

## APPENDIX D

### Narrative Summary – Lily

<p><b>Educational background</b></p>	Q1
<p>Lily is a female trainee in her late 20s. She has a 2:1 degree from a post 1992 University but has no other additional qualifications at the moment. Her own school experience was one she described as ‘easy’, both being an ‘<i>enjoyable experience</i>’ and ‘<i>where the work was straightforward</i>’. She found her time at school ‘<i>not challenging</i>’ and the best things were ‘<i>the school facilities, the teachers</i>’ and especially ‘<i>the social aspect</i>’. She did say that the only negative thing was the amount of travelling she had to do to reach her school; ‘<i>the distance, it was about an hour away from home</i>’. Lily’s experience of exams was that she found ‘<i>them easy</i>’ and seemed to ‘<i>get through them without much work</i>’. It ‘<i>felt like a natural step</i>’ to go to university, where she was ‘<i>one in a long line</i>’ of people from her family to enter higher education. Again, Lily found her time at university ‘<i>easy</i>’ and ‘<i>did not really work hard</i>’ to achieve her 2:1. ‘<i>I would have liked a 1<sup>st</sup> but didn’t work hard at all</i>’. She did have ‘<i>a lot of support, both financially and with school work</i>’ from her family throughout her education.</p>	Q1 I1 I1 I1 I1 I1 I1 E E E E
<p>In categorising her into one of three types; engaged academic, willing/strategic complier or reluctant complier, Lily would fall into the group I define as willing/strategic complier (see 3.7.2).</p>	
<p><b>Becoming a teacher</b></p>	
<p>Lily, when she was younger, ‘<i>always wanted to teach, I don’t know why, I just wanted to teach</i>’. She helped out when she was in sixth form with the year 7 and 8 where it was ‘<i>fun and I loved it</i>’. During her gap year she spent some time travelling including to India, where she ‘<i>stayed in an Indian orphanage... and I taught them English ...just verbal language skills, not reading or writing</i>’. This she found ‘<i>really interesting...I learnt a lot from them...it was just really, really good</i>’. Lily became ‘<i>really appreciative of what education means – they don’t have anything</i>’.</p>	I1 I1 I1 I1 I1
<p>Having completed her degree, she delayed starting her PGCE as she ‘<i>wanted to have some life experiences first</i>’. Additionally, her ‘<i>dad was keen on me going out and getting experience, just to make sure</i>’. Lily quotes him; “<i>if you don’t like teaching, then you’ve got something else to turn back to</i>”. Having then worked for 3 years, Lily ‘<i>got to the stage where I got comfortable and where I thought if I don’t do it then there’s a danger that I might not and might regret it</i>’. She applied for the PGCE and was accepted onto the course.</p>	I1 I1 I1 I1 I1
<p>Lily was clearly very enthusiastic about becoming a teacher; ‘<i>I can’t wait – I’m really excited, I can’t wait I love it I really, really honestly do</i>’. She continued, ‘<i>everyday is different, every student is different and building those relationships and getting to know individuals where they are, where you know they can be and trying to get them to believe that as well and when the penny drops and</i></p>	I2 I2 I2

*they can see what they need to do, they want to do it'. The thing that Lily really appreciates is 'seeing them actually really try, I know some of them don't always get what they want, they don't give up and keep trying and trying and trying and its getting them to keep on trying. The key is to get them to give that effort'. For her, the thing that made teaching worthwhile was 'building those relationships, all of a sudden they start opening up to you and that gives you an insight into the way that they are working and why they are that way and that encourages you to try and help them'. She was realistic enough though to know 'it doesn't always work'.*

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Lily was also aware that *'there's a lot of pressure – in education at the moment it's very difficult to get a picture of where we are supposed to be aiming, there's a lot a pressure to get pupils to hit target grades and the FFT [Fischer Family Trust] grades are quite stretching'. She continued; 'there's a danger that you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing in your classroom, you are just pushing, pushing, pushing to get to the grade, that they might not get anyway, then there's other skills and things that they haven't got because you are so focused on doing what the exam board say you need to teach. There's not much room for flexibility in your scheme of work.'*

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Lily also considered what the downside to teaching might be, in her opinion, the most problematic was *'the timeframes and the amount of work that you need to get your pupils through, it's not just one subject they are doing, and you can't always build on things, to get them to see a bigger picture'. In addition, there is 'the shear amount of marking and paperwork is sometimes really horrendous, and then the moderation of that marking is little bit crazy'. However 'if you think teaching is a vocation, then it's a brilliant career to have, it's very diverse, everyday is different... hearing their point of view... you think why doesn't my mind work that way, its brilliant, you learn a lot'.*

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*'I always knew I wanted to teach, and then when I made the move, I had a panic and thought what if I'm no good? I've never in my life had that panic, I've never really had to try too hard, I just passed my GCSE, my A levels, my degree, and if I had have tried hard I probably would have come out with a first, and all A\*'s but I didn't. I thought if I don't do much work and I can still get these grades, then why am I working? When you do start to work [in a paid occupation], you begin to realise what hard work is'.*

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For her, the best moment was *'when all of a sudden its "miss, miss, miss" their hands are up, whereas at the beginning they are all a bit shy or they are not so bothered, or they don't trust you, then all of a sudden, they all have their hands up, they are all talking, all asking you questions, they are all saying hello to you in the corridor, that for me is just fantastic.'*

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It has not always been easy, particularly at the beginning as Lily *'was scared of failing, and my family have never seen me so passionate about something, I've never been scared of failing until now and that really panics me that I might not be able to do something I really want to do'. She also highlighted her perceived*

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<p>difference between those just entering the profession, and those who have been in education for some time; <i>'young teachers are more upbeat about it [teaching] as they haven't seen the whole thing about education system over the last 15 years, some people are really down about it all at the moment...especially with all the strikes and things'</i>. She concluded <i>'I'm really glad that I made the move – I did the right thing, my confidence is slowly there'</i>.</p>	<p>I2 I2</p>
<p><b>First Teaching Placement</b></p>	
<p>Lily's first school placement was at an 11-19 'average-sized comprehensive school' (Ofsted 2010:3) situated on the outskirts of a city in the South West of England. It has a growing number of 'minority ethnic groups' and 'students whose first language is not English' (ibid). The 'proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average' (ibid). The school is 'in partnership with other local secondary schools and a college of further education to provide 14-19 provision' (ibid). The school has 'specialist Business and Enterprise status' (ibid) as well as being 'a training school' (ibid) with close links to a local university. The school is currently in consultation with parents and other stakeholders in respect of applying for academy status in conjunction with two other local schools (School website 2011).</p>	<p>O O O O O O W</p>
<p><b>Second Teaching Placement</b></p>	
<p>Lily's second placement was at a 'larger than average' (Ofsted 2007:3) 11-19 secondary school located on the coast in the South West of England. Here, 'most students are of White British heritage and the number of students whose first language is not English is well below the national average' (ibid). There are a low proportion of students eligible for free school meals or have learning difficulties or disabilities (ibid). The school has specialist status in technology, was awarded 'Leading Edge' status in 2003 and is a training school. The school is also in discussions with parents and other stakeholders with regard to changing the status of the school to that of an Academy (school newsletter 2011)</p>	<p>O O O W W</p>
<p><b>Lily's conceptualisation of the ideal teacher</b></p>	
<p>In her first interview, Lily's idea of a good teacher was based around <i>'building a rapport with their pupils'</i>. She also considered that it was important to <i>'forge a good relationship and then using assertive and fair discipline'</i>. It was important for her to be seen to be <i>'trying to help them, to explain things, to take an interest in them'</i> [the pupils]. In her second interview, Lily continued upon the same theme; <i>'rapport, if you cannot get your students on side then it's an uphill battle'</i> and also <i>'respect, [there is] a fine line between the two, being able to chat and still doing the work, listen when you are talking ... a negotiation, a sales pitch'</i>. She felt it important to be <i>'willing to roll your sleeves up and</i></p>	<p>I1 I1 I1 I2 I2 I2</p>

*working as hard as they are, you are bothered about where they get to as well they see us more than they see their parents, you are a role model'. Additionally, Lily was concerned not just about teaching her own subject, but being able to draw 'those personal learning and thinking skills out of them...it's not just theory... they will have to work hard...to give a clear picture of what it's like out there [in the world] a real picture of it'.*

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During the second interview, I introduced prompt cards (emboldened in the following paragraphs) for Lily to rank order, or discard to stimulate discussion about key characteristics of her ideal teacher. At first, Lily wanted 'to put all of them in a line' (giving all eleven equal ranking), but eventually she did decide that to her, some were more important than others. First, she put **reflective practitioner** as 'there is no point in going forward if you can't see what you have done already and whether it's working or not because you're wasting your time, your pupils time'. Next was 'being **flexible** and having certain skills and bringing those skills out in your pupils'. On equal standing with flexibility was **skills** and **social service**. Lily considered that 'you need to provide them [the students] with your subject knowledge, but for them to draw on that knowledge and use it in real life they need general skills, transferable skills and being a social service, we are there to try to get them to understand that'. In her next line, Lily also had three terms equally ranked; **standards, knowledge** and **theoretical knowledge**. 'Knowledge is key in your subject, but also if you know your subject well, and you have general knowledge, you can try to use it in your classroom to get them to relate'. You need to 'mix it up a bit and make it like real life for them'. In respect of standards, Lily thought 'your pupils need to know what you expect of them and you need to know what they expect of you'. Next on its own line Lily put **making judgements** 'what you need to do, what you don't need to do, what to put into place for certain individuals'. Following this, Lily placed **regulations**, 'once you can do these things [the preceding factors] you need to think about am I being fair in my classroom and across the board and am I hitting the same level to give my pupils the same opportunities as others have. It is important in terms of marking as well'. Her penultimate response was **autonomy** which she considered to be 'the same idea' as regulation. Finally she placed **technician** which she thought 'was rubbish because if you've got the level of skill and flexibility, social service and then theoretical knowledge, and subject knowledge, that's all built into one, that makes you a technician'.

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### **Imagined future career path**

Throughout Lily's previous career, she 'has been quite focused to be the best that I can be, to move up as high as I can reach, but having taught a bit and looked at school policy and hierarchy, it's kind of like the more you take on, the more leadership roles you have, the less you are actually teaching'. This has put doubt into Lily's mind as 'for the first time, I'm not really sure what I want to do'.

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'I've always been ambitious, I've always strived to climb up that ladder, but teaching is a little bit different for me, at the moment it's about teaching' rather

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than ambition. *'It does seem that the higher you go the less teaching you do the more admin and paper-based work you do. I've already done that, so at the moment, my aspiration is to be the best teacher I can be and improve and just build on my practice, and for me that's my ladder'*.

### **M Level study**

Lily at first, considered that the Master's level assignment a way *'to go on into Higher Education yourself'* but she also considered it as a means to *'better develop your own understanding and knowledge'*. Having started the assignment, she *'had a little panic, then having done one already, I got back into it, being in University, doing assignments'*. Her approach was to *'start with a plan, just bare bones, a template to sort out what I was going to write, where'*. This was followed by doing *'all of my research first... finding bits I could use ... I built my assignment around that because of the feedback I had from my first assignment, about it being disjointed, I thought I would do the research first ... I picked things that interested me, that I either agreed with or disagreed with, and then built my essay around it'*. This Lily found to be *'much easier to write and much easier to follow ... it did flow'*.

However, she was *'more stressed as it was a Master's level assignment, and the sight of that title stressed me out more – I was more panicky on this one ... it made me work a bit harder, as I was panicking about it, I started it much earlier which gave me more time. I was more focused with this one, whereas the last one I was more blasé about it'*. Her approach was to *'Google key terms to find key names and dates, and then went to the library to get some books – I'm much better with books. I did use a few on-line journals ... journals panic me a little bit ... more the referencing of a journal, but they are quite good to use'*. For Lily the best part *'was the end bit, justifying about what I did and what I thought.'*

Having now completed the assignment, and passed it at Master's level, Lily was still unsure with how it related to becoming a teacher. *'I've always wondered this, with all the assignments, how is this helping me in the classroom I do struggle sometimes with seeing it because you are already thinking it and already doing it anyway the difficulty is putting it down on paper in an order, and I don't know if doing that exercise helps. I guess it does in getting a broader view to what other people think and have found, and then you can see if there is anything that you should be considering in the classroom, so that aspect I can see, but a lot of it is what I do in my classroom without thinking about it too much, but on reflection, I do that, I do that'*.

Given the choice of how she would like to be assessed at Master's level and with the assumption that all PGCE courses have to have an element of M level study, Lily would *'quite like to do a research project – I've seen it done [by another local university] with a presentation for part of it, and then actually do research with questionnaire, interviews with students and teachers and they look at the National Strategies programme, and then write what they have*

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<p><i>found, with their suggestions to make improvements ... and then focus even deeper. You are actually involved in the research rather than just look at other people's research...It's easier to get your teeth into something that's actually your bubble, that you have actually researched it in depth'.</i></p>	
<p><b>Continuing on to Master's</b></p>	
<p>In the first interview, Lily thought she might continue on with further study as she thought <i>'that education is important to me...I had to fight to get my education and to do my degree, which was a really big deal, so education has a special place in my heart to always do as much as I can because I have learnt that it is the one thing that you can do that no one can take away from you. Everything can be pulled away from you but that can't'</i>. However, despite these sentiments, Lily was weighing up <i>'whether I feel it necessary to do it and if it will add anything'</i>. To her, it would depend <i>'if there is something that will help me be a better teacher, then I would consider doing it. If I don't think it will improve anything, then I'm not sure if I would go for it'</i>. Like all the trainees at the moment, her priority is to <i>'get a job, see how I go and then decide'</i>.</p>	<p>I1 I1  Q2 Q2 Q2  Q2</p>

KEY

E –Email correspondence

I1 – Interview 1

I2 – Interview 2

O – Ofsted

Q1 – Questionnaire 1

Q2 – Questionnaire 2

W – School/College web site