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Moving beyond the 'initial' in Initial Teacher Education: the role of ITE providers in supporting and developing new teachers

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Abstract

This article describes a small-scale qualitative study focusing on Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) during their first year of teaching. The study aimed to find out how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers can best support NQTs by looking at barriers that NQTs face, their perceptions of the support they need, and how these findings could be embedded into a university's NQT Strategy. NQTs were visited in their employing schools at various points over their first year in teaching and were interviewed about their role and their perceived strengths and barriers which they had encountered. The paper highlights the differences between standards-driven competencies which are often perceived to be the main focus of the NQT year and the pastoral forms of support that are needed to overcome issues such as workload. Conclusions were drawn from these semi-structured interviews, alongside secondary evidence including discussions with mentors and head teachers, and iterative readings of relevant literature. Findings from the research include suggestions for next steps in relation to developing NQT resources and in relation to the support offered by the ITE provider. I also consider the implications for future research in this area.

Key words

Background to the research

The Government has acknowledged that there are growing signs of shortages within the teaching profession in England and that the retention rate of current teachers could be improved (Foster, 2019). Data from the Department for Education (DfE) shows that those in the first five years of their career are more likely to leave the profession (DfE, 2017). Therefore, it is now crucially important that teachers are adequately supported in the early stages of their careers in order for them to remain in the profession. However, much emphasis on passing the NQT year currently focuses on meeting the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) rather than the pastoral support needed. Is this therefore, why the retention rate is declining?

Under current arrangements, NQTs undertake a statutory induction period of one year (or equivalent if working part-time) once they are employed in a school. The DfE (2018a:6) describe this period as 'the bridge between initial teacher training and a career in teaching' suggesting that this transition needs to involve support from both the ITE provider and the school. This induction period will be revised from 2021 with the introduction of the Early Career Framework (ECF), giving NQTs entitlement to a two-year programme of 'structured training and development' (DfE, 2019a: 6). As yet, materials and programmes for the new framework have not been published. Input from teachers, school leaders and academics was drawn upon during the DfE's consultation period thus supporting the notion that the views of those currently employed in the education sector is essential 'if we are to realise the democratic, pedagogical and social aims of education in the twenty first century' (Mockler and Groundwater-Smith, 2015:5).

Citation

Although the induction period is completed in the NQT's employing school, Ofsted inspection guidelines for ITE show a shift towards the accountability of ITE providers for their trainees' performance in their NQT year and beyond (Ofsted, 2015), leading providers to explore how they can best support NQTs. The level of support that can be given is somewhat inhibited given that ITE providers receive no additional funding for this level of support and many academics within the ITE sector are already struggling to manage their vast workload (Ellis et al, 2014). As the DfE (2019a:5) outlines that the content of the ECF should 'build on and complement' ITE this study sets out to ascertain the views of NQTs about how they feel they can be best supported, with a focus on support that can be further offered by the ITE provider post-training, and whether standards-driven competencies are the main area in which NQTs need support.

Literature Review
It is well-recognised that the transition from training to teaching can be difficult. Much research focuses on transition, the importance of support (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011, Engvik & Berit Emstad, 2017) and the changes that NQTs go through as they embark on the journey from novice to experienced learner (McLean, Bond and Nicholson, 2014). Engvik and Berit-Emsted (2017) suggest that this transition requires academic, social and personal support. Guskey's (2002) 'Model of Teacher Change' underscores this, implying that continued follow-up and support following initial training is even more crucial than the training itself. It is suggested that support allows those in the initial stages of their teaching career to 'tolerate the anxiety of occasional failures' (Guskey, 2002: 388) suggesting that resilience is needed during this period.

The importance of resilience amongst teachers is commonly advocated. Le Cournu (2013) argues that this is particularly significant, given the political, social and economic context surrounding teaching and the increasing challenges that teachers face. When considering resilience, the common view is that it means learning to cope with adversity whilst remaining in the same context (Smith and Ulvik, 2017) which may mean accepting unreasonable demands or adapting oneself at the expense of one's own agency (Chandler and Reid, 2016). However, resilience can also mean having the strength to leave a situation or role in order to share beliefs and achieve individual goals (Smith and Ulvik, 2017). Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011) discuss the relationship between 'risk' and 'protective' factors for early-career teachers' resilience. Risk factors identified included individual factors such as lack of confidence, a reluctance to ask for help or conflict between personal beliefs and practices adopted by the school, and also contextual factors, including school/ classroom context and professional work context. Those factors listed within school/ classroom context correlated highly with the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) including dealing with disruptive pupils, managing the needs of disadvantaged pupils and curriculum knowledge. Of these factors, behaviour management was highlighted as being the most frequent challenge for NQTs (Beltman, Mansfield and Price, 2011). Risk factors listed under 'professional work context' included workload, non-teaching duties and lack of support. In terms of protective factors for resilience, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy were highlighted, alongside contextual protective factors including school leadership and mentor relationships. The DfE's advice for reducing workload for NQTs/ Early Career Teachers (ECTs) reflect many of these outlined factors (DfE, 2019b) with key themes highlighting: non-teaching tasks, including behaviour management; subject and sector knowledge, including curriculum knowledge, and external factors including monitoring and support during induction.

Day (2002) argues that although experienced teachers may have been able to keep their identities intact during a period of turbulence, younger teachers are particularly susceptible to feeling the pressures of competency measures. This is furthered by Fraser (2018) who describes how teachers' identities will change over the course of their careers and that ECTs will create their sense of identity as a result of concepts derived as a result of feedback from others in the profession. Ball (2000),

acknowledging that a sense of identity is important for teachers in the early stages of their careers, identifies ontological insecurity as widespread amongst NQTs and attributes this to the performativity and accountability climate rife in schools. This links to debate surrounding an emphasis in schools on the 'competencies of teaching' focussing on a competency-based model of teaching (Furlong and Maynard 1995:27) and how teachers' development is often characterised by the ability to demonstrate government-determined skills (Webb et al, 2007). For example, the DfE induction guidance (2018a) stresses the importance of meeting the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) using the term 'standards' 49 times in total. This adds to the notion of the perceived importance of meeting pre-determined teacher competencies. This raises the question as to how compatible a competency-based standards approach is with the need to engender reflective, autonomous and critical practitioners who remain in the profession long term.

Much literature around the NQT induction year is embedded in the narrative of 'survival' with discourse focusing upon this primarily as a gateway for NQTs to then 'thrive'. Phrases such as 'surviving your NQT year' are often used both amongst colleagues working in the teaching profession, book and journal publications, and within ITE programmes (Williams, Moorse and Yates, 2009; Robinson, Bingle and Howard, 2016). As much as the potential challenges of the NQT year should not be glossed over, perhaps this narrative sets NQTs up to believe that the NQT year is something much more daunting than it need be, with such language conjuring up images of the NQT year as a battlefield or something similarly traumatic. A focus on language such as 'thriving' during the NQT year may be more appropriate in order to encourage a growth-mindset amongst NQTs, something which many of them will be advocating to pupils in their own classrooms. As Dweck (2012:10) explains, 'believing that your qualities are carved in stone – the fixed mindset – creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over'. The need to prove yourself in given situations within the classroom or within your career as described by Dweck (2012) will be reminiscent of many NQTs who, through observations, performance review meetings and target-setting, will continually feel like they are being 'judged' against the Teachers' Standards. A movement towards a 'growth mindset' may not come easily to those who are constantly being judged. Perhaps having to evidence that you have met the Teachers' Standards at the end of your training is not consistent with a growth mindset where really the emphasis should be on ITE as a starting point for development. Links to resilience can be seen here where NQTs need to take risks, confront challenges and persist in working on areas of development (Dweck, 2012) whereas perhaps too many NQTs approach feedback with a fixed mindset manner. Here, attention may need to focus further on the role of the mentor.

The support of colleagues in the induction period is seen to be pivotal in keeping ECTs in the profession (Thomas et al, 2019). Current induction guidance (DfE, 2018a) states that an induction tutor/ mentor should be identified and that a monitoring and support programme should be in place for all NQTs. The ECF (DfE, 2019a) commits to funding time for mentors to support NQTs in their first two years of teaching and to funding mentor training. Zuljan and Požarnick (2014:1) describe how 'a fruitful synthesis of theory and practice can occur if novices are systematically introduced and supported by good mentoring in the transition from study to school life and culture'. It can be argued though that a formal induction process does not guarantee an NQT's success and that informal collegial support is also essential. This is likely to come in three forms: professional, focusing on the required teaching competencies; emotional, helping them to deal with the 'realities' of the profession and other personal difficulties; and social support to help them adapt to the school's culture and become part of the team (Thomas et al, 2019).

Research Design

My study involved a small convenience sample of six NQTs and aimed to gain an insight into their perceptions of how ITE providers can best support them by looking at barriers they face, the support needed, and how these findings can be embedded into a university's NQT Strategy. Of the NQTs recruited to this study, two were Secondary postgraduate NQTs, one male and one female, and four were undergraduate primary NQTs, all females. The NQTs were employed across a range of settings from a small village primary school to a large secondary school with over 1000 pupils on roll.   Three of the NQTs were employed in schools where they had completed their final teaching placement.

I collected data over a period of one year using a case study approach. Willis (2007: 239, cited White, Drew and Hay, 2009: 21) describes case studies as 'about real people, in real situations' which commonly rely upon 'inductive reasoning and illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study'. Denscombe (2007) suggests that a case study approach will look at one or a few cases rather than being a mass study. The advantages of this include greater insights being gained through this approach and sufficient detail being gained in order to understand and unravel any complexities. For the purposes of this research, I chose a collective case study, whereby a number of cases were chosen in order to lead to a better understanding of NQT support (Stake, 1994).

NQTs were visited in their employing schools once a term.   During the visits, semi-structured interviews were undertaken and responses recorded. This form of interview was used to ensure that questions were open-ended and that prompts could be given and answers probed as needed. This allowed me to ask for clarification of answers if necessary or to ask for responses to be extended, elaborated upon, exemplified or for further detail to be given (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). The interviews began with an overarching discussion about perceived highs and lows of the NQT year which then led to further discussion of specific topics. It was also important to consider whether questions would take a direct or indirect form. Tuckman (1972 cited Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) suggests that the indirect approach, in posing questions where the purpose is less obvious, is advantageous in terms of producing more open and honest answers. It is worth noting that NQTs, being interviewed in their employment setting, may not have felt comfortable speaking openly about their concerns or the difficulties which they were facing. Therefore, the purpose of the study was made clear and it was emphasised that there would be no implications for the NQTs if they were to give frank answers.

Hammersley (2008) suggests that qualitative research is more entangled in ethical constraints than most quantitative research, as it can be argued that its very purpose may be political or ethical. In order to conduct this research, an ethics approval form has been completed and approved by the university's cross-school ethics committee. Ethics often involves issues of power and, in this regard, significant amongst the challenges of adopting a case study approach is the potential difficulty of negotiating access to case study settings and gaining the trust of potential research participants (Denscombe, 2007) – in this instance, headteachers acting as 'gatekeepers' and controlling access to the school. Due to my relationship with the NQTs and my positioning within the university, gaining access to their employing schools was not a challenge, particularly as I reassured the headteachers of the school's and the NQT's right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Alongside interviews with the NQTs, discussions with some NQT mentors and Head teachers from employing schools took place. Secondary evidence was also gathered from questionnaires and surveys and discussions with other NQTs within my NQT Lead role.

Findings
Initial data was collected from the first visits to see the NQTs towards the end of their first term of teaching. NQTs were asked to reflect on their role so far and discuss what had gone well in terms of their achievements and perceived strengths and what they perceived to be the greatest challenges

they had encountered. At this point, the most frequently raised topic was not being able to 'switch off' from work. One NQT asked if this was 'normal', but despite raising this as a challenge, she did not necessarily see this as a negative as she was really enjoying her job. Furthering this, workload was also raised as a challenge by three of the NQTs with one describing teaching as a 'juggling act' with on-going planning, marking and administration tasks. One NQT described how she never got to the end of her 'to do' list, thus adding to her feeling of never 'switching off' from work. Another NQT acknowledged how her school had moved towards a reduced marking system in response to findings from the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016) and she was finding that this was having a very positive impact.

Other topics included concerns over the responsibility of making decisions within their roles. Although three of the NQTs viewed making their own decisions as a positive factor, others found this difficult and spoke about how this was a significant change from their placements during training and how it was rather a daunting prospect for them. This was particularly the case for two NQTs employed in single-form entry, or smaller schools who did not have other teachers in the same year group to work alongside. One NQT who worked in a small village school spoke about the high level of responsibility she already had due to the limited number of staff in the school. She acknowledged that this could not be helped but found it a real challenge. All the primary NQTs were given the choice as to how they used their Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA)/ NQT time, with the exception of some pre-booked courses. They described how they used this time for a range of tasks but none of them seemed to have a clear schedule or set list of tasks to complete.

All the NQTs spoke about the importance of getting to know the routines and systems of the school and how, for those employed in schools new to them, this had taken a considerable amount of time. Unsurprisingly, the easiest transition related to this point came for the two NQTs who completed one of their placements at their employing school, however, another NQT spoke in detail about how her school had a clear induction programme which began before the summer and helped her to really 'hit the ground running' despite her not having previous experience at the school. Further discussions centred around working with parents and Teaching Assistants (TAs), showing a lack of confidence amongst some within these areas. One NQT commented that when working with parents, she 'pretended to be confident' and felt she had to act as though she 'knew everything'. When asked further about this, she said that she was keen for the parents to not know that she was an NQT as she felt this may impact on their view of her abilities in the classroom. Two NQTs expressed concerns about working with colleagues who were much more experienced, and how they did not want to challenge their views or ways of working.   All NQTs had extremely high expectations of themselves; one summarised her reflections saying, 'I need to realise that not everything will be right first time'.

When asked the same questions on later visits, the NQTs' responses were somewhat different. Here, behaviour management, previously not mentioned, was raised by all but one NQT. Into the second and third terms of teaching, five of the NQTs were finding that behaviour management strategies previously employed in their classrooms were no longer effective and that they were having to trial new methods with their classes. One NQT put this down to the fact that the children were now familiar with them as a teacher and therefore had begun to push the boundaries further. Another explained that she felt it was because of the time of the year, over winter, with more indoor playtimes, children needed much firmer boundaries. Assessment was another area discussed by four of the NQTs and the difficulties in 'plugging gaps' which were highlighted by formative assessment, alongside moving onto new areas to be covered with the children.   All NQTs at this point were seen to be reflecting on their practice and evaluating what was not working effectively as well as what was. Two NQTs who had previously being relatively confident about their abilities in the classroom, expressed concerns over their lack of confidence in their role.

All NQTs spoke about the importance of on-going support and continued professional development (CPD). The majority felt that support within their school was extremely effective although one NQT felt this was not the case. One NQT said that she was finding online courses useful and was exploring these of her own free-choice. When asked about how they could further be supported it was suggested, by four of the NQTs, that opportunities to network with other NQTs would be welcomed. Those employed in larger schools very much valued being part of a large team or several smaller teams within departments or key stages. They saw the opportunities that working with and learning from colleagues created.

Resources already offered by the ITE provider were deemed very useful by the NQTs. They found useful such things as a dedicated NQT website, live webinars held by a panel of ITE staff, and documentation sent out to both NQTs and their mentors in school to support them through the induction period. NQTs suggested topics for future webinars and further content for the website. One NQT suggested the use of social media as a platform for the sharing of good practice and to make contact with other NQTs. They all had felt it useful to work with me; the interviews gave them space and time to reflect on their roles and they valued having someone to speak to about their experiences without feeling like they were being judged.

Discussion of findings
The interviews revealed that managing workload was a major concern of the NQTs and that some were judging their own worth as a teacher on their ability to complete, marking and administration. The Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016) reported that teacher effectiveness is too often judged by how much marking has been completed rather than how effective the feedback is. A further example of this came from an NQT who judged himself to be 'ineffective' as a teacher due to his lack of time management, spending too much time marking books and completing paperwork, however, his mentor did not raise any concerns about the quality of his teaching or impact on the progress of pupils in his class. This NQT was still deemed to be meeting the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) but judged himself to be 'ineffective'. This suggests that it is not the standards-driven areas which NQTs need most support in but with managing workload and work-life balance.

There are clear indications of a struggle with identity during transition from trainee to qualified teacher. Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2012: 244) describe this as a 'dramatic and traumatic' transition. Struggles here were particularly evident when NQTs discussed difficulties in working with parents and TAs. The NQT who explained that she did not want parents to know that she was an NQT clearly envisaged negative connotations with this label; she described how she wanted to be seen as more knowledgeable and confident than she actually felt as she thought parents may be likely to 'challenge' her if they were aware that she were newly qualified. The NQTs who expressed concerns about working with very experienced TAs, expressed how they were concerned about challenging their views or set ways of working. NQTs who feel this way, are more likely to have their identity shaped to fit that of the school than keep their own identity in-tact in the same way their more experienced colleagues will (Day, 2002). During the induction year, the NQT not only has to teach, but also must learn to teach within a particular workplace and with particular colleagues. Clearly, there is the potential for significant tension for NQTs between wanting to be seen as a 'proper' teacher and at the same time being in need of support (Haggarty and Postlethwaite, 2012).

There was a strong message from the NQTs that support from within the school is crucial and this will undoubtedly vary between context. Fuller and Unwin (2004, cited Haggarty and Postlethwaite, 2012: 244) describe how workplaces such as schools exist on a continuum between 'restrictive and expansive learning environments' offering diverse opportunities to learn. Those NQTs who felt they were most effectively supported were offered regular CPD opportunities and worked closely with colleagues both within their own school and partner schools. It is also important here to consider

network size. As highlighted in the findings, the two NQTs in smaller schools, sometimes felt that they lacked guidance from colleagues. One NQT identified in the first research visit that she was relatively isolated and consequently contacted another NQT in the same cluster of schools in order to gain peer support and further her own development. Thomas et al (2019: 163) emphasise the significance of network size as it reflects 'teachers' opportunities for accessing resources'. Those less effectively supported, or with smaller networks, had to look for support outside of their school, through contact with other NQTs or the ITE provider.

Some findings from the first visit to NQTs were perhaps 'less expected' than later findings. Many books and websites devised to support NQTs through their first year of teaching tend to focus on standards-driven topics such as behaviour management, pupil progress and assessment. Perhaps it should be asked whether ITE providers are guilty of this to some extent too? However, the biggest challenges for NQTs in the very early stages of their induction year do not always relate to the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) but topics such as workload management and the need for support in making decisions. The initial findings correlate strongly to Beltman, Mansfield and Price's (2011) 'professional work context' risk factors where heavy workload and the pressures of non-teaching duties were discussed. There is less emphasis on standards-driven factors or those listed within 'school or classroom context' risk factors. When standard-driven factors, such as behaviour management and curriculum knowledge, do come into consideration, it becomes apparent that it is only when the NQTs are putting the theory from their training into practice that their learning becomes meaningful. The importance of reflection on practice was evident from all NQTs interviewed, all valued the time to off-load and reflect. However, it needs to be noted that for experience to become educational, it must be critically analysed, otherwise existing practices will simply be reinforced (Tripp, 1993; Brookfield, 1998). Again, this relates back to the importance of NQTs creating their own sense of identity and not simply being 'led' by colleagues.

Suggestions of future topics for webinars included further support with curriculum knowledge such as the teaching of phonics and supporting disadvantaged children. Further ideas for the NQT website focussed mainly on subject-specific resources. It is therefore evident that practical resources required by NQTs tend to fit into the standards-driven areas of teaching and are perhaps perceived by them to be of greater importance than the findings suggest, however, answers to the other interview questions suggested that support required was more in the pastoral sense.

Many of the themes within the findings sit within the 'professional behaviours' section of the ECF (DfE, 2019a) including: opportunities for collaboration; reflective practice; working with TAs; building effective relationships with parents and engaging in CPD. This section of the ECF also addresses workload and well-being including developing strategies to use time most effectively, the right to have support and 'protecting time for rest and recovery' (DfE, 2019a: 25). This suggests that the DfE is acknowledging that these are key areas in terms of teacher retention and, whilst being careful not to draw generalisations, it seems that the findings from this small-scale study are by no means unique.

Limitations within this case study require caution when seeking generalisations from the findings. The data gathered was based on a small sample of NQTs who trained with one ITE provider. The NQTs were chosen because they were employed relatively locally to the provider and were all willing to discuss their experiences. However, through analysing data collected during the interviews, it has allowed light to be shed on some of the barriers that NQTs face and ways in which they can be further supported. It has also highlighted the complexities of the induction year, the varied experiences and the ways in which the ITE provider's support may be limited. Much of the support offered to NQTs is based within employing schools and therefore is out of the ITE provider's control. It is a challenge for ITE providers to create ways for trainees to be taught about the teaching of learning which will be meaningful to them beyond their training once they are employed in varied contexts (Loughran and

Berry, 2005), however given the wide variation in approaches of employing schools, this is an important point to consider. It is hoped that variations within levels of mentoring and support will be addressed through the introduction of the ECF (DfE, 2019a) as this is an area that was highlighted as being of upmost importance within the findings.

Conclusions and Impact on Practice

Managing workload emerged as a clear theme within the findings. The DfE (2018b: 3) has advised that ITE Providers need to establish 'good habits' in their trainees with regards manageable workload, particularly in terms of marking, planning and data management. Perhaps, however, this needs to be embedded further to ensure that during placements trainees are developing strategies ready for their NQT year and not focussing on the short-term. Strategies for this need to be made explicit before the NQT enters employment and needs to be further discussed with the NQT mentor. Glazzard, Denby and Price (2014) suggest that trainees are often told that workload will be easier once they qualify, however in reality, this is often not the case and ITE providers should not mislead their trainees. NQTs need to know how to organise their time effectively, particularly their use of PPA time. Again, this is an area that ITE providers may look at addressing more explicitly. When discussing the NQT year, there is to be careful consideration of language use, sessions in university which previously focused on 'surviving' will now be reframed around 'thriving'.

Findings showed that time was needed for NQTs to get to know the routines and systems of their employing school and that this could be challenging. Naturally, those NQTs employed in their placement schools had an advantage in this area. In order to smooth this transition, ITE providers should consider guidance, or a check list, of what an NQT needs to know as they enter their first weeks of teaching, this would encourage NQTs to ask the 'right' questions as they visit their employing school and to use their time to its greatest potential. It would also aid those NQTs employed in schools that do not have clear induction programmes.

Further scenario-based activities around working with parents and TAs will be offered during training, and as possible topics for future webinars. Opportunities to invite parents in to discuss their own experiences of their children's education and expectations of NQTs will also be considered. This may include colleagues from the wider university who are parents of children in local schools or those who are school governors.

It is clear from the findings that NQTs need support during their induction year but they also need opportunity to 'off-load' and reflect on their practice. Loughran and Berry (2005) emphasise the importance of talking about practice and that for those working in isolation, problems can often be heightened rather than solved. As the workload of many ITE academics is already close to capacity (Ellis et al, 2014), it is not always possible for these members of staff to offer support in terms of offering a 'listening ear', however, it is important that they facilitate other ways of providing this. Networking has been a recurring theme throughout the findings of this research and will therefore form a focus for moving forward with the NQT Strategy at my university. The creation of social media platforms is being explored, alongside ways of connecting NQTs employed within the same area through 'hubs', offering them the opportunity to contact and meet with each other. This echoes Beltman, Mansfield and Price's (2011) suggestion that fellow NQTs can provide informal support. Opportunities for NQTs to meet at the university at the end of their NQT year is also being considered, however it should be noted that due to the wide geographical location of NQTs, this may not be viable for many. Networking opportunities with Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs) will also be offered through a 'buddy' system to which a number of RQTs have already committed.

It is evident that support is pivotal during the NQT year. Returning to Thomas et al's (2019) view on high quality support, the findings suggest that the emotional and social support is just as important as

the professional support. NQTs need to feel supported and need to feel part of the team. During training, the importance of pastoral support and ways to address work/ life balance need to be given, where possible, as great an emphasis as meeting the Teachers' Standards within the NQT year. Although the role of the mentor is key, Thomas et al (2019: 178) suggest that the induction of NQTs needs to be viewed as a 'school-wide responsibility', perhaps this is something that should be promoted to NQTs, so that they can pinpoint a range of colleagues who they can turn to.

Next Steps for Research
There are plans for a longitudinal study to follow-up from this initial research with a larger group of NQTs. Such a study would collect further qualitative data to understand in greater depth the transition during their initial year of teaching and the most effective forms of involvement from the ITE provider. It is important that ITE providers are not complacent in what they offer in terms of support for NQTs and that support is in line with the outlined ECF (DfE, 2019a). As is hopefully evident from the above discussion, creating next steps for ITE providers is not a straight-forward task but studies such as the one outlined are crucial in creating a better understanding of the support needed by future NQTs in order for them to remain in the profession and for teacher retention to increase.

Acknowledgements

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