

APPENDIX D

Narrative Summary – Ruby

<p>Educational background</p>	
<p>Ruby is a female student in her late 30s. She has a 2:2 from a post 1992 University and an MA in a subject related to her previous career. Ruby found that she <i>‘enjoyed my school experience tremendously [as a pupil] – good teachers, lovely class of pupils’</i>. For her, the work was <i>‘fairly easy and enjoyable’</i>, apart from Physics as <i>‘I didn’t really understand it’</i>. Exams were also <i>‘fairly easy – I liked studying and exams have never bothered me’</i>. Ruby found it an easy decision to go to university, even if she was the first in her family to do so. She described having <i>‘a tremendous amount of support [from them] I was lucky, however, they were too influential in what I studied and now I regret this’</i>. She worked hard at University, <i>‘but lost interest in the last year’</i>. Ruby did a sandwich course and <i>‘didn’t really want to go back to studying after being on placement’</i>. As a result, Ruby did not get the classification of degree she hoped for, but <i>‘did work very hard for my Master’s...and was delighted with the result of that’</i>.</p>	<p>Q1 Q1 I1 I1 I1 E E E E E E E</p>
<p>In categorising her into one of three types; engaged academic, willing/strategic complier or reluctant complier, Ruby would fall into the group I define as willing/strategic complier (see 3.7.2).</p>	
<p>Becoming a teacher</p>	
<p>Becoming a teacher was not the first career choice for Ruby, <i>‘my mum was a teacher and it was “no, no, I’ll never do that” so she started work in another area related to her degree, a job she found ‘very intensive and hand on, so I didn’t really give [teaching] much of a second thought’</i>. After marrying and having children she <i>‘started to think, do I really want to do this...especially when it’s such a thankless task, you get nothing in return. I wanted a bit more quality out of my job than I was getting’</i>.</p>	<p>I1 I1 I1</p>
<p>Her last job, prior to starting to train as a teacher <i>‘was with an education department in my local authority...I got to know some of the head teachers and got to know staff...I spent more and more time in school and began to think “oh perhaps this is for me”. I really enjoyed it, the culture, the environment, you know, the way the pupils were, the staff. As a result, Ruby decided ‘to look a bit more seriously now...I came to an open evening [at the University], everyone was really helpful, I applied, got in and find myself here now’</i>.</p>	<p>I1 I1</p>
<p>By the time of the second interview, Ruby was <i>‘fine...I’m really enjoying it...you do form quite quickly very strong opinions about where you want to be [the type of school] and what sort of teacher you want to be’</i>. She was <i>‘surprised at how easy planning is...it doesn’t bother me...its all a bit frantic at the moment’</i>. For Ruby <i>‘it has been how I expected it to be and I’ve enjoyed it...people can’t underestimate how difficult it is going to be for that year, especially if you have a family. You want to do it justice, as you are paying for it and you want to do a good job’</i>. She also thought it was <i>‘great getting to know the pupils’</i>. She thought it <i>‘important to find something that they [the pupils] like so that we can talk about it and that seems to make a difference’</i>.</p>	<p>I2 I2 I2 I2</p>
<p>First Teaching Placement</p>	

Ruby went first to a 'larger than average secondary school' (Ofsted 2009:3) where 'the great majority of students are of White British heritage' (ibid) and mostly come from 'advantaged, socio-economic backgrounds' (ibid). Students eligible for free school meals was 'well below the national average' (ibid) as was 'the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities' (ibid). The school has Visual Arts and Special Educational Needs specialisms as well as being a Leading Edge School. Ofsted in its 2009 report graded the school 1 for overall effectiveness, although it was graded 2 for teaching and learning.

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Second teaching Placement

Ruby's second placement was in a very large secondary school in Cardiff. Estyn reported in 2009 that 'the school's catchment includes both relatively prosperous and economically disadvantaged areas [with] approximately 25% of the pupils come from areas deemed to be socially disadvantaged' (Estyn 2009:1). Students entitled to free school meals approximate to 11 % of the school population and most (94%) 'come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English' (ibid). Estyn described the school as 'a good school and is moving forward from strength to strength' (Estyn 2009:2) and was graded a mix of 1 and 2 against the key questions set (ibid) with 'the quality of teaching ...better than the national average' (Estyn 2009:4).

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'I have been left on my own more here, but it does give me time to reflect...the mentor has been great, really helpful, lots of feedback'. She felt rather more supported here than in her first placement, as the 'mentor there wanted to control everything'.

I2
I2

Ruby's conceptualisation of the Ideal teacher

I asked Ruby what she thought makes an ideal teacher before she went on her first teaching placement *'this will probably change in sixth months when I am actually doing it, but at the moment...I think it is somebody who is consistent, who is open and honest, is approachable but still quite strict'*. She was clear that she did not want *'to go in trying to be anybody's friend'* especially as Ruby was older than some of the other trainees. She thought these younger ones might think *'because they are only of couple of years different, then I can be their friend'*. She reminisced about her own school days when *'some of the most popular teachers were those which had an open door policy "if you've got a problem, you come and tell me, lunch time, break time, it doesn't matter" and that's the sort of teacher I want to be'*.

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During her second interview, Ruby thought for her it was *'the patience, knowing that they are all individuals with different needs and wants'*. It was also about *'getting to know the pupils, having a rapport with them...having observed a large number of teachers, I think that the teacher that has a good rapport with the group has a far easier time of it than the ones that don't'*.

I2
I2

As part of the second interview, I introduced prompt cards (emboldened in the following paragraphs) for Ruby to rank order, to disregard or to stimulate discussion about key characteristics of her ideal teacher. Ruby divided them into two columns, which *'were quite separate'* but of equal value. On the top she placed **flexibility** and **knowledge**. With flexibility *'I know it's never going to go as per the lesson plan and there is absolutely no point in persevering with what you have written down if the*

I2

support their lesson plan’.

Continuing onto Master’s

From her first interview, it was clear that Ruby knew why Master’s level study was an issue in education. For her, having already achieved a qualification at that level, she was *‘tempted to say I am not interested in the Master’s level just because of the time and time management issues’* however she thought she *‘might miss out on something, some part of development’*. This was highlighted in her first placement where the school had a strong ethos in CPD and encouraged staff to undertake further study *‘I was quite surprised at how there was all this technical jargon being used’*.

I1
Q2
I2
I2

‘I don’t’ know, because I’ve got a Master’s, I can see its place now, more so than previously’. For Ruby she also wanted to undertake a *‘research Master’s, not a taught one, which is what I did before. What would appeal to me is looking at different areas and spending time doing some primary research in that area and writing up you findings,...that would appeal to me more than me going to lectures’*.

Q2
Q2

KEY

E –Email correspondence

I1 – Interview 1

I2 – Interview 2

O – Ofsted/Estyn

Q1 – Questionnaire 1

Q2 – Questionnaire 2

W – School/College web site