTA training and locally organised TA training courses. But the main source will be the discourses, behaviours and roles of those teachers and other staff in the local context of the classrooms and the school. Whilst there are some 'professional identity' traditions in the sense of external training and standards for TAs, it is locally situated identity and personal identity that is most importance for this staff group.

Finally, the potential for career development is intimately linked with teaching. In fact, an imagined trajectory from TA to qualified teacher is encouraged by headteachers seeking to develop their staff. It is also built into policy in the form of the integrated qualifications framework. TAs are themselves likely to feel motivated to move from lower status to higher and some TAs aspire to become qualified teachers and consequently engage with and adopt a professional identity. This was made clear in the Testbed project where, for example, participants in a focus group of TAs in one school all said that they had found the process of performance review which had been introduced valuable and clearly took considerable pride in the portfolios they had compiled.

However, not all TAs positioned themselves with a career and a professional trajectory. Sandra who was interviewed as part of the Testbed project had been an LTS who reported that the Headteacher had been impressed with her work and had persuaded her to take on more hours as a Teaching Assistant. Our fieldnote goes on:

> *She was reluctant because she was 'a full time housewife looking after a husband and two boys at home', and didn't wish to engage in further training. She had left school behind with some relief and was not keen to set herself up to fail again. Neither did she have any ambitions for higher paid work or qualifications. She indicated that she was not the only one to feel this way and there was a sense that she wanted that to be acknowledged and accepted. … she clearly felt slightly railroaded as if she was being told she 'should' want to do more training and have a career and somehow she was failing again by not wanting to.*

As the life history literature has shown us, individual biographies, including experience of schooling and how they see themselves in terms of past

educational achievement, are significant for understanding how each person locates themselves. But we are seeking in this paper to elucidate the more general mechanisms at work such as Sennett and Cobb's account of the tension between moving on and up versus solidarity and fraternity (Sennett and Cobb, 1972).

The reforms and expansion of TA work have widened the possibilities available to members of this group and the resources on which they can draw in constructing identities. If it is the case that there are traditions of practice which teachers draw on, how far are TAs able to draw upon these same traditions? Is it the case that they are not so easily available to this emerging professional group in the ways they are for teachers? As TAs partake more centrally of teaching roles, work in conjunction with teachers, and in the process reflect on teaching they have seen and experienced, perhaps the resources that such traditions offer to teachers will become available to them too – a kind of legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger, 1998).

Another way to view the professionalisation of TAs is as colonisation by a more powerful world of teaching with its long history. It was certainly the case in many of the Testbed schools that initiatives intended to train and develop TAs were automatically conceived as extensions of what was done with teachers until some responses disturbed that assumption. The close relationship between teachers and TAs is very different from that of teachers and Caretakers, and it is to this latter group that we now turn our attention.

Caretakers

In English schools, the Caretaker or Site Supervisor has responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness, integrity and security of the school buildings. In all but the very smallest schools they will supervise a team of cleaners. Caretakers' work is far more distant from teachers and the core teaching function of schools than that of TAs and in fact most other workforce groups, although just as crucial for the operation of the school. Caretaking is a long established, full time and almost always male role, in contrast with TAs and lunchtime supervisors (who, as we will go on to discuss, have a far less stable and established job).

Caretakers, along with facilities staff, have the lowest educational attainment of any group in the school workforce with most not having reached A Level. The perceived prestige of their work is low (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996). Only 5% of site staff needed specific qualifications (Blatchford et al, 2006:57) and they receive among the lowest rates of pay. The rate of pay is not dependent on educational qualifications or experience. Length of service for teachers is taken as a sign of greater competence and is rewarded through incremental pay increases. The different conditions of service of caretakers carries a powerful message about the qualitative valuation of the work - that anyone can do the work and time spent doing it does not enable the person to accrue extra competence, skill or understanding.

These differences are pertinent to the different ways in which teachers and members of other groups in the school workforce respond to the concept of career. Teachers have a 'career structure' with promotional rungs progressively well paid with each higher rung bringing higher status; TAs can aspire to getting at least to the bottom rung of this ladder. This is informally associated with an expected career path, a trajectory, whereby the lower rungs are designed for those at the beginning of their career and are therefore linked informally but strongly to age and – in the case TAs - inexperience. For caretakers, there is no such thing as career progression and an increase in pay can be achieved in larger schools only by moving from an assistant post to key postholder and in smaller (usually primary) schools by moving from a smaller to a larger school.

Although the caretaker has a low status within the school they almost always supervise a team of cleaners. In larger schools this can be quite an extensive team. Other than this, however, the caretaker is a lone worker with the great majority having no colleagues at the same level in their workplace. This is similar to a lone office worker or a headteacher but in marked contrast to most of the other staff groups and especially teachers and other staff who work with children. This raises the questions as to who the caretaker's colleagues are, where would she or he meet them and what other ways of relating to colleagues might there be. In some cases there are local meetings of caretakers providing a forum where common needs and concerns can be identified (Johnson et al, 2004).

Most caretakers are employed not by the school but by either the local authority or private cleaning agencies. They therefore have to manage the day to day demands of relationships with staff in the school and the demands of an external line management system. This ambiguous relation to the school raises real practical questions as to who is responsible for training and development especially where this touches on interaction with teachers and children. Interestingly half of caretakers say they are not supervised by anyone but where they are it is likely to be by headteachers and deputy headteachers (Blatchford, 2006).

While there is a considerable infrastructure and set of discourses that support an array of teacher identities and the active location of teachers in professional space, this is not the case for caretakers. For this group there has not, for example, been, any parallel with the professional debate in the 80s and 90s about education and schools in which teachers took moral and personal positions and in doing so articulated their personal and professional identities *as teachers*.

There is much work to the effect that teaching is very personal in the sense that the way one conducts oneself, i.e. the practice of teaching, is deeply affected by personal values, biography, personality and life cycle (e.g. Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Nias, 1989). Is it the case then that being a teacher implicates the self more than being a caretaker? Our own earlier work on the active location of teachers emphasised this connection. We argued that especially the moral and artistic ingredients of a teacher's practice

necessarily involved personal judgements that could not be separated from the wider set of 'positions' an individual wished to maintain outside the school community. Subsequently Moore et al (2002) using this theoretical framework argued that personal and professional tensions were sometimes created because of this.

Sennett and Cobb (1972) argue that the professional has distinguished him or herself from the majority of others by demonstrating greater ability and that being a professional is a matter of being able to make choices as to who one is and, because being an expert legitimates autonomy, being free to act. The caretaker has not so distinguished him or herself. The job could be done by almost anyone and doing it over time does not confer extra value (in the sense of extra remuneration). A caretaker's practice is not differentiated in the same way as a teacher's. Indeed it is ideally to be made uniformly effective through achievement of common measurable competencies. The social construction of the caretaker, acting through the inherited social structures and categorisations and already determined relations within the social field of the school workforce, makes available fewer identities specific to being a caretaker. So, unlike teachers, but in common with TAs and LTSs, the ways in which caretakers choose to undertake their work will not be constructed from discourses and resources about their specific job. Nevertheless, there will be differentiation.

For example there are deeply rooted identities within working class culture: 'a good worker'; someone who 'can do a fair days work for a fair days pay'; a person who 'takes pride in doing a good job' and their opposites. Being a supervisor of others offers a range of other identities: 'considerate'; 'fair'; 'competent'; 'stands up for the interests of his subordinates'. The caretaker is often a man in charge of a team of female cleaners. Thus gender identities will be played out in everyday interaction. But there are also the more subtle identities such as solidarity with low status workers in the school; a tacit sharing of the experience of the same low valuation of their work and themselves.

Whilst partly reflecting the centrality of teaching in schools, the usual division into 'teaching' and 'support' or 'non-teaching' staff supports this low valuation, carrying with it the weight of a host of other differentiating elements as we set out throughout this paper, including pay and conditions, training, status, and power. It is also formally structured by union membership: the majority of non-teaching staff in schools belong to the same union – Unison – and so through union meetings, activism and industrial action this experience is more formally shared.

We have attempted in this section to emphasise that caretakers and teachers occupy significantly different positions in the school community and in wider social space. These different positions mirror the often discussed differences between professional and manual. We have argued that caretakers are less valued in relation to a variety of objective frames of reference and within the hierarchies created by these frames or social fields. This is not the same as the actual experience within the community of the school. Blatchford et al

(2007) report that the majority (72%) of site staff felt appreciated by their school community and were very or fairly satisfied with their job.

It is also intriguing that there is evidence of the professionalisation of the caretaker's role. It is being achieved through the expansion of the role and increased pay, the introduction of structured credentials in the form of accredited qualifications, the facilitating of group identity and induction into and alignment with corporate aims. This process is exemplified by one case study reported by Johnson et al (2004) where the local authority training manager stated:

> *"we're continuing to work on that professionalism which we've been working to achieve…I think in a lot of the guys' minds they want to be seen as professionals and be recognised as such..."*

A key aspect of professionalisation in this authority was the expansion of the role and the creation of a new name of site manager. They introduced the name and expanded role of the site manager. Caretaking had tended to be a reactive role but the site manager was expected to:

> *…set up preventive plan maintenance (PPM) schemes, minor decoration and minor improvement programmes, take responsibility for health and safety with regard to the state of buildings, help with income generation, oversee the upkeep of school vehicles and deal with contractors that come onto site. (Johnson et al, 2004:220)*

There was also a greater appetite for training opportunities:

> *"A lot of our guys are like sponges when it comes to training. They'll grab anything that's going….I think if there were more accredited training they would be even more keen, depending on whether the school was able to fund the training."* (Training manager quoted in Johnson et al, 2004:221)

Whilst this evidence raises a host of questions regarding what is meant by being a professional in this context, it is clear that for this group at least closeness to teaching on the one hand and an established career ladder on the other are not any part of it. However, its fulltimeness, its generally satisfying nature and its maleness are clearly important ingredients. This contrasts sharply with the lot of lunchtime supervisors, who we go on to discuss next.

Lunchtime supervisors

There is not much written about lunchtime supervisors, the group of staff concerned in the main with supervising and managing pupil behaviour within classrooms, refectories and playgrounds during the midday meal break. Blatchford et al's recent work (2006, 2007, 2008) includes what they call midday assistants and midday supervisors, midday supervisors being senior to midday assistants. There are one or two earlier, small scale studies, there

is our own work on the Testbed programme for TDA (Coldwell et al, 2008) and a little of our earlier work on career pathways in the school workforce (Johnson et al, 2004). Overall, as we say, not much. But there is enough to get a flavour.

What is it like for lunchtime supervisors? Well, it is certainly not highly paid: during Spring 2005/06 (Blatchford et al, 2006), the only school staffing group earning a lower average hourly rate than Blatchford's midday assistants (£6.87 per hour) were cleaners (£6.25 per hour), and the midday supervisors fared only a little better earning an average of £7.18 an hour. If the 39 support staff groupings considered by the Blatchford team are ranked in order of average hourly pay rates, the two lunchtime supervisor groups are in 35th and 38th place. For this and other reasons, including limited hours of work (Blatchford et al, 2006), there is evidence that it is one of the least attractive jobs in the school workforce. Both categories (Blatchford et al, 2006) had high rates of vacancies (reported by 14-18% of schools), suffered recruitment problems (reported by 15-15% of schools) and had high rates of turnover (5% of schools).

There is usually, like caretakers, no clear career structure. For those supervisors who wish to progress, it is a transitory role: in contrast to caretakers but in common with TAs, there is evidence of LTS being a route into other roles in education, a stepping stone from parent/carer to TA and possibly, eventually, teacher (see for example Coldwell et al, 2008; Johnson et al, 2004). As Johnson et al (2004:79) note, for groups like LTSs

> *"career progression does not always follow a simple path and support staff may wish to gain experience and training in areas that will prepare them for a different role, rather than for progression to a higher level within the same role."*

There are some training and development opportunities available to LTSs, although only one accredited qualification (Johnson et al, 2004:53) and these are largely limited to short courses related to behaviour management. Johnson et al suggest that

> *"[t]his is one role for which there is perhaps a need for more focussed training within a specific qualification framework which allows lunchtime supervisors to progress to other support staff roles." (ibid).*

According to this study, nearly 400 learners were on lunchtime supervision courses introduced by the Learning and Skills Council in 2003/4, although this "was very patchy and only occurred in about one third of LSC areas." (ibid). However, other data presented in the study suggested that local, bespoke courses for LTSs had been developed across a range of Local Authorities. Certainly, data gathered for the Testbed project indicates that LTSs accessed a range of courses, which contributed to positive changes for some of those individuals, as we will go on to discuss.

Returning to Sammons et al's (2007) dimensions of professional identity, for LTSs, the second and third of these are dominant: there are no traditions or discourses for LTSs beyond what is passed down through folk memory and media representations. The professional identities available to lunchtime supervisors are heavily steered by the relationship to teachers and senior leaders, and the education and - in particular - management of the behaviour of young people. A lunchtime supervisor's role is inevitably centred on management of behaviour of young people: to be a good lunchtime supervisor is to manage pupils' behaviour well. But this is not simply a controlling role akin to being a prison warder. A school is a place of education: lunchtime supervisors are part of that educational mission. Thus the lunchtime supervisor can position herself (it usually is herself[3]) as simply a warder; or as a confidante; a conduit; a friend; a protector; a mentor; an educator. The positioning is heavily influenced by the relationship of the role and the individual to teachers, education and the educational culture of the school. But a further determinant of a lunchtime supervisor's action is the fact that they are invariably local. Consequently they have a position and an identity within the community and must be sensitive to the constraints this puts upon them. This is also true of TAs and caretakers (but less so of teachers who have the protection of their role as 'expert professional'). But, unlike caretakers TAs and lunchtime supervisors interact with children and are held accountable by their neighbours for the way in which they do that, especially in matters of discipline.

Maintaining a positive professional identity is particularly difficult for staff such as lunchtime supervisors who do not have clear professional roots, qualifications and career pathways beyond schools. Unsociable hours, poor pay, lack of career pathways or accredited training routes add up to a role unattractive to many (as we note above in regard to staff turnover) and this is reflected in the low status afforded to LTSs: Naylor (1999), suggests that LTSs are not afforded the same respect by pupils as other groups in the school workforce (particularly teachers, of course). In the Testbed study, too, lunchtime supervisors were typically quite removed from the main work of the school, seen as behaviour monitors, part-timers, managed by a senior leader usually but often with little other formal contact with teaching staff. In addition, they often saw themselves in this way too. For example, in one school, the midday supervisors, with one exception, were reportedly uncertain about the necessity of training for their group unless it was group training very closely connected to their role. They reported that they were encouraged and paid to attend training and development days but felt the topics were not really relevant for them, one noting "You know it was about the vision for the school and things like that" – clearly not seen to be relevant to them.

However, Naylor's (1999) study - one of the only studies to address the role of LTSs - clearly showed that, despite their apparent distance from the core work of teaching, LTSs do in fact undertake a range of tasks that fit very clearly with the job of educating, developing pupils' affective, social and

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[3] Although the data for lunchtime supervisor categories were not broken down separately, for the 'other pupil support staff' category in which Blatchford et al include their two LTS groups, 94% of such staff were female (Blatchford et al, 2006: 27)

emotional skills. Blatchford's team, too, (Blatchford et al, 2006, 2007) provide some evidence of LTSs being seen by teachers to make a positive impact on pupil behaviour, sometimes relating this to learning. For example, one teacher commented that an LTS "Supports behaviour – she keeps them calm ready for afternoon learning" (Blatchford et al, 2006: 88). And in the Testbed project we found that work in some of the case study schools sometimes made quite powerful changes to the available professional identities of these staff, and these were usually linked to children's learning. The changes were typically centred on providing increased opportunities to take part in Training and Development, quite often via an appraisal or performance review system being introduced. These were accompanied by or led to other changes that affected LTSs in a variety of ways.

One way that LTSs increased their status in the Testbed study was by being given - or taking on uninvited - roles that explicitly involved student learning, often reading to or listening to children, in much the same way that TAs increased their value to the school by aligning their work closely with teaching and learning-related tasks. Either via suggestions made from performance reviews or changes instigated by senior school leaders, LTSs were sometimes given roles that much more explicitly involved them in the work of teachers, for example being attached to classes. In one school, LTSs were engaged in appraisals and relevant training, which resulted in their taking on responsibility for pupil activities at lunchtimes. In another, a range of training and development strategies were made available to LTSs, who were then seen by other staff to have made "a noticeable impact on the school at dinner times, children were calmer, there were fewer behaviour issues" [fieldnote]. Furthermore, the Headteacher noted that children's behaviour and learning in the afternoons became noticeably better, which he linked to children's involvement in purposeful activity at lunchtime.

In such cases LTSs, often for the first time, were therefore legitimated as members of the school community; previously, their work was often not recognised by themselves or others for its importance (as Naylor pointed out some time ago). They were given the trappings of higher status in some schools: handbooks, training, and roles in learning moving from seeing themselves as "'just' mums" to "experts" in the words of one.

Sammons et al's second dimension, therefore becomes in these cases much more important and the links to Teaching and Learning tie LTSs in to dominant policy discourses; they are in effect able to access professional identities that fit with the core mission of the school. In our earlier work, we noted that the lineage of the Teaching and Learning agenda in English schools - which can be traced back through the 'Standards' agenda to the changes to the professional work of teachers in the Education Reform Act of 1988 - acts to "impose greater degrees of uniformity and conformity" thereby threatening to "impoverish the notion of active location, restricting the number of potential positions a teacher may assume" (Coldron and Smith, 1999:711). This line of argument is found in a large body of educational policy research, for example Moore's (2006:498) characterisation of "'reorientation' changes (temporary or compromise adjustments to structures and practices) and

'colonisation' changes (more permanent alterations to a teacher's or school's ethos and philosophy) brought about through effects of public policy change". According to these accounts teachers, starting from a position of relative autonomy, with a range of possible identities structured by traditions from which to choose, experience a narrowing of the 'horizon of choice' of professional identities. In contrast, and in common with caretakers, LTSs start from a position as a low status, poorly paid non-professional, well down the hierarchy of roles in a school, however you might define it. For this group, this particular policy agenda has opened up some new opportunities to actively locate themselves by aligning their work clearly to 'Teaching and Learning'.

For some individuals this links to particular career trajectories as we noted earlier. In the Testbed study, for example, at one primary school we spoke with Jackie, who had successfully moved smoothly along the conveyor belt. Since joining the school 9 years ago as an LTS, she had undertaken an NVQ level 3 qualification and became an integration assistant for a boy with a medical need, moving on to a reception class TA role and now amid a Foundation degree was considering becoming an HLTA and "feeling slightly bemused by, but rather liking the idea, of being a Newly Qualified Teacher at 50" [fieldnote]. In schools where the culture prizes this transition, individuals such as Jackie can prosper.

In contrast, LTS's who do not wish to make such a move can be sidelined as we saw earlier with Sandra the LTS who had been persuaded to become a TA. Sandra's views indicate that whilst it is clearly useful and important to frame her decision-making in terms of inherited social structures and categorisations - her view of herself as a full time housewife; her view of herself professionally as not wishing to move forward; her fear of training linked to her own experiences of school – she is in our terms actively wishing to locate herself in this way despite being 'persuaded' 'reluctantly' to "get above herself" by the Head. In this case, we see the way that gender interacts with class; she may well be experiencing "a tremendous fear of exposing" herself as Sennett and Cobb describe, but this is not only about subjugation and fear of turning against her class through becoming educated or professionalised, it is about her view of herself as a woman – a housewife.

How does one read these varying experiences? On one account, members of this often forgotten group of largely working class, female, poorly paid staff are able to access a previously unobtainable range of identities associated with part of the core work of the school. Some of the data we have discussed, drawing on the Testbed study and elsewhere, indicates this can have powerful, positive personal changes for individuals. On another reading, the focus on professionalisation and education can lead to alienation and personal harm, be greeted with fear and resistance.

Discussion

Our aim in this paper has been to examine the notion of active social location as a theorisation of work identity applicable beyond teachers to the wider school workforce. The central element of this approach – that in developing

their work identity, groups actively create identity by choosing from arrays of structured possibilities – seems to be wholly appropriate. However, the secondary concept in our earlier work – that this identity work for teachers can be characterised as choosing from a range of traditions – does not hold up as well.

By focussing our attention on TAs, caretakers and LTSs, we see more clearly - as we would expect - the importance of gender, social class and personal biography in structuring work-based identities. The focus on these groups also helps us see the importance of potential trajectories between staff groups in the workforce (particularly from LTS to TA and TA to teacher), and the relationship of the role of these other groups to each other and, above all, the core educational mission of the school and its teachers to such identities.

The identities available to the groups we looked at are structured by complex interplays between these features and others, much less by well established professional traditions. However, interestingly, we do find that the continuing dominance of the standards agenda and performativity, which we argued was narrowing the range of identities available to teachers in the late 1990s, also structures the available work identities of at least some of these other groups. For TAs, the group closest to teachers, this is clearest in the 'modelling' of teaching as a profession narrowly focussed on teaching and learning (i.e. standards), supported by HLTA and other national qualifications. For LTSs, it is apparent in their alignment with the teaching and learning agenda as a means to improved status within the schools, and in their potential trajectory to TA and teacher, smoothed by a commitment to this agenda. Whilst the Every Child Matters policy agenda that we briefly discussed earlier appears to provide an opportunity to define not only teaching more broadly but also other staff roles, in the Testbed project we found little evidence that this was happening in a widespread way in practice. It may be that the move to rewarding 'Teaching and Learning Responsibilities' and the narrow T and L focus in threshold payments had driven out the potential for ECM to be used to make such changes in many schools. The dominance of these agendas should, however, not be seen as wholly unwelcome for our other groups: on the contrary, it has opened up identity options that provide possibilities for them to feel and be more valued and even professionalised. Overall there may be differential shifts in opportunities among the various workforce groups, including teachers.

Another important point is that each of these accounts is hidden in the blindspot of research focussed entirely or predominantly on the way workforce and other reforms have played out for teachers (and in schools conceived as the places where teachers work).. We would also argue that one's view of schools also has to shift, from a place where teachers work, and create their professional identities, to places where many groups of people interact and create their professional identities. Throwing the spotlight on groups further down the hierarchy such as TAs, LTSs and caretakers helps us gain a new perspective on the kinds of places schools are for the people who work within them. By shifting one's gaze, in this case towards the usually ignored

lunchtime supervisor and caretaker, or the more visible TA, one's understanding of the work of teachers may also shift.

If these arguments have established significant differences in the nature of what it is to be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a lunchtime supervisor or a caretaker then what does this mean for policies that assume (or seek to establish) homogeneity, e.g. an integrated qualifications framework?

In our previous paper, we concluded by noting that the differing teaching traditions required a commensurate acknowledgement of the need for a range of professional development opportunities appropriate to such traditions, rather than a narrow focus privileging some. In this paper, we would argue that it is still true that staff development for the school workforce needs not only to encompass an understanding of teaching that is not dominated by the standards and latterly teaching and learning agendas, but needs to reject the colonisation of other job roles by teacher professional development and identity. Staff development for the wider workforce groups needs to acknowledge, accept and even celebrate different cultures of workers in an organisation. Moreover, this is true of whole school training and development, and professional development policies and practices for teachers as well.

Appendix

Table 1. Groups of workforce in English schools (after Blatchford et al, 2006)

Staff Category	Illustrative titles	
Staff with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	Classroom Teacher (no extra responsibility) Advanced Skills Teacher Year Leader Deputy Headteachers	Classroom Teacher (with extra responsibility) Excellent Teacher Headteachers Assistant Headteachers
Teaching Assistant (TA) equivalent	Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) TA (Secondary school) TA (Primary school) TA (Special school)	Learning Support Assistant Nursery Nurse Therapist
Site staff	Caretaker	Premises Manager
Other pupil support	Lunchtime Supervisor (LTS) Bilingual Support Escort Language Assistant	Cover Supervisor Exam Invigilator Midday Assistant
Pupil welfare	Connexions Advisor Home Liaison Officer Nurse	Education Welfare Officer Learning Mentor Welfare Assistant
Technicians	ICT Manager Librarian Technology Technician	ICT Technician Science Technician
Facilities	Cleaner Kitchen Manager	Cook
Administrative	Administrator Finance Officer Secretary Data Manager Personal Assistant to HT	Bursar Office Manager Attendance Officer Examinations Officer

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