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SHIFTING SELVES AND SPACES: CONCEPTUALISING SCHOOL EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING AS A THIRD SPACE

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic was the catalyst for unprecedented change within education systems around the world. Teaching and learning which had traditionally taken place in school classrooms suddenly moved online. Teachers' responses to the emergency changed not just pedagogy but who was teaching as well as when and where teaching took place. Bhabha's 'third space' (1994) provides a way of re-imagining the new spaces (both physical and virtual) which were created in response to the pandemic. We report on data from two research studies in Scotland conducted in the 2020-21 academic year covering two lockdown (stay at home) periods: one comprising interviews with nine educators in Scotland; the other study using two rounds of focus groups with eleven early career teachers. Our research thus enquires into the lockdown practices of a range of teachers and managers across different local authorities in Scotland, exploring how they engaged learners using digital technologies during two national lockdowns. Across both studies, digital technology played a key role in how this third space was mediated and the findings show participants' emotional highs and lows of working within this new space. It also shows teachers' changing perceptions of children and families and how power relations evolved over the lockdown periods. Technology facilitated the emergency response, but questions remain as to what the legacy of this forced shift will be. This paper points to the importance of two-way communication between home and school and how third spaces using digital technologies could bring home and school funds of knowledge closer together.

Keywords: Digital third space; home/school links; emergency remote teaching; pandemic pedagogies; the third self.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 global pandemic forced the mass closure of school buildings and teaching had to be carried out at a distance, mediated by digital technologies. While this approach was not new to many teachers it gained ‘renewed salience’ during this period (Williamson, Eynon and Potter, 2020, p.108). The ‘unprecedented, rapid and forced’ shift (Trust and Whalen, 2020, p.507) from face-to-face, in-class teaching to digital provision with almost no preparation time has been likened to building a plane while flying it (ibid), raising serious challenges for which education systems have been, on the whole, poorly prepared (Zhao, 2020; Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020).

Widespread responses to maintaining the continuity of education while keeping participants safe has involved activating emergency remote teaching (Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020) which is described as ‘surviving in a time of crisis with all resources available including offline and/or online.’ (p.2) and as ‘temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis’ (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust and Bond, 2020, p.6). However, much of the response globally has been to focus on digital technologies and the delivery challenges therein (O’Meara and Gentles, 2020). Inevitably, the speed of implementation of crisis measures has led to claims of ‘learning losses’ due to minimal provision of digital lessons in state schools (Green, 2020), significant variations in teachers’ readiness and capabilities in supporting learners at a distance (Trust and Whalen, 2020), and an exacerbation of educational inequalities in terms of access to resources in the home. The level of parental support for digital learning, and the amount of time spent on digital activities (Andrew et al., 2020) were also key factors impacting pupils’ experiences of lockdown learning.

While the way in which learners experienced such disparities is undoubtedly important, this paper focuses instead on responding to Williamson et al.’s (2020, p.111) challenge to explore what happens when ‘classroom space-time travels in the opposite direction into the home environment’ and where ‘the polysynchronous world of learning in the digital age is introduced into the rhythms of family life’. We do so by invoking third space theory (Bhabha, 1994), in agreement with Brown et al. (2021) who argue that lockdown allowed for hybrid third spaces to emerge between the first space of the home and the second space of school. Thus, we focus on the implications of teachers’ work shifting radically and suddenly (Marshall, Shannon and Love, 2020) and on the consequences for parents, carers, and families whose involvement in learning changed with equal speed as they morphed into dual roles of parent-educators (Bozkurt, 2020). As Richmond et al (2020) have argued, it is important to investigate how teachers, pupils, and families experienced the blurring of the traditional boundaries between home and school as teaching moved from the familiar spaces of school in a manner few had anticipated.

Our research thus enquires into the lockdown practices of a range of teachers and managers across different local authorities in Scotland, exploring how they engaged learners using digital technologies during Scotland's two lockdown periods between March 2020 and June 2021. Home and school are traditionally viewed as separate contexts with clearly defined and impermeable boundaries (Cook, 2005), with one-way communication (Marsh, 2003) leading to the colonisation of home spaces in the facilitation of school objectives (Grant, 2011). In contrast, lockdown placed parents 'in loco magister' (Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks, 2021) as new possibilities emerged, blurring roles, responsibilities, and power relations as learning shifted online. Third space offers a useful lens through which to examine the extent to which newness entered the world of teachers, pupils, and their families as they attempted to maintain the continuity of education.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW: THIRD SPACE

The concept of third space theory has been attributed to Bhabha (1994) who, as part of a critique of processes of colonial repression, proposed it as a means of resisting hegemonic forces by exploring how people from marginalised cultures are able to negotiate new and more powerful positions by working in-between the first space of their own traditional culture and the second space of the imposed culture (Jordan and Elsdon-Clifton, 2014). Third spaces are thus characterised by hybridity where established boundaries and taken for granted norms are challenged and destabilised (Barak and Gidron, 2017), opening up possibilities for the construction of new identities and more inclusive practices which serve to work more favourably and beneficially for those in less powerful groups (Benson, 2010). By 'fostering dialogue amidst difference' as Manyak (2002, p.423) argues, previously competing discourses are brought into conversation with one another (Arteaga, 1997), with the potential to transcend oppressive essentialisms of binary thinking and to subvert monologic roles and patterns in favour of cross pollination, multiplicity, and diversity (Manyak, 2002). Third spaces have permeable boundaries enabling newness to enter the world (Bhabha, 1994), compelling people to reconsider assumptions and challenge the familiar (Akkerman, 2011), providing alternative understandings and heightening dynamic new possibilities for human development (Max and Stammet, 2005).

As a conceptual tool 'pitched between humanities, cultural and literary studies' (Potter and McDougall, 2017, p.40), third space theory has been used to explore and understand how the bringing together of contradictory knowledge bases and practices can be a vital catalyst for change and growth. It has quickly expanded beyond the political (Moran, 2018) and has been taken up, for example, in educational research where Moll's use of the term 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 1992) has given third space theory powerful leverage in the exploration of home-school links. Funds of knowledge are 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for

household or individual functioning and well being,' (Moll et al., 1992, p.133). Characteristic of 'people-in-an-activity' (Moll and Greenberg, 1990, p.326), funds of knowledge are manifested through events and activities: all communities have them irrespective of their level of disadvantage. Capitalising on first space cultural practices, then, can facilitate transformation of the more official spaces, enabling participants to develop expertise and indeed to become more central in their own learning (Jordan and Elsdon-Clifton, 2014). Application of third space theory in a digital context enabled Benson (2010) to demonstrate how her research participant integrated his funds of knowledge of digital tools and multimodal literacies within the formal English Language Arts curriculum, positioning himself as expert in ways denied him by the more formal print-oriented curriculum.

Thus, while third spaces can be both metaphorical and physical, digital spaces can act as a contested area where new possibilities exist because the values and culture of the participants themselves feature in that space (Potter and McDougall, 2017), introducing the idea of porous expertise (p.6) within a flattening of hierarchies and the transformation of broader social processes. Max and Stammet (2005) develop this point, showing how hybridity can be the catalyst for a reorganisation of participants' actions, roles, participation, and division of labour (p.10). In this context, Jordan and Elsdon-Clifton (2014) examined the in-between digital spaces that reside in the 'overlap and displacement of domains of difference' (Bhabha, 1994, p.2), showing how student teachers could take control of the digital space using their confidence and competence in the relevant digital tools to destabilise the traditional hierarchical role of teacher/student, shaping the context to suit their own learning needs by challenging the instructor and leaning on their own uses of peer feedback rather than always relying on those traditionally viewed as expert. Moran (2018), too, viewed digital third space, in service of an online practicum, as enabling pre-service teachers and teenage learners to subvert traditional roles, bringing together their out-of-school funds of knowledge related to pop culture, using the website Slack to co-produce a shared learning environment in which all participants interacted as experts and on relatively equal terms.

Brown et al. (2021) have argued that the unexpected, rapid, and forced closing of school buildings in moving from face-to-face classroom teaching to online schooling from home during lockdown enabled third spaces to emerge. These were mediated almost exclusively by digital technology as the medium through which teaching took place – with a range of consequences for teachers, pupils, and parents both positive and negative in terms of tensions created by the blurring of the boundaries between home and school. Zecca and Cotzab (2020) also described how teachers responded to the forced shutdown of school buildings in their creation of virtual third spaces that encouraged a more egalitarian dialectical relationship among participants beyond the bounds of conventional hierarchical social structures. In a previous article, Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks (2021) showed how third spaces were capitalised on during first lockdown in Scotland, with children and their parents calling on their home funds of knowledge to transform

school tasks online, producing creative responses that enabled teachers to see their children differently and, on occasion, more positively. During the second lockdown, however, parental concerns to maintain more orderly family home circumstances led to requests for more structure and routine, leading to transmissive, school-led activities.

In this research the aim was to explore how teachers engaged learners using digital technologies during two national lockdowns, conceptualising this emergency remote teaching as a third space. Next, we provide detail on the methodology we used, then we provide findings from our research, a discussion of those findings and finish with our conclusions and suggestions for further research.

3 METHODOLOGY

Two studies of teachers in Scotland during the pandemic in 2020-21 have been brought together (Carver and Shanks, 2021; Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks 2021), with a new round of data analysis for the purposes of this paper. While these previous studies considered how teachers viewed their roles and professional learning needs during the time of crisis, this post-lockdown study had the benefit of space and hindsight to explore the extent to which third space could offer a useful lens for understanding teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using thematic analysis on these existing datasets was seen as ethically important in offering a deeper theoretical contribution than was previously possible when researching the pandemic while living through it. It was also recognised that participants in these earlier studies gave an important gift of data in such a challenging time, particularly those with additional challenges beyond the lockdown such as completing their teacher induction year; being clinically vulnerable; looking after their own children; or dealing with precarious employment. Secondary data analysis was therefore chosen as ethically important in making good use of the data from the previous studies and helping to move the COVID-19 narrative into a richer theoretical area.

Data comes from two qualitative studies. One was conducted solely by researchers at the University of Aberdeen, using email correspondence and semi-structured interviews with nine educators comprising primary and secondary school classroom teachers, Head Teachers and a local authority education officer (referred to below as T1 to T9) chosen to provide a heterogeneous sample (Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks, 2021). The other was an online focus group study conducted by researchers at the Universities of Aberdeen and Strathclyde with a sample of eleven recently qualified primary and secondary school teachers (referred to below as A to K) from those two institutions (Carver and Shanks, 2021). One of the paper's authors was involved in both studies and saw the usefulness in using both datasets to explore to what extent teachers were experiencing a third Space during remote teaching periods. Ethical assurances meant that no data was shared between the two teams. Thematic analysis therefore relied on a secondary analysis by the original study authors working with their own data, which built on their existing

familiarity with the data, while adding the ability of the shared team member to check the developing themes between both research teams. The approach is therefore best described in ‘supplementary analysis’ since the research team is similar to the primary studies, the subject is similar, but the focus is more refined (Heaton, 2008, p. 510).

Aside from giving the opportunity to return at a more reflective pace to data collected and analysed as a matter of urgency during a pandemic, there are benefits to secondary data analysis more generally. Heaton (2004) notes the use of secondary analysis of qualitative data gaining popularity in the 1990s as a method suited to non-naturalistic data (i.e., data generated by researchers), although much of the methodological theory was established earlier in document analysis and conversation analysis methodologies. More recently, the defining feature of secondary qualitative analysis is a shift in purpose from the original study, typically emphasising ‘verification, refutation and refinement’ (Heaton, 2004, p.9), meaning that the new study has a different purpose, question, method, data source, or research team. In this study, the combination of datasets can be seen as partly changing the source, the use of top-down coding changing the analysis method, the research team partly merging, and by using Carver and Shanks (2021) dataset to examine the transferability of the theoretical framework established in Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks (2021).

While the ethical approval for two separate studies meant that shared oversight of coding was only possible by the one researcher who was part of both research teams, this did bring the benefit of having her adopt a dedicated checking role. Specifically, researchers conducting the coding of transcripts noted not just where notions of third space or liminality could be identified but also where they were missing from participants’ accounts. This enabled an interpretation across both datasets of the compatibility of the theoretical framework, challenging the team to ensure that interpretation was not forced. There are limitations with this secondary analysis as we set out with a specific focus on third space and may have overlooked other themes and insights which could have been gleaned from the data.

Drawing heavily on grounded theory to understand changes to coding, Heaton (2004, pp.98-99) helpfully distinguishes between secondary studies which start with a ‘clean slate’ to return to the raw data and those which, as in this study, work with existing codes since ‘a broad theme may have been previously identified and coded in the primary analysis but requires more elaboration and/or linking to other codes for the purposes of the secondary analysis’. Likewise, quality assurance in secondary qualitative analysis draws on the same concepts as those established by grounded theory scholars, such as trustworthiness and authenticity, highlighting the importance of triangulation within the team to the extent allowed by data sharing restrictions and the regular logging of decisions within NVivo to ensure auditability and allow for reflexivity.

We admit that the research has limitations which should be openly acknowledged as part of the transparency process of a trustworthy study. The

sample size in both studies was small and likely to be unrepresentative of the population of all teachers. We were not seeking to achieve generalisability however and believe that our findings, tentative as they are, will resonate with many across the profession. The partial nature of the study in terms of perspective should also be acknowledged, with teachers' voices being the only lens through which we sought to explore digital education. The perspectives of parents and children would enhance studies of online participation, giving a richer picture of lockdown teaching and learning and the attendant joys and stresses.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Role shift and emotions in the new pedagogical space

As schools went into lockdown in March 2020, teachers prepared to move teaching and learning from the in-classroom contexts that had provided them with familiar experiences of working with children, to online teaching of which most of them had very little sustained previous experience. There were reports in the data of teachers feeling out of their depth, with many indicating that they were being positioned as learners and novices, rather than experts in the new third space. T2, a Head Teacher reported that 'we were literally making decisions on our feet' and T1, an experienced classroom teacher, admitted to feelings of stress rarely experienced in her career prior to lockdown:

I think was feeling overwhelmed by the technology.... I just didn't have the knowledge of how these things work. (T1)

T2 described some teachers not even having access to Wi-Fi and how she had to organise resources and hardware so that teaching could go ahead at very short notice. T3, a local authority officer, talked about the stress of having to organise training for staff at the same time as teachers were undertaking online teaching – a situation likened to rewiring a house while still living in it.

Although experienced in more traditional pedagogy, many teachers had little prior understanding of online teaching and their roles often became coloured by technical considerations. The recently qualified teachers, however, saw potential in shifting to digital spaces (G/L/H). Participant G felt this may be more difficult for established teachers and highlighted how they wanted books or manuals to support them with the technology.

There was also an awareness among participants that the corresponding role shift for parents was also causing difficulties. T6 noticed parents becoming increasingly frustrated at the complexity of their roles as parents and parent-teachers, with many also having to work from home at the same time. She commented on parents complaining to her of the demands being made on their family and working lives: 'parents are finding it very difficult and understandably they're taking their frustrations out on us'. At the same time, some schools were still looking to parents to supervise and ensure that work was completed, using

dedicated digital spaces as one-way communication encouraging parents to supervise their children:

Our school created a parent portal, and posted work here with a short description about what we wanted done (A)

The third spaces that opened up were fluid and dynamic transitional spaces. While they imply both technological and pedagogical transformations, they are also imbued with emotion, meaning that the different participants encounter their changed circumstances and changing roles through emotional responses that are tied up with feelings of power and powerlessness.

4.2 Shifts in practice

Teacher participants soon began to try to find solutions to the pedagogical challenges that arose in the new digital spaces. As a result of ‘greater empathy’ (T3) of parents’ circumstances at home, teachers began to make increasing use of asynchronous learning activities. As T4 said, ‘I have to consider the parents’ needs and what makes them feel secure’. She adapted the tasks she set to accommodate this but acknowledged that this was different to what she would have planned if the parents weren’t involved.

Teaching is best with interaction; I post up activities online which have to fit into family life (T4)

The issuing of individual tasks for independent pupil response became even more pervasive during lockdown 2 after schools had engaged with parents to get their views on the successes and failure of lockdown 1. Parents strongly supported those pedagogies which saw tasks being put up online by teachers in advance. T4 identified the approaches taken in her setting which centred around posting activities well in advance to meet parental demands:

That’s what the parents asked for, they said can we have it on a Sunday, so we can print off what we need in advance. It then doesn’t impact our homelife. (T4)

However, among the newer teachers, it appears interactions with home were strengthened. Examples included engaging with community hubs for the children of key workers where pupils from different schools interacted and using Google Classroom to share artwork with peers and parents. Most significantly was a shift away from just thinking of their own classes and trying to help wherever they could:

I’m not actually quite sure which classes I’m meant to be responsible for right now, we’re just all going for it (G)

Generally, teachers were fairly ambivalent about the rationale for changing their approaches. On the one hand, they were happy to act on parental feedback to make changes to their 2021 lockdown practices to facilitate less stressful home

circumstances, but on the other hand they were uneasy about the compromises that such activities involved in terms of their valued beliefs about effective teaching and learning. Third spaces may illustrate the intermingling of competing discourses, leading to the development of new knowledge, but here the conflicting approaches led more to anxieties about a return to traditional transmissive approaches.

4.3 Successes in the third space – fostering home funds of knowledge

Nevertheless, some parents, mainly reported by primary practitioners, did find time to work alongside their children in using their funds of knowledge from home to produce interesting and creative outcomes in response to the tasks that their teachers had set them. There were examples, almost exclusively in the 2020 lockdown, where children were able to meet the demands of the school's digital activities but very much on their own terms and using resources and experiences from their homes. Examples from the newer teachers included science experiments that could be done in the kitchen, design technology and music using household or virtual items. The results could be characterised as neither home learning nor school learning, but something in-between – a hybrid set of outcomes where children and their parents were more in control of what was being learned and highlighted in the videos they posted up in response to the teachers' challenges.

T2, reported on the third space facilitating more sympathetic experiences for some children with additional support needs. In the more conducive environment of the home, they were able to produce work in their own time, using their own familiar resources and materials and supported one-to-one very often by interested family adults.

Fusing home and school experiences meant that the boundaries between the two settings were relatively porous, with opportunities for learning flowing both ways simultaneously and children able to take up school tasks but shaped in ways that capitalised on their own cultural resources. Some of what children were capable of surprised teachers and made them re-evaluate the benefits of capitalising on home opportunities.

T6 felt that these new spaces online enabled her to see her pupils differently from in-school classroom life characterised by its busyness and frantic pace:

In nursery there would be constant interruptions, whereas with the videos you are really getting this great snapshot. (T6)

4.4 Technology as panacea?

A growing awareness of the limitations of the technologies available to teachers also led to pedagogical changes from those approaches favoured in normal in-class teaching. T5, a secondary school teacher, lamented the inability of Microsoft Teams to facilitate any kind of face-to-face discussions. It was felt that

asynchronous activities could not replicate the richness and spontaneity of interaction the teacher and learner would have in the classroom.

The shift to asynchronous teaching was also viewed as limiting, T4 was not convinced of the efficacy of this approach:

a pre-recorded lesson is completely different from the way I'd deliver a lesson in the classroom ... you don't have the dialogue... it's like going back to the chalk and talk (T4)

In these examples, there are tensions between the principles underlying the classroom practitioner's normal practices and the approaches that had to be taken due to the exigencies of the emergency remote context. In one case the teacher admitted to feelings of de-professionalisation:

relationships are at the heart of teaching. Being behind a screen with no opportunities for dialogue is not effective teaching and learning. This is not what I signed up to do. (T5)

Technology, moreover, opens up others' worlds for scrutiny in ways that are not possible where home and school are more separate. While some (both parents and teachers) were open to this more transparent way of operating and were sanguine about revealing aspects of their home lives, others admitted to being uncomfortable and under surveillance. A common feeling of teachers was 'being judged all the time' (T6), with parents having such easy access to children's work and the teachers' feedback.

4.5 Shifting power relations

Yet the new spaces created the possibilities for certain practitioners to become involved in ways they tended not to be able to do in normal in-school learning. Teachers confident with their technology skills came into their own during lockdown – even if these were inexperienced teachers in the early years of their career. Prior to lockdown the recently qualified teachers might have seen themselves as apprentices learning from more experienced colleagues. However, in the online learning domain they could carve out more agentic roles. T2 extolled the strengths of the 'new teachers who really stepped up'.

But perhaps the most significant shift in power relations was realised by T3 who, by listening to the voices of children and parents, saw the crucial role parents play in learning:

Parents have realised that a lot of learning does happen at home and they are the first educator. (T3)

This in turn led to T3 questioning the purposes of their work in school, challenging transmissive models of teaching and reimagining what effective learning might look like as schools go back after lockdown:

There is a realisation that the traditional confines of what learning was has been challenged ... it's maybe about our challenging our own understanding our own beliefs of what a child is. (T3)

It might have taken a global pandemic to foster this deep and felt awareness of the role of parents in children's learning, but it is something that T3 feels can be taken on to shape the future of education in ways that really have meaning for children and their communities:

In terms of following children's interests and seeing where we go from there and I think it's more of an opportunity if anything else that we are looking at our curriculum and we are looking at what we want to provide and what we want to do next. (T3)

Thus, we explored the data in the two studies to understand how teachers engaged learners using digital technologies and we conceptualised this emergency remote teaching as a third space. We found shifts in roles and emotions, and also shifts in practice. Participants spoke of successes in the third space and of fostering home funds of knowledge, but we question the idea of technology as a panacea and are cognisant of shifting power relations. We now discuss these findings before offering conclusions in terms of theory and practice and potential future avenues of research.

5 DISCUSSION

Our research highlights interesting new roles that opened up for teachers and parents as both parties wrestled with the complexities and practicalities of online learning and teaching. Teachers' growing awareness of the busyness and fraught nature of family life extended their thinking about planning to move from traditional considerations of individual children to those of the families themselves. This, in turn, involved more holistic decisions to be made about the what and how of the new platforms they were using to engage with this new focus on children-within-the family. There were glimpses of successful pupil achievements, mostly in the 2020 lockdown, where teachers saw what children were capable of when they were able to go beyond skill and drill work and engage positively with authentic contexts for learning, drawing on home resources and funds of knowledge by posting videos of themselves using technologies that they and their parents were comfortable using. This was neither typical home learning (self-directed and personalised) nor traditional schoolwork (transmissive and monologic); it inhabited an in-between space where the children were meeting the expectations of the school but more on their own terms (Gibson, 2000) and where their home culture could actually feature in that space (Potter and McDougall, 2017). In this way, while some parents were tasked with supervising or monitoring students to ensure they engaged with tasks, many parents were able to assume more central roles in the learning process, engaging as partners with their children and the school. This struck us as an interesting shift in power relations, with schools handing over power

to families, thus encouraging ‘a more egalitarian, dialectical relationship among people beyond the bounds of conventional hierarchical social structures’ (Zecca and Cotza, 2020, p.35).

Other more emancipatory roles were opened up too, for the empowerment of ‘low power actors’ (Lo and Diochon, 2019, p.3.) such as newly qualified teachers with competence in technology use, bearing out McDougall and Potter’s (2019) claims about third spaces requiring a flattening of hierarchies and a more porous idea of expertise (Potter and McDougall, 2017, p.83). As popular tools such as Microsoft Teams added new features such as breakout rooms in response to teachers’ demands during lockdowns in many countries, such expertise was less about knowing how to do something and more about being able to figure it out. New teachers were able to position themselves as experts, despite their lack of experience, by using the cultural capital of their technological skills in supporting colleagues and in facilitating learning for their classes, thus making purposeful use of the new context. For these educators, online liminal spaces were more ‘democratic, permissive and inclusive’ (Lo and Diochon, 2019, p.2), affording opportunities not so readily available in the traditional setting of the physical school.

Moreover, children with a record of specific needs, such as autism or Additional Support Needs, were often able to flourish in the quiet and orderly world of the online context (see also Pozas et al., 2021), where they could position themselves as successful students. There was evidence in the data that asynchronous learning opportunities favoured these children by enabling them to take time to post up considered responses using materials that they were familiar with in their own home environment and then to get personalised feedback one-to-one rather than in the public domain. In this way, new possibilities for successful identities were available in ways that had often been denied them in the busy classroom environment, bearing out claims around the inclusiveness of third spaces. In the first two spaces of home and school there is often a power imbalance (Yahya and Wood, 2017) where such children are often subjected to the rules and decisions of adults. In the third space, however, learners can have more agency to shape their learning trajectory in more self-directed ways, as a result gaining access to a broader range of identities, including those as successful learners.

However, there were unresolved tensions in the third space of online learning in lockdown, highlighting the contested, negotiated, and political nature of third spaces (Potter and McDougall, 2017, p.83). While making positive responses to parental requests for more routine and structure in the 2021 lockdown, teachers tailored their online activities to enable parents to manage the multiple demands on their time and resources at home (Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks, 2021). However, in doing so, the teachers-initiated practices that they felt ambivalent about in terms of their underlying principles and core values (Kim and Asbury, 2020). The new context for learning, they felt, was a colonisation of spaces normally inhabited by teachers themselves, according to their valued purposes, with parents asking for worksheets and PowerPoints with voiceovers that explained the tasks to

be undertaken or tasks which resonated more with the kinds of pedagogy parents had experienced when they were at school. Although teachers were happy to be seen responding so positively to parental requests, this did come at a cost and many teachers were uncomfortable about the return to traditional, transmissive practices that they would never have subscribed to in normal classroom activity. A further cost accrued in terms of workload (Pozas, Letzel and Schneider, 2021) and teachers reported increases in the amount of time required to plan, post and assess pupils' work in the new digital space, although some did find new efficiencies in using online forms and automated marking. There were concerns about burn out and anxieties about wellbeing, given the efforts they felt they had to exert in order to facilitate learning to the high standards they would normally apply to classroom learning. Even those teachers who felt able to 'get ahead' were regularly working 12-hour days and not taking weekends or holidays, often feeling guilty whenever they were not working.

Third spaces may be liberating (Hawley et al., 2019) and sites of 'radical openness' (Klygite et al., 2019) but they can also expose participants to 'greater ambiguity and a diminished sense of security' (ibid, 2019, p.2). Third spaces are thus risky places 'on the edge' (Soja and Hooper, 1993) where comfort zones are transgressed, and uncertainty ensues. This may be exacerbated for new teachers who find themselves on precarious employment contracts. There was mutuality in risk-taking (Klygite et al., 2019) in our study, with parents risking the opening up of their family circumstances to scrutiny via their posted videos. They also risked damage to self-esteem if mistakes were made in the public view of teacher scrutiny when helping their children in loco magister (Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks, 2021). Teachers too were very aware of the surveillance that they were being constantly subjected to as they worked online with children who were in much closer proximity to parents than they would have been in the physical classroom. Biesta (2013) has encouraged educators to be open-minded in embracing the indeterminate potential of school life, instead of eschewing the frustrations and lack of certainty that are implicit in educational encounters. Building on this work, we suggest that there would be merit in exploring what Lauer (2009) has termed a third self, comfortable in the confrontation of uncertain third spaces, and investigating what it might mean to be capable of working with flux and fluidity (Hawley et al., 2019). This will never be easy for teachers whose sense of identity may be tied to discourses of control and authority.

Our research also highlighted the intensely emotional characteristics of working in online third spaces. where 'the traditional time and space configurations of formal education are no longer critically important' (Schuck, Kearney and Burden, 2017, p.126). Third spaces are experienced emotionally as much as they are cognitively and socially, and they are certainly not neutral zones of transformation. In this contested arena characterised by disruption and destabilisation (Jordan and Elsdon-Clifton, 2014), teaching becomes an inextricably emotional practice (Hargreaves, 2001) grounded in human interaction

and embedded in relations of power and status (Lasky, 2000). Experienced classroom practitioners, through being positioned as learners or novices in the new digital space in which they had few prior experiences (Marshall, Shannon and Love, 2020), felt heightened and more acute emotional responses than were expressed by newer teachers. Feelings of anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and stress were not uncommon as they made their first tentative steps in managing the new technological challenges. Nor was it uncommon for technical hitches beyond their control to disrupt teaching and dent their fragile identities in the new space (Yildirim and Elverici, 2021), leading to further emotional uncertainties.

Social interactions that draw people together are grounded in emotionality (Zembylas, 2010) and online interactions with parents and children are similarly infused with emotions. Feelings of constantly being scrutinised and evaluated led to some teachers closing down on third space opportunities for harnessing their own home funds of knowledge in engaging children in interesting contexts for learning. When other teachers experienced the digital space as less threatening, even opening up new opportunities for them to monitor their learners or generate engagement data from their interactions, they were able to open up to new possibilities for learning. This included the confident technology-skilled newly qualified teachers. Yet, positive emotions such as pleasure and happiness were also evoked particularly when pupils' achievements demonstrated the effectiveness of new planning approaches aimed at the family unit and which facilitated home funds of knowledge to be utilised in completing school tasks at a high level but with the inclusion of home cultural resources. Teachers enjoyed seeing what their children were capable of, especially when their achievements surprised them, challenging their preconceptions.

6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of our research was to explore the consequences of emergency remote teaching by examining the digital pedagogies of teachers in Scotland during two periods of COVID-19 lockdown and the consequent mass closure of school buildings to all but the children of key workers. We decided to use the lens of the third space as a frame for understanding digital experiences due to the appropriateness of its emphasis on in-betweenness and on hybridity. We recognised that moving learning into homes and appropriating homes for schooling purposes would lead to a blurring of the edges between two contexts that have traditionally been considered as separate (Pahl and Kelly, 2005). We wanted to examine claims around third spaces as zones of transformation (Gutierrez, 2008), inviting new possibilities for teaching and learning through the challenging of existing assumptions and practices.

While we realised that third spaces were contested and experienced, we had not anticipated the extent to which digital spaces were experienced as such intensely emotional and relational phenomena. Emotions of pleasure and satisfaction for

teachers were embedded in the achievements of their pupils, especially when these reflected the new regimes of planning that had made the family a more prominent concern. Negative emotions of anxiety, stress, and fear were also in evidence, highlighting the vulnerability and fragility of some teachers' new roles, positioned more as novices than experts in a world dominated by technology and open to the vagaries of technological unreliability. Relationships were also wedded to the complexities of the challenges that people were living under and the examples of conflict between parents and teachers extant in the data were functions of the pressures and frustrations that were incrementally building in lockdown as teachers and parents alike strove to maintain continuity in school and family life.

The issue of third spaces and the emotions has been very little researched and while our research breaks new ground in bringing together these two otherwise independently well-researched areas, future work should be undertaken to explore the connections in greater depth, particularly in relation to the opening up and closing down of third spaces as a consequence of participants' emotional responses in the relationships which become significant online.

Nor did we realise, at the outset of the project, that the new digital pedagogical approaches to emerge in the online spaces between home and school would come at a cost to teachers' sense of moral purpose (Kim and Asbury, 2020) and to their working conditions. The colonisation of teaching spaces by parents (Johnston, Foy, Mulligan and Shanks, 2021) was unexpected in that, in terms of home-school partnership links, there has traditionally been an imbalance in power relations, with the movement of communication between the two contexts being one way (Marsh, 2003) and with parents being recruited to operationalise the aims of the school (Grant, 2011). Teachers' responses to parental requests for more independent activities for their children in order to alleviate the pressures on their hectic home lives led to the posting of work well in advance of completion deadlines. It also led to the utilisation of the PowerPoint with voiceover instructions, enabling pupils to manage activities autonomously and with little disruption to busy parents' lives. In terms of teachers' values, there was considerable unease in the return to transmissive approaches (Allen, Rowan and Singh, 2020), with interaction being the main loss (Zhao, 2020). In terms of workload, too, teachers reported a massive increase in the time spent planning, posting and responding to children's work (Marshall, Shannon and Love, 2020), leading to claims of stress and deteriorating well-being (Kim and Asbury, 2020), although for newer teachers such excessive workloads were worryingly normal and shifting to homeworking offered some relief.

We hope that those charged with the responsibility for creating and managing future digital spaces will work to maintain a balance between the competing claims of participants' different desires and aspirations. The unresolved tension in our research was between the drive of parents to maintain an orderly and relatively calm family home and the principles of teachers who valued interaction. Further

exploration of the power relations inherent in digital third spaces should thus be a focus of future research work.

This paper also points to the importance of two-way communication between home and school (Grant, 2011) in forging genuinely equal partnerships and avoiding either colonisation of school pedagogies by home exigencies or the imposition of school discourses on the cultures of families. We would encourage schools to engage parents and families in dialogue around the value of their home funds of knowledge to support children's sense of themselves as successful learners in contexts that motivate them and give personal value. Our research suggests that the digital environment is an ideal space to do this kind of work, enabling children to use home resources, materials, and experiences in the service of technology-infused outcomes, ultimately helping them to meet school curricular objectives but also reflecting their own valued cultural resources and aims (Gibson, 2000).

Our work, in addition, illuminates the importance of educating prospective teachers to be comfortable with uncertainty (Lauer, 2009) and to accept that inhabiting new spaces may be liberating on the one hand, but that they may also be ambiguous and risky, leading to a decrease in psychological security (Hawley et al., 2019). Further research could therefore build on our work by exploring the support mechanisms that might enable risk-taking in third spaces where indeterminacy is a key element. Questions of identity inevitably come into play (Kim and Asbury, 2020) where teachers, used to being positioned as experts, experience a subverting of traditional roles and responsibilities. Future work might investigate the nature of teacher agency (*ibid*) in the construction and maintenance of the valued identities of the third self in situations of uncertainty online, especially with regards to the ways teachers may create their own digital spaces to experiment with or seek feedback on new ideas.

Ultimately, though, a significant challenge for all with an interest in or responsibility for school education, is to consider the implications of what has been learned during the period of lockdown in shaping future educative experiences for all our young learners (Bubb and Jones, 2020). How can educators capitalise on what has been learned about the value of digital third spaces in connecting children more closely to the purposes of schooling but in ways that really meet their needs and interests? How can teachers activate their third selves in 'thirthing' (Lauer, 2009), that is engaging in the creative restructuring of messiness and ambiguity in support of new possibilities for children's learning? Dewey (1899) remarked on the waste that accrued when school learning was divorced from the everyday life activities of learners, and we challenge future researchers and practitioners to explore ways of energising third spaces using digital technologies to bring home and school funds of knowledge together in closer synchrony.

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