



Title Transforming Self As Reflective Teacher:
Journey Of Being And Becoming A
Teacher And Teacher Educator

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**Transforming Self As Reflective Teacher:
Journey Of Being And Becoming A Teacher
And Teacher Educator**

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Abstract

The nature of reflective practice in teaching and its development is the focus of this research. The research approach is reflexive narrative through systematic self-inquiry using Johns (2010) six dialogical movements. This methodology is new to researching the practice of teaching. The research process involved constructing stories of practice experiences, culminating in the construction of the reflexive narrative charting the entire journey over three years and four months. Creating the stories involved in-depth reflection using the disciplined practice of journaling. Reflection was deepened using reflective models, and dialogue with a range of literature sources also supported the creation of the stories. Central to the study was guided reflection through regular engagement with an established inquiry group, which provided a high level of challenge and support for the research. The reflexive narrative was constructed from 25 stories of practice experience, which represents the journey of being and becoming a reflective teacher and teacher educator.

The research presents aspects of the lived experience of teaching which includes foregrounding some of the complexity of classroom practice. The research demonstrates how engaging in in-depth reflective process can transform moment to moment practice within the fast-paced crowded classroom experience. This is achieved through gaining an in-depth understanding of self as a teacher, and of the education system and its policies and practices.

As a result of in-depth reflection on practice, aspects of teaching which usually remain hidden are exposed. The research identifies how emotion impacts on teaching in some depth. An understanding of one's emotional self in practice, and one's personality preferences are essential in developing desirable practice. The research makes a contribution to knowledge about narrative research in educational practices. The methodology demonstrates a valuable approach to developing teaching practice, and enabling a teacher to identify issues which impact on practice but which have been hidden. Teachers also gain an understanding of the fear and constraints which limit desirable practice and enable one to find ways to work that are liberating rather than limiting.

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Abbreviations

ITE Initial Teacher Training

ITT Initial Teacher Education

LEA Local Education Authority

NSS National Student Survey

QTS Qualified Teacher Status

SEN Special Educational Needs

SoE School of Education

TDA Training and Development Agency

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Introduction

The aims of the research are to explore the nature of reflective practice in teaching, and how it can be developed through reflexive narrative inquiry. Research questions consider what does it mean to be a teacher and how can one become more effective in practice through the process of reflection. The study involves researching self within the practice environment and the purpose of this chapter is to position self in relation to the research. My current practice is as a teacher in higher education, with a previous first career in school teaching. Reflexivity is central to the study, and Etherington considers the importance of background influences in reflexive research, and has identified questions which are desirable for the researcher to pose:

- How has my personal history led to my interest in this topic?
- What are my presuppositions about knowledge in this field?
- How am I positioned in relation to this knowledge?
- How does my gender/social class/ethnicity/culture influence my positioning in relation to this topic/my informants?

(Etherington 2004:11)

In considering these questions throughout the research, it is important to begin by considering some of the influences which have shaped my life and work. Heidegger's discussion of Being and Time is valuable to consider in positioning self (Dreyfus 1991). This was an exploration of what it means to be a human being experiencing existence through time. Heidegger's discussion focused on what it means to be a human being gaining an understanding of the nature of that 'being' in the world (Heidegger 1962). I use Heidegger's fore-structure of being as a theoretical starting base for my journey of being and becoming. Heidegger's fore-structure sets out how one exists in the world through fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception (Dreyfus 1991). Fore-having examines background and influences which shape one's meaning making when engaging with the world. These experiences result in taken for granted beliefs and opinions. Fore-sight concerns planning to proceed in the world, within one's current experience of being. Fore-conception focuses on one's expectations, preconceptions and predictions in relation to the future.

1.1: Fore-having

Fore-having refers to my background and how I have been shaped by life experiences and influences, which have made me the person and teacher that I have become. This process of recollection involves memories which are cognitive representations of my past as I interpret them currently. Fivush & Bauer (2010) identify how memories presented might not be accurate representations of events, and that these representations might change over time. In the recollection of my past I must be aware of these limitations, however, the important consideration is the meaning that I currently give to events in my past, and the impact that they have on my present.

My background

My parents came to Britain from Nigeria in the 1950s as students. At this time in post-second-world-war Britain, the middle-classes from African colonies like Nigeria were invited to come and study in order to better themselves through education, and then return home to support the development of their countries. My parents came to Britain to gain qualifications, with the intention of returning home after a few years. Having a good education and gaining qualifications was always considered of the utmost importance. It was expected that I would value my educational opportunities, study hard and achieve well academically. However, it was never my parents' intention that I would grow up and live my life in Britain, I was intended for Nigeria. Despite my parents' intentions, circumstances resulted in me growing up and living my adult life in Britain. Ethnicity and gender are two of the aspects of self that Etherington (2004) identified as important to consider in relation to reflexivity in research. In British society I am seen as a black woman, and I need to reflect on what this means for me, where I position myself and the implications for this research.

Olesen (2011) and Dillard & Okpalaoka (2011) discuss the research and theories of feminism that have arisen, and the challenges and arguments which have been presented. Olesen discusses the dynamic nature of feminist research practices, as women in different places and situations seek to work with multiple identities arising from historical and social contexts. There are differing theories arising from women's experiences, which include class, race, sexuality, culture and dis/ability. Olesen explains how intersectional research attempts to address complex feminist issues through dynamic centring, which involves focusing on two or more aspects and analysing how they relate and construct each other. This intersectionality seems relevant for me to consider in relation to my history, social and cultural contexts, with influences growing up including Nigerian Yoruba, British urban

working-class and British rural middle-class cultures. Dillard & Okpalaoka (2011) discuss particular issues of Black feminism. It was identified that White feminism that arose in the USA did not address the experience of the African American women. Attempts have been made to find a common epistemology of Black feminism; however, significant differences were identified between the experiences of oppression of African women, as compared with African American women. Okpalaoka raises some issues concerning African women's experiences which I can relate to my own life experience. African women have traditionally had economic independence through having their own businesses. The notion of the woman being dependent on the man arose through colonisation, and the attitudes of European men (Dillard & Okpalaoka 2011). I recognise this issue as one that has had an impact on my life. The women in my Nigerian family always worked. In Nigeria the women of my grandmothers' generation had their own businesses and therefore financial independence from their husbands. From my mother's generation the emphasis was on gaining an education, which would ultimately lead to improvement of economic prosperity. In my family girls and boys were expected to achieve well academically. This was a rather different experience to that of some of my school friends, who chose to take needlework and cookery as options because they believed these skills would be more useful to them as adults. At the time I did not understand why these girls limited themselves in terms of education. I had been led to believe that striving for high attainment was important for all young people.

In addition to aspects of European colonialism, Okpalaoka identifies oppressive cultural practices which face women in African societies as the other significant concern for African feminist researchers (Dillard & Okpalaoka 2011). I can relate this concern to my own experience of life, as I experienced both positive and negative aspects of Nigerian culture. Growing up and living out my life in Britain has presented me with additional challenges. Gillborn (2008) in his discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) raises the issue that there is no biological basis for the notion of 'race'. The term 'race' is socially constructed, and what this means changes over time. Gillborn suggests that the use of the term 'race' in the language of everyday experience means that racism must exist. CRT presents the argument that racism exists in society and manifests in subtle ways. This has been the reality of my experience of life and work, and is one of the many themes to arise from time to time in my reflexive narrative. However, throughout my life I have always sought to exert my position as an individual above all else. It has always been important for me to try to make others

aware that Black people (as well as others) are not a homogenous group. Whilst I might use ethnicity, and gender in positioning self, who I am is also determined by the complex and unique experiences I have had during my lifetime. This acknowledgement of self as individual is also important to consider as a teacher, since I seek to support the learning and development of classes of students and children which are composed of many individual human beings; an issue that I feel policy makers do not consider in appropriate depth.

Childhood experiences

As a small child I wanted to be a nurse when I grew up. My mother was a nurse and midwife, and I liked to be around her when friends and relatives came to her for advice about their babies. I liked to accompany my mother on visits to the baby clinic with my brother. I liked to watch the other mothers and nurses as they tended to the babies. I also enjoyed the visits of the health visitor. I had a dressing-up nurse's uniform which I loved to wear for play as I tended to my brother who was my play patient. I recall once at school completing a piece of writing about the health visitor and being praised by my teacher for how good it was; she chose to read it out to the entire class. I went home and proudly told my mother about this. However, my interest in nursing was shattered early on. Nigerian families were ambitious for their children. As a little girl of five I was told that I must not say that I wanted to be a nurse. I must be a teacher of big people. What they meant by this was an academic, but I did not understand the meaning of this at the time. I recall my father saying to me "nurses are small people but teachers are big people". At five years-old I did not understand what that meant, but I was sad that they did not consider nurses to be worthy, since to me there was nothing greater.

When I was ten I was given a book about the life of Marie Curie as a present. I found the story very interesting and from then on I wanted to be a scientist. I became very interested in science, and it was to be my favourite subject when I went to secondary school. I remained interested in things medical, and often read my mother's nursing books, which led the family to try to persuade me to become a doctor. This held no interest for me. By this time I had an idea about being a research scientist like Marie Curie, and discovering something of value to humanity. I had a particular love for astronomy. I recall how excited I was when my parents took me to see a presentation at the London Planetarium for the first time. From then on I would regularly go out into the garden and look up at the night sky. I loved to read books on astronomy and look at the pictures, and try to imagine what it is like out in Space.

My parents had both died by the time I was sixteen, and I believe that this set my life on a different course than had been expected. I did go to university on leaving school at eighteen. By this time I did not know what I wanted to do with my life, and I chose a combined studies degree, with geology as my main subject with archaeology and chemistry. Chemistry had been my favourite subject at school, but I did not wish to take it as a straight single subject degree. It became clear to me very soon that I did not have research scientist potential. I felt that I was stupid because I struggled to understand significant parts of the chemistry course. Fellow students claimed that they did understand, which led me to form the conclusion that I was lacking. In my third year I added astronomy as a minor subject for one year, and loved the course. Although as a child I had been very interested in astronomy I had been discouraged from considering it as a course of study because I was told that “We don’t do this in Nigeria”.

During my second year as an undergraduate I realised that I wanted to work with people in my career. My first thought was that I wanted to be a midwife; I returned to that interest from childhood. I did not have a desire to do general nursing, and discovered a two-year midwifery only course that I could do. However, there were few places in the country which offered this course. Circumstances were such that I needed to be in London after my graduation, and I realised that I would not be able to take this two year midwifery course, since there were none offered in and around London. I then considered what else I could do that involved working with people. Going into teaching had been very popular among my school mates, and the majority of the girls who had taken A levels went on to teacher training courses. Several of my undergraduate peers had come onto their degree programmes with the intention of taking a PGCE afterwards in order to teach their subject in secondary schools. I had never had any thought of becoming a teacher. Whenever I thought of teaching it had always been in secondary schools, and this had no interest for me. Now, as I began my final year as an undergraduate I realised something else about myself; that I wanted to explore and search for my creativity. I thought of the primary school and the creative possibilities. The interest grew and resulted in applying to take a PGCE in primary education, with a junior age focus.

Teaching

I qualified as a teacher at a difficult time in that there was a shortage of jobs in primary schools. After qualifying with my PGCE I first worked in a day nursery with children aged two to five. This was a very interesting experience since I had never previously considered

working with children of this age. This turned out to be a valuable learning experience in that I gained an understanding about the learning and development of such young children. I also discovered that as a qualified teacher I had much to contribute in this nursery setting, since the knowledge and skills gained from my PGCE could be applied and developed. Parents gave me very positive feedback on what their children were gaining from the activities which I introduced into the setting.

After two years I went to work as a supply teacher in primary schools. I was able to obtain some placements which lasted several months, but finding a permanent post was still challenging. Eventually an unexpected turn of events led me to being offered a permanent post to teach science and maths in a secondary school. This was a dilemma. I had never really desired to teach in a secondary school, but this seemed the only way that I would be able to complete my probationary year as a teacher. I remained for five years, giving up the maths after two years but remaining with science.

The aspect of secondary school teaching that I enjoyed the most was in being a form tutor. I was able to develop a special bond with this group of pupils; they were 'my children'. I was teaching in a split site school where form tutors remained with their class for the years that they were in the lower or upper school. As a lower school form tutor I felt very sad to give up my first class, however, by the time my second class were ready to move on I had come to understand the 'need to be needed' that many teachers experience in their professional role.

After this secondary school experience I decided to give up teaching, and worked for three years for a large children's charity. There came a time when I wanted a change. In 1989 there was an acute shortage of primary teachers to fill all of the posts available in London. This was the complete opposite of the situation I had found myself in when I qualified with my PGCE. I was easily able to obtain a permanent position in a primary school for that September. This was the year when the National Curriculum was being implemented in schools for the first time, beginning with the three core subjects of English, maths and science. For me this was a very good time to come back into primary teaching. As a scientist I was unusual as a primary teacher. Science had never been taught in depth in primary schools before. I had the knowledge and experience of secondary science teaching which I could adapt for the primary school.

This was a good time professionally. I loved teaching in a primary school, and felt fulfilled. It seemed that my original decision to enter primary teaching turned out to have been a sound sense of where I should be. I felt that the work enabled me to use all aspects of my being in a way that secondary teaching never did. I was able to use my creativity in planning cross-curricular learning experiences for children. I did however, really love teaching primary science, since I had the freedom to be creative with it and link it with art and PE and other areas of the curriculum.

I am someone who desires the opportunity for continuous change and development. I do not like to stand still in my work. Though not really ambitious, I always like to move on and take advantage of new opportunities. Eventually I made a bid to take another break from teaching. It soon became evident that a more fundamental change was needed. I considered some further study in order to make a career change. It seemed that teaching would not let me go. I had two years in temporary teaching posts followed by a year of working with a different children's charity in their school inclusion project. It was through this work that I had the experience of running INSET sessions with teachers in schools, and sessions for project workers who worked in schools. I enjoyed my work with adults, and considered that with several years of successful classroom teaching experience I might have much to contribute to new teachers. This resulted in applying for and gaining a post in higher education, at first to teach science on primary Initial Teacher Education programmes. An interesting piece of irony is that higher education was what my father had in mind for me at five years old, although I do not think that he would have thought that my discipline would be education.

Significant personal issues

On a personal and emotional level my early life had been traumatic and challenging. I entered adult life with a desire to find healing and wholeness as a result of past trauma. I decided to undergo psychotherapy in an effort to really make a difference and change my life for the better. This took place during my time of teaching in secondary school and the first children's charity. By the time I came back into primary teaching, I had gained a new sense of myself. As the years went by I realised that the process of personal development that began during the years of psychotherapy, was continuing, since I could look back over the years and compare progress before and after the therapy. I recognised that developing myself through change and transformation was very much part of how I desired to live my

life. This aspect of my past is important to consider in relation to my motivation to engage in self-inquiry research.

In 1997 I underwent a Vision Quest in the Native American tradition. This involved a period of retreat with others in preparation for going off alone into the 'wilderness'. The Vision Quest was three nights and three days alone sitting in a sacred circle in nature that I had created for myself. I had water but no food during that time. It was a time of silence, stillness and simply 'being' rather than 'doing'. The Native American tradition was that people went on Vision Quest at significant times in their lives in order to seek a 'vision' or answers and insights into life's issues. I found my Vision Quest to be the most powerfully life-transforming experience that I had ever had. When I emerged from my sacred circle, life past, present and future would never seem the same again.

A Quest of any kind is a heroic journey. It is a rite of passage that carries you to an inward place of silence and majesty and encourages you to live life more courageously and genuinely. (Linn 1997:4)

During that time of stillness, silence and solitude it felt as if I was surrounded by a mirror on 360 degrees, so that everywhere I looked self was reflected back, there was no escape. I had expected to find the time of Vision Quest to be painful and uncomfortable, but instead I found it to be a time of contentment and joy. My 'vision' involved coming to understand all that I had gained through having developed myself over the years. The implications of this were profound, and significantly changed my sense of self and how I would proceed in the world. I emerged with a new basic positive outlook on life. Less than two years after the Vision Quest I applied for a post in higher education, never having considered this previously, and was surprised to be accepted for the post. I believe that this came about as a direct result of transforming self as a result of the Vision Quest experience.

1.2: Fore-sight

Fore-sight concerns my understanding of issues relating to self and current practice as I plan for doctoral study. In my career I have taught learners at all stages from Early Years up to Masters (apart from A level). As a teacher in school I developed confidence in my ability to be a 'good', successful and effective teacher. This confidence came from different sources of feedback. I could demonstrate how my children were making progress in their learning and development through examples of their work and how they applied their knowledge,

understanding and skills. I knew I was successful from the responses of the children; through their open excitement and engagement in their learning experiences. Children actually said that they liked school and being in my class. I had feedback from the parents on the conversations that they had with their children about what was happening in school. I also had feedback from colleagues who observed my classroom practices. I even had very positive feedback from Ofsted¹ inspectors. I had been described by colleagues in secondary and primary schools as ‘an exceptional teacher’. I believed that I had much to contribute to the learning and development of the next generation of teachers. I came into higher education, and discovered that being a ‘good’, successful and effective classroom teacher does not necessarily translate into a ‘good’, successful and effective teacher educator. This is a theme which is explored in the research discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

The reflective teacher

When I came into higher education I became aware of the notion of reflective practice. I was required to take a course on Learning and Teaching in higher education. The idea of reflective practice had not been raised or discussed during my PGCE, and it was not an expression I had heard used in my practice as a teacher, however, through studying on this course I became aware that reflective practice was what I did as a teacher. I began my first professional reflective journal during studying for this course.

I recalled the nature of reflection in my practice as a school teacher. At 3.30pm each day after the children had gone home I would take some time to sit, think and mull over the events of the day. Then I would mark children’s work and think about what I needed to plan for tomorrow based on today’s outcomes. I recognised that reflection had always been part of my practice as a teacher, and this continued with my work in higher education. I heard my colleagues speaking of reflection and how we could support our students in developing this. Some colleagues discussed how they found that those students who failed school placement tended to have difficulty with reflecting effectively. This led me to consider how students can be best supported in developing as reflective practitioners. I was an external examiner for a PGCE programme which, in my view supported students well in reflecting on their school experience. I considered this to be a real strength of the programme. I was aware that students were well supported with some simple questions to prompt reflection. They also were able to have reflective conversations with tutors. I

¹ Office for Standards in Education inspectors

decided to focus on a piece of research on supporting students in developing reflection for my MA research project. As the programme leader for primary PGCE I was able to develop the course to include reflective practice seminars as spaces for reflection for students.

I had for some years considered the nature of what it is that teachers *do* in practice. I recall an acquaintance asking me this once. I paused and thought about it for a moment then I said “I assess, I am constantly assessing and responding”. I was aware that no one had ever asked me the question before, or that I had ever thought of trying to articulate what it is that I do from moment to moment in practice. As I begin my research journey of transformation a number of questions come to mind that I seek to explore:

- What is it that a teacher does from moment to moment in practice?
- How might I become a ‘good’ teacher educator?
- How does one meet the needs of adult learners effectively?
- How does one support the development of student teachers effectively?

1.3: Fore-conception

Fore-conception concerns the expectations I have for the study as I begin the research journey. Expectations are influenced by my personal and professional history, including my beliefs, opinions and assumptions. Reflective practice is central to the study and I am influenced by the ideas and experiences of past study. I found the work of Schön particularly influential in my previous MA studies (Schön 1983; 1987). It seemed to me that education policy makers were attempting to position teaching within Technical Rationality. I have been interested in Schön’s idea of Professional Artistry in practice, and seek to explore what this might mean for teaching. There is much discussed in the literature about the complex nature of teaching, and it is often difficult to articulate what a teacher does in practice (Loughran 2006, Berry 2008). Through this research I expect to find ways to identify and articulate some of this complexity of practice, since I believe that this is of upmost importance to a teacher educator. I seek to understand myself as a teacher, and be able to articulate and support the development of beginning teachers, and practicing teachers who might wish to inquire into their own practice. I recognise that learning and teaching go hand in hand. As a teacher I am always a learner; and as a teacher I learn from my learners.

My Vision of Practice

This study forms part of my ongoing life journey of being and becoming the person that I am and desire to be. It is difficult at this stage to articulate my vision of practice. I believe in the value of education in enabling people in life. I like to consider life as providing unlimited possibilities. This means being open to the unpredictable, the unfamiliar and unexpected in order to develop and grow as a whole person. I would like my learners to be able to make the most of opportunities to develop and grow. John Keats' idea of *Negative Capability* resonates with me, '*...that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without the irritable reaching after fact and reason*' (Colvin ed. 1925:48). In relation to human achievement Keats had the view that beauty arises from this state of uncertainty and mystery. I believe that learning and teaching could unfold in this way.

I conclude by returning to Etherington's questions for the reflexive researcher. I have identified the significant life experiences which I feel have an essential influence and impact on my approach to the study. I embark on this new journey of being and becoming as the next stage on my life journey. I draw upon the personal attributes which have been shaped by my life experiences. I believe that this journey of being and becoming builds upon the process which developed through my years of psychotherapy, and the Vision Quest experience. I have the expectation that I will be transformed through the journey, as I was transformed by those past experiences.

1.4: Thesis overview

In chapter 2 I discuss how I went about constructing the reflexive narrative, including the methodological influences on the research. In chapter 3 I present the reflexive narrative which is constructed from representations of episodes from my practice experiences, including discussion of the insights gained. Chapter 4 is concerned with a more in-depth interpretation through analysis of the insights gained from the reflexive narrative. Chapter 5 concludes with a reflection on the research process, and a discussion of the contribution to knowledge gained from the research.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTING THE NARRATIVE

Introduction

The approach to research is reflexive narrative. In this chapter I explain and discuss the nature of reflexive narrative and its appropriateness for self-inquiry research. I discuss the stages of systematic self-inquiry, including how I constructed the reflexive narrative which is presented in chapter 3. I conclude the chapter with a discussion in which I position my study within the wider field of approaches to research.

2.1: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is an approach to research which seeks to gain understanding of the human experience. Denzin & Lincoln (2002) discuss how many involved with qualitative research would argue that not only is it impossible to separate the researcher from the research, but that the only research possible is our own experience. This view might present a valuable argument in favour of researching lived experience through a 'personal lens'. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue for narrative inquiry as an approach to research in the social sciences. Since education is part of human experience they view the narrative approach as being most appropriate for research into it and gaining an understanding of aspects of it. These are reasons given to argue for narrative as a most appropriate way to represent the experience of a teacher or learner. Clandinin and Connelly consider that life is lived as narrative, and so narrative is the most appropriate way to study it. As a result narrative is both the methodology and the phenomenon being studied.

What is narrative?

Reissman (2008) discusses the meaning of the word narrative and how it is understood. Narrative and story are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing, or story might relate to one whole narrative possibly within a series. Reissman suggests that a narrative is a sequence of events which are selected, linked and evaluated. Polkinghorne (1988) suggested that narrative gives meaning to human events in an ordered way. Polkinghorne made a distinction between narrative and chronicle in representing events. A chronicle simply lists events; a narrative has a 'plot' which links the events to make up a story. The plot is woven throughout the narrative so that each individual event can be understood in relation to the entire story. A plot can be complex and composed of a number of subplots. Polkinghorne stated that a plot cannot be imposed but arises from significant themes emerging through the linking of events.

In this self-inquiry study, my entire journey will be presented as a reflexive narrative, which will include smaller narratives of experiences which make up the journey. I will use the word 'story' to describe these smaller narratives. The plot that emerged from my study concerns my 'being' and 'doing' as a teacher. The insights gained through the study resulted in significant themes emerging from the plot. Themes include the place of emotion in teaching; the complexity of classroom experience; and the nature of reflective teaching.

Types of narrative

Moon (2010) discusses her framework for identifying different types of narrative which she describes as 'story', which I summarise as follows:

- Personal story: based on description or reflection of personal experience.
- Known story in a communal setting: stories told among people who share experiences such as working within a profession.
- Non-fiction: these are not personally known but are taken to be true.
- Fiction and fantasy: stories that the listener might not be sure are true; however, they may contain elements of the presenter's experiences that have been re-imagined. The listener reinterprets the story based on her or his own experiences.

(Moon 2010:15)

Moon discusses how one person's 'personal story' becomes 'known story' to others familiar with the storyteller, and 'non-fiction' to people not personally known by the storyteller. Moon goes on to consider that personal story, known story and non-fiction can become fiction when a receiver's imagination is taken into account. This framework for narrative is interesting to consider in relation to my self-inquiry study. I need to be aware that my personal story will be received by others in a different form from my experiencing of it. However, although I might desire my stories to be received as 'known', the intention is that my stories will inspire resonance, and this is possible if the receiver also experiences them as 'non-fiction' and 'fiction'. An example of this might be presented in Story 8 from the chapter 3, entitled *Becoming Visible*. A reader who is unfamiliar with the context might consider the story to be fiction based on the way it is written, and possibly non-fiction if they are familiar with university teaching. The story might resonate with a colleague who is familiar with the specific context, in which case the story might be considered to be known. However my intention is to represent a personal story of my professional experience.

I can identify two ways in which personal story might be understood. Moon's focus is on the telling of one's own story, such as in journal writing or blogs. Another type of personal narrative is the life story, which might be autobiographical and presented by self, or it might be presented by another, such as arising from an interview. Goodson (2012) identifies different approaches that individuals take to presenting their life stories. Some take a descriptive approach which appears to be passive and accepting of lived experience. Others might take an 'elaborative' approach, which focuses on evaluation and analysis. I relate Goodson's notion of focused elaboration to the reflective nature of my study. The importance of evaluation and analysis is the move towards action. Goodson also describes personal story as 'personal history', since the narratives that people present are historically and culturally situated. He gives an example from education which relates to my experience of inquiry. Goodson discusses how teachers' narratives are currently concerned with their experiences in a culture where their practice is directed and regulated by the government. Teachers' narratives of thirty or forty years ago presented their experience of professional autonomy. Historical and cultural contexts are important to consider in relation to my narrative. Goodson's work is based on the representation of teachers' narratives gained through analysing interview data. My narrative is autobiographical and the links with auto-ethnography should be considered.

Ellis & Bochner (1996) support the view that researchers cannot separate themselves from the language used to communicate the research. They argue that narrative concerns communication through its representation of experience. Auto-ethnography is a way to communicate one person's experience of the world and inspire thinking and reflection in others. This approach to research enables people to gain an understanding of another point of view. Auto-ethnography must therefore be a representation of the author's subjective experience, and will stimulate a subjective response from the reader. I can relate this idea to Moon's (2010) framework for narrative; how it is presented and how it is understood. Auto-ethnography methods are considered valuable in gaining understanding of self within the lived context, and for demonstrating aspects of experience to others (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Jones (2005) argues for auto-ethnography for social action by making the personal political. She discusses the importance and power of writing about one's personal experience and performing auto-ethnographic narratives, causing disturbance in order to stimulate social action.

Reflexive narrative

My narrative inquiry can be described as 'personal story' as suggested by Moon (2010), in that the focus is on presenting my own stories. The study has links with auto-ethnography in that the aim is to communicate aspects of my experience for the reader to engage with. This includes my subjective world view, inviting the reader to reflect critically on the issues. The narrative can also be considered to be 'life history' as suggested by Goodson (2012). I recognise that I am representing my stories within a particular historical and cultural context. However, my study differs from these narratives in that it is reflexive and seeks to effect change and transformation.

Reflexivity

Etherington's criteria for considering reflexivity discussed in chapter 1 are useful for a researcher to begin to focus on (Etherington 2004). Etherington discusses how many researchers might favour traditional and familiar approaches in which the researcher is the detached objective observer in a certain world. This is more comfortable than dwelling with the doubts and uncertainties arising from having to acknowledge that the researcher needs to check their subjective engagement with the study. Speedy (2008) discusses how literature on reflexivity critique the methods used to produce what she identifies as traditional research reports. They discuss how literary devices are used to represent the researcher as neutral and objectively separate from the research. However, Speedy raises the issue that traditionalists similarly critique reflexive approaches which use such devices to represent authenticity in research reports.

Grbich argues that 'reflexive subjectivity' replaces objectivity (Grbich 2004:28). Self-reflexivity is essential for the researcher in order to continuously check their knowledge and process of knowing. This suggests that the researcher acknowledges their partial subjective view, however, they are continuously weaving this awareness through that which is researched. This idea suggests to me a willingness to dwell with the uncertainty of continuously becoming.

Linde (1993) argues that narrative is valuable in the social evaluation of people and their actions. She discusses how in reality we experience the world in relation to our senses and emotions in ways beyond what can be grasped or 'language'd'; we personally appear to be without boundaries. In contrast we experience other people to be well formed and contained within appropriate boundaries. Narrative is a way of creating self so that we

might appear to be like others. Linde continues by identifying that reflexivity in personal narrative is made possible due to the separation of self as narrator and central character, in order to evaluate self through observation and reflection, resulting in self-correction and development. Linde considers reflexivity in personal narratives to be a powerful evaluative process, which needs to be conducted at a distance from the experience being narrated. In relation to my study this concerns the in-depth reflection on my experiences after the event. Through the narration of the experience in which I recall, review and question my actions, I am able to develop, recreate and transform myself in preparation for future action.

Johns (2010) regards reflexivity to involve reflecting on an experience by making connections with past experiences and using the insights gained to prepare for future action towards realising one's vision of practice. My reflexive narrative research involves reflecting on episodes from practice, considering the meaning that I give to them, and how they link with past experiences. Through gaining insights and new understandings through in-depth reflection, future actions can be transformed. Etherington (2004) raises the issue that some critics view researching self as 'self-indulgent, solipsistic and narcissistic' (pp141). I would argue that understanding self with an aim to effect change and transformation is ultimately concerned with striving to become a more enlightened human being, who has a concern to work towards promoting social justice as much as possible. This might be about gaining some awareness of what I did not know previously, as opposed to holding on to the illusion of objectivity, which enables me to remain blind to what I do not know.

2.2: Systematic self-inquiry

The systematic self-inquiry involves engagement with Johns' six dialogical movements. Johns' (2010) principles focus on learning and development from everyday lived experience, and narrative self-inquiry leads to mindfulness and self-realisation (pp1). The six dialogical movements are seen as a journey of being and becoming, through observation, description and reflection. Although each of the six dialogical movements can be focused on and described in a progressive way, they are dynamic and can be experienced as flowing and merging in different ways. This approach to inquiry was originally devised by Johns as a way to support nurses in developing as effective practitioners (Johns 2009; 2010). The approach was further developed for healthcare practitioners on a Masters programme. The aim was that through linking story and theory by constructing narratives of experience, how theory informs practice would have greater meaning for the practitioners. Engaging in this

approach to inquiry led to professional transformation. Later Johns established an interdisciplinary community of inquiry for the engagement of doctoral study, including himself as the experienced guide. During my involvement with the community it has included practitioners who are nurses, nurse educators and a bodywork practitioner. I am the first person from an education background to conduct research using the six dialogical movements. Through my study I sought to explore the value of the inquiry approach in supporting teacher development.

Dialogue

Bohm (1996) discusses the challenges that people face in society with communicating effectively. Despite technological advances which apparently allow for greater ease in communication, there tends to be a lack of understanding between groups of people. Bohm defines 'dialogue' to mean 'to make common' which might not be how the word is understood in everyday use. The definition suggests actions leading to common understanding. However, often in everyday experience people are unable to achieve common understanding, and are unaware that they might not be engaging in dialogue effectively. This arises due to a receiver of information giving it different meaning to the giver. Bohm suggests that if givers and receivers of information reflect back their meanings, then this allows for new ways of understanding which might flow from the original intention. The end result might be that giver and receiver finish with new understandings that are not necessarily the same, but they will have created them together.

The meaning that I am giving to 'dialogue' is Bohm's idea of '*a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us*' (p6). Bohm suggests that in order to achieve dialogue successfully we need to suspend our assumptions and opinions. This is challenging since we must first become aware of what these are. Dialogue can take place between groups of people and with the self. Through the reflective processes of the six dialogical movements one engages in dialogue with self, which means questioning one's beliefs, assumptions and opinions; however, this can only be partial. Group dialogue is essential in raising awareness of beliefs, assumptions and opinions in order for the 'stream of meaning' to flow and result in new understandings.

Summary of my engagement with the six dialogical movements

<p>1st Movement: Dialogue with self.</p>	<p>Maintaining a regular reflective journal, involving writing about the detail of everyday practice and any factors which have an impact on this.</p>
<p>2nd Movement: Dialogue with the story.</p>	<p>Working with the text to develop the story around emerging insights.</p> <p>Using a model to support deepening reflection.</p>
<p>3rd Movement: Dialogue between the story and other sources of knowing.</p>	<p>Further deepening and developing insights through engagement with literature, ideologies within current education practice and other sources.</p>
<p>4th Movement: Dialogue with guides.</p>	<p>Sharing the story with guides within an established community of inquiry in order to check and challenge beliefs, assumptions and opinions, and co-create meaning and insights.</p>
<p>5th Movement: Dialogue with emerging text.</p>	<p>Over time the stories developed around insights are woven together in a coherent reflexive narrative.</p> <p>Stories and insights develop on from each other, each subsequent story having been developed on from previous insights.</p>

6 th Movement: Dialogue with others.	<p>Dialogue with colleagues.</p> <p>Sharing ideas.</p> <p>As a movement towards promoting social justice.</p>
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(Adapted from Johns 2010:28)

Reflection

Reflection is an essential aspect of narrative inquiry and is central to this study. It is important to consider theory relating to reflection. The work of Schön was of particular importance for me to consider as I began this study, since it had been influential in my previous MA research with student teachers, and I found some of his ideas valuable. In addition Schön’s work is referenced in so much of the literature on reflective practice. The early work of Argyris & Schön (1974) identified some of the contradictions faced by professionals in the way that they practice. Professionals have their ‘theories of action’ which concern how they claim to practice, but how they actually practice might be different. Argyris & Schön described the actual practice as ‘theories in use’, of which the professionals might not be aware. Argyris & Schön proposed models to enable professionals to gain an awareness of their theories in use in order to discover if these were congruent with the theories in action. The models were designed to support professionals in working through the tensions arising from any contradictions between theories in use and theories in action, in order to achieve more effective practice.

Schön (1983) discusses how for much of the twentieth century professional knowledge based on scientific research was considered to be rigorous and desirable, however, there had been a crisis in confidence in the professions since practitioners were not able to produce the outcomes expected. Schön discusses the complexity of professional practice in that different practitioners might frame a situation in different ways depending on their concerns. It would be important for the practitioner to be able to name and frame ideas in order to be able to solve the technical problems of practice. Schön considers professions like teaching to have ‘messy’ and ambiguous outcomes. The work of such professionals often involves ‘knowing-in-action’, which is tacit knowledge of practice, and the professionals might be highly effective but unable to articulate what they do. Schön describes this effective practice as Professional Artistry (Schön 1987). The processes of

reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action promote the framing and reframing of issues and understanding and are considered to be the practices that enable the development of Professional Artistry.

Moon (1999) discusses how the term 'reflection' appears to be challenging to define, along with its associated themes of reflective thinking, learning and practice. Schön built upon early work by Dewey (1933) who sought to define a reflective 'operation':

(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or nullify the suggested belief. (Dewey 1933:9)

Dewey went on to describe five distinct steps in the reflective process:

(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is the conclusion of belief or disbelief. (p72)

Dewey considered 'reflection' to mean something more than ordinary thinking, and his ideas are often discussed in the literature on reflective practice. There are many suggestions for defining 'reflection' in the literature and Moon (1999) suggests that taking a common-sense view is valuable, especially considering the fact that the term 'reflection' is in common everyday use.

...common usage of the word imply a form of mental processing with a purpose and/or an anticipated outcome that is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution. (Moon 1999:4)

Although there does not appear to be a consensus definition of reflection, I am in agreement with Moon that reflection should be considered to be multifaceted. How one defines reflection will depend on the purposes to which one wishes to apply it. This suggests to me that it is important to explain how the term is being used, including the process and product of reflection. In my study I used reflection as a process of self-inquiry, and the product was the narrative to represent the experiences linked to the insights gained. Johns (2009) stresses that reflection is always about action, and should work towards promoting better practice, ultimately helping create a better world. I have understood reflection to be a dynamic process which means that attempting to define it precisely might not be appropriate. In this study reflection can be considered to be the

process which enables me to bring to consciousness my thinking, feeling and doing in practice; to frame my experience of practice in order to understand it, and to reframe in order to transform it. This process was stimulated by working through the 'creative tension' that I experienced in my day to day practice.

Senge (2006) describes 'creative tension' as being generated when we try to resolve the difference between our vision of practice and the current reality of practice experience. Senge argues that a willingness to work through creative tension is an essential aspect of gaining personal mastery in life. In order to be able to generate creative tension one needs to have and hold onto a vision. In addition one would need to gain an understanding of one's current reality. Senge identifies that a challenge with this involves the discomfort caused by the emotional tension that one experiences entwined with working through creative tension. In order to resolve the emotional tension one is tempted to limit the vision, since this can be controlled. This suggests to me that it is important to understand the emotional tension involved in an effort to maintain the vision.

In relation to my study I found it difficult to articulate my vision of practice when I began, I was only able to do this in my third year. My vision of practice concerned my belief that every human being is a successful learner, and my desire was to be able to support my students in realising this for themselves and their pupils. Creative tension arises since the system of education in which we must practice imposes narrow ways of measuring progress, which do not identify and celebrate every learner's success. This situation raised serious concerns about promoting equality of opportunity through education, and resulted in the discomfort of emotional tension. The framing and reframing through reflection led to gaining a better understanding of current reality, and this in turn supported the resolution seeking process which arises in order to work through creative tension. The reflective process also raised awareness of the emotional tension. Senge (2006) argues for the value of generating and sustaining creative tension, since it is this that leads to change, growth and development. This suggests that limiting one's vision or not seeking to understand current reality might result in stagnation. I relate the idea of working through creative tension to the *potential* of becoming, which is a theme that I discuss in depth in chapter 4. Throughout the reflexive narrative presented in chapter 3 I seek to demonstrate my potential of becoming through working through creative tension.

Critical Reflection

Fay (1987) considers that people experience the world as illusion and do not have an awareness of the reality of their existence. Fay discusses how critical social science theory is based on the human ability to reason. People can transform their experience of life through gaining an understanding of their reality, and how and why things are as they are, through rational analysis and reflection. Mezirow (2000) proposes a theory about how transformative learning takes place in adults. One would need to be able to gain an understanding of one's meaning making and assumptions about life and experience. This framing of beliefs and assumptions requires gaining an understanding of how these are socially and culturally constructed. Critical reflection would include challenging these frames of reference. Transformative learning would occur through the reframing of ideas and experience, gaining new meaning about being in the world. Transformative learning involves critical reflection focusing on tasks, which Mezirow (2000) describes as 'objective', and critical self-reflection which he describes as 'subjective'. Ultimately it is transformative learning which is required to promote social justice.

Dirkx (2006) critiques Mezirow's view of critical reflection, and considers that the critical assessment of one's assumptions and beliefs is insufficient in itself for transformative learning. Dirkx considers the importance of reflecting on one's subjective reality, and how our hidden emotional selves impact on how we engage and make meaning in the world. Dirkx has the view that critical reflection needs to include gaining an understanding of the deeper emotional reasons behind our beliefs and assumptions.

Brookfield (2000) also critiques Mezirow's views on transformative learning and critical reflection. He discusses how in order for transformation to take place critical reflection must include a critique of influencing ideologies. Through this one would come to gain an understanding of the power bases which influence our lives. This critical reflection would need to challenge everyday experiences and practices which have become so normalised that people are often unaware of how oppressive they are. This is hegemony which works to normalise oppressive practices and maintain existing power structures. Brookfield also stresses that transformation must demonstrate changing assumptions and ways of practicing in the world. Brookfield (1995) earlier proposed three categories of assumptions which might be applied to reflective teaching. Paradigmatic assumptions relate to broad beliefs and intentions about educational issues. Prescriptive assumptions relate to ideas about appropriate educational practices, which would include how 'good' teachers should

behave. Causal assumptions relate to the impact of certain practices. Brookfield's (1995) three categories of assumptions have been useful to dialogue with; however, it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between them, as he himself argues.

I relate my experience of self-inquiry to Fay's analysis of critical social science theory, in which one's ability to effect change arises through gaining self-knowledge (Fay 1987). Fay argues that self-knowledge includes an understanding of the society and context in which one is socially situated. This knowledge and understanding can lead to achieving autonomy from enlightenment, empowerment and emancipation (Fay 1987:205). Human experience and behaviour arise as a result of many complex factors, and Fay discusses those which constrain humans from gaining true autonomy. Fay argues that human experience is complex embeddedness as a result of embodiment, tradition and force. Self-knowledge and social understanding would need to attend to an awareness of the constraints, and identify aspects which are worthy of change, and those that can be changed. Reflexivity is essential in gaining knowledge of self through an analysis of the social and cultural context and its historical emergence (Fay 1987)

In seeking to transform self through critical reflection I seek to gain an understanding of reality and the constraints on achieving my vision of practice as lived reality. The aim is to frame and reframe aspects of my experience as a teacher, attending to the place of emotion in shaping my beliefs and assumptions, and seeking to understand the power bases. It is important to consider Freire's (1970) idea of understanding for humanisation. This requires an awareness of the risk of the oppressed becoming the oppressor. The aim must be to promote freedom for all, oppressed and oppressors. This ultimately should be the aim for promoting social justice.

2.3: 1st Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with self

This movement involves maintaining a reflective journal as a systematic process. I have had previous experience of maintaining professional and personal reflective journals. An important issue for me is that I do not enjoy handwriting, and discovered the enjoyment of writing through word processing. During this study I have systematically focused on writing in depth every Sunday. Sometimes I have written additional journal entries on other days. I have found this approach manageable since I have been working full-time in addition to studying part-time. If significant events occurred during the week that I wished to reflect on I used a digital voice recorder that I could go back and listen to later on. John's (2010)

describes journaling a 'writing self', and Bolton (2010) discusses the place of reflective writing as going 'through the mirror'. Reflection might involve just looking in the mirror and then turning away. This does not allow for depth of insight. 'Through the mirror' involves depth of reflection and developing reflexivity.

In writing my journal I begin by focusing on describing the detail of events as suggested by Johns, which I relate to the story of experience described by Bolton in her model for 'in the mirror' writing. I find that as time passes I move into a deeper reflective space in which I begin to raise questions about my experiences. It is soon after that my writing and thinking becoming inextricably linked as I move onto identifying issues, and possibly problem solving. I discovered some years before undertaking this study that I sometimes might emerge from journal writing having found a solution to a problem. I relate this to Bolton's (2010) view of the effectiveness of writing as a vehicle for reflection in that it can help the practitioner think more logically.

2.4: 2nd Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with the story

As a result of moving into reflective thinking mode in my journal writing I found that my experience of the first and second dialogical movements tended to merge. The second dialogical movement develops on to dialogue with the written account and deepens reflection. In the past I had devised my own model to structure my reflective writing as follows:

- Date
- Student cohort
- Session title
- Aims or learning purposes
- Progress
- Evaluation

This model provided me with a structure for reflecting on classroom teaching episodes, and could be modified for other professional experiences, such as tutorials with individual students and team meetings. As I became more experienced with reflective writing I let go of the structure, tending to include only the date, student group and title of the session, if appropriate. As a result of the learning from my own process of reflective writing, I devised models to support my students in developing their reflective writing. Through this work I

became aware of the dynamic nature of reflection, and considered that although a model might be a valuable support to begin with, it might not be helpful to use if too rigidly or for too long. When I began doctoral study I decided to continue with my system of reflective writing, and to supplement this by considering how Johns' model of structured reflection (MSR) could support my deepening reflection in the early stages; however, I chose to use it loosely rather than systematically (Johns 2009:51) [figure 1]. The model had been devised to support nurse practitioners with deepening reflection; however, the cues could be adapted for classroom teaching reflection [figure 2]. I chose to consult the MSR after I had written my journal account, and found that I had addressed most of the cues to a greater or lesser extent. The cues which relate to the practitioner's feelings and actions were straight forward to address. Those cues which reflect on the feelings and impact on others were difficult to address for classroom teaching. The vast majority of my teaching takes place with large groups of around thirty students. If I consider adapted cue: *What were the consequences of my actions on the students and myself?* Only a partial response can be given to this question. It might be argued that this is also the case if working with one patient; however, it is extremely difficult to know about the feelings and views of thirty individuals who are grouped together in a classroom. However, the insight gained through an awareness of this reality of a teacher's classroom experience has been a significant theme emerging from my doctoral study.

MODEL FOR STRUCTURED REFLECTION [15A EDITION]

- Bring the mind home
- Focus on a description that seems significant in some way
- What particular issues seem significant to pay attention to?
- How were others feeling & what made them feel that way?
- How was I feeling and what made me feel that way?
- What was I trying to achieve & did I respond effectively?
- What were the consequences of my actions on the patient, others, myself?
- What factors influenced the way I was feeling, thinking & responding?
- What knowledge did or might have informed me?
- To what extent did I act for the best and in tune with my values?
- How does this situation connect with previous experience?
- How might I respond more effectively given this situation again?
- What would be the consequences of alternative actions for the patient, others, myself?
- What factors might constrain me acting in new ways?
- How do I NOW feel about this experience?
- Am I more able to support myself and others better as a consequence?
- What insights can I draw?

(Johns 2009: 51)

Figure 1

ADAPTED MODEL FOR STRUCTURED REFLECTION

- Focus on a description of your experience that seems significant in some way
- What is the background of this experience?

Ask yourself the following:

- What particular issues seem significant to pay attention to?
- How do I interpret the way others were feeling and why they felt that way?
- How was I feeling and what made me feel that way?
- What was I trying to achieve and did I respond effectively?
- What were the consequences of my actions on the pupil/s, student/s, other/s and myself?
- What factors influence the way I was/am feeling, thinking and responding to this situation?
- What knowledge did or might have informed me? (*could be professional, personal and academic*)
- To what extent did I act for the best and in tune with my values?
- How does this situation connect with previous experiences?
- How might I reframe the situation to respond more effectively given this situation again?
- What would be the consequences of responding in new ways for the pupil/s, student/s, other/s and myself?

Figure 2

Cue: *What factors influenced the way I was feeling, thinking and responding* might be supported by the influences grid in focusing and deepening reflection on self (Johns 2009:62) [figure 3]. I found the influences grid helpful in focusing on myself within the practice situation. Johns discusses the challenges faced by this cue in that people often find this threatening. This cue involves looking closely at oneself, which in my view is not something usually practised in any depth due to the discomfort that might arise. The influences grid supports one in looking closely at self. Johns' uses the analogy of removing the 'smudges' from the mirror, which I relate to Bolton's idea of being willing to go 'through the mirror' and see what is on the other side. I found the influences grid helpful in identifying aspects of self within practice. An early example came from gaining an awareness of my positive and negative attitudes to certain students. This is presented in the story 4 *Fear and Dread* and story 5 *Complexity* in chapter 3.

INFLUENCES GRID

(Johns 2009:62)

Conforming to normal practice/habit? The weight of tradition	Negative attitudes and prejudice? Racism?	Expectations from others? Need to be valued?
Limited skills/ discomfort/ confidence to act in new ways?	What factors influenced my decision making and actions?	Fear of sanction? The weight of authority?
Emotional entanglement/ over identification?		Misplaced concern - loyalty to colleagues versus loyalty to patient? Anxious about ensuing conflict?
Personal stuff/baggage? Deeper psyche factors?		Knowledge to act in specific ways? The weight of theory?
Wrapped up in self-concern? Pity? Stressed? Guilt? Frustration? Other feelings?	Time/ priorities	Expectations from self about 'how I should act' Doing what was felt to be right?

Figure 3

There were other questions on the influences grid that I found useful to consider:

- *Expectations from others*
- *Fear of sanction*
- *Expectations from self about 'how I should act'*

Ultimately self-inquiry study concerns knowing self and what one brings to the practice situation.

One cue made me pause to consider: '*what knowledge did or might have informed me*'? I found this difficult to answer, and came to realise that I could not recall which established theories about learning or teaching really informed my practice, or how I had developed my practice in this way. This seemed a significant insight during the first year.

Constructing the stories

In order to explain how I went about constructing the individual stories, I draw upon an idea from literary theory as discussed by Bertens (2008). This is a literary device proposed by the Prague structuralists in the early part of the 20th century. Foregrounding in literature presented the unfamiliar within the familiar background. Many of my stories are set against the background of the classroom. The actual experience of being in a classroom involves a complex range of sensations and thoughts. As a teacher I would have my aims and expectations for the session, including my plan and intentions for learning, and teaching

strategies that I would employ. In my narratives I have chosen to foreground many aspects of my lived classroom experience, in addition to evaluating teaching strategies, which is the usual focus of teachers' narratives (Berry 2008). The aspects were chosen as a result of the creative tension that the issues caused. My stories demonstrate how I engaged with working through the creative tension of practice.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics as presented by Gadamer (1975) concerns understanding texts. As a methodological influence in relation to shaping this study, hermeneutics concerns how the individual narratives of classroom events relate to the whole journey of 'being and becoming' a teacher (Johns 2010). The entire reflexive narrative can be understood from the stories of experience, and each individual story can be understood through its relationship to the whole narrative. Gadamer (1975) considers that understanding is gained through the fluid movement between the whole and the parts. This suggests that experiential understanding is dynamic and constantly shifting and deepening. In relation to my self-inquiry study subsequent narratives will be influenced by earlier experiences, and I might give new meaning to earlier narrative insights as a result of developing understanding. Johns (2010) describes the process of reflexive narrative as a hermeneutic circle or spiral. I would describe my process as a shifting cyclical experience as understanding deepens. Discussion with others was considered by Gadamer as essential in gaining understanding. One can only gain so much from individual thinking. Through discussion a shared and co-created understanding can be made.

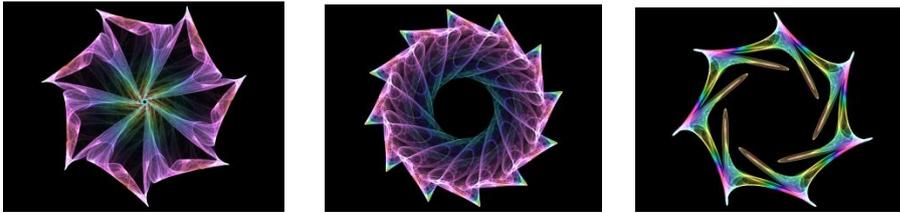
Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000) discuss the idea of Alethic hermeneutics in which attention is given to the researcher's subjectivity in relation to the object of research. In terms of researching one's own lived experience the researcher might gain insights into behaviour and response about which one was previously unaware, and this new awareness will have an impact on future behaviour and response.

I think of narrative research as a hermeneutic mode of inquiry, where the process of inquiry flows from the question – which is a question about a person's inner, subjective reality and in particular how a person makes meaning of some aspect of his or her experience. (Josselson & Leiblich 1999:x).

My 'question' concerns the nature of reflective teaching and my experience of it. Each story that I tell or show will represent an aspect or episode on the journey. The journey will be

understood through the stories, and each story will be understood in relation to the whole journey, which can be considered a reflexive hermeneutic cycle that is continuously shape-shifting.

Representation of the experience of hermeneutic shape-shifting cycle



(Chaoscope Icon function 7.3.11)²

2.5: 3rd Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with text and other sources of knowing

In the process of developing the individual stories which are woven together in the reflexive narrative in chapter 3 I have drawn upon a number of ideas and theoretical views. Dialogue with the literature was an essential aspect of the study in supporting the interpretation of the insights gained through the process of reflection. Many of the stories include some discussion of the literature relating to the insights. On occasions, particularly during the second and third year of study, I chose to dialogue with specific texts, which I have included within the narratives as quotations. The significant themes emerging from the insights are as follows:

- Emotions in teaching
- Issues of diversity with an emphasis on the quiet teacher
- The complexity of classroom practice
- Chaos theory and my experience of self-inquiry
- Chaos theory and education

² Chaoscope explained later in this chapter

- The nature of reflective teaching

The insights and themes will be interpreted and analysed in detail in chapter 4. My experience of the 3rd dialogical movement was that it was inextricably linked with the 2nd dialogical movement in the development of the individual stories around the insights.

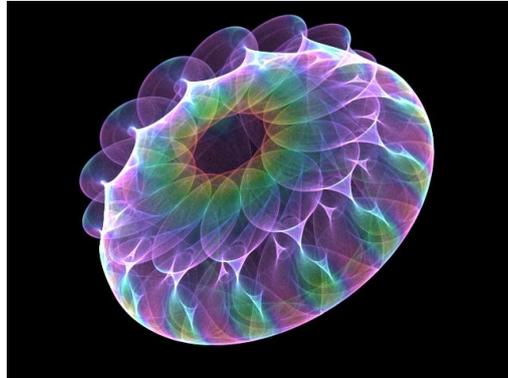
Chaos theory

Chaos theory became an important focus after one year of study, to support me in understanding my reflexive process. Chaos theory presents a valuable conceptual framework for demonstrating the experience of being and becoming, through engaging in a deeply reflective practice. I had to dwell with the uncertainty of what the outcomes of the study might be or where it would take me. As I experienced periods of significant insight I came to value the deepening understanding about aspects of practice. This resulted in me being able to release the desire to control where I was going with the study. There were times when I felt that I knew where I was going only to experience the unexpected and unpredictable. At other times unexpected order would emerge. This was an uncertain journey of being and becoming, and chaos theory provides a valuable way to understand it. The following narrative is included here because it represents the significant insight into my research experience after one year of study:

The Beauty of Chaos (November 2010)³

I had been trying to find a visual image to represent how I view my journey towards PhD. I had been very interested in fractal art as discussed by Wheatley (1999) as pattern forming from chaotic systems. Beautiful patterns from random mathematical functions, which I do not understand. I was very attracted by the colours and patterns.

In making sense of the hermeneutic cycle I considered picture 1 as a visual representation.



picture 1: (chaoscope Icon)

One can see the individual components interwoven to form a pattern. The result is a thing of beauty.

For a long time it seemed that I was flitting from place to place without making connections. I thought that although I could not see where I was going, I would eventually be able to look back and see a pattern emerging. Then I found the fractal art software. I loved the patterns which seemed to represent part of me.

At the research seminar **A** opened the feedback discussion by commenting on my use of colour in what I wear and my way of being. She said that this was my distinguishing characteristic, which in her view colleagues enjoyed so much. She then went on to talk about emotions in teaching, and how what I had presented had resonated with her work.

My recent feelings of breakthrough might be represented by picture 2.



Picture 2: (chaoscope Icon)

³ This story is my experience of giving a presentation on my first year of doctoral study to colleagues at a research seminar.

Colour and light; order beginning to form out of chaos, resulting in a thing of beauty.

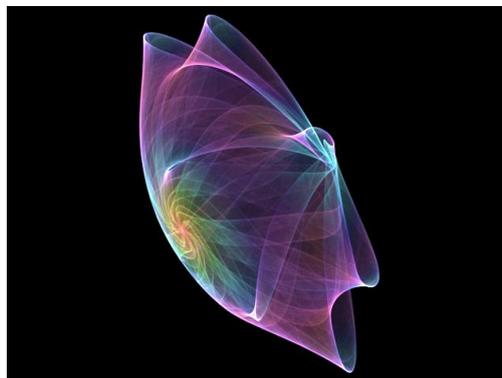
I decided to predict how the narrative of my entire journey might be represented at the end. It seemed to me that picture 1 was too ordered and symmetrical. This is not how I view the journey. It is complex, uncertain and open to the unexpected. This is what makes it valuable and worth doing. I decided that picture 3 better represents my predicted journey.



Picture 3: (*chaoscope chaotic flow*)

In relation to my understanding of hermeneutics, the loops might represent my individual narratives of experience, but they make sense only when considered as parts of the whole (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000). The whole is a pattern of beauty; beauty formed from chaos.

I might, however, decide that my journey should be represented like picture 4, which contains a bit more order to it. The colours also seem more in tune with my way of being.



Picture 4: (*chaoscope Icon*)

I have, however, decided that picture 5 is the most appropriate representation at this time.



Picture 5: (*chaoscope Icon*)

I really like the colours of this one, and it is irregular in shape. I like the irregular loops and whorls. These are colours I wear. I welcome the uncertainty of the journey. Maybe if the path is too ordered and predictable it provides less of interest and challenge. Stepping back and viewing the whole journey results in a thing of beauty.

During the discussion in the research seminar **B** mentioned beauty, and asked me how I viewed this. She commented on how in order to consider beauty one must be able to engage emotionally. I found this comment interesting, unexpected and surprising. Something to think about.

This story represents the beginning of my engagement with chaos theory and how I came to use the chaoscope pictures to represent my experience of the research process. In chapter 3 I revisit the chaos theme in some of the stories, including chaoscope pictures. All chaoscope pictures have been generated on the computer by me. The mathematics involved is beyond my understanding, but I have focused on the form and colour in generating the pictures using random function rather than the numbers. The notion of 'beauty' arising from chaos is a recurring theme in the narrative. Chaos theory in relation to education has also emerged as a significant theme which is discussed in chapter 4.

2.6: 4th Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with guides

Bohm's (1996) ideas about co-creating meaning through dialogue can be related to Gadamer's (1975) view that discussion is essential to gaining understanding. I believe that dialogue enabling the 'stream of meaning' to flow relates to Mezirow's (2000) ideas about re-framing in reflective action. I am aware that the stories are my representations of events which demonstrate my highly subjective and limited point of view. The established community of inquiry supported me in challenging my beliefs, assumptions and opinions about practice. This involves the framing and re-framing of ideas which result in change and transformation over time. Framing and reframing includes an examination of current ideologies in education as identified by Brookfield (2000), and it attends to the place of emotions in framing beliefs and assumptions (Dirkx 2006). High challenge and strong support are essential aspects of guided reflection. As suggested by Brookfield (2000:146):

Any critically reflective effort we undertake can only be accomplished with the help of critical friends. We need others to serve as critical mirrors who highlight our assumptions for us in unfamiliar, surprising, and disturbing ways. We also need our critical friends to provide emotional sustenance, to bring us "reports from the front" of their own critical journeys.

The established community for inquiry consisted of PhD students with our principal supervisor as experienced guide. Second supervisors also attended the groups on occasions. There were six students at any given time during my study. The group met for four hours one afternoon each month. Group members were required to post a narrative during the week prior to the session for others to read in preparation for the meeting. Each student was given some focus time for the discussion of their narrative during the session. The community also met for a three-day winter and summer school each year.

An example of how I have worked within the group comes from an experience during the winter school in 2011. I brought a narrative entitled *Being Authentic*, and was given focus time on the first day. I had included a number of insights and problematic issues in the narrative. It was suggested that I might re-write the narrative with the intention of performing it. This would mean that I would need to focus more succinctly on the insights. All of the members of the group were asked to write some ideas for performance based on the meanings that they had given to my narrative. They spent about five to seven minutes on this and then gave the papers to me to read. It was suggested that I might find these ideas helpful in my re-writing of the narrative for performance on the final day. The ideas were given as follows:

1.

Becoming visible

Dance → small on the floor blending into the background

Small movements

Gradually parts of yourself emerge; an arm, a leg etc.

Movement increases

Removal of dull covers (clothes) to reveal colour and brightness

Movement wild, expansive and dramatic

SEE ME

2.

Becoming visible

Infinity
Invisible
[Dis]able

“ + & - “

√square root

Questions

Mean

Mode

Graph paper

Normal curve

staying low



elasticity

Documentation

‘Adenike’
Now performs with mean

Organisation

Using numbers
Problematic mean

3.

Becoming visible

I work, I teach, I educate
But what I do is unseen
What I achieve is uncounted

I am counted
but I am unvalued

The system can see only those
that it has created in its own image

I am different. I am better
but I am invisible

Do I have to become as they are
to be seen again?

4.

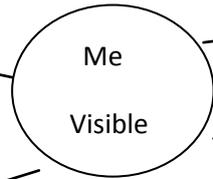
Becoming visible

PG student say

Liz say

heard

powerful



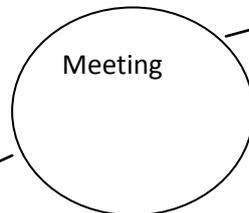
HoD say

I say

These words make me

I want to be heard

In being visible I am



Number Ofsted
Safeguard against chaos
failure

I say

But surely numbers are beautiful
Lead into chaos

organisational notice

Doubt myself?
Not heard
Behind the

How do I respond?

5.

Audience follows
A sequence of
structural images
to fluid images
using movement
this would happen
at stages through
narrative
moving from
constant to
freedom

I was interested to note how different these perceptions were from each other, and to what I was trying to communicate. I did not understand paper 2, and I felt that paper 1 was projecting 'stuff' onto me. I did find paper 3 very interesting and illuminating; I liked the idea of 'created in their own image'. The result was that I wrote the narrative *Becoming Visible* which is story 8 in chapter 3. In the session on the final day I chose to project the narrative on screen using the LCD projector. I asked members of the group to read out the different voices. I found that I was quite surprised by how well it turned out. The meaning for me was clear and I realised that it was not about being seen and heard, the insights were really about what it is that makes an effective teacher. This was the question that I chose to explore over the coming months. Revisiting the notes sometime later I realised how I could relate to aspects of them all, since my colleagues had picked up on experiences that I had shared with them over many months. The insights gained as a result of the sharing, rewriting and performance demonstrate the co-creation of meaning through dialogue, as identified by Bohm (1996), which resulted in me coming to a new understanding of my experience as a teacher.

In addition to the guidance and feedback that I received for my own narratives, reading the work of others and providing feedback was also valuable for my learning. In addition to the high level of challenge, I found the engagement highly stimulating. As someone who enjoys learning and new possibilities, I found engagement within the group very rewarding. Due to the nature of our studies, some very intense emotional issues surfaced on a number of occasions, however, I experienced the community to be a very safe and supportive space to explore these intense issues. I valued the interdisciplinary nature of the group particularly. I gained new perspectives on education and teaching from practitioners from other disciplines. It was also very interesting to learn of the experiences of other practitioners, and to recognise the similarities and differences that we face.

2.7: 5th Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with the emerging text: Constructing the narrative

The reflexive narrative is constructed from the stories of my practice, which are representations of my experience. I have used the terms 'woven' and 'interwoven' to describe the narrative writing and how plot, themes and insights are linked together. I have had some years of experience practising the craft of weaving fabric, and find it helpful to use 'weaving' as a metaphor to explain my process of constructing the reflexive narrative.

THE WEAVER

I take the 'fluff' from nature, from cotton, flax, wool and moth cocoon. I spin it on my spindle and watch it form into threads. I see the yarn and think of the possibilities ahead and the fabric it might become. I take my yarn and use the thread to set the warp upon the loom. I take more yarn and thread it on the shuttle for the weft. Now I am ready to weave. On a floor loom I press the peddles to lift some warp threads to create a shed. I move the shuttle across the shed and pull the shunt to settle the weft within the warp. I repeat the process and over time the fabric begins to form. The pattern of the fabric evolves through changing the order of the warp threads that form the shed, and changing the type and colours of the weft threads.

Reflexive narrative:

The 'fluff' from nature represents my beings and doings in the world; my experiences. As I began the journey these were disparate; I did not know where I was going. Eventually I could see the meaning and began to collect the 'fluff' to begin spinning the yarn. The yarn represents the plot of my reflexive journey which is all about my experience of practice. The setting of the warp represents the plot being established and taking form. The weft represents the journal entries and stories which I am weaving together on this journey. The evolving fabric represents the reflexive journey.

I press the peddles

Which lift the warp threads

I form the shed

The shuttle goes back and forth

I pull the shunt

Which sets the weft within the warp

Over time the fabric unfolds.

As a weaver I used a number of different approaches to weave my fabric. Some required the use of a loom, and others were much freer. I have chosen to set my warp on a floor loom for this metaphor for my narrative journey of being and becoming. This is a rigid structure; however, it is possible to create beautiful patterned fabric through using the warp and weft creatively. The loom is a metaphor for the rigid structure of the education system

in which I must practice. The structure is set and I cannot change it, however, I can find ways to work creatively within its rigid boundaries. The process of weaving on the loom might be considered a metaphor for working through creative tension.

Weaving the reflexive narrative

The reflexive narrative is constructed from twenty-five stories from practice written and developed over three years and four months. The twenty-five have been selected from thirty-three which were written and discussed in guided reflection in the inquiry group. I enjoyed writing and the challenge was in deciding which aspects of practice to focus on to write about since there were so many. The regular practice of preparing a story to take to the inquiry group for guided reflection provided the systematic focus. During the first year of study I chose to focus largely on problematic questions from practice, and it was many months before I was able to look back and identify the issues that were emerging, such as the complexity of classroom experience, and how in-depth reflection was changing me as a teacher.

In constructing the reflexive narrative I read back through three and a half years' worth of reflective journal writings, and decided that this material might provide additional rich data. I chose to use some journal extracts as connectives between stories in order to weave a more coherent narrative. This is particularly relevant in the first year of study, represented in academic year 2009-10 section of the narrative, since it enables me to demonstrate my process of transformation more effectively.

The academic year 2010-11 begins by building upon my learning and development from the first year. I chose to dialogue with significant issues, and I sought to demonstrate the changes in my practice as a result of the transformation arising from the study. The significant themes emerging at this time were concerned with the place of subjectivity and objectivity in professional practice, the place of emotions in teaching, and the question of how is a 'good' and 'effective' teacher to be determined. During this year I found so much that I wished to focus on to write about. Inspired by a visit to the Susan Hiller⁴ exhibition, I wrote a series of shorter sketches called *Unravelling: Work in Progress* and *Work in Progress: Three More Sketches*, which focused on deconstructing aspects of my practice experience. In the second year section I chose to include fewer extracts from the journal,

⁴ Art work exhibition at the Tate Britain in London.

since many of the stories include some reflection on the events. I have also included more dialogue with literature.

In the section focusing on the third year of the study, academic year 2011-12, I began to reconstruct myself as a teacher with a better understanding of the practice environment. The process of deconstruction continued however. I viewed the experience as a continuous process of deconstruction and reconstruction in transforming self in practice. The stories in academic year 2011-12 demonstrate my attempts to reframe myself and experience of practice. One of the themes to emerge was in finding my voice and having an impact. I use the metaphor of the ripple effect in discussing this. It was in the third year that I was able to articulate my vision of practice effectively, and to gain a more in-depth understanding of the nature of reflective teaching. In the stories I dialogue in some depth with literature, demonstrating its impact on my thinking. It was during this time that I was able to develop my idea of 'awareness-in-action' which will be discussed in depth in chapter 4. Chaos theory and its application to education emerge as a significant theme in this section of the reflexive narrative, and I have included a section on the literature which I used to develop my understanding of the theory. This section ends with stories which demonstrate how I have transformed in 'being' a teacher. In the final two stories I seek to demonstrate how I respond to problematic issues within complex classroom practice. During this later stage in the study I recognised and focused on how I engage with the fear that seems to pervade the education system. I continue the reflexive narrative into the academic year 2012-13, entering the fourth year with three stories which demonstrate the ongoing journey of being and becoming. It was a challenge finding a place to stop, since the journey is ongoing, however, the final story finishes with a suggestion of continuation.

Creative devices

I chose to present my stories of experience as a teacher in the present tense, since this seemed to be the most appropriate way that I could capture the lived embodied experience. I wrote the stories through reflecting on the past, however, using the present tense seemed to enable me to 'time travel' by bringing the past into the present. Through this I hoped to draw the reader into the story to help them engage more effectively with what I was experiencing. Some of the stories include a follow-on reflection in which I chose to demonstrate my analysis of aspects of the experience and the insights I was gaining about issues. All stories have been given a title, which enables the reader to gain a sense of what is to come. Some of the titles were chosen to be rather startling or provocative, in order to

capture the reader's interest and invite questions which will be answered through the reading. Examples of such stories include *Fear and Dread*, *When Worlds Collide*, *Losing Control* and *Scenes from the Police State of Education*. In *Losing Control*, the focus of the story concerns letting go of control as a teacher, however, I chose a more provocative title, which gives a rather different meaning to the idea of losing control in the classroom.

Ethical considerations

The ethical guidance produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) identifies contexts which involve research into a teacher's own practice. A teacher researcher needs to consider the impact of reflective research on students and colleagues. It is essential that the research does not result in harm for the active and passive participants of research. Edwards & Hillyard (2012) discuss some of the limitations of standard research texts in how they address the ethics of research. They argue that accounts focus on theory and do not address the subjective aspects of the work, including the situational issues that arise often in unexpected ways. Edwards & Hillyard argue for more examples of the subjective realities in the literature for researchers to draw upon.

Some of the criticisms raised about researching self concern the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. Etherington (2004) discusses how it is argued that the researcher cannot help but include the stories of other people, some of whom it is impossible to make anonymous. My stories of practice include other people. These are mostly my students and colleagues, sometimes friends. As a result of my research approach I have found myself facing some of the subjective and situational issues raised by Edwards & Hillyard, which need to be addressed. The stories which I tell represent my views and the meaning that I have given to the event. The words and behaviours of everyone described in my stories are my perceptions of events, which I recognise have been presented in a way to convey a particular meaning to the reader. I must however seek to ensure that my stories do not cause harm to others. Where students and colleagues are represented I have not included any names. I decided that to make up names would be difficult since I include so many people in my stories. I decided to use letters of the alphabet for all colleagues and students. Most often I have given the label 'A' to the first student or colleague mentioned, 'B' for the next and so on. Sometimes I have gone to the other end to the alphabet and used 'X', 'Y' and 'Z'. I have used the same sequencing of letters in each story, which means the 'A' in any particular story is not the same as 'A' in the next. In this way I expect that colleagues and students cannot be identified. In all conversations given in the stories I have presented them

in a way to convey my intended meaning. I have used some pseudonyms for colleagues and pupils from the past.

There were some exceptions in which some individuals can be identified. There are two senior colleagues who can be identified due to their positions within the organisation. These two colleagues appear in the narrative in stories in which I present my feelings of unhappiness and discomfort as a result of their words or actions. In order to address this ethically I use an adapted version of Johns (2010:39) ethical mapping in my analysis of the issues.

<p>Students' position</p> <p><i>The organisation, senior colleagues and myself all claim to have the students' best interests at the heart of what we do.</i></p>	<p>Who had the authority to make the decision/act within the situation?</p> <p><i>Senior colleagues' intentions were assumed to be in the best interests of students.</i></p>	<p>Senior colleague's position</p> <p><i>Has a position of responsibility within the university. Has a responsibility to ensure that the established performance indicators are achieved within the department. Need to demonstrate taking action to ensure that high standards are achieved and maintained.</i></p>
<p>If there is conflict of perspectives/values – how might these be resolved?</p> <p><i>On occasion a senior colleague might agree with my view of how we should proceed, but feel under pressure to the organisation to follow procedures which are experienced by staff as oppressive.</i></p>	<p>The situation/dilemma</p> <p><i>I disagreed with the beliefs and actions taken by a senior colleague.</i></p>	<p>What ethical principles inform this situation?</p> <p><i>The dominant discourse concerns 'student experience' and is determined by their achievements in meeting the standards for QTS and their level of satisfaction with their courses.</i></p> <p><i>The assumptions behind the performance indicator data are given limited consideration. Impact on staff is not given</i></p>

		<i>consideration.</i>
<p>My position</p> <p><i>I have concern for the learning and development of my students as teachers. Left feeling unhappy and/or distressed due to the words or actions taken.</i></p>	<p>Consider the power relationships/factors that determined the way the decision/action was actually taken</p> <p><i>Senior colleagues have pressure placed on them and in turn place pressure on me.</i></p>	<p>The organisations position</p> <p><i>The organisation uses performance indicator data as a way to try to ensure that it is able to be appropriately competitive nationally and internationally in attracting students.</i></p>

This ethical mapping relates to my experiences with senior colleagues included in story 8 *Becoming Visible*, story 9 *Doubt and Uncertainty*, story 18 *Voices in My Head* and story 24 *Scenes From the Police State of Education*. In order to be able to include these significant episodes in the reflexive narrative it was not possible to ensure anonymity due to the positions held by these colleagues within the organisation. The stories and perceptions are my own; however, I use the ethical mapping template in order to consider the points of view of the other people involved in the episodes. Although the results of the exchanges involved discomfort for me, it is important to consider the intentions of the others and the pressures that they faced. In seeking to ensure that no harm is caused to others through my research, this analysis is important.

There are two other individuals who are clearly identifiable in the narrative. I make reference to a friend called Liz, who has given me permission to include her real name. I am pleased to be able to acknowledge her appropriately, since my conversations with her often resulted in important insights. Also my colleague CC permitted the use of her initials and I acknowledge her. Again this seemed highly appropriate given the value I give to my collaboration with her.

2.8: 6th Dialogical Movement: Dialogue with others

During the study it was important to share my ideas with others. I had the opportunity to present aspects of my work to colleagues in research seminars. These were invaluable in supporting me in being able to articulate what I was doing. Feedback and comments from colleagues provided important perspectives in addition to the challenge and support

received in guided reflection. An example of this is demonstrated in the narrative *The Beauty of Chaos* presented above. I also had the opportunity to present at a number of conferences during the years of study. Promoting resonance in others has been an important aim of this study, and feedback from conference participants has suggested this. It has been particularly gratifying to learn that my work has motivated others to examine their own practice as teachers. It was also gratifying that participants identified the 'crafting' process of the narrative. Valuable feedback came from the editors and reviewers from the Journal *Studying Teacher Education* in which I have an article published based on the early part of this study. Since publication my article has been widely accessed; more than others in the same edition. I have also had feedback from academics who consider my work to be of significant value in relation to researching teacher development.

2.9: Coherence

The notion of validity relates to a positivist scientific approach to research, in which the aim is to produce knowledge which can be generalised. This had been the dominant discourse in what constituted valid research for much of the twentieth century. Coherence is a more appropriate claim to be made for my self-inquiry study. Bentz & Shapiro (1998:87) present research as 'structured inquiry' in which the researcher considers and uses the methods which are most appropriate in seeking answers to questions in a coherent way. Bentz & Shapiro discuss how the methods used to answer scientific laboratory-based questions might be considered 'techniques', but the methods used in answering questions about human behaviour and experience might be considered 'guidelines'. In researching human behaviour and experience a range of methods are used by the researcher to look for 'patterns of coherence'. Bentz & Shapiro (1998) identify a vast range of techniques and methods used in research today in an ever changing world. They suggest that a person-centred approach to research might involve a range of methodological influences.

Lather (1993) identifies what she describes as the 'crisis in science based methodologies' due to a world that was no longer certain with absolute frames of reference. In the post-positivist world the researcher now becomes part of the researched, and research becomes lived experience. As a result of research being understood as something lived, and experience being complex, Lather proposes four frames for validity in research, two of which I consider in relation to my study. Rhizomatic validity uses the rhizome as a metaphor. This is an underground system of roots which does not arise from a solid trunk, but spreads out in many directions. This might result in a mass of complex tangled roots.

This frame is valuable to consider since it allows for the uncertainty of experience and practice. Lather considers rhizomatic validity to result in networking which to me suggests some kind of order arising from the chaos of the spreading roots. Another frame is situated validity which recognises the place of subjectivity in research. One needs to be self-reflective in meaning making. Situated validity recognises the tentative and multifaceted nature of knowledge, and enables the researcher to invite others to make their own meaning from their work.

Richardson (2005) suggests other ways of considering validity in research. She discusses the notion of triangulation in demonstrating the validity and reliability of research, which can be related to scientific methodologies. She argues that the triangle is inappropriate imagery for considering the validity of postmodern research texts. Richardson uses the crystal as a more appropriate structure since it is multidimensional and can have a variety of shapes, which might grow and change. This 'crystallisation' image for validity in research allows for the complexity of experience. I view the crystal as an interesting metaphor to consider. A crystal has structure and beauty in its complexity. Richardson goes on to identify criteria for evaluating postmodern research texts based on creative analytical processes (CAP). She suggests four criteria:

1. Substantive contribution: concerned with making a contribution to understanding of aspects of human experience.
2. Aesthetic merit: the writing should be engaging for the reader
3. Reflexivity: concerning the self-awareness of the researcher in the research process
4. Impact: does the piece engage the reader on an emotional level and inspire them to inquire into their own practice.

(Richardson 2005:964)

In my self-inquiry study I do not claim to align my work to any existing theory of practice or research. I have taken ideas and seek to demonstrate how they can be used to explain my experience, and how they have been used to inform my approach. Reflexive narrative focuses on ways of knowing which are subjective and contextual, and categorised by the individual 'I'. This differs from other ways of knowing which are considered to be objective and generalised, and can be categorised by the collective agreement. I would argue that my study addresses all of Richardson's CAP requirements. Narrative inquiry has been used

previously to research the experiences of teaching and learning, however, focusing on the lived experience of teaching through engagement with Johns' (2010) six dialogical movements is new to researching teaching. I have sought to make my reflexive narrative interesting and engaging for the reader in the way that I have expressed myself in writing, and through varying the style throughout. The long reflexive narrative is broken up into stories from practice, however, the links between them are clear and I have explained how they each relate to the whole reflexive narrative of being and becoming. I have demonstrated reflexivity through my in-depth reflections and observations of self in episodes from practice. I have demonstrated clearly throughout how I have questioned my actions, opinions and assumptions. Feedback on my stories through the inquiry group, and through publication and presentations suggest that they inspire resonance and encourage colleagues to examine their own practice in different ways. I use the ideas of Lather and Richardson as criteria for the coherence of my study.

2.10: Authenticity and resonance

A question might be asked about why anyone should believe this work. This study focuses on the constructed reality of my lived experience as a teacher rather than on a pre-existing notion of teaching and what this means. Four Arrows (2008) argues for alternative aims for research which challenge the authoritative claims for traditional research. He suggests four summary aims for enabling a more authentic experience of research which honours creativity and reflection:

- Honour the centrality of the researcher's voice, experience, creativity and authority
- Focus more on important questions than on research methodologies per se
- Reveal virtues (generosity, patience, courage, respect, humility, fortitude etc.)
- Regard the people's version of reality

(Four Arrows 2008: no page number given)

I relate these aims to my study in many ways; I believe that I have challenged some of the established ideas about what it means to be a teacher, and how a 'good' and 'effective' teacher might be determined. The tensions within teaching as practice are explored within the narrative, and I discuss in depth more of the nature of being a teacher in chapter 4. Although teaching might be perceived by an observer to be calm and ordered practice, through my narrative I have sought to represent some of the uncertainty, doubt and general

messiness of the lived embodied reality. The aim is to inspire resonance in the reader. No other person will have the same lived classroom experiences described in the narrative; however, the stories will resonate since other practitioners might have had similar experiences.

Kreber (2013) discusses a view that interest in authenticity in teaching and scholarship in higher education has increased in recent years. She argues that many academics might not be aware of the impact of inauthentic practices which have been normalised as a result of hegemony. Kreber discusses three philosophical perspectives on authenticity which might be helpful for academics to consider as they support students in their learning and development. The *existential* perspective involves becoming aware of our life purposes and possibilities, and how we need to gain an understanding of our values and how they shape our actions in the world. The *critical* perspective is how we gain this understanding through reflection. The *communitarian* perspective concerns how we are all part of a community and bounded by socially and historically constructed values and norms. I relate Kreber's views on authenticity to the core aims of this study, and the purposes of engaging with Johns' six dialogical movements.

2.11: Positioning the research

My self-inquiry study took place within an education system that favours an evidence-based approach to research, and which defines successful learning and teaching in terms of test and exam results. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) identify and discuss the development of qualitative approaches to research at the end of the twentieth century. This development was greeted by a neo-positivist resistance which called for a more 'scientific approach' through what was described as evidence-based research. The result was that a clinical trial model approach to educational research was favoured. Howe (2004) presents the argument that there are important differences between an experimental approach involving administering a medicine, and administering an educational strategy. The clinical medicine context is far less complicated than the education context. He argues:

As indicated [above], "dispensing a curriculum" is quite different from "dispensing a pill." Finally the precision with which outcomes can be measured varies considerably. Compare a "10-point reduction in diastolic blood pressure" with "a 10-month growth in mathematical understanding." (pp48)

The rhetoric concerns raising educational standards and the assumption that these can be easily measured. This leads to the dominant discourse that the evidence-based classroom is desirable. The evidence used is the test and exam results upon which a school's place in the league tables is based in England. A school's worth and value is based on its position in the league tables. This dominant discourse does not examine the assumptions behind these claims, and it does not focus on the reality of the lived experience of the pupils, their families and the teachers. In my view the dominant discourse relates to the desire for certainty. This can be obtained if generalisations can be made about human behaviour and experience. Through researching into my lived experience as a teacher I aimed to challenge some of the ideas about the desirability of generalisation in education practices. In justifying and promoting this approach to research I am considering seeing things 'big' as identified by educational philosopher Maxine Greene:

To see things or people big, one must resist viewing other human beings as mere objects or chess pieces and view them in their integrity and particularity instead. One must see from the point of view of participant in the midst of what is happening if one is to be privy to the plans people make, the initiatives they take, the uncertainties they face. (Greene 1995:10)

Greene discussed how 'great men' viewed the 'small picture' from a distance. This meant that they had a detached view of the people whose lives might be affected by their decisions. I relate this to the politicians who impose policy from the point of view of the detached 'small picture'. By coming up close and seeing the 'big picture' one would be able to see and know of the lives of people, and the reality of the impact of policy on lived experience. Narrative inquiry enables Greene's 'big picture' to be communicated. Goodson (2012) discusses how narrative research focuses on the 'smaller picture' of individual lives and the importance of identifying and presenting individual experience in modern culture and research. Although Greene and Goodson use the adjectives in opposite ways, they are arguing for the same idea, which is valuing the lived reality of experience in considering policy making.

Phillion et al (2005) recognise that narrative is an important approach to researching human experience in a society that is becoming increasingly diverse. Narrative through engaging in deeply reflective practice has the potential to result in insights of social, cultural and educational significance which might promote social justice. They argue for understanding experience as it is rather than trying to make it fit into some predetermined theory. They

recognise that narrative is presented to an audience and invite the receivers of the narrative to open their imaginations to new possibilities in knowing. I would argue that my study is to consider aspects of what it means to be a teacher which go beyond any established theory, professional standards or ways of measuring teacher effectiveness.

Self-inquiry research is a practical activity; however, doubts about philosophical positioning have resulted in me considering issues relating to modernist/postmodernist arguments. As a result the postmodern movement has been valuable to explore in connection to this self-inquiry study, and is discussed in appendix A.

CHAPTER 3: THE REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE

Introduction:

Reflexivity in this narrative is demonstrated through considering my whole journey of emergence through the experiences presented in the twenty-five stories and journal extracts. This represents the hermeneutic whole. Reflexivity is considered in depth in chapter 4 as I analyse the themes which are the parts that make up the whole.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-10

Story 1: Fear and Dread (October 2009)

I am about to teach my first session with second year undergraduate student teachers, and I feel a sense of dread; some of them had displayed very immature behaviour in their first year. Groups have been rearranged for the second year so that the students are now in age-phase groups. I wait in the workshop room not knowing who to expect. *A* and *B* are the first to arrive. They greet me in a very friendly manner, asking if I have had a good summer. *C* arrives and I think "Oh, one of the silly trio". I am surprised that she chooses to sit at the table with *A* and *B*. *A* and *B* are both mature students, who I enjoyed teaching last year due to their engagement and enthusiasm. *C* joins in the conversation, and again I am surprised that she is interested, and engaging in sensible adult interaction. *D* arrives and sits next to her friend *C*.

I introduce this first science session, aiming to convey pleasure in seeing the students again, and enthusiasm for the sessions ahead. Today our theme is *Minibeasts*, and I know from past experience that it could generate some 'excitement'. As students begin to examine the leaf litter for animal life, there are some screams, and shrieks about spiders. Although I am quite comfortable with handling spiders and other *Minibeasts*, I am aware that some people have a real fear. I find myself thinking about my own fear of dogs, in order to empathise. *A* and *B* are soon focused on the activity, working with interest and enthusiasm as they did last year. Most of the other students soon settle down and begin to work seriously.

I notice *C* sitting by herself on the edge of the room. I go up to her.

"What's wrong?" I ask.

"I hate bugs and creepy crawlies." *C* replies.

"But what will you do in the classroom?" I say.

"Don't know."

“Okay, let’s suppose you are not doing a lesson on *Minibeasts*. What would you do if a spider crawled into your classroom?” I ask.

“I’d run out screaming.”

“Really?”

“Well no, but I wouldn’t touch it or go near it.” says *C*.

“But what would you do?” I ask again. *C* shrugs her shoulders. I sit down next to her and ask again.

“What would you do in the classroom? How would you handle this situation?”

C hangs her head and will not look at me. Tears come to her eyes. I begin to feel sympathy for her. She looks just like a sad little girl, and I am aware that I would like to put my arm around her to comfort her. But she is not a little girl; she is an adult, and a beginner teacher.

“I’m not saying that you must take part in the practical activities here, but really, I do think that it is important that you consider what you will do in the classroom.” I say, trying to make a sympathetic connection. The tears begin to roll down *C*’s face. I decide that it is best if I leave her, she does not want to talk about it. I find myself questioning whether she is mature enough to have responsibility for a class of children. *D* joins her, and the pair sit together apart from the other students. I am thinking that it would be in *C*’s best interests to consider appropriate strategies to use in the classroom, before she finds herself in a difficult situation with thirty children to attend to; but she does not want to think about it right now.

A and *B* are fired up with enthusiasm. They have so many ideas.

“I wish I could go into school right now and try out some of these ideas. This is going to be great.” says *A*.

During the plenary, other students come up with strategies for dealing with *Minibeasts* if they are nervous about handling them. Some share experiences they have had in school during placements. *C* and *D* sit quietly and subdued.

I am conscious of my mixed feelings. Part of me feels that as adults they can choose not to participate if they wish, and that this is acceptable as long as they do not disrupt my session in any way. However, I do not feel comfortable with this. If I am honest, I feel that students should come to a session willing to participate, or not attend at all. I know that in the school classroom, I would not let pupils refuse to take part in a session. I would ‘make them’ do the work. I feel my natural ‘teacher instinct’ being suppressed in this undergraduate classroom.

However, we insist that students attend, since we have a full attendance requirement. We do not allow them as adults to choose not to attend. We also tell our student teachers what they must learn. We are driven by the Q Standards for Qualified Teacher Status; The National Curriculum and National Strategies requirements. I find myself considering (not for the first time) if there is something childlike about many people who chose to become teachers; and do we as teacher educators encourage this through our approach to practice?

Journal extract 25.10.09

I have been reading Mattingly (1998) further. I was interested in the notion of the narrative being about constructing future experience. The example of the nurse who has a vision of the child patient, as he/she will be in six months' time. It is important to have that vision of the patient rather than just focus on the tasks being performed for that patient. I was thinking about what this might mean for the teacher. In school I would have a vision of where I want the child to be in the future; that is what they will achieve. I do not however think that this relates well to higher education and teaching adults. In my sessions with student teachers (and others) I can give them ideas and share information and insights, but it is up to them to decide what they do with it. If I am teaching a science session I am asking the students to consider the possibilities, but they are not going to teach exactly the same content and in the same way in the classroom. They are going to hopefully use and adapt this information in order to best provide for the needs of their children in the classroom. They might of course decide not to use any of it, but do it their own way. What then is my vision for these adult students? Maybe it is about them being willing learners who take responsibility for their own learning.

Story 2: Illumination: Concerning Seeing the Light Side of the Moon (February 2010)

Beginning:

Question: What is meant by the 'Dark side of the Moon'?

Answer: We always see the same face of the Moon from Earth. The dark side is the part that we never see from Earth.

Teaching episode:

"Does the Moon move through space like the Earth does, or does it stay in one place?"

This is what a PGCE student asks me during the 'Journey through Space' workshop.

I am aware of four students working together. They have been practising the modelling and demonstration teaching approach, in trying to explain some complex scientific ideas in ways which would be comprehensible to primary aged children. As I approach them to respond, I am aware that two of the students are still discussing the problem, and using the Earth globe and Moon model to try to solve it. I hear and observe them demonstrate and describe what would happen if the Moon stayed in one place in the Earth's orbit. In this moment they come to realise that this would mean that we would only see the Moon at one period of time during the year, when Earth passed through this part of its orbit around the Sun. The students have worked out for themselves that the Moon does move with the Earth on its orbit around the Sun. Now, what they want from me is an answer to whether the Moon orbits the Earth.

The students between them are holding up the Earth globe, Moon model and torch representing the Sun. I ask them to let go of the Sun to simplify things. One student begins spinning the Earth on its axis and a second student tries to work out what to do with the Moon. I ask them to hold the Earth and Moon still. Next I ask the Earth to begin to spin slowly on its axis.

"What would happen if the Moon stayed still as the Earth spins on its axis?" I ask.

The students are unsure. I decide to re-phrase the question.

"What would you see happening if the Moon stayed in that position while the Earth spins on its axis?" I ask.

"We would always see the Moon in the same place in the sky", a student replies.

"Is this what we see happening?" I ask.

"No we see it change position and phase, so this must mean that it does orbit the Earth", says another student.

“So the Moon orbits the Earth, as the Earth orbits the Sun”, adds a third student by way of summarising what has been learned.

I am pleased that they have ‘got it’, but in that moment I become conscious of something. I think that this is an opportunity to explain my teaching strategy for these students.

I say “Here is an example to reflection-in-action. Notice that I did not tell you the answer, but asked you questions instead. I was prompting and leading you until you were able to work out the answer for yourselves. This is an example to what we mean by scaffolding, in which the teacher assists the learners’ understanding by getting them to work out the answer themselves. This helps them to understand the concepts more deeply”.

This group of students are content and I walk away from them. However, I am feeling a sense of unease and I am not sure why that is. This was a successful interaction with a group of students. I realise that I have experienced an important moment of consciousness but I am not sure what this is about.

Later that day

I ask myself why I got so excited about this teaching episode. This is a concept that I have taught to ten year-olds on a number of occasions, so surely it should be straight forward to teach it to high achieving postgraduate student teachers.

Middle of the night 2 days later:

I realise that I would not have taught the concept to ten year-olds in the same way. I would have taken a different approach. But how did I know what to do with these student teachers?

Later that week:

I realise that somehow I seem to know how to respond to a particular group of learners. This seems to be something that I do automatically, without being conscious of what I am about to do before it occurs. This episode was not just about helping adult learners to understand a scientific concept; in the moment I became conscious of what I was doing, and became aware of an opportunity to model my teaching strategies to this group of student teachers. This was a modelling opportunity that I could not and did not plan for, because I could not know before it happened, exactly how the students were going to respond to the activity, or what questions they would ask.

One week later:

Reflecting on these events in retrospect, I felt that something significant had occurred, but at first I was unable to articulate what it was. When the students first asked the question, I

took action as a teacher without even being fully conscious of what I was doing. I obtained the desired outcome in that the students were able to understand what happens to the Moon. However, in that moment of success I became aware of the strategies I had used and the potential for modelling this for these student teachers. I mentioned the process of using the teaching strategy as 'reflection-in-action', but what happened was more appropriately what has been described as 'knowing in practice' (Schön 1983), or 'tact' (Van Manen 1995), or 'intuition-in-action' (Johansson & Korksmark 2004). These are those moments when a teacher responds to learners in ways which might be highly effective, but are often difficult to articulate.

In the moment I seemed to know how to respond. On reflection later I realised how I would have responded differently with a group of ten year-olds had they asked the same question. Firstly, they probably would not have been able to work out for themselves that the Moon must move with the Earth on its orbit around the Sun. I would have had to use the Earth globe and Moon models to demonstrate the relationship very slowly, also including a model to represent the Sun. I would still have used questioning to prompt and lead them to working out the answer for themselves.

This method of scaffolding is an approach that I have used with all ages of learners. With my PGCE students I could have just answered "Yes the Moon does orbit the Earth"; however, my approach to teaching is always to help the learner to understand. I do not believe that knowing an answer is enough; it is understanding that results in deep learning. If I can scaffold learning so that the learners can work out ideas for themselves, then this is likely to result in deeper understanding. This is an example of how I interpret the meaning of 'scaffolding' in my teaching. I wanted my PGCE students to understand the concepts because good subject knowledge will give them the confidence to be able to take children's learning forward more effectively.

I am aware that this approach to teaching requires the learners to think. I am aware that learners are not always happy about this. I remember in school there were occasions when children wanted me to 'tell them' how to do a task that they struggled with. My response was to ask them questions to get them to think through stages of the task, resulting in them working out the answer themselves, with me by their side scaffolding the learning. Some children wanted what they perceived to be the easy way out. I am aware that this happens with student teachers, who want easy answers that they can use without having to think too much. I call these 'tips for teachers', rather than gaining an understanding of the principles

of learning and teaching, which can be applied to meet the needs of the learners effectively. Even some MA students have a desire to come and sit in the twilight seminar, and have me talk at them, rather than engage with a task that requires them to think. Students often want tips on how to pass the assignment, rather than focusing on learning for understanding. Am I right to take the approach towards understanding? Should I allow the learners to decide for themselves whether to think deeply or not?

The session with my PGCE students went very well, with both tutor and students happy with the outcome. I think that my sense of unease came from the fact that this teaching episode involved the learners learning about a science concept. There was a clear answer to the question which the students were able to find out. However, it is teaching the students how to teach the concepts which is much more challenging. We teacher educators expect to model examples of good practice for our students. An essential part of the 'artistry' of teaching involves responding to learners through 'knowing-in-practice', 'tact' or 'intuition-in-action'. This presents a challenge for the teacher educator because first they must become aware of the strategy, then be able to articulate it, and then explain the process to students. These moments are difficult to plan in advance.

I think that my experience of *illumination* was in becoming aware of these complex issues of practice as a teacher educator. It seems that my reflective process is resulting in me becoming more aware of 'intuition-in-action' moments. Or maybe this is an example of 'reflection-within-the-moment' (Johns 2009). My significant moment was in becoming aware of this. Had this been in the school classroom, my learning intentions would have been to help the children understand the relationships between the Earth, Sun and Moon, using models for demonstration. Reflection-within-the-moment would have involved me consciously responding to children's ideas through questioning, which would result in scaffolding to lead them to understanding. Reflection-within-the-moment was much more complex with PGCE students because it involved not only scaffolding their understanding of the science concepts, but also taking advantage of this situation to explain my teaching approach, which could be applied to many other classroom episodes.

Ending:

Comment: Maybe the 'Light side of the Moon' is the face that we always see from Earth.

Journal extract 16.1.10

I have come to realise that my way of being as a teacher is to help students to understand. To me knowledge is not enough; a learner needs to understand in order to learn deeply and effectively. I realise that this was my way of being as a learner also. I always wanted to understand things. I was not content with surface knowledge. I think that this was the reason I thought that I was stupid as an undergraduate. I remember the chemistry in particular. I tried to understand some very abstract concepts, when other students accepted knowledge. I realise that my belief about learning and teaching is that deep understanding comes when the learner can work things out for themselves. My role as the teacher is to scaffold this by asking questions. I take the learner back to what they know and understand, and then 'give them a helping hand over the bridge' in order to move forward. I have sometimes encountered resistance to this. I think that it needs an open disposition on the part of the learner.

Journal extract 31.1.10

What I have learned about myself is that I need to be confident in my expertise. I like to engage with my learners on an adult to adult level, which should mean that I do not need control. I suppose I want the learners to feel that they can have confidence in me. If I were able to establish my role as one who facilitates learning with the learner, this might be helpful. This leads me to consider, what is it that learners want from me as their teacher? Should I always give them what they think they want? What if I disagree with what they think they want? What is appropriate at different levels and how can that be conveyed to the learner? Maybe it is about the learner being able to know where they need to go and how to get there appropriately. I must consider this in future.

Story 3: When Worlds Collide (May 2010)

*AA's story*⁵

It is Saturday morning and I wonder what time they will all arrive. I have a lot to cover today, and I am uncertain of the timing. I am concerned that these students never seem to arrive on time. I do want to give them some time at the beginning for reflection and discussion on the past month, because I think that they need it.

9.40 and six of the group are here now so I can begin. We are only waiting for **B**. We begin the reflections on the past month. **CC** mentions the assignment and is concerned about having missed the last session. **D** agrees with this since she was absent also. I give a short overview of the assignment requirements. I do not wish to discuss this in depth right now since there are individual tutorials this afternoon. **E** gives her views as is usual, and I think this is helpful. **CC** seems satisfied for now. I ask if anyone else has anything that they would like to discuss; there is silence. I decide to move on to the main focus for the morning. I introduce the aims for the session, which is to consider some theories about adult learning. I know that this group have covered the theories of Vygotsky and Bruner in some depth in their previous module. Before I go on to introduce the idea of andragogy as the art and science of teaching adults, I ask them to consider their current understandings of the differences between adult and child learners. This is a multi-disciplinary group of professionals and three of them have had no experience of working with children. The other four have had varied experiences. **CC** is the only one with expertise in children's learning. I am pleased that this is a diverse group, since I think that this is likely to result in a lively discussion. **B** has now arrived, and I ask the seven to organise themselves into two smaller groups for the poster task. I am surprised that there is some hesitation. I wonder, is this due to not wanting to offend anyone by choosing people to work with, or is it that there is someone (or more than one) who they wish to avoid? They all agree that I should arrange the groups. I number them alternately one and two. The ones are a group and the twos the other.

I sit and listen to the group of three first. They have very varied professional experiences, and have differing opinions. They seem to work well together though, and decide to create their poster in the form of a Venn diagram. I let them discuss and do not intervene; I do not think that it is appropriate to give my views at this stage. I move on to sit with the other

⁵ AA represents me, and CC represents my colleague who was also my student in this module.

group. I sense some tension here, and **CC** is looking anxious and rather stressed. **E** has a lot to say as is usual, and it seems to me that **CC** is making an effort to respond positively. They have not yet written anything on their poster paper, but **CC** seems to be making notes. **B** makes a contribution from time to time, but **F** does not say anything while I am there. I am concerned about **F**; she rarely makes a contribution to group discussions. I wonder whether this is because she perceives herself as being inexperienced compared with the others. She is young and graduated with her first degree only two years ago. The others are all very experienced professionals. I am also concerned that **E** dominates the discussion. She always has a lot to say. I am concerned that the others might feel intimidated by her. I am now aware that we have run over time. I would like to move on. I tell the students that we need to come together to feedback in five minutes. Time goes by and still the group of four do not write anything on their paper. I go over and ask them to get something down. I am anxious about the time. I have a lot to cover in this session. I am sure that they could spend more time on this activity but it was only supposed to be a short introductory task. Eventually the group of four draft their poster collaboratively. I bring them all together for a feedback discussion. The group of three present their poster first; they decided to begin considering learners from the age of seven, because they felt that younger children are entirely passive and dependent on adults for their learning. Next I ask the group of four to feedback; **CC** still seems to be anxious and stressed. It is clear that these four have differing opinions. They each make a contribution to the discussion of their poster. It seems to me that they each do not wish to associate themselves with views expressed to which they do not agree. **CC** disagrees with a view expressed about children being passive participants in the learning process, unlike adults who bring their life experience. She mentions the Early Years Curriculum and asks me for my views about the National Curriculum. I think that she would like me to agree with her point of view. So far in the discussion I have not given my views. I open up the discussion without giving my views. I am thinking that I do agree with **CC**'s views, and as a colleague I would support her whole-heartedly. However, in this situation I am the tutor for a group of students, and it is not appropriate for me to agree at this point⁶.

We eventually move on to my main focus of the session. I introduce the idea of andragogy as defined by Knowles and associates. I then discuss their views on the differences between adult and child learners. I give the students my views based on my years of experience of

⁶ I wanted the students to share their ideas without being influenced by my views at this stage

working with children and adults. At this point I am agreeing with **CC**'s views expressed earlier. We discuss ideas about the development of adult learners. **E** raises the issue that there seems to be little discussion in the literature about the progression from child to adult learner. I introduce the students to the work of Perry on *Intellectual and Ethical Development*, and the work of Belenky et al on *Women's Ways of Knowing*. These ideas are new to all of the students. I would like them to spend some time considering similarities and differences between the research findings, but we have run out of time. I ask the students to complete this task in the private study time.

CC's Story

It is Saturday morning and we have a module session. I am really tired today. I am a little bit late but at least I am not the last to arrive. It is nice to see people; it is a shame I could not make the last session. **AA** asks us for reflections since the last session. I am really worried about the assignment. I feel I don't know what I am supposed to be doing. I am glad that **D** is also in the same position, since she was not able to come to the last session either. I am not sure that this is the right Masters course for me. I thought that this course would be really good since the students would not all be teachers. I did however think that there would be other colleagues from the University here though, but I am the only one. **AA** is mentioning a number of approaches we could take for the assignment. It is good that I can have a tutorial with her later. I seem to have taken up all of the reflection time. I feel guilty now.

We are going to discuss the differences between adult and child learners, this will be really interesting. **AA** wants us to put ourselves into two groups. I must resist the teacher in me taking over and organising this; I will let the others do the organising. I am surprised that no one else wants to do this. I cannot believe that **AA** is having to organise the groups.

Anyway, I am with **E**, **F** and **B**. **F** is not focused. She is telling us about her difficulties at work. I feel even guiltier now about having had all the attention on me at the beginning. I know that it is difficult to learn if you are distressed. I think that **F** really needed to have some time to talk about her work situation, in order to discharge the emotion; then she would have been in a better place to focus on this task.

This group is difficult. I really like what **E** has to say. She does not have my experience but she does seem to understand how children learn and develop. **F** also has made some good points. I find **B** quite difficult to work with. Maybe this is because my experience as a learner has been in the UK. I have a different cultural perspective to him. I cannot agree

with him though that children are empty vessels waiting to be filled. I must make some notes about what is happening for my reflections, since I am going to be writing about this session later. **AA** seems to be very concerned about timing. This is probably because she is aware that we have chosen this session to focus on for shared reflection. **AA** wants us to move on; I am not ready yet since this discussion is so interesting. I am really connecting with **E**'s point of view since she does seem to have an understanding of how children learn. This is a great discussion, and we seem to be influencing **B** now. **AA** wants us to get our poster drafted. We need to do this quickly.

I am not sure what I think of the other group's views. They seem to regard children as passive learners. I think that it is good that each member of my group gives their own views. I tell them about how the Early Years Curriculum is designed. Children do bring their experiences to the learning situation. I am sure that the National Curriculum expects the same I ask **AA** to concur. She is asking for other views and not concurring, but not disagreeing either.

I am interested in what **AA** is saying about andragogy versus pedagogy. Now what she is saying agrees with me, I am glad that the others know this now. I have never heard of Perry, or Belenky et al. This is really interesting; it is a shame that we do not have time to discuss this now. I must read up on these later.

AA's Reflections

I have learned that **CC** was not stressed and anxious as I had thought, but she had been intensely interested in the topic, and would have liked to discuss it in more depth. I had also made a number of other assumptions about the group of four. **CC** had not been writing notes for the poster task, she had been writing notes for her reflection, which we would be sharing. I had thought that **E**'s comments were the cause of **CC**'s anxiety, but it was **B**'s comments which caused concern. I had been concerned about why **F** was not participating; my assumptions were partly accurate, but there was also another reason unknown to me which **CC** was aware of.

I need to consider my main concern about timing. I had not taught this session before and was concerned about how the timing would work. I had a lot to get through in this session. Why did I feel that I should cover that amount of content? Why did I not stop and allow the students to decide how much they wish to cover? I suppose that one reason is that I tend to feel that I must give the students 'value for money' and that this includes providing sufficient content. I feel that this has been a major issue in my ITE work, which seems to be

so content driven, but do I need to do this for MA students? Does this even need to happen on ITE programmes? MA study is more about developing thinking. **CC** said that she likes to learn through engaging in in-depth discussions. Maybe I should have included less content in order to enable this to happen. There were also tensions between what I consider to be my views of the autonomy of adult learners, and feeling that I should be in control of the class as the teacher. Can I allow the learners to take control? What then is my role as the teacher? I am not sure that I know how to deal with this. What would happen if I let go of control? Would chaos ensue? Maybe I should aim to make sessions more open; possibly having a range of materials available for students to draw upon if they need them, but allowing them to determine the pace at which they would like to work on a task. I think that this is about letting go of control.

I became aware that **CC** as a member of the student group has more insight into the needs of other group members than I have, however, neither of us had any accurate knowledge of why the other students could not organise themselves into two groups. I made assumptions about the group dynamics. **CC** would like to experience a more effective learning community; however her views on the reasons why it has been difficult for the group to develop are quite different from my assumptions. In **CC's** view there seems to be a cultural issue within the group which hinders the learning community development.

I am also aware of prejudice on my part. I had thought that **CC's** apparent discomfort was due to her discussion with **E**. My view is that **E** tends to dominate the discussions, and I have often been concerned about how the others feel about this, particularly **F** and **D**. **CC** felt that she was having a very productive discussion with **E**, and enjoys engaging with her. We discussed this and realised that as teachers we tend to relate particularly to students who we perceive to be like ourselves. **CC** feels that she often has a lot to say, and therefore identifies with **E**. I on the other hand am a quiet person, who needs to be given the space to either think or speak. I tend to notice **F** a lot because she is quiet, and I realise that I have been rather anxious for her. I personally can find it difficult to be a learner in a group with very vocal and dominant people as I perceive **E** to be.

Journal extract 13.5.10

It was the narrative group yesterday. This session included C's Canadian student nurses and CJ's Masters students. I chose to present my narrative 'When worlds collide'. I was really interested in the comments made by the students. One said that she had been interested to note what I said about quiet students, since she herself is quiet and often feels invisible. I told them that I always do notice the quiet students, and am aware that my way of being is in the minority in the teaching profession. I know that former colleagues did regard the quiet children as being invisible. Another student commented on being aware that she always has a lot to say and that she had not considered how other students must feel. Another student commented on having had no idea that teachers might be so concerned about their students, others agreed with this. They felt that teachers just come in and deliver, and they had been surprised by how much goes into planning and teaching a session.

I found this a really interesting session, and my narrative was just right for this. I was quite taken with the impact my story had had on these students, and had the impression that they might view their teachers in a different light in the future. I told them that I did not feel that I could share my story with my students for ethical reasons, but that it was really valuable to gain some feedback from them. What I gained from this session was as I expected that students would gain a different and more positive view of me if they knew my story. I would of course gain more insight into the students' needs if I gained their stories also.



Journal extract 4.10.09

On Friday I read the preliminary reflective tasks for my new group of PGs. As with last year the task was '*What I personally bring to the role of teacher*', which included some guidance questions, and asked the students to reflect on their own experience as learners in school. I am unsure why, but this time I was struck by some common themes which emerged. The majority of students identified teachers and learning styles which supported them, and those which did not. They finished by saying that they intend to teach in the style that they found most effective for them as children. Most were going to be lively and enthusiastic, using lots of activity and role play. One got my attention because she echoed my experience as a learner, which is quiet and shy, not liking to be picked on to answer. She was going to consider the needs of the quiet and thoughtful children. She identified the lack of understanding about being quiet, which is assuming that the child is doing nothing. What struck me about these accounts was the need to give students feedback on considering the needs of all children. I was going to suggest to the team that we ask the students to consider in the coming weeks how they

would meet the needs of children who have different learning styles to their own. At first I thought this would be very important for their learning and development. I thought that identifying their own preference was a good place to start but they would need to move on from here. I got to consider my own classroom practice. I started thinking about the assemblies I used to do in school; how I went about choosing children for the various parts. I usually did not select children with the best speaking abilities to take the leading parts, but considered other factors, such as giving the quiet ones a chance. I was remembering in particular **A** as the narrator for *'Theseus and the Minator'*. I chose her because she wanted to do it, and I wanted to give her the chance to have some attention. She did it well and with confidence, and I was pleased that she had wanted to do it (head teacher commented on how much she had progressed). She was not however the best speaker in the class; there were others who could have performed the part better. I realised that what I was doing was giving attention to the quiet little ones who were like me as a child. Was I taking care of the invisible child that was me? What is startling is that I think that I have only just realised this with all of my years of experience; I continued to consider the 'needy child' that was me. I know how much the attention seeking extroverts used to irritate me. Did I provide adequately for their needs? What about now? I realise that with adults it is the attention seeking men who have irritated me immensely, like **Z** last year. The women do not behave in that way, but it occurs to me that they behave rather differently to get attention; usually by being rather intense, and taking too much of the feedback time. Somehow they do not seem to irritate me as much as the men. Am I providing adequately for the needs of my adult learners?

Journal extract 12.12.09

On Friday I had the PGs back after placement 1. We had a reflective practice seminar (RPS) where I had given them a guidance framework to support their reflections. It was interesting going around and listening in on the conversations. I was very aware of the strength of feelings. They talked about happiness when children succeeded, and concerns about some behaviour. One mentioned anxiety about having to tell a child off; she thought that the child would not like her for this, but was surprised and pleased when s/he came back happy after five minutes. Many students spoke of their sadness when they had to say goodbye to their children. Some were showing their cards that the children had made for them. Y mentioned how there was a day when she was in a bad mood and she was aware the children had picked up on this and were behaving badly. She reflected on what I had said before placement and decided to force a smile and positive manner. She found that she soon began to feel much more positive and the children responded accordingly. I thought that this was a brilliant example of being conscious about feelings as discussed with Liz last week. I decided to share my thoughts about teaching and emotion with the students. They all seemed quite interested and agreed that emotion played a huge part in being and becoming a teacher.



Story 4: Reflection: The Butterfly and the Volcano (June 2010)

Guided reflection and narrative as a process of self-inquiry and transformation towards achieving a vision of practice as lived reality

Being and becoming.....

One year on I realise that I am only just beginning to understand what this means. I am aware that this process of engaging in in-depth reflection has been uncomfortable, bringing all sorts of issues to the surface. I have been unsure what my focus from practice will be. I considered that I should focus on my work in teaching student teachers; however, this has not felt to be sufficient. I teach more modules on the MA programme now; most of these students are qualified teachers, but one module consists of a multi-disciplinary group of professionals who are not all teachers, and none of them have a background in school teaching. I have felt the need to be open to any teaching opportunities which arise for me, and not to focus only on work involving teaching teachers. I have been searching for some common element of my practice as a teacher that applies to any and every group that I teach. I have found this to be difficult and keep on returning to my core beliefs about teaching and the nature of being a teacher and I realise that this is based on my experience in the primary school. There I spent so much time with a class of children that I came to know them very well.

The one thing I always had confidence in as a professional in school was that I was a very good teacher. How did I know this? It came from the children's responses, feedback from their parents, and from colleagues who observed my teaching and the work that the children produced. When OFSTED began it also came from the inspectors. When I came into higher education I soon became aware that being good school teacher did not necessarily result in being a good teacher educator. How did I know this? I have allowed myself to be largely influenced by the results of student feedback questionnaires. The client group were highly critical. However, I had very positive feedback from colleagues and others who observed me teaching. So what is this all about?

When I wrote *Fear and Dread*⁷ I felt that I gained considerable insight into how I view teaching in HE, in particular how I view teaching undergraduates. I became aware of my prejudices and fears about teaching this highly critical cohort of students. I also became

⁷ Story 1 in the reflexive narrative.

aware of the subjective nature of narrative. This was my perception of events, including about the behaviour of the students. I really did not know how they were thinking and feeling, and what they learned from the session. I considered what I might gain from hearing their stories of the classroom experience. Then I considered what they might gain from hearing my story of the event. I wondered how that might alter their perception if they knew how I felt and what I thought. This seemed impossible to achieve in reality, due to the issue of power in the relationship between student and teacher, and, if I am honest, my fear of exposing my vulnerability in this way to my students.

Wheatley (1999) discusses the view that we need to descend into chaos before we achieve a new vision, and a new way of being, working and understanding. This has been described as experiencing the 'dark night of the soul'. I understand this means the feelings of acute discomfort as a result of stepping outside of one's comfort zone and letting go of control. This is how I was feeling last term. I doubted myself as a teacher educator and wondered whether I should be doing this still. I now realise that this came as a result of the depth of reflection which was bringing to consciousness emotions and thoughts that I had not considered previously (in addition to an acutely demanding workload).

Also chaos theory provides the analogy of a butterfly flapping its wings and having an impact on the other side of the world. Previous scientific thought stated that such very small changes did not have an impact. What then would be the effect of a volcanic eruption? Would this send shock waves throughout the Solar System and beyond? The real volcano delayed my return in April. This delayed completing the study with CC, and also resulted in me not being able to attend the PhD group session in April. I had intended to bring to that session a narrative based on some aspect of the study with CC. I did bring the narrative to the session in May. It was here that I met the Canadian students whose comments had such a powerful impact on my thinking. The study with CC has been my personal erupting volcano and the fall out has had an enormous effect on me. Real and personal volcanoes have definitely had an impact. I am beginning to see my way forward, and see the light.

CC and I found ourselves in a unique situation of being able to share narratives of a classroom event as teacher and student. Developing my narrative of the inquiry and sharing this with the Canadian students also had great impact on my thinking. I found their comments extremely powerful in confirming for me how students might respond to hearing

about a teacher's experience. As a result of this my thinking has shifted considerably. I believe that my teaching will undergo significant change.

As a result of these experiences I am finding my focus. The common element in teaching, which I have been trying to identify, is about the complexity of the classroom environment. This is so whether I am teaching ITE or other courses. This was also true for the school classroom. This is the issue which is the common element in all of my classroom experiences, from nursery school to MA modules. This is different from one-to-one teaching with individual learners. My focus aspect of practice is about how as a teacher I work with the complexity of a classroom event. I find myself thinking about the effect of the butterfly flapping its wings; small changes can have a great impact. In the classroom, sounds, movement, facial expressions and body language, deliberate and unconscious actions can all have a profound effect on the experiences of the participants. 'Stuff' that teacher and students bring to the classroom can also have an impact on how events unfold, and ultimately the learning that takes place.

I have returned to reading Loughran (2006). Much of what he writes is so relevant to my current thinking. It seems incredible that I did not gain this understanding when I read these chapters three years ago. I have come to realise that experience affects my understanding of what I read. I have only recently really understood Loughran's meaning, because I have only recently become conscious of experiencing it. He discusses a lot of issues around the complex nature of the classroom, and the uncertainty of teaching. He suggests that teaching should be considered as continuous inquiry into practice. Teaching is a dynamic and evolving practice. This is problematic because novice teachers would like it to be straight forward. He suggests that we teacher educators need to show students our vulnerability and talk through how events unfold in the classroom. He thinks that this might make them see that we experience the uncertainty that they experience. I was able to do this in my study with CC, but I am uncertain about how I could do this with my ITE students, particularly the undergraduates.

Loughran discussed tensions between allowing the students to learn and develop at their own pace and in their own way, and our desire to model good teaching which they will then reproduce. I resonate with his point about the process of inquiring into practice not being about getting things perfect, but as a dynamic real process. I need to pay particular attention to this. Also teacher educators should take risks and make this explicit for students so that they too will feel that they can do this. We are not giving them

prescriptions for how to teach in the classroom, but we should be trying to influence their attitudes. I agree with this, however, statutory requirements around National Curriculum, Q Standards, tests and league tables make this difficult. I do believe, however, that we can and should be looking at creative ways to work within these constraints.

I had been feeling that as an experienced teacher, how could I get things so wrong, especially after ten years in HE. But I realise that this is not how it is. Change is important and expected. It is an essential aspect of teaching. Loughran (2006:52) cites Mason as stating that disturbances in practice lead the change. A disturbance might be experienced as positive or negative. A change occurs as a result of discharging the disturbance, which can be about doing things differently, in a way that might lead to positive outcomes. Over the past year I have experienced both positive and negative disturbances. Both have resulted in me questioning what I do in practice. Currently I feel that I would like to throw it all up in the air and start again from a new and fresh perspective. My starting point is that every time I walk into the classroom I can never know what the outcomes will be. This is scary, but it is part of the reality of being a teacher.

Journal extract 18.6.10

Something interesting happened yesterday. I received an email from a MA module student who had failed her assignment telling me that my message had been unhelpful. I was shocked and distressed by this because I thought my response to her first email had been helpful. I showed my response to Y and Z for their opinions, and both said that they thought that it was fine. I considered whether I should reply or ignore it. I decided to reply. I read out the email and asked Y's and Z's opinions. I modified my tone and made it very direct and to the point. Z said why do I not begin with "I am sorry that....." I felt unhappy about this because I felt that it would be insincere and I did not want to do that. But then Z asked what effect I was trying to achieve. She said that it is about being sorry that she [student] was feeling that I had been unhelpful. In that moment I felt that something clicked. I asked myself if this is how students see me. This was never my intention. I realised that I was hurting and that this was getting in the way of me being able to see how others might respond to my actions, and the effect I was trying to achieve. I decided to follow Z's suggestion.

I realise that I am feeling so sensitive due to what has been happening with undergraduates. Any suggestion of criticism is getting to me. I am not acting rationally. This reminds me of the time when I was aware that I was not responding rationally in my dealings with N (former colleague). I have been feeling so sensitive because it seems that students are not experiencing what I have been intending. Maybe I should look at this and aim to be more aware of how I respond in the future.

Journal extract 2.7.10

Something has shifted this week. I find myself saying how it is for me. Is this about discharging that creative tension that CJ has mentioned? It is interesting that I seem to be able to do this now. Things are shifting and changing. I will see where this takes me.



Story 5: Complexity (July 2010)



Student, know, today, activity, seems, session, last, time, like, assignment

Today is the last session of the module. I am nervous and excited about today. I am going to take a few risks with the activities I have chosen. I have thought long and hard about this. I wonder how the day will unfold?

Student A arrives early and bursts into tears. She tries to explain how she is feeling. She is so anxious about the assignment; she still does not know what to focus on. I put my hand on her shoulder to express my concern. We agree to a late submission for the assignment as I am aware of the personal challenges she faces right now.

Student B is anxious about having missed the last session. He made an early start on his assignment and I have already given him some feedback on his draft. He would still like to have a tutorial later today to check that he is on the right track. I sense some distance in his manner, but I am not sure about this perception.

Student C arrives looking cheerful as ever. She feels very confident about her assignment and where she is going to take it. I am not so sure though. I have concerns about her ability to complete the assignment successfully. I am also concerned about her standard of writing.

Student D seems much happier than she was the last time I saw her. I have organised the reflections over the last month session differently, which hopefully will provide her with the space to speak. She engages actively with the discussions today. She is more vocal than I have ever seen her before. After completing the MA she has decided that she would like to become a primary school teacher. She is very happy when I offer to give her some information about the PGCE. She is pleased to hear about my considerable experience of working on the programme. We agree to discuss this later.

Student E says how much she liked the last session given by my colleague **X**. She looks me in the eye as she says that she likes **X**'s style of teaching. Is this a criticism? Is she implying that she does not like my style of teaching? I am aware of how hurt I feel. I realise that I am

over-sensitive due to recent challenging experiences. I must let go of the feeling and not let this spoil my day.

Student F is the last to arrive. He seems tired, but does not complain. He is doing the MA in one year and is finding it challenging to manage three assignments at the same time.

Student B and **Student E** dominate the discussion as usual. **Student D** is very vocal today, but **Student E** and **Student B** always have to have the last word. I am conscious of how I relate so much to **Student D** because I perceive her to be like me. I am also conscious of my feelings about others, particularly **Student E** who I perceive to be a dominant personality who has a lot to say and who I perceive to be a 'know it all'.

∞

As I walk into the room after lunch I hear a conversation between **Student B** and **Student E**.

"When do we get the time for reflection. I am too busy to reflect" says **Student E**

"Tell me about it!" **Student B** replies

"I just don't have the time to do it. I know we are supposed to be keeping a learning journal, but when do I get the time to reflect? There is always so much to do. I am just never going to be able to reflect" says **Student E**

"Yes, I know just what you mean" agrees **Student B**

I wonder about this conversation. Is this **Student E's** way of getting at me? Am I being paranoid? I have asked students to maintain a learning journal throughout this module. It seems to me that **Student E** is quite dismissive of reflection, although I know that she is quite reflective in her approach to her work. I know that **Student B** does value reflection in practice and learning, he has said so and demonstrated this, but I think he is trying to support **Student E**.

"Maybe we find the time for those activities that we value" I add.

Student E gives me that wide-eyed look that she uses when she is really paying attention. It seems to me that we have a moment of connection. She is really looking and seeing me for the first time today it seems. I sense the impact of my words and savour the moment, and feeling the 'Wise Women' for a while.

∞

These are some of my perceptions of the classroom today. I can identify factors which had an impact on my feelings and actions during the day. However, I do not know of all the factors which have an impact on the feelings and behaviour of the students during this

session. This is part of the complex nature of a classroom event. I think that today I tried to do what was best for this multi-disciplinary group of professionals who are my MA students. I am also coming to realise just *how* different it is to teach adults compared to teaching children. I think that we do not always appreciate this in ITE, in our efforts to 'model' good classroom practice. I agree with Loughran (2006) when he states that we are not providing student teachers with a prescription, but we are supporting them in developing appropriate attitudes required for teaching.

(Review of 2009-10 appendix B)

Journal extract 5.9.10

Reflecting on Patient Voices the website mentions 'Humanising Healthcare'. Is there a place for 'Humanising Education'? On one level we are very engaged with humanising, however, when I think of digital stories they usually relate to specific aspects of teaching or learning. What about being a teacher and being a learner? Maybe there is something in this. I think of the work I did with CC. This was about *being* a teacher and a learner, rather than the *doing* of it. What about 'narrative-based' education and learning, as opposed to evidence based – test results and league tables. I find myself thinking again about positivist and interpretive research and the value given to them. Can human beings be truly objective? Is this really what we mean or is it about how much of the picture we can see when we are standing in the middle of it, as opposed to when we take a step back and are more removed from it?

(Patient voices⁸)

⁸ <http://www.patientvoices.org.uk/>

Story 6: Embracing Subjectivity (September 2010)

I told my story of the classroom event in performing *When Worlds Collide* (story 3). This seemed to resonate with several members of the audience⁹. I am aware of the **subjective** nature of my story. I was trying to convey to the audience a part of my lived experience of the event; however the story cannot be considered an accurate representation of the lived experience.

My teacher's narrative was about one lived classroom event. The narrative was *my* representation of that classroom experience. This experience was unique; no other teacher will ever have that same experience, and indeed I will never have the same experience again. Yet my story had meaning for other teachers who heard it; and I learned so much from the telling of it. My story has great value to me due to the insights I gained. This is **subjectivity**; yet greater value appears to be given to **objectivity**.

∞

I am marking the dissertations for the MA. In their Methodology chapters students attempt to justify their approach to research. They position their research within the interpretive paradigm, and discuss a qualitative approach. They go on to discuss their methods of inquiry in some detail. They then argue for **objectivity**. They discuss how they aimed to be as **objective** as possible. They strive to value **objectivity** over **subjectivity** because somehow they have picked up on the perception that **objectivity** is desirable. I wonder how this has happened given that the teaching team does not promote this intentionally.

I have been allocated **A**'s dissertation as second marker. I am very uncomfortable about this because she is a colleague with whom I have worked very closely. **X** has been her supervisor and is her first marker. I have discussed my concern with other members of the team. Somehow I do not think that marking this dissertation is the 'proper' thing for me to do. Other colleagues say they understand, but are all reluctant to take on the second marking of **A**'s dissertation themselves. I discuss this with **X**; he asks if my concern is that I am unable to be '**objective**' when I mark **A**'s dissertation. I tell him no, *that* is not my concern. I am sure I can be '**objective**'; it is just that marking **A**'s work does not seem to be the 'proper' thing to do. **X**'s view is that **objectivity** should be my only consideration. I agree to continue as second marker, because I do not want to cause more stress for colleagues. However, can I be truly **objective**?

⁹ A joint conference presentation with CC on the collaboration which was the focus of story 3.

What is meant by **objectivity**? The Chambers online dictionary definitions include, ‘not depending on, or influenced by personal opinion or prejudices; relating to external facts, etc, as opposed to internal thoughts and feelings’. It is interesting that this dictionary does not have a definition for **subjectivity**.

What is meant by subjectivity? Ellis & Flaherty (1992) state that ‘....**Subjectivity**, meaning human lived experience and the physical, political and historical context for that experience.’ So why is **objectivity** considered to be so desirable? Can marking ever be free from ‘...personal opinion or prejudices?’ Can anyone be truly **objective**? Even the definitions of **objectivity** I have chosen were selected because they suit my particular interpretation of the concept more than others.

As I mark **A**’s dissertation I am aware that I am making copious notes, in far more detail than the others I have marked. Why am I doing this? I am aware that I am concerned to be transparent. I feel the need to justify every decision I make in detail. I am anxious when I meet with **X** to discuss our marking. Have I judged correctly? I am relieved that we have both made a similar judgement about **A**’s dissertation. I gave it a slightly higher grade but we agree the final grade should come between our two judgements. This episode is now finished. But it is not finished; I find that I am now anxious about how **A** will respond to knowing that I marked her dissertation. Will she think that the grade is justified? Will she be disappointed? Will she think that having me as her second marker was the ‘proper’ thing to do?

In order to be able to make fair and appropriate judgements about achievement, we begin with module learning outcomes, and assessment requirements. We have assessment criteria upon which to base the marking. The team of tutors meets to go through the standardisation procedure. In addition to this each dissertation is marked by two tutors; the first marker being the supervising tutor. However, can we be truly **objective** in our judgements of students’ performance? I am aware of **subjectivity** in my process, as I am influenced by the emotions from my lived experiences. As I attempt to assess the dissertations based on the required assessment criteria, I am aware of a range of other factors which have an influence on the judgements I am likely to make:

- ∞ The nature of the relationship I had with the students
- ∞ The subject matter of the research
- ∞ My knowledge of students I have supervised in my role as their first marker
- ∞ My limited knowledge of **X**’s students in my role as their second marker

The above include:

- ∞ The challenging relationship I had with **C** who transferred to **X** for supervision
- ∞ My judgement about the ability and effort made by my supervisees. **D** was diligent, very able and worked hard. **E** although able did not put in the effort.
- ∞ My close relationship with **A** as colleague

It seems that emotion is more likely to play a part in my role as first marker, since I supervised these students and have more knowledge of them. Emotion will also play a part in marking **C**'s and **A**'s dissertations due to our history. I am aware of the possibility of marking too favourably or too harshly due to being influenced by my past experience of individual students. As second marker I am mostly more detached from the students as individuals, but this lack of knowledge also has an impact on the judgements I make about their work.

I have to discuss the performance of eight students with **X**. We are happy with the first two since we have both made the same judgement about grades. Then I am pleased to hear that **X** has given **D** A1 for outstanding achievement. My first instinct had been to give her A1, but I changed this to A2 due to my concern that I might be judging her too favourably because she was my 'star' supervisee. We settle on a final A1 grade. We move on to find that I have judged **C**'s dissertation more favourably than **X** did. I am aware that I was concerned that I might judge her too harshly due to my perception of her as being difficult. We settle on the lower grade. There are three dissertations about which we differ slightly, including **A**'s.

We do spend some time discussing **E**'s dissertation. I have given her C1 and **X** has given her B3. As we discuss I am aware of my feelings about **E**. In my view she did not put in maximum effort. I ask myself if I am judging **E** unfavourably due to my opinion of her. We eventually agree on the C1 grade. There is one assignment that we have assessed very differently. This is **F** who was a supervisee of **X**. My judgement is B2 but **X** has given it C2. We have to discuss this for some time before we agree to give it C1 with the intention of putting the dissertation forward for moderation by another tutor.

The notion of **subjectivity** in assessment and marking is problematic and disturbing, because we like to think we are being **objective**. It seems to me that embracing **subjectivity** results in a more thorough approach to marking, because it makes us more aware of how we make our judgements. We possibly miss much in our efforts to be **objective**, because we cannot be truly **objective**. It is my view that through acknowledging **subjectivity** we gain better

understanding. Maybe my success in marking is not about being **objective**, but in being aware of how **subjectivity** plays an important role in the process. The value of embracing **subjectivity** is in the connections made and insights gained through striving to understand the lived experience.

Journal extract 15.9.10

I was interested to note how I felt when one student mentioned the word 'objective' in his sharing of his understanding of the nature of reflection. In that moment I became aware of how much my thinking has moved on lately. Previously I would have wanted to question the notion of 'objectivity'. Is this where I am right now? Writing the narrative 'Embracing Subjectivity' has certainly got me thinking in ways that I had not previously. I found myself encouraging students to form their own opinions and not just accept my views on issues such as the model for reflective thinking.

Journal extract 19.9.10

The new people¹ had a lot to say about both of our narratives. I am considering the question about why I did not tell *A* that I would be her second marker. Firstly, we do not go to students and ask them if they mind who marks their assignments. The woman said that this was not any student. I do not think that this would have been right ethically, because we have not discussed this as a team. There are no different protocols in place for marking assignments of our colleagues who are also our students. Maybe we should discuss this as a team. This issue will arise again in the future with so many colleagues taking higher degrees with us.

If I consider what might have happened if I had told *A*. She might have said fine, this is okay. She might have been unhappy about it, in which case I would have had to mention it to others in the team. This might have caused more problems. They might have been cross because I had spoken with *A*. This might have made a bigger issue of the situation. I realise that the problem is the lack of protocol. Having reflected on this, it did not occur to me to ask *A*. If I had the time again, I would still not ask her. What we need is to discuss the situation. The visitor was right though that this was no ordinary student. We do need to have some protocols for marking the assignments of colleagues.

*Does we mean I or we mean we?
You have written we for I when as well as my for me.
When I've written we, I really do mean we.
When I've written I and my, this really is me.*

Story 7: Transforming and Remodelling (October 2010)

The Old Story

Once upon a time there lived a Sage. She showed the Novices how to dance by first performing on a stage.....

It is the first science workshop session with the PGCE students. I would like them to begin to understand how children in the primary school learn science through practical investigation. Today I will introduce the process skills of scientific enquiry. I model a teacher's approach right from the start. I begin by displaying the learning objectives on the visualiser which the students also have on the handout I have given them:

Students should:

- Know of the nature of process skills in scientific enquiry
- Begin to understand the importance of process skills in science learning
- Be able to apply process skills in a practical activity

This models the approach they will be using with children in the classroom. In school it would be:

WALT: We - are - learning - today

"Today we are learning how to plan a scientific investigation".

I display the list of process skills and give a brief overview of each one. I use my set of balls to model the approach¹⁰.

"What can you tell me about this?" I begin with an open question to get the students observing. I move on to more focused closed questions to get them to use the sense of sight to really look and notice. I go through each process skill in turn, asking focused questions to encourage students to respond.

"Now can you raise questions about the set of balls?"

"Which question can we investigate easily right now?"

"Can you make a prediction about which ball will bounce the highest?"

"What do we need to consider when carrying out the test?"

"Now that we have results, what conclusion can be formed?"

¹⁰ I used three different balls to demonstrate how a teacher might use the simple set of objects as a focus for planning a scientific investigation. I would go through all of the process skills of scientific enquiry so that students understood how they can be developed (see appendix E)

“Can you form a hypothesis, which is a reasonable explanation for the results obtained?”

Now the students can go through the process themselves using the set of materials placed on their tables, and using the structured guidance on the handout. They have a set of five different tea bags which are labelled with a letter from A to J. I show them the equipment available to use for the investigation. I let them spend about fifteen minutes working through the process skills in order to plan the investigation. I move among them joining in with their discussions and giving advice when necessary. We come together for feedback on ideas and progress so far. I ask them to negotiate and modify plans so that no two groups are investigating the same question. This will provide a more interesting feedback session later. Before they begin the practical I ask them to check their chosen resources with me. I have to do a lot of direction here to ensure that they make best use of the limited resources, and select those best suited to their purpose. I am interested that they all seem to go for the large beakers. Some are so eager to get started that they get up and grab beakers before I have the chance to discuss the plan with them. I have had to do so much running around, talking and organising that I am tired now. I engage with each group to ask them to justify what they are doing. I sometimes prompt and lead them in a different direction to improve their scientific method.

It is now time for the plenary session. Groups give a short overview of their investigation and what they have found out. They all agree that they have learned something about tea bags that they did not know before. I explain that I have given them some familiar materials in an unfamiliar context in order to try to get them to consider the child’s point of view. As successful adult learners these students have wealth of life experience, and take much for granted in ways that are different to children’s points of view. Students say they enjoyed the session. Later in the week they evaluate the science workshop as one of the sessions they enjoyed most during the first induction week. This has been a successful beginning.

∞

Transforming

I have an idea. I meet with Y to consider what we will be doing in science with the PGCE students. We agree that the introductory session works well, but I suggest we do it differently this year. I explain my idea. “I like it”, he says enthusiastically. “We are taking a risk though”, he adds. “I know we are” I say; “Let’s do it”; we agree.

∞

The New Story

Once upon a time there lived a Meddler. She asked the Novices to begin the dance, and then she joined them in the middle.....¹¹

It is the first science workshop session with the PGCE students. I would like them to begin to understand how children in the primary school learn science through practical investigation. Today I will introduce the process skills of scientific enquiry. I share the aims with them which are:

- Introduction to learning and teaching science in the primary school
- Introduction to practical investigation

These are all successful adult learners who bring their wealth of life experience to this journey of becoming primary school teachers. They all have experience of science as learners, since GCSE grade C or above in science is a requirement for entry onto the programme. I tell them that this is my starting point as a teacher; I am beginning by considering what my learners already know and understand. I tell them that the approach I will be using with them is going to be different from that I would use with children in the classroom; I will explain this later. I have decided to give them a handout at the end of the session. I explain that the task is for them to use the set of materials on their tables to plan and carry out a scientific investigation in any way that they choose. The materials are a set of tea bags labelled A to J. I show them the equipment. I put some guidance points on the visualiser, asking them to consider collaboration and negotiation, and to ensure that all group members participate. I give them some brief questions to reflect on when they have finished the investigation. They have fifty minutes to complete the task. I say that there are two aspects of the task that I would like them to consider. One is the actual scientific investigation and what they learn from it; the other is the process and experience of working within the group.

I have arranged the tables so that the students are in groups of four, five or six maximum. I am expecting that they will find collaboration and negotiation quite challenging. I have asked them to decide what assistance they would like from me if any. I intend to observe what happens and only answer direct questions if asked. I go around to the different groups and observe. I resist the urge to intervene and direct the students. Some groups are working easily and smoothly, but others are taking a long time to reach agreement. Sometimes they call me over, but only to ask for another piece of equipment. Sometimes

¹¹ The idea of meddler-in-the-middle was devised by McWilliam (2009)

they ask if their approach is correct; I remind them that what they do is entirely their own choice. This feels easy. I am aware that I do not feel tired as I usually do at this stage in the workshop. I have not been running around directing and organising; the students are making their own decisions. I am conscious as I observe that I will be sharing my reflections on the session with students later. I am surprised and pleased that the students have used the resources effectively without any direction or intervention from me. It is now time for the plenary session. Each group in turn presents what they did and how they experienced the activity. I notice that they have all engaged in systematic scientific investigation. Many identify the challenges of working in a group, and their thoughts on the implications for the teacher when working with a class of children. I share my reflections on the activity, including the reasons for my actions and my observations during the activity. Each group in turn has identified issues related to learning and teaching. Several have realised in this first session the importance of a teacher being well planned, and trying out practical activities before giving them to the children. I give them the handout during the final ten minutes. They identify the process skills used in the activity. They realise that they have successfully engaged in a systematic scientific investigation using familiar everyday materials. They look pleased. They say that they enjoyed the activity, and feel less anxious about teaching science now. I explain how I used to teach the session, and demonstrate my teacher modelling using the set of balls and the structure from the handout. I feel that the new approach provides them with a much richer experience; they agree with this view, even those who said earlier that they would have liked more direction from me. This first science workshop has been evaluated well again this year. This has been a successful beginning.

Transforming.....

To be continued

Reflections on Transforming and Remodelling

We taught the introductory science workshop with six groups of PGCE students during induction week; three each. Both Y and I agree that the risk paid off well. At first I found not controlling rather challenging; as I went among the small groups, I was aware of wanting to intervene, particularly to encourage students to modify their scientific method. I realised that completely accurate method was less important than what they were learning about teaching and learning. I also discovered that the groups were often able to identify flaws in

the method and to change the question in order to address this without intervention from me. I attempted to be more mindful of myself and how I was feeling and responding in an attempt to model differently. I chose to share my reflections about my role as the teacher during the session. This included explaining how I had to stop myself from intervening and directing during the session. Student **A** mentioned that at one point when I came to observe her group she had been concerned that I would interrupt them. She had not wanted this because they were engaged in an interesting discussion. She had been pleased that I had not intervened. She explained that this incident made her realise that she had always felt the need to engage with the learners as much as possible in the classroom, but she now understood the importance of allowing some space and independence in learning. I found this to be an interesting comment, and one to consider and share with colleagues later.

In sharing my reflections I also demonstrated an example of my uncertainty as a teacher. I discovered some minutes into the third session that I had one group of seven students. I had intended that there would be groups of four, five or six. I had missed an extra chair at one of the tables. I asked Student **B** if she would mind moving to another table to make a group of five. She said she did not mind, and moved to the other table. After this I worried about whether I had acted correctly. I was controlling again. Did it really matter if there was one group of seven? I knew that the larger groups were likely to be the most challenging, and I had wanted six to be the maximum. I worried that **B** did mind moving, but had decided not to make a fuss. I was concerned that I might have disrupted a group bonding process. I remained uncertain about this being the correct decision. When we came to the plenary, I decided that I would share this uncertainty with the students.



Extract from Reflections on an emotional episode (December 2010)

I know that I do not work within a culture where the emotional aspects of professional practice are acknowledged, yet they are evident everywhere. I consider how we responded to the death of a colleague. I consider how we dealt with another colleague's grief. I proceeded to continue with my professional life without consciously acknowledging the deep emotional impact that these events had on me. **It seems so obvious now, how could I not have been aware?**

I find myself recalling the Jenny Mosley's Circle Time model for whole school improvement and development. I remember how whilst teachers were willing to embrace this for supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing, they did not seem to be willing to engage in the process themselves. It requires participants to attend to feelings and provides support for sharing and resolution (Mosley 1993). I have not encountered a school that uses this with its staff. In seeking out Mosley's Golden Rules for staff, I have decided that there is one which I think is pertinent to me for focus:

'I do not have to have everyone's approval all of the time to know that I am trying my hardest'

(Mosley 1993: 54)

Story 8: Becoming Visible

I am teacher, I am learner.

I am the roots, the firm and strong foundation.

I support others, and allow them to sparkle.

But who looks beneath the surface to really see.

I am different, I am me.

I strive to walk the talk, when others talk the talk.

But, when under pressure they talk the walk.

I am judged and I am counted.

I am given a number but not a value.

I am invisible

The system can only see what it has created in its own image.

They are only willing to see what they are looking for, not what is really there.

I am invisible

How is teacher effectiveness determined?

Liz: You have high expectations; you want the best for your learners.

PG student: Thank you so much for all you have done for me, I have learned so much from you. You are the best teacher.

UG student: I didn't like this course; I didn't learn anything. Before it started I understood how this subject should be taught, but now I am confused. Now I am not sure. I don't like you. You are the worst teacher.

Colleague: Maybe they will look back in the future and see just how much they have learned from you.

HoD: The number does not fit. Enough of reflection, now I am looking for some action.

By looking for your own image you do not see what is really there.

I am invisible

I am different

I am created in a different image

I am quiet

I am female

I am small

I am Black

I AM HIGHLY VISIBLE

Yet I remain unseen

Journal extract 2.2.11

I realised that my narrative was not about becoming visible, it is about what makes an effective teacher. How can this be determined? This also means examining what makes for effective teaching and what is effective learning. These issues are complex. My becoming visible is only one aspect of the issue. It is part of my experience, but not the main thread. I need to consider other experiences of teaching in this question. As a teacher of student teachers and practising teachers I need to consider my students' practice dilemmas along with my own. It occurred to me that teaching is a complex undertaking but we tend to simplify it in ITE. It is simply about delivering the curriculum not inquiring into it. It seems that government are producing a new breed of teacher, not in their own image but in some image.

Recollection:

As a young teacher of secondary pupils I was mistaken for one of the thirteen year old girls – *not seen as a teacher!*

As a primary teacher in my late thirties sitting at table with my Year 6 children at lunchtime during school journey, I was given a child's meal – *not seen as a teacher!*

On a visit to Westminster Abbey with the same Year 6 class I was standing in front of two guides who were talking about the children and wondering who had brought them in – *not seen as the teacher in charge!*

Story 9: Doubt and Uncertainty (February 2011)

Developing, moving, turning, swirling, ever changing.

I leave feeling shocked. So, HoT thinks that academic development is not important. We should be focusing on training good classroom practitioners because that is what the Training and Development Agency (TDA) pay us for. She said we are not concerned with the academic aspects of learning; that is only what the University wants? Did I hear this correctly? Does she really mean this? I did not challenge her because now is not the time, with the Ofsted inspection in three weeks' time, and I know that she is under pressure. Our undergraduate programme is an honours degree with QTS. This *is* academic as well as professional. Surely academic and professional go hand in hand. I feel very uncomfortable about the exchange. Am I the one who has got it so wrong? I discuss my doubt with another colleague. He agrees with me about academic development as well as professional. I had asked HoT about using the word 'trainee' to describe our student teachers. She says that we must use it because it is written in all of the TDA documentation. I press her further on this, and she admits that Ofsted and the TDA would not penalise us for using the word 'student' but we *are* going to use 'trainee'. I try to remind her that as a whole staff team we agreed to use 'student' and 'student teacher'.

The PGCE and undergraduate programmes are both academic as well as leading to the professional award of QTS. 'Trainee' to me suggests an individual learning technical knowledge that does not require critical or reflective thinking. 'Student' suggests education involving inquiry and development beyond just a consideration of technical knowledge. I aim to encourage my students to become critical thinkers, who do not accept what is presented to them without questioning, and considering alternative points of view. I believe that teachers who do this are likely to become the most effective practitioners. But *how* is an effective practitioner to be determined?

I am concerned that HoT holds such views of teacher education. What kind of practitioners then are we sending out into schools? I think of my Masters students. Each week I hear of their concerns about the demands of the job. They are concerned with their targets, the latest prescribed teaching methods to be employed; test results, league tables, and Ofsted requirements. Effective learning is demonstrated in children achieving the desired level in the tests or exams. This means that the school will be placed in a good position in the league tables. Head teachers are targeting certain children for 'booster' classes in order to

get them up to the desired level for the SATs tests. Good SATs scores mean high in the league tables.

In group discussion MA Student **A** talks about her reception class. She is struggling to teach them an aspect of phonics; they just don't seem to get it no matter how hard she tries. Why not let this go if the children are not ready for it, she is asked. She says she cannot let it go. The government expect her to use this method, and she feels that she has a duty to them to comply, since they employ her. I am interested that Student **A** does not think that her first duty is to the children and their needs. I wonder whether by focusing on what children cannot do she is missing the real progress being made elsewhere. Maybe their real progress cannot be quantified. Maybe if Student **A** could see what is really happening she might not be so despondent?

Educational reforms of the last two decades have focused on objectifying specific learning outcomes resulting in much superficial rather than substantial learning. With emphasis on what may be superficial behaviours, little attention is given to assimilation, internalisation, or integration of thought.

.....honouring teaching and learning as complex and developmental in nature.

(Macintyre Latta in Four Arrows 2008: 112)

Current practices in school education consider that learning is about meeting prescribed outcomes, which can often be measured by tests. Does this mean that the effectiveness of a teacher is determined by their learners' test results, or boxes ticked for learning outcomes met? This approach does not acknowledge the complex nature of learning and teaching. I see learning and teaching as fluid; ever changing and developing. It seems difficult to capture the lived reality as a 'snapshot' since it has changed in the next moment.

Although learning and teaching are complex practices and experiences, in ITE I think we try to simplify them by focusing on the content of the curriculum. This means that our student teachers often think that learning to teach is about teacher educators 'telling them what to tell'. They expect us to provide them with a 'book of recipes' for classroom practice. The challenge comes when we expect them to think and enquire into practice. The challenge comes when children do not respond as expected; what does the teacher do now?

Teaching involves so much including building relationships, management abilities, understanding social and psychological aspects of being, one's own and others' emotions, awareness of physical needs, intuition, and pedagogy as well as good subject knowledge.

However, we do not focus on all of these aspects of being a teacher in our teacher education programmes.

Maybe colluding with the objectification of learning, and the over simplification of teaching as practice is the way in which teachers cope with the emotional demands of the complexity of the profession. The more I reflect on these issues the more I experience a sense of doubt about whether I am and can ever be an effective teacher.

Then I watch the Richard Dimbleby lecture on BBC given this year by Michael Morpurgo entitled 'Set our children free'. I listen to this with excitement. He speaks of the restrictions and limitations of league tables and the focus on test results. He speaks of the need for children to learn more than just the curriculum subjects. They need to be able to make important life choices. Relationships are important if learning is to take place, but how can teachers focus on this effectively with such large class sizes. He speaks of the need for smaller class sizes; for children to begin school later; for children to have more experiences to learn outside the classroom; for children to sometimes engage with adults other than teachers such as writers, poets, artists and scientists who are invited into schools. This is what I have been saying for decades, but no one is listening to me. I notice some illustrious guests in the audience, however, these are well known people that I would expect to be there; Michael is preaching to the converted. But this lecture has been recorded. Maybe some of the policy makers might see this.

No one is listening to me; maybe they might listen to Michael Morpurgo.

Developing, moving, turning, swirling, ever changing.



Story 10: More Beauty from Chaos (March 2011)

I am excruciatingly busy
Teaching every week day
Teaching on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings
No time to take off in lieu
Teaching six different modules
I am leader for three of them
Teams of colleagues to manage
I am professional lead for primary science
All of the primary science to oversee
Coping with the demands of a new technician who knows little about science
Having to go over every minute detail
All this and trying to fit in supervisions meetings for MA research project students,
BA research projects too
Undergraduate year 1 student teachers need so much guidance
Undergraduate year 3 student teachers are all very anxious as they approach the end of
their programme
And I must take care of my PGCE seminar group, and meet with my personal tutees
Then there is the new MA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion module
Taught for the first time this year
As module leader I have planned it brand new
There is no slack
And now Ofsted
I don't have time for this
More demands
When do I plan?
When do I study?
When do I sleep?

It has been crazy, yet in the midst of all this chaos, I am able to find beauty.

The new Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) module has expected learning outcomes as stated in the Module Document. But what I really hoped for was to be able to raise

awareness, which would make a difference to these teachers' lives and practice. I told them that my role was not that of 'sage on the stage' telling them how it is, or even 'guide on the side'. My role as tutor would be 'meddler in the middle'. I would provide materials and questions which would promote and provoke thinking and discussion.

Now I see from their class discussion, just how critically they are engaging with the issues. They are raising a number of thought provoking questions. They are becoming more aware. This is gratifying for me as their tutor. Here is some beauty arising from the chaos of my professional life.

I experience synchronicity; ideas and materials come at just the right time. I show my EDI students the video of Joel Burns'¹² passionate exposition. When it finishes there is silence in the room; not a breath can be heard. I let the silence continue for a while. Then I speak, inviting them to share their thoughts with others in small groups, or to sit in silence if they wish. Later they begin to share their thoughts in the wider group. They speak of ideas about change, and trying to influence children's attitudes from a very young age. They agree that it is more difficult to influence the adults' attitudes though, but they will return to their schools and discuss issues with colleagues, and engage with parents. I see change happening; seemingly, more beauty from the chaos of my professional life.

Today it is the II (another MA module), and tonight we have had an inspirational speaker, presenting passionate ideas about inclusion with a particular focus on disability education. Back in the seminar room I ask students how the presentation might have challenged their thinking. The response is the usual despondence. The speaker was too idealistic they say; this is not the reality of actual classroom practice. They don't agree with inclusion for all in mainstream education. They think disabled children should be put in special schools. How can a teacher provide for the needs of a seriously disabled child when they have 28 or 29 other pupils to cope with? They continue to discuss the hardship of classroom practice. Not enough resources; not enough time; pressure to meet targets. Then someone suggests that these are all the reasons why teachers decide to leave the profession. This is a real low point; I hear these complaints every week. These teachers' experiences of practice relate very much to my own.

Critically reflective teachers know that while meeting everyone's needs sounds compassionate and student-centred, it is pedagogically unsound and psychologically demoralizing. They know that clinging to this assumption will

¹² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax96cghOnY4>

only cause them to carry around a permanent burden of guilt at their inability to live up to this impossible task.

(Brookfield 1995:21)

I recognise that my basic assumptions about effective teaching come from my ideal vision of primary school teaching, which concerns working with the 'whole child'. In higher education this would relate to being able to meet the needs of individual students. Brookfield (1995) has a view that this idea concerns market forces in a capitalist economic system; basically, universities are businesses wanting the consumers' money. I view this ideal of working with the 'whole student' differently. I feel that this is the ideal vision of practice which many teachers wish to pursue when they come into the profession. The harsh face of reality means that being able to work with the 'whole child' or 'whole student' effectively is not often possible.

Back in my seminar room with students something stirs within me. We do not have to be so despondent. We do not have to leave the profession because reality does not live up to our vision. Learning and teaching are complex and fluid, ever changing. Maybe we need to pause and look around and notice what is happening. I take a risk. I ask the students what it is that they want. In an ideal world what would they expect? I ask them to hold the vision. No one rejects this idea, so I proceed. I mention how we desire to change the world; it is good to have a vision so we know which direction we are going. I talk of small steps, tiny steps in fact. I ask them if these are worthwhile. I mention the reality of a profession driven by targets, test results and statistics. I suggest that maybe by focusing only on these demands we might miss the real progress being made by learners, because this cannot be measured, and boxes cannot be ticked. Maybe we should pause from time to time, look up and around, and see what is really happening. We might then experience those 'magic moments' in our professional practice when we see our learners' real progress, which cannot be quantified easily.

Student **A** tells us her story from practice. She has a girl in her triple science class who does not appear to be well motivated and is not predicted to achieve well in the GCSE exam.

Student **A** observed this pupil one lunchtime last week explaining a complex chemistry calculation to a boy considered to be a much higher achiever. The girl had understood the calculation and had given up her lunchtime in order to help a struggling fellow pupil.

Student **A** says that this was unusual. This girl usually spends her time with her boyfriend

during the lunch hour, but on this day she was giving freely of her time, and demonstrating her learning.

Student **A** says that this was a magic moment for her as a teacher. She had not thought of this until I mentioned holding on to those magic moments in the midst of negativity.

Student **A** is beginning to understand; other students in the group agree. My risk has paid off, and I realise that this is my magic moment as a teacher; my students have risen above the negativity, and in this moment are willing to look beyond the targets, statistics and tick boxes. These are the moments that make professional practice as a teacher worthwhile. Here again is more beauty from the chaos of my professional life.

I am aware of learning so much through my work with MA students. It seems that I am learning along with them. I am engaged with critical reflection of my practice as a teacher, and I am striving to support my students in critically reflecting on their own practice. I am a teacher who is teaching teachers, and it seems that their concerns are also my concerns, and my concerns are their concerns.

More synchronicity follows. In reading Senge et al (2005) I consider the idea of suspension and 'seeing our seeing' (pp 29). They discuss the need to stop and remove ourselves from our habitual ways in order see things freshly. This involves becoming aware, and can be very uncomfortable, often due to the fear that what we uncover might destroy our way of being. However, I think that this pause and suspension might help us to see what is really there rather than what 'they' tell us should be there.

I recall my response to a recent general email sent by a colleague, urging us to watch an inspirational video called 'The Evidence-based Classroom'. Another colleague responded saying that she thought it 'remarkable' and had bought it to use with her students. I watched this 'remarkable' video, and felt a sense of unease. The message concerned measurable outcomes from education. It seemed inadequate to me, only telling a part of the story.

How do adults learn of the existence of hegemony – the process whereby people learn to embrace ideas, practices, and institutions that actually work against their own best interests – and their complicity in its continued existence? And, once aware of it, how do they contest its all-pervasive effects?

(Brookfield 2005:31)

I feel I am becoming more aware of hegemony in practice, but sometimes feel I am the only one who notices. However, I must remember Student **A** and her gaining insight. I take

another risk this week and ask the II module students if they can identify what they are passionate about professionally. They all have much to say, and none of it relates to measurable outcomes. The students seem comfortable to hold this passion for the moment. The session has begun with a positive view of practice this week. Again I see more beauty arising from the chaos of my professional life.

Journal extract 6.3.11

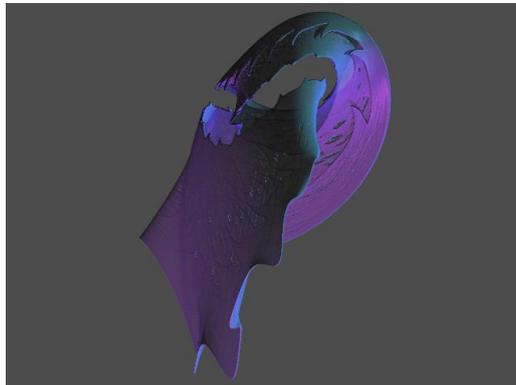
I feel that when I can engage with a student on a one-to-one basis I can attend to their needs appropriately, however, when having to teach such large numbers the system does not allow this to take place as it should. This is what my MA students are experiencing in school also, but most have probably not thought about it in any great depth, and do not challenge the system. It seems to me that learners need to engage socially in order to learn effectively, but they also need some individual one-to-one teaching and support from the teacher in order to achieve their true potential. If we were able to do this effectively, there would be no need to talk about provision for special educational needs (SEN) and other specific needs, since this would be embedded within what we do for all learners. Instead teachers have to work within a non-ideal system that does not support meeting the needs of all learners. Learners do not need to be labelled as SEN, EAL (English as an additional language), gifted and talented, or other if the learning ethos was about supporting individual learners' needs.

Instead we need to make small steps towards, rather than achieving the vision of practice. In order not to be too despondent and to survive within the profession, we need to accept that things are not perfect and we are doing the best we can. We hold that vision of perfect practice, but stop and pause from time to time, really look around at what is really going on, and notice the real progress being made and know that what we do is worthwhile. Our best might not be quantifiable, or win us any awards or accolades, but noticing the real progress that our learners make is worthwhile.

Story 11: Unravelling: Work in Progress (April 2011)

THREE SKETCHES

Professionalism



(Chaotic flow solid, random light: 24.3.11)

What does it mean to be 'professional' as a teacher?

"Conforming – playing a role – not letting the real you out"

(First year undergraduate student teacher)

"Knowing where the boundaries are"

"Being a role model for pupils"

"Limiting what you do"

"There is a difference between primary and secondary teachers"

"Protection"

(Teachers on the MA programme)

This gets me thinking. What does professionalism mean to me? Do I let the real *me* out?

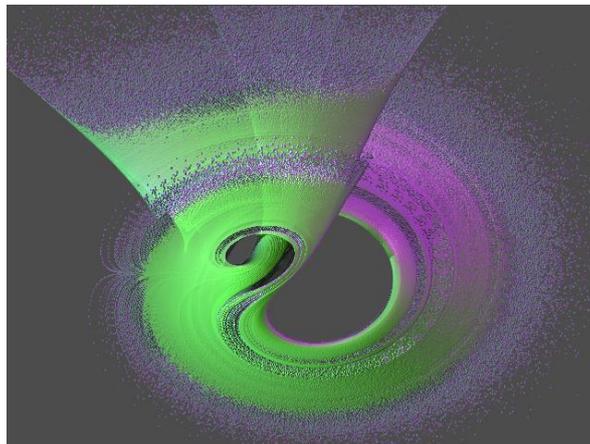
As a secondary school teacher I wore a mask and heavy suit of armour. I did this for protection; mine and theirs, but mostly mine. So what did they see? I think they saw a strong, reliable and dependable individual. This made them feel safe. What they did not see was the sensitive, fragile and vulnerable reality within. They did not see the pain and suffering. The mask and armour kept it contained. I took off my armour and mask on my way home from school each day, but I carried them around with me all of the time ready to put on if I encountered pupils.

As a primary teacher I still wore the mask, but I also wore a thinner, lighter, softer suit of armour. It was still there to protect. Again they saw a strong and dependable individual,

who helped them to feel safe, and made their days interesting and exciting. The reality was still sensitive and vulnerable at times, but far less fragile. I left the mask and armour behind in school when I went home.

I came into higher education to teach adults. I did not think that I would need the mask or armour. I wanted to reveal the real me. I feel most fulfilled professionally when I can be myself, without mask or armour. I am still sensitive and driven by the desire to be strong. Sometimes the mask slips back on, but I must remember that I am also vulnerable; I must risk showing this to my students from time to time. My students have constructed or are constructing their own masks and suits of armour. They need my support and advice. So, I keep my old mask and suits of armour packed away in a box. Occasionally I take them out and show them to my students and explain how they were formed.

Subversion



(Chaotic flow solid, random light: 1.4.11)

I am striving to be a critically reflective teacher.

I am asking questions, but not necessarily expecting answers.

I am trying to articulate my thinking.

I speak out.

“Teaching and learning are complex processes, but we only skim the surface in teacher education programmes. We don’t talk about emotion in teaching. We don’t support our students in dealing with the emotional side of teaching.

And what is a successful learner? Is it one who gets the right test results? Is it one who meets the directed success criteria? It seems to me that much more is going on. I

remember a six-year old called Bessie. I observed her in the classroom. She chose to learn how to spell the names of her classmates. She chose to explore reflections of light. Bessie

was learning; but not doing what her teacher had asked. I observed a successful learner, but there was no test score or box ticked.”

A is angry and reacts to my words.

“We do take care of our students very well in the SoE!

There never was a golden age of education when things were much better than now”

I am surprised, this is not what I said, and she has not understood my meaning. Am I perceived to be subversive for daring to challenge what is held dear in the SoE? What must the others think?

I recall an incident

We were invited to share our metaphors for teaching and learning. Some quoted from books; others brought a picture. Collegiate feedback was given to all who shared. I was the last to speak. I thought of my experience as a spiritual healer. I spoke of teacher as healer, bringing down the light and helping the learner to draw out what is already there. This was greeted with silence. Was it stunned silence? What did they think? Someone quickly changed the subject, and the session was concluded. I had no response, but reaction was silence.

Daring to be different

Daring to challenge

'Magic'



(Polynomial function: light; 5.4.11)

The penny drops for PGCE Student **A**

“I observed the teacher working with a child. She was asking him questions. Every time she asked him something he thought of another way to try out the task, until he eventually got it. The teacher wasn’t teaching him she was just asking him questions; (slight pause) but I suppose that is what teaching is all about isn’t it?”



I have implemented a new plan for undergraduate year 1 science this year. I want the students to tell us what they have learned, rather than regurgitate what we tell them. I invited them to ask what they want to find out. They ask a lot of questions; I am enjoying the module this year. The students seem to be enjoying the science module. I feel energised and interested, not exhausted as previously.



I wanted to go beyond the stated learning outcomes for the module, I wanted to raise awareness; I wanted to make a difference. I showed my students the video¹³. When it finished there was silence. Not a breath could be heard. I paused and let the silence continue. This was special – ‘...not the absence of words but the presence of understanding’ (Sharmer in Senge et al 2005:78).

¹³ Joel Burns’ (2010) plea to put an end to homophobic bullying as a result of a number of recent suicides among teenage boys, who had suffered this type of bullying. (see story 10)

Then these teachers, my students, began to speak. They spoke of change and influencing the attitudes of their learners from an early age. They would go back to their schools and discuss with colleagues and parents.



I have struggled to persuade teachers who are my students to look beyond the tests and prescribed success criteria. I wanted them to see that there is more going on. I wanted them to see the 'magic' for themselves. They did not get it. I wondered if I was the one who had got it wrong. Was I a fossil locked in past strata?

Then **B** spoke of her pupil, and recognised a 'magic' moment when she really 'saw' the achievement of this girl, which could not be quantified.

C was adamant that comparing test results before and after was the only way to determine successful learning. Then she began to listen and hear. She looked and saw other things going on. Now she is willing to see beyond the numbers.



Reflections and readings:

I have been inspired by the ideas of Susan Hiller who currently has an exhibition at the Tate Britain. She produced a narrative in the form of artwork called 'Work in progress' in 1980. This involved unravelling the canvas of one of her previous paintings and then weaving the threads together into a new three dimensional form which she called 'thread drawings' or 'doodles'. Over two weeks she unravelled and made a new piece each day. The process of creating the art evolved each day and was not predetermined (Gallager 2011)¹⁴. This idea resonates for me. It seems to relate to what I am doing in identifying the themes emerging from my narrative. Themes include, complexity, subjectivity, emotion, doubt and uncertainty, beauty and magic. I had chosen to focus on three this month, professionalism, subversion and 'magic', and once again I experience remarkable synchronicity in being drawn to the exhibition at this time.

During this current academic year I have found that I have been learning so much through my work with the MA students. In the session when we discussed the nature of professionalism, the focus was largely on how we present ourselves to our learners as teachers. My students raised issues that I had not thought about before. It also became

¹⁴ Gallager explained Hiller's approach to her art.

evident that views differ widely, and that behaviours which some teachers consider to be appropriate were considered to be unprofessional by others. Different models of teacher professionalism orientation exist. Hoyles cited by Evans (2008) formulated what was described as restricted and extended views of professionalism. Restricted related to focus on the day-to-day aspects of the job, but extended professionalism is concerned with a wider vision of the purpose of education. Evans discusses the changing nature of views about aspects of teachers' professionalism. My students raised a number of issues in their discussion, including how to engage with social networking and maintain professionalism, and how they comply with government directives. I feel that considering teacher professionalism is a complex undertaking. Evans' notion of 'professional culture' encompasses the range of issues in my view, since it allows 'professionalism' to be complex. I am aware of how I am changing. I have so many questions arising. I often feel out of step with some of my colleagues. It sometimes feels quite dangerous now to express my views.

A danger facing teachers who move into critically reflective mode is that of being marginalized. In a hostile culture, critically reflective teachers can be labelled as subversive troublemakers whose *raison d'être* seems to be to make life as difficult and uncomfortable as possible for those around them. Raising challenging questions can lose them friends, harm their careers and turn them into institutional pariahs

(Brookfield 1995:235)

I am interested in Brookfield's views on committing 'cultural suicide' as described in the quote. I am aware of having questioned what 'we' do in the SoE. I will try using 'I' instead of 'we' as Brookfield suggests, and see if this makes a difference. I know that I am not the only subversive however, and maybe saying 'I' might draw others out.

I was interested in hooks discussing Thich Nhat Hanh's views on teacher as healer (hooks 1995: 14). This is how I saw myself as a teacher many years ago in the primary school. My attempt to explain this to my colleagues in the SoE many years later did not go down well. Whilst no one commented on my metaphor at the time, later in the corridor one colleague did approach me to ask if the crystal I was wearing was my healing crystal. This showed that she did have an awareness of where I was coming from, but she had chosen not to associate herself with my 'strange' ways in the presence of other colleagues. Teacher as healer means that the teacher needs to attend to her/his own healing and progress first in order to support learners effectively. This is a way of being which hooks considers that a majority of

teachers are reluctant to engage with. hooks' ideas for 'engaged pedagogy' would support learners self-actualisation (hooks 1994). In order for this to happen effectively teachers would need to demonstrate this process in themselves. I have always believed that teaching and learning go hand in hand. I am a teacher and a learner. During this academic year I have sought to demonstrate this more for my students. I have mentioned my own studies to each group that I have taught. This has made an impression on some students, who sometimes ask me how I am getting on. I am aware that there is more that I should do. I have attempted to make my vulnerability more transparent at times. I must continue to pay attention to this.

In challenging times it is important to pause, look up and around and see what is really going on. This is a view I have been sharing with my MA students who struggle with the demands of everyday classroom practice. But 'magic' moments do exist; we need to take time to see them. Senge et al (2005) raise the importance of silence in being able to see. Sharmar (in Senge et al 2005:79) discussed the importance of silence for real communication to take place. He describes this as 'seeing from the inside'. These experiences can result in 'magic' leading to meaningful change. I feel that teachers are so busy being busy that they feel they cannot allow themselves the time to be still and quiet. I think that if they did this more they would truly see and hear more effectively.

Jaworski (in Senge et al 2005:53-66) shared his wilderness retreat experience. He described the profound change brought about by being truly present, engaging with the silence and really being able to see. This was exactly my own Vision Quest experience¹⁵. I experienced pure 'magic' and life was never to be the same again.

I conclude by returning to Susan Hiller. In producing her artwork she invited viewers to create their own subjective meanings as they engaged with her work. I have been inspired by chaoscope fractal art due to the light, colour and pattern generated. Engaging with colour is so much part of my way of being. I have chosen three visual images to represent my views of professionalism, subversion and magic at this time. I am aware that others might give my pictures different meanings.

¹⁵ Experience explained in chapter 1

Journal 6.5.11

Of the assignments I marked, I realised that some of the mature students were better able to draw upon their life experience in approaching the task. Many others I think worked just as hard but they did not have the same experience to draw upon. This results in the mature students demonstrating far better knowledge and understanding and therefore getting higher grades. I find myself wondering what the students must think about their assignments. Are they disappointed in getting low grades? The current system does not tell the whole story. I wondered what would happen if we gave written feedback only and no grade. Students would have to focus on their real achievement rather than the superficial consideration of the grade. I think that this would be a better way to assess learners and would make acknowledgement of individual progress. Learners would just need to pass an assessment and then attend to the feedback on their performance. This would enable them to consider better their strengths and what they need to develop. But this arrangement does not fit the system. It wants numbers not meaning and understanding. It seeks to simplify a very complex situation. As Liz said yesterday 'learning is messy', yet the system tries to convince us that it is simple.

Story 12: Work in Progress: Three More Sketches (May 2011)

The Absurdity of Guilt



(Oil pastel 23.5.11)

April 2011 and it has been an exhausting term. I am ready for some annual leave. Over the past few weeks I have been yearning for quiet retreat; to take some time out to become centred and balanced again. This might allow space for insights and answers concerning current life challenges. I have not been able to find an organised retreat that suits me at present. I am envious of a colleague who is going on a Silent Retreat; this was booked many months ago. I have had to let go of the idea of going away on an organised retreat. I have not even planned a trip abroad this year; probably the first time in six years that I have not gone abroad over the Easter period. I have nothing planned. I have some days for myself, I must **do** something. Maybe I can visit relatives and old friends whom I have not seen for a while; life having been so excruciatingly busy. I must also give the house a good clear out and clean; it is such a long while since I have had time for this.

My first day of leave. The weather is beautiful; I cannot stay indoors today, I must go out and enjoy. St Albans is at its most beautiful at this time of year, and today is a day to really enjoy it. I stroll through the town and find a place to sit. The birds are singing, and the trees are in bloom with new green leaves, and pink and white blossoms. I sit in a favourite spot near the abbey. Ahead of me is a row of delightful period cottages, painted white. To my right is the ancient arch leading to the cathedral grounds and the boys' school. To my left is the charming Fishpool Street with its period houses, some over four hundred years old. I am sitting on a bench surrounded by trees displaying the new growth of Spring. I enjoy the warm sunshine on my skin; I have longed for this during the dark winter days.

A week later I am back in my favoured spot. It is yet another fine day; unseasonably warm for the time of year. It is lovely, yet I am feeling guilty. The days have drifted by and I have **done** nothing. I have not visited those relatives. I have not made an effort to visit old friends. I have as yet not begun the major clear out at home. Instead I have been outdoors, wandering the quiet streets of St Albans and sitting in the garden at home. It has been so quiet here; many people seem to be away for the holidays this year. I have **done** nothing. It has been so quiet, none of the usual drilling and hammering of building work, or the raised chatter of children's voices. I have **done** nothing. I feel guilty. Why?

.....the serious seeker of detachment will have to embrace the Holy Trinity of Ss – Solitude, Stillness and Silence – and reject the new religion of Commotionism, which believes that the meaning of life is constant company, movement and noise. Commotion is life; solitude, stillness and silence are death.

(Foley 2010:103)

This resonates with me. I have been rushed off my feet for months. I have been concerned about the culture within the SoE involving 'busy being busy'. I have longed for stillness and silence, but did not recognise it when I 'got what I had wished for'. I should laugh at the absurdity of my guilt. I should have known. I recall my Vision Quest which was the most powerful life transforming experience I have ever had. I was never more truly focused and present as when sitting in my sacred circle in stillness, silence and solitude. I learned that through stillness one can make the greatest leaps forward; through silence one can truly hear; and through solitude one can truly connect with others.

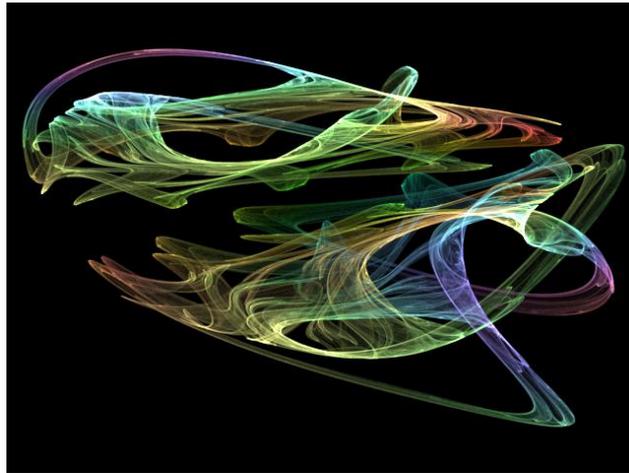
Real communication can only take place where there is silence. But there is something more in this silence that goes beyond opening the heart and 'seeing from the inside.

(Senge in Senge et al 2005:79)

It seems a real challenge to resist the culture of 'busy being busy', and allow myself to 'do' solitude, stillness and silence. I now return to the active frenzy of **doing** which is my working life.



Messy



(Chaotic flow, light, 23.5.11)

Liz told me of a course she attended recently at the Institute. She had been impressed and reassured when the presenter had said “Learning is messy”. I like this, and I agreed.

What does ‘messy’ mean to me?

It seems to be considered a negative attribute, in contrast to ‘tidy’ which seems to be desired. I do not enjoy the process of tidying up, but I do like the outward appearance of tidy; at least to begin with. I cannot find things when I have tidied up. I can always find things in my messy piles; all I have to do is think of when I last used an item, I know exactly where in the pile to look. My mind does not seem to work well with tidying, sorting and ordering in a logical way.

In the past I have described my way as that of ‘organised chaos’. But is organised messiness the same as organised chaos? Maybe order from chaos is the result of organised messiness. Sometimes at work we receive emails asking us to remember to wash mugs and wipe down surfaces. I am aware that some people use tidying as an avoidance strategy so that they do not have to think about a challenging issue, or focus on doing something important. I find it difficult to keep a tidy desk, but I know where things are.

This gets me thinking that maybe one should not go on appearances. What exactly does it mean to be messy or tidy? It is considered that tidy looks good, messy does not; therefore tidy is desirable, and messy is undesirable. However, my organised messiness works well for me. Some people tidy when they are stressed and uncomfortable. Maybe this is about fear of being out of control. Messiness might be considered out of control, and so tidying might be about keeping things contained and having control. However, is such control always necessary, and should messiness always be feared?

...I wonder why we limit ourselves so quickly to one idea or one structure or one perception, or to the idea that 'truth' exists in objective form. Why would we stay locked in our belief that there is one right way to do something, or one correct interpretation to a situation, when the universe demands diversity and thrives on a plurality of meaning.'

(Wheatley 1999:73)

What about the messiness of learning? Legislation and policy suggest that learning is simple and ordered. If teachers do what the policy makers tell them to, then pupils will make progress. Even some who would challenge this view seek to promote 'evidence-based' learning, which tries to apply the medical clinical-trial model to research into learning and teaching. It seeks to find quantifiable data as evidence of learning and progress. Evidence of learning is usually found in the test and exam results. The system often can only see what it is looking for, not what is really there.

We cannot continue to imagine that student teachers will become fine practitioners if we provide blueprints of mastery. First, mastery is a myth and an excuse for those who have lost passion and desire, and second, to imagine that we can clone teachers and reproduce lessons and knowledge is to envision that the teacher identity, instructional proficiency and learners in context are blank slates of conformity.

(Sameshima in Four Arrows, 2008: 59)

This challenges the notion that all learners can learn in the same way, and that there is one way to teach. Learning and teaching are not tidy and ordered. I agree that learning is messy. However, why should messy not be desirable? To take the risk of letting go of the desire to be in control; this might lead to unexpected beauty and magic of experience.

Why would we ever choose rigidity or predictability when we have been invited to be part of the generative dance of life.

(Wheatley 1999:73)

Imagine a teacher letting go of control. Embracing the unexpected and learning along with her learners, co-creating meaning together. Imagine assessment without grades. Learners are given feedback based on their own individual achievement. They are informed about strengths and areas which they could develop.

Messiness to me acknowledges diversity and the complexity of human experience. 'One size does not fit all'. It allows difference, and this can be uncomfortable to some.

And I saw for the first time that there can be and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches.....I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause.

(hooks, 1994:43)

One could stay with the familiar and predictable, and comfortable orderliness of 'tidy'. I believe that taking risks, causing disturbance and discomfort, and living with uncertainty are 'messy'. However, maybe in order for deep and meaningful learning to take place one must be open to the messiness.



Pink Plasters



(Oil pastel 23.5.11)

CRT (critical race theory) argues that racism is endemic in US society, deeply ingrained legally, culturally and even psychologically. It is vital to note that the term 'racism' is used not only in relation to crude, obvious acts of race hatred but also in relation to more subtle and hidden operations of power that have the effect of disadvantaging one or more minority ethnic groups. This is a more radical approach than many liberal multiculturalists are comfortable with. Nevertheless, it is an approach that is in keeping with recent developments, not only in the academy but also in British legal approaches to racism and race inequality. This reflects the long history of antiracist struggle and the attempt to broaden the approach to examine institutional racism that operates through subtle, sometimes unintended processes, expectations, assumptions and practices.

(Gillborn 2008:27)

I cut my finger; I stem the flow of red blood by covering the wound with a pink plaster.

It is question time after the presentation given by David Gillborn to all staff in the SoE. My colleague **A** asks:

“If racism is so ingrained that we are not aware that we are promoting it, what can we do about it?”

An important question, but no answer emerges. After the session, groups of colleagues complain. They say the talk was not what we need; we want answers and action. We need something more pragmatic. What can we do about the disproportionately high numbers of

BME students who fail our courses, and get low grades? We really do care about the wellbeing of our students in the SoE.

I know that these are 'nice' people who really do care.

I have had ideas about what we should *do* for years. But no one is listening to me.

This focus is due to a strategic directive from on 'high' in the University for Faculties to work towards improving the retention and achievement rates of BME students. BME means Black and minority ethnic, but everyone says 'BME'. I do not like the term BME, and when I expressed this feeling I was told, "But BME is what is in the documentation". No one was interested in finding out why I do not like the term.

BME is a term used to describe *me*, that I did *not* chose and do not like. I prefer to say 'visible minority' because to me that is 'telling it as it is', and not hiding behind an acronym which allows people to avoid emotional engagement with the meaning of the term.

The working group discusses our next step, after David Gillborn. My colleagues talk of doing things about language issues and religious issues. It seems to me that they are deflecting in order to avoid confronting the challenging issue of race. It seems to me that this always happens. I say that what we need to go back to colleague *A*'s question and confront what this means for each of us. It needs a pause to dwell with the discomfort of the issue. I suggest showing a powerful piece of video to provoke thinking.

I find some samples of Jane Elliot's work. She continues to conduct her workshop on discrimination with groups of adults all over the world. I find a powerful video clip of a group of young adults in the USA. A young white woman cannot tolerate the oppression she is experiencing as a member of the 'blue-eyed' group and speaks out, and then she walks out. She is told to consider that she can walk away and know she will not experience the oppression of racism outside. But people of colour cannot do this. Racism is there even in their homes when they switch on a television.

And when they cut themselves, nice people give them pink plasters to cover their wounds.

It seems to me that this is the point that my colleagues need to be aware of. Before any changes can be made that will really make a difference for 'visible minority' students, staff need to become aware. If they become aware, then next time they might notice oppression in action when they visit students in school or go about their lives. This raised awareness

might then put them in a position where they can promote lasting change, rather than returning to the old ways after a flurry of activity, which is what usually happens.

But first they must notice that all of the plasters are pink.

I cannot tell my story and ask my colleagues to become aware and commit to change. They need to be willing to dwell with the discomfort of how their actions as 'nice' people might inadvertently be oppressive. Pausing and stopping in order to dwell with an idea does not come easily to my colleagues, who like to talk and be busy, but I suggest that we try it. This event takes place during a busy SoE meeting. We have spent more time than intended on earlier items on the agenda. We have been allocated a twenty minute slot. The moment has come. Colleague **B** introduces and asks for silence after the video; space to dwell with the issues. I am sitting at the back of the room. I notice some colleagues are not focused. Some are reading, others are chatting. I wonder what they pick up from the video clip. A moment of silence; a few minutes discussion in table groups; a few more minutes for feedback. Now we move on to the next item on the agenda. The moment has passed, and the opportunity to raise awareness has been missed.

They haven't noticed that the plasters are pink.

We continue as before 'busy being busy'.

So nothing has changed. Students will continue to tell us that all is well. The SoE is a good place to be. Then soon another student will tell me about an unhappy school placement. With tears in her eyes she will tell me that she feels she was treated unfairly. I will ask if she discussed this with her supervising tutor. She will tell me she tried to, but was not heard. She will then say it does not matter now, the placement is over and she does not want to make a fuss. I ask the question, why does she think she was treated in this way? There will be a pause and she will tell me that she does not know. I have heard this before. They never know why they are treated unfairly; so they say.

If only the tutors could understand about the pink plasters; next time they might be ready to hear.

Reflection June 2011 (Zante paper)

The threads which linked all sketches involved my desire to be valued for who I am in my professional setting. This involves honouring the value of stillness and silence in order to dwell with issues and gain understanding. This way of being feels alien within the culture of 'busy being busy' in which I work. One sketch also demonstrates my desire to resist the notion that learning and teaching are tidy and ordered, and that only progress that is quantifiable is of value. This is what the system promotes, but I wished to challenge this view of education.



It seems that my 'Work in progress' sketching has evolved. The sketches began as separate themes which formed aspects of 'complexity'. The second three sketches were connected with fine interwoven threads. Maybe the next stage is a more closely woven series of sketches where the threads are more intricately linked. The threads to be interwoven involve finding my voice at the same time as honouring the power of silence.



Story 13: Becoming Visible: Finding My Voice (July 2011)

I look, I see, I notice, I observe.

I hear, I listen, I notice, I observe.

I touch, I feel, I sense, I notice, I observe.

I think, I ponder, I dwell, I reflect.

I understand.

Episodes during a week at work

“Why don’t we interpret the Module Document with more flexibility? Why don’t we focus on giving the students what they need rather than what the document tells us?” I say to my colleagues at the meeting to consider the development of the undergraduate year 2 module. They stop, pause and listen, think, and then consider my suggestion.



“I have been thinking about how we assess students. I have an idea that we should get rid of grades and marks for assignments and focus on giving developmental feedback instead” I say to **A**.

She stops and pauses in the act of ‘busy being busy’. She looks me in the eye in a thoughtful way. I seem to have gained her attention. I explain. Why do we need grades and marks? This is what the system requires but does it result in meaningful learning? I mention my undergraduate year 3 students who worked so hard and did the best to their ability. I speak of **Z**, I know just how hard she worked on her assignment. I know what a hardworking and committed student she has been throughout her three years. She sent me a polite email as module leader after receiving her marked assignment. She was very disappointed with her 52 mark, questioning its accuracy given how hard she had worked. I read the comments written by the marking tutor which were positive in identifying the strengths, and supportive in suggesting what could be developed. Yet **Z** had looked at the mark, 52, and felt disappointed. I suggest to **A** that if we had used feedback alone, **Z** would have understood her achievement better and areas for development. **A** has a meeting to rush off to, but she did pause, stop, listen and think for a moment.



Our new inquiry group has been experiencing difficulty in becoming established. This is only the second time that we have all managed to meet together. **B** opens the session. I raise the issue of the difficulties and suggest that we discuss establishing ground rules or ways to

proceed. The others agree. Each person is invited to share their thoughts. **C** speaks of her distress after the last meeting. **D** speaks of realising that she reacted inappropriately during the last session. **E** speaks of her difficulty in speaking out in groups, and her feeling that as more experienced academics we all must find this much easier than she does, since we must know what we are doing. I am surprised by this and tell **E** that I understand and feel just as she does. **B** empathises with this way of being also.

I make a suggestion about a way forward. I raise the issue of active listening being difficult. I suggest that we try to respond by asking the speaker a question to help them with their insights and understanding, rather than reacting with an anecdote or opinion. They agree that active listening is difficult. I share with them how I have been working in this way with my students to try to encourage them to listen actively. They agree to try out this approach. We reflect on this at the end. It seemed to work in a more supportive way. We also seem to have focused a lot on emotion. This is not something that we usually focus on explicitly in the SoE.

Three occasions in one week.

Maybe I am finding my voice.

Maybe I am becoming visible.



Participating in the performance¹⁶ is extremely powerful. It gives me a sense of what **F** was feeling. This experience promotes reflection. Throughout the four days I have heard of the experiences of nursing practitioners who become patients themselves. It seems to me that there is pain and conflict in experiencing life from the other side as a patient rather than as a practitioner. What does this mean for me? This raises a number of questions for me.

My experience as a patient in hospital has been mostly positive. This came up in conversation with **G** before the gathering, and as a nurse she was surprised and pleased to hear of my positive experiences of being nursed. Perhaps I feel this way because I am not a nurse. Perhaps nurses have higher expectations of nurse practitioners when they become patients themselves, due to their knowledge of the profession. Maybe it depends on the nature of the illnesses. This leaves me with a question; is there a similar relationship in learning and teaching?

¹⁶ Performing a narrative at the Reflective Practice Gathering, Zante 2011.

I am a teacher and a learner. I do not think that I have had such feelings of conflict in relation to this. Maybe this is because I see teaching and learning going hand in hand. I am a learner and a teacher at the same time. I learn as I teach. However, maybe I teach in the way I like to learn. I recognise that this might not be appropriate for everyone. The challenge is in gaining understanding of the learner's experience, and responding appropriately. This can happen more easily when I engage on a one to one basis with students; but it is very difficult in the standard group of thirty students.

(Review of 2010-11 appendix C)



ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-12

Story 14: Re-framing (September 2011)

The Past

One: Finding my silent voice

1989

My first break from teaching, working for a large children's charity project¹⁷. We are a very small team, just Tina, Allen and myself. We are working with a team building consultant to help relieve tensions within the team. During these two days all of our hidden thoughts about working together are being revealed. I have learned that Tina is frustrated with me because of what she perceives to be my lack of understanding of the importance of meetings, because I say little. Allen learns of my discomfort and frustration when he jumps in to answer all of the questions when we give training sessions. He will not let me speak and this distresses me. I see the participants looking at me. I am perceived to be a passive Black woman who allows the White man to dominate. I learn about Allen's concern about my silence. He says that I do not say much during meetings, and this makes him anxious because he does not know what I am thinking. In training sessions he is concerned that I will not be able to answer questions. He acknowledges that what I *do* say is good. Sometimes he *has* allowed me to speak, and he knows that I pause to think before responding. Allen does not like the pauses because he fears that they will lead to longer silences, so he feels that he must fill those spaces as soon as possible.

I tell them of my need for thinking space. I recognise that their talking and thinking is intertwined, but I need thinking spaces without talking, and then I respond when I am ready. Now we understand each other.

Next meeting Tina has been talking, Allen has been talking. Allen asks me what I think, I say am thinking, and will let them know when I have something to say. This helps to allay his anxiety. I am thinking and processing ideas about issues, and Tina and Allen's views. I speak when I am ready to respond.

During the next training session a question is asked. Allen steps back and allows the split second pause space; then I respond. He now sees that it works.

¹⁷ Working with African families living in the UK.

Over the years I have found it valuable on a number of occasions to explain to people. “I am still thinking; I will let you know when I am ready to speak”.

At the Gathering, did I really say “I speak when I have something important to say”? I do not recall what I said, but this is not what I meant. I find it interesting to consider the different meanings given to what is experienced.

Two: Equal Opportunities

1983

The school has been closed this afternoon for yet another anti-racist training session. I do not find these very interesting or useful. I know that many of my colleagues are anxious. They are good people and are really concerned with the welfare of our pupils. However, they are full of fear and are anxious about making mistakes. I do not think that it is helpful to have training facilitators who make them feel guilty about being white. I also sense that the facilitators were not happy with my remark, which they considered to be flippant. I said to one of them, “Actually I am not black, I am brown; I am scientist, see?” I don’t think that she got it.

Last week I was summoned to attend a meeting over lunch with the Swann committee. Our school was chosen because we have a larger proportion of ethnic minority teachers than most other schools. At least we got a free lunch out of it. They asked us why we had chosen this school, expecting some profoundly interesting response. Each of us, one by one said that we applied for a job and were accepted. It is obvious really.

1999

I am attending a three day anti-discriminatory practice course. I am finding this really interesting, it is making me consider issues of prejudice and discrimination in ways that I have not thought of before. I really like the materials we have engaged in. I really like ‘A Tale of O’ and the ‘Drawbridge Exercise’. However, I find Juliet’s paper on ‘Power and Oppression’ particularly significant.

‘Xs have more power to effect change than Os do’

I have not thought about this before. I agree with this whole-heartedly. In the days that follow I am eager to plan anti-discriminatory courses to offer as INSET programmes for the schools that we work with. Juliet has given me permission to use some of her materials, and

she has suggested that we might run some courses together. That would be really interesting, to have a Black woman and White woman working side by side; and **O** and an **X**, or is it two **O**s? It depends on how you look at it.

2002

I did not get the opportunity to deliver my anti-discriminatory practice INSET in schools; however, I have adapted it to use with my PGCE students. I find my current work place rather backward in terms of equality awareness. This is very different from working in London. If the staff lack awareness how can the students be supported in developing equality awareness? I have spoken to HoD about this and she agrees that we need to address these issues of diversity awareness. I have explained why it is not appropriate for me to take a lead on Equal Opportunity issues, and she understands. However, I am happy to develop materials and participate in the background.

I believe that '**X**s have more power to effect change than **O**s do'.

The Present

The semester B Equality, Diversity and Inclusion module went very well with students saying how much they had enjoyed it. We are repeating this module again for the intensive semester C summer school week.

I introduce myself to the students. I explain my hope for the module. I tell them of the need to establish ground rules because sessions might bring some very sensitive issues to the surface. I also say what I always feel is necessary for me at the beginning of these sessions dealing with equality issues.

"In my view, being anti-discriminatory is a lifelong pursuit that affects us all. Each time we revisit issues we should be open to learning something new that we were not aware of before. As a Black woman this does not make me an expert; I am learning too. I have a particular life perspective, but I too am learning anti-discriminatory practice. I hope that my presence will not prevent you from saying what you wish, and from exploring issues. My role as teacher here is not to present myself as an expert 'sage-on-the-stage', or even 'guide-on-the-side'. I will be 'meddler-in-the-middle'. I will provide you with materials and questions to provoke and promote thinking and discussion."

The students establish their ground rules which include:

- ❖ It is okay to make mistakes

❖ It is okay to have different opinions

Most students have come with a clear outline of what they wish to focus on for the assignment. I urge them to approach the sessions with an open mind, and try to be prepared to modify their ideas for the assignment in the light of what they learn over the week. As the days and sessions unfold this group develops as a learning community, willing to share their thoughts and ideas; ready to ask questions. They agree to disagree on occasions. I am aware of holding back my views and opinions, but I ask them challenging questions. When my views do come out I invite them to challenge me. It seems to me that they are not feeling limited by my presence.

On the first day the students focus on the behaviour and attitudes of the 'other'. This might be the parents of their children, or others in the community. On the final day the students are ready to confront their own behaviour and its implications. They are willing to consider going back into their schools and settings, and striving to be agents of change. Almost every student has changed the focus for the assignment as a result of what they have learned over the week. I have on several occasions spoken of emotion and how we rarely address this aspect of being a teacher. They agree with me on this. I have acknowledged the emotional charge of this week. Students have been moved by some of the materials that I have given them as provocations.

They evaluate the module very highly. The verbal feedback has been very positive. I note the comments about how much they valued the fact that I did not tell them how it is, but let them come to their own understandings of issues.

It is early September and I am marking the assignments for the EDI module. I get the usual range of marks from 40 up to 78, with most being in the 50s and 60s; however, as teacher I am really gratified by the results in a way that has nothing to do with the numbers. Almost all of the students reflect on their learning from the module. They reflect on coming to the module thinking that they knew a lot about gender/disability/cultural/discrimination/etc issues, but as a result of the sessions they have a new awareness of issues. They have changed.

Reflection

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning in adulthood involves challenging our deeply held assumptions, through the critical analysis of our frames of reference, in order to be able to re-frame (Mezirow in Mezirow & ass. 2000; Mezirow 2003). Transformative learning would include critical reflection in gaining an understanding of how other people make

meaning, and critical self-reflection in gaining an understanding of our own meaning making. It seems to me that the value in this process is ultimately to promote change in thinking, which results in us developing ourselves as responsible adults who strive to ensure social justice and the common good. In education we are driven by the requirement to comply with predetermined learning outcomes, which might not necessarily be transformative in Mezirow's terms. My hope for my Masters students is that they will develop beyond the stated learning outcomes for the module, and that their study will enable them to become agents of change in their schools and settings, as a result of their critical analysis of issues, and critical reflection. They face challenges in that they are working within a system which tries to promote a scientific deterministic approach to learning and teaching in schools, which in my view is over-simplistic and does not take into consideration the complex nature of human experience. These students come from a model of education where the teacher is expected to control the prescribed success criteria for learning outcomes. Trygestad (1997) argues that applying chaos theory to education attends to the different life experiences which learners bring to a classroom event. She goes on to consider that transformation is a desired outcome of postmodern education, and this requires disturbance, and dis-equilibrium to take place in order for a new state of equilibrium to be achieved.

My approach to teaching these adult learners was to provide them with provocations, without an expectation of where these would take them. The outcome was determined by the learners themselves. In reading their assignments I was interested in the meaning given to some of the provocations. Students' interpretations varied from each other's and my own. This led me to consider how it is that we ever gain common meaning? What mattered ultimately was that the students demonstrated changes, an awareness of their previous views, and some re-framing of assumptions about equality issues. It was clear that some struggled with issues, and all brought aspects of their life experience, which would have an impact on the meaning given to the provocation materials, and the actual learning outcomes for each student. Iannone (1995) in his consideration of chaos theory and education suggested that a good teacher might be like a Jazz musician who improvises. I have considered in the past how is a good or effective teacher to be determined? Maybe a good teacher, in a similar way to the Jazz musician, is one who acknowledges the chaos of a classroom event and is prepared to go with the flow in establishing the new equilibrium.

Dirkx (2006) considers some other aspects of being which might impact on transformative learning. He considers the place of subjective experience in the framing of assumptions, including the deep emotional issues which impact on how individuals make meaning. He argues that there are situations in which critical analysis and critical reflection might not lead to an understanding of the origin of a frame of reference, as suggested by Mezirow (Dirkx et al 2006). I think that Dirkx's ideas relate to some of my students' learning processes.

What of my own transformative learning? I find it interesting to reflect on when I became comfortable with the political term 'Black' as opposed to the literal meaning of the colour 'black' which I struggled with into adulthood. I have had a belief for a number of years that as a Black woman (an **O**) I would have less of an impact on raising awareness of equality issues than a white person (an **X**). I am now aware of where this belief came from. I know that in terms of 'anti-isms' an individual will only alter their views and opinions if they have the desire to do so. I believe that this has been achieved in my approach to teaching the EDI module.

I have a number of years of experience of teaching about anti-discriminatory practice which might be of value. In addition there has been a directive from Ofsted (which must be obeyed if we wish to maintain our good grade). One of the action points involves ensuring that our students are prepared to teach in a diverse society. In my department we are sadly insular and lacking in understanding of this. **HoT** admits to not knowing how to proceed, but she is concerned about the Ofsted grade. I offer my experiences and she accepts gratefully. She comments on me being quiet, and about not knowing what I am thinking. She talks of 'lights hidden under bushels'. I speak of being an 'internal processor' rather than an 'external processor' which in my view is the more common way of being in the department. However, maybe she has a point; it is time for me to be seen and heard, but I must do it in my own way.

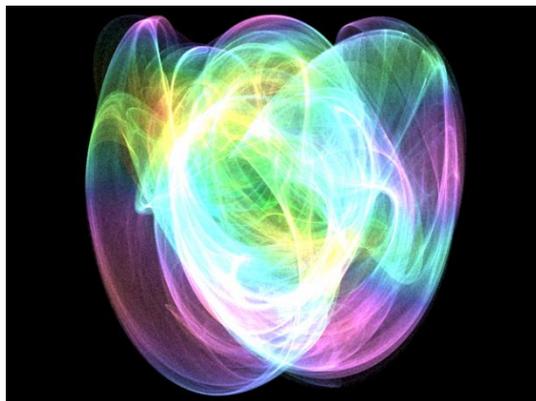
I think back to my experience of anti-racist training in the 80s. Facilitators of training were often rather aggressive in their approach. I do not think that this resulted in change and re-framing. I think that it led to resentment in some people, and the political correctness backlash of the 90s. I believe that my quiet way has great value. I wish to continue to provoke and promote thinking and discussion among colleagues, and the teachers that we work with. This includes racism awareness; however, I also think of other aspects of diversity and inclusion, such as those little boys in my class who were different and did not

fit the usual football playing macho way of being, which was expected by their peers. I think of all the quiet little girls who were 'no trouble' and so remained invisible. I think of all children and learners who bring their individual and unique ways of being in the world to the common classroom event.



Story 15: Embracing Chaos (October 2011)

I decided to go on the journey. I needed to walk into the heavy swirling mists. I had no idea where it would take me, but I was excited as well as apprehensive. I walked into the mists. I had no idea where I was going, or even if I was walking in the right direction. I put one foot in front of the other and kept on going. I found it scary and painful at times, and on occasion wondered if I was doing the right thing. But there was no going back and I continued walking. Then I thought I saw something stir; I stopped and looked back. I could see that the mists had cleared from where I had been and I could see clearly where I had come from. The journey began to make sense at last. I continued forward into the heavy mists again, happy in the knowledge that I was going somewhere, even if I did not know where to right now, but if I looked back from time to time I would know where I had come from. I continued on the journey. Then came the time when the mists began to clear a bit; and then some more. I began to detect a road or path on this journey. Then the mists cleared considerably. Ahead in the far distance I could see Journey's End signposted. I realised that it was a long, long way off, and wondered if I would ever reach it. I could see many different roads leading to Journey's End, all interconnected with narrower paths. I have decided to take this road and see what will happen along the way. I know that in the future I might decide to take a different road, in which case I will stroll along a connecting path to reach it.



(‘Swirling mists’16.10.11 chaoscope IFS flow)

To some physicists chaos is a science of process rather than a state, of becoming rather than being.

(Gleick 1998:5)

¹⁸**Gleick's view resonates with me on several levels. First it relates to my experience of the narrative journey. I am aware that I am in a state of continuous change. Journey's End represents the point of examination within the system; however, I know that the journey will never end. Gleick's views also relate to my view of learning and teaching. These are processes which involve continuously becoming as well as being. My question: How appropriate is it to apply chaos theory to teaching and learning? My practice as a teacher is with adult learners in higher education. Students have been judged as successful learners within the system. However, my learners are teachers who feel required to have tight control on the learning of children within a system that favours a scientific deterministic approach to learning and teaching. This is a challenge I face in living my values.**

Autumn 2011: Work with student teachers

I am aware of my changing approaches to teaching and classroom engagement this term. I find myself speaking more of my truth, which is about what it really means to be a teacher. I ask students to consider us as a learning community right now in this moment. I ask them to consider what it is that we all bring to this common classroom event. We bring who we are, our life experiences and how they have shaped us. We bring how we engage with the world. We bring what has happened to us today prior to meeting together in our classroom. I ask students to consciously focus on how they feel right now. Are they excited and eager to experience what will unfold in our time together? Are they tired and anxious and feeling uncertain? How do they feel about the peers that they are sitting with? How do they feel about me, the teacher? What do they think of the subject we are about to cover? I acknowledge that we are all unique individuals, and we bring this uniqueness to this common classroom event. I suggest that each person is likely to experience this event in a different way to everyone else, and this will affect the learning that takes place. I ask students to consider this when faced with the children in their own classrooms.

Trygestad (1997) discusses how learners bring themselves as individuals to the classroom event which will have an impact on the learning that takes place. This relates to my own consideration of classroom events. Trygestad points out that due to this complexity the learning outcomes might not be what the teacher intended. This is why I think that it is

¹⁸ Dialogue with literature in bold.

important to let go of prescribed learning outcomes and for the teacher to focus on what has been achieved rather than what was expected.

Autumn 2011: PGCE introductory sessions to primary science

A year has gone by since I introduced the new approach to this session. What do I think about it now? The majority of students claim to lack confidence in their ability to teach science. I have my learning intentions for this session, and I have put a lot of time and effort into planning and preparing the resources. However, I have decided to let go of the need to control the development and progress of the session. Through addressing my learning intentions I have created a learning environment that I believe will be supportive; however, I acknowledge that the learning outcomes are uncertain; I await the learners' responses. I explain that as a teacher I am beginning with what my learners already know. These students all have prior experience of learning science. I give them some short guidance for the activity, and provide materials for them to focus on for investigation. I show them the equipment. I then leave the students to decide for themselves how they will investigate. In addition to planning and conducting the scientific investigation, I ask students to focus on the process and experience of collaborative working in groups of six and seven, and to decide what support, if any, that they need from me the teacher. I tell them that they have an hour to complete the activity and reflective review. Later I will share with them my thinking as a teacher. I observe the students in action, and respond when they ask. I reflect on the old approach.¹⁹

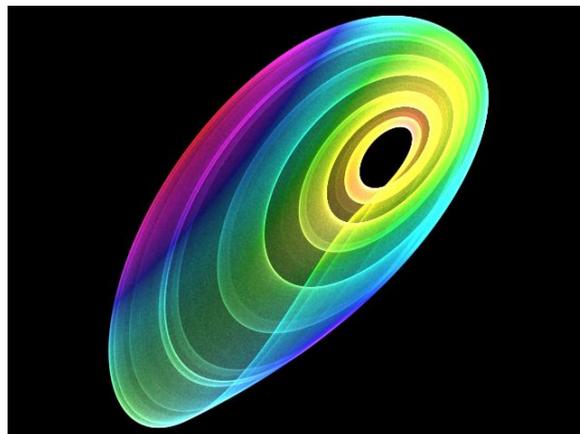
The new approach allows for chaos to flow. The outcomes are uncertain, however I know that learning will take place. An hour passes, and the students have completed the task, and reflected on what has taken place. We all come together and I ask the students to share experiences in order to 'unpick' what has just happened. Some speak of initial discomfort due to me not giving them specific direction for the investigation. Some speak of feeling surprised at how much science can be gained from such simple everyday materials as teabags; and others speak of how much they have learned about teabags that they had not known before. They speak of what they have learned through making mistakes and having to modify their method. They raise concerns about the appropriateness of using boiling water with children in the primary school classroom. Some speak of the positive collaborative group experience in working together; others speak of tensions in the group

¹⁹ Link with story 7 Transforming and Remodelling 'the old story'

with so many different points of view being made. They decide that groups of six or seven are too many for a comfortable learning experience; they will use smaller groups in their own classrooms. A few speak of having got it all wrong; I explain to them why it is that what they did was right. I tell them how pleased I am as a teacher to hear this variety of comments in the feedback. I could have told them all of the points that have been raised. They respond by saying that finding all of these issues out for themselves means that it has greater meaning and will be remembered.

I share my intentions as teacher, by telling them that this is precisely the point I wanted to make. I have observed so much learning taking place. I distribute the handout at this late stage in the workshop session, and ask the students to identify process skills from the list that they used today. Most find that they have used all of them. I tell them that this shows that they have been 'doing science'. This gives confidence to the majority who claimed to be lacking in knowledge and confidence.

After establishing the learning environment I let go of control. I responded when students asked me questions, but otherwise I did not interfere with their activities. Students learned about the process skills, and much more besides. They learned about science, they learned about learning, and they learned about teaching. Students selected equipment for themselves without my intervention, demonstrating no foundation in my former anxieties. I allowed for chaos to flow in my classroom. Beauty arose from chaos.



(‘New vision of beauty form chaos’ 16.10.11 chaoscope chaotic flow)

Iannone (1995) was concerned about an education system producing passive and unthinking students, and ‘robot-like’ and de-professionalised teachers. He argued that attending to the chaotic nature of classroom events was part of a teacher’s professional

artistry as suggested by Schön (1987)²⁰. Cvetek (2008) is concerned that teacher education programmes have become based on technical rationality. She suggests that teacher educators should 'chaoticise' their classrooms so that students are made aware of the complex nature of classroom events, rather than simply ticking the boxes as required. I find that these views resonate with the insights into practice that I have gained. It seems to me that chaos in the classroom is important to consider.

However, Hunter & Benson (1997) disagreed with an application of chaos theory to the classroom. They were critical of chaos as a way to new understanding of science and human behaviour. They argued that teaching and learning could be better explained by current theories about social constructivism²¹. Hunter & Benson focused on the social aspect of learning including what learners and teachers bring to the classroom learning event, and suggested that there is an amount of certainty in how things will unfold. I would argue that how individuals will interact at any time is uncertain; however, the resulting learning that takes place is the new state of equilibrium arising from disequilibrium, which can be considered as order arising from chaos. In contrast to Hunter & Benson (1997), Trygestad (1997) argued that social constructivism processes do demonstrate chaotic flow. She viewed the idea of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, in which a more knowledgeable other supports the learner's development to demonstrate chaos. She also considered Piaget's ideas about the accommodation and assimilation of new experiences for a learner in order to reach a new state of equilibrium after a state of disequilibrium.

I am developing new ideas about what beauty from chaos means for me. As a teacher I plan the learning environment, and provide the students with the stimuli, and resources for learning. As the teacher I have my learning intentions, however, rather than having fixed success criteria on predetermined learning outcomes, I observe the learning which does take place. This is a new state of equilibrium being established from the chaotic flow of the students engaging with the new stimuli in ways that have meaning for them. It seems to me that the education system is so focused on controlling learning outcomes that it does not

²⁰ This idea relates to professional practice that cannot be easily explained or supported by technical rational knowledge.

²¹ Social constructivism theory proposes that learning is a social activity; therefore interaction between humans is central (Pritchard 2013).

see the beauty of the learning that actually takes place. The system is obsessed with numbers.

Bigger, smaller

Taller, shorter

Higher, lower

Richer, poorer

Colder, hotter,

Weight

Height

Temperature

Percentage

Scale

How much?

More than, less than

Too much, too little

Grades, marks

First, last

Best, worst

Top, bottom

Digits

Figures

Average

Above average

Below average

Mean, mode, median

Zero

Infinity

It seems to me that embracing an application of chaos theory for education, or chaos as a metaphor for the processes of learning and teaching, would result in a more positive experience for learners and teachers. All learners would be winners, since they would be given feedback on their achievements, and advice on how to improve. Teachers would

recognise that having established an appropriate learning environment, learning would take place out of the chaotic flow of classroom activity. They would not need to 'control'. Teachers would be energised rather than exhausted. If schools focused on readiness to learn new knowledge and skills rather than having established ages for stages of development, children would be able to develop at their own pace, rather than having to feel failures for being behind the average for their age.

I think of those scientists who ignored small differences in calculations in their efforts to find pattern and order, when what they needed to do was to see the beauty arising from chaos (Gleick 1998). I believe that in education if we do attend to these small differences we will see the beauty arising from the chaos.



So what is chaos theory all about?

Chaos theory arose from natural sciences. Previously science was considered to offer certainty, and there was the belief that as time went by then so would our understanding about the physical universe, gained through the acquisition of new scientific knowledge. Wheatley (1999) explains that as the 20th century progressed, scientists were discovering that theory did not fit previously understood models and new explanations for events were needed. Wheatley explains how Newtonian physics had been used to explain the world and existence for three hundred years by the beginning of the 20th century. Newtonian physics was reductionist involving separating into component parts, and using cause and effect to explain events and phenomena. The universe was considered ordered and predictable, and it was believed that through reductionism and identifying component parts, science would eventually be able to explain everything. The classical science of Newton's universe puts the human scientist researcher in an objective position, separating out the parts from the whole in a detached way in order to achieve greater understanding. Wheatley goes on to discuss how the classical view of the universe was applied to most aspects of life in Western culture during the three hundred years, including to organisations. The aim of organisations was to promote order and predictability. Wheatley explains how in the 20th century the new physics of quantum theory resulted in a different way of understanding the universe. The work of scientists such as Bohr, Shrodinger and Heisenberg resulted in new ways of understanding elemental particles; quantum theory emphasised the relationships between phenomena in understanding them, rather than the separation of them. Although the theory arose from study of sub-atomic phenomena it could also be applied as a way of understanding bigger systems.

Organisations throughout the 20th century continued to be based on the Newtonian model of the universe. Wheatley (1999) and Stacey (2012) consider that strategic plans do not work. Both Wheatley and Stacey argue that the relationships between people are important to consider within organisations, and the new physics has much to offer organisations as they develop in the 21st century. Wheatley explains that an alternative to predictability is 'potential', which relates appropriately to a consideration of relationships. I would in addition relate potential to uncertainty. This suggests that an organisation would need to let go of desired strategic outcomes and be open to the potential for change. This would attend to the complex factors which impact on any organisation and the individuals

who work within it.

Gleick (1998) discusses how chaos theory developed during the 20th century, resulting in many physicists viewing phenomena and events in different ways. The quote in story 15 suggests that 'becoming' relates to the uncertainty of existence as compared with the certainty of 'being'. Gleick goes on to discuss some of the scientific research and ideas which led to chaos theory. Previously scientists had chosen to focus only on those measurements and phenomena that were considered to be relevant, but they were now discovering that small changes could have a great impact on an event. This idea is known as the 'butterfly effect' and arose from research into systems for predicting the weather. Previously ignored minute pieces of data were found to have very great impact on predictions about the weather. Chaos theory suggests that small initial changes can have a huge effect on how a dynamic system like the weather will unfold. As a result the outcome cannot be predicted. In science patterns were seen to emerge from apparently chaotic systems. For example, the chaotic weather systems observed on Jupiter included the great red spot which maintains stability within these systems.

Another aspect of science discussed by Gleick is how scientists sought explanations for events and phenomena through complex linear systems. It was from biological science that another significant contribution to chaos theory was made. This came through studying equations to explain the progress of animal populations over time. Scientists used simple nonlinear systems to explain this and discovered that order soon became chaos, and then over time order was restored. A simple system became complex. The instability resulting in descent into chaos is known as bifurcation. Sardar & Abram (1999) explain that previously scientists had not noticed this phenomenon because conventional mathematics and physics study chose to ignore the complexity of the feedback loop which resulted in the chaos. This is presented as an example to how classical science does not work when used to oversimplify complex dynamic systems.

Gleick (1998) discusses the discovery of strange attractors. Scientists had found patterns in linear systems which enabled them to be classified effectively. Scientists tried to classify non-linear systems but were unable to do this. Non-linear systems could be measured but it had not been possible to find the constant that would connect all systems, they could only be understood individually. Gleick discusses how Lorenz discovered that mathematical strange attractors exhibited random and chaotic behaviour, but if observed as a whole,

patterns could be seen. This is an example of stability and order arising from chaos. The non-linear systems were all different but what they had in common was the ability to demonstrate patterns emerging from the chaos of the event. Scientists discovered that the initial conditions in which the strange attractor was established were important in having an impact on the emerging patterns, which relates to the 'butterfly effect'. The evidence to support the mathematics of chaos theory came through the development of computers which were able to complete thousands of calculations in a very short time.



Story 16: Making Ripples (November 2011)

Some people like to jump into the pool making a big splash that gets them noticed. They then swim through the water making great tidal waves as they go. Some people around them join the flow, but others feel so overwhelmed that they stand by the edge of the pool to keep out of the way, or they decide to leave the pool. I prefer to make ripples in the pool. I think that they are gentle, and at first their effect is felt only in the immediate vicinity. However, as time goes by the ripples spread out and gain greater impact. Soon the whole pool feels the effect and people can choose to flow with the ripples if they wish.

I speak out about those with the power within organisations who only see what is created in their own image.

I believe that I observed transformative learning. **A** is excited and asks me to send her a summary of my ideas that she might pass on to others.

Next day **A** replies expressing heartfelt gratitude for my input yesterday. She says that as the discussion progressed she had been feeling quite discouraged; however my views had given her heart. She would pass on my summary to her colleagues since she feels that my experience would be valuable to them.

Making ripples in the pool

I say that there is a reluctance to pause and consider doing things differently. I speak of taking risks and dwelling with uncertainty in order to promote change that will make a real difference, otherwise things will remain the same. **B** pauses in her act of 'busy being busy', and converses with me for half an hour.

Making ripples in the pool

There are forty-eight colleagues on this course from various departments across the University. I am uncertain how they will respond to what I give them. My intention is to provoke some disturbance, and I am aware that I am taking some risks. Some of the discussions are quite heated, and they do not respond to my provocations in the way that I expect.

As they pause for their break, one of them comes to tell me that in his view the group were in denial of the issues before now. My session has opened it up and made them think about issues around inclusive practice for the first time.

Making ripples in the pool

D tells me of hearing about me during the past week not only from **A** but also from **B** at a project meeting earlier in the week. **B** told them about my idea of 'dwelling with uncertainty'. **D** said that they thought that this was a wonderful idea to consider.

I created a few little ripples, and it seems that they are spreading out and having an impact on others in the pool. Some are choosing to flow with them. I wonder how far the ripples will spread.



Story 17: Articulating My Vision (December 2011)

The highly successful learner

I remember a boy called Barry who I taught in Year 6. He was considered to be of below average ability for the class, and was on the SEN register for receiving additional support with his learning. Barry always tried any task given to him. He worked slowly, needing more time to complete tasks than most other children, but he stayed focused until he had finished. He rarely allowed himself to be distracted, and he never seemed to be bored. He would sometimes put his pencil down and pause for thought, and then he would return to his work. He always finished a task. Barry was a chubby boy and I have found that such children usually feel uncomfortable about their performance in PE activities. Barry was always willing to participate. He would happily demonstrate his gymnastics skills or dance routine. He was even willing and eager to dress up and participate in a dance performance for the whole school and parents. I saw Barry develop and grow during my year with him. In my view Barry was a highly successful learner, even though he was unlikely to achieve A grades in the tests and exams. It seemed to me that Barry was always open and eager to learn new things, and he worked to the best of his ability.*

My vision of practice

I have a vision of practice as a teacher, which is to be able to inspire and support my students in becoming highly successful learners just like Barry. In my view a highly successful learner is one who is open and willing to develop themselves and grow; to be open to new possibilities in knowing and experiencing. I realise that I have this vision due to how much I have always valued my own learning journey. Sometimes I have found it exhilarating, at other times rather uncomfortable. Sometimes the journey has been easy, at others it has been a struggle. Ultimately it has always been valuable, and I have been able to look back and see how far I have come. I like the idea of there always being the possibility of new experiences and knowledge. I think that I became a teacher as a young graduate because a part of me realised how much I had to learn. I continued as a teacher because I valued my own learning journey so much.

Becoming a teacher educator

How does one determine a good and effective teacher? When I was in school I felt confident that I was a good and effective teacher. It took me years to gain that confidence in myself, but it existed. The evidence came from the responses and achievements of the children. I had very high expectations of children in terms of achievement and behaviour, and encouraged them to work hard. In return I had very high expectations of myself; I aimed to make their learning as interesting and exciting as possible. I know from the children's responses that they enjoyed being in my class, and I felt great satisfaction in their achievements over the year when I wrote their reports and met with their parents each summer. I also had evidence of being a good and effective teacher from the feedback from the parents, and from colleagues who observed my classroom practices, and also from the Ofsted inspectors. Then I came into higher education, and felt my confidence disappear.

²²Clemens et al (2010) discuss how new teacher educators experience a loss of identity. In the school classroom they had felt confident and secure in their expertise, but now felt themselves floundering, with the sense of being an imposter. This is exactly how I felt and it was a surprise to me, because it had taken me many years to build up my confidence in the school classroom. I had come into higher education thinking that I had valuable expertise to pass on to new teachers. I realise that I have *never* been able to gain confidence in myself as a good and effective teacher educator. Clemens et al discuss how teacher educators need to establish a new identity, drawing upon some of the expertise that they had before. Teaching teachers involves being able to articulate aspects of practice for students of teaching, which requires an awareness of self in practice. '... , they recognised that an identity founded on vulnerability and borne out of ongoing learning was, indeed, the basis of professional expertise.' (Clemens et al 2010:215)

Learning conversations

I have been hearing good things about the SoE. **A** has been engaged in researching views about learning and teaching across the University. She tells me that she has been hearing wonderful things about us in the SoE. We are well regarded by other schools and departments across the University. I am interested and wonder about the reasons.

²² Dialogue with literature in bold.

I am meeting with **B** who tells me that she and her colleagues always enjoy coming over to the SoE. She likes the positive atmosphere that she experiences as soon as she enters our corridors. **B** is so interested and excited by the ideas that I share with her about my work. She speaks of previously working with three of my colleagues and how much she enjoys our enthusiasm and expertise in working with students. I am pleased by how positive she is, but I am also rather concerned because it seems to me that we face many problematic issues in the SoE. I do however come to realise something that I had not considered before now, probably because it seems so obvious. In the SoE our focus is on people in our practice, and all of us actually 'like' people, which is why we chose a first career in school education. We actually 'like' our students, and the acts of teaching them. From my conversation with **B**, this does not appear to be the reality of some colleagues in other disciplines within the University.

However, is the SoE an environment in which I feel that students are able to develop as highly successful learners? I would also ask the question, is the best way to develop new teachers to treat students like children? I believe that some students think this. It seems to me that some colleagues take this approach, and many students like it. This follows a 'tips for teachers' in curriculum subjects approach, which students think that they can simply apply to their learners in the classroom. This approach does not require students to think in any great depth, and does not acknowledge the complex nature of learning and teaching. It does not address the unique situation that any teacher will find themselves in within their classroom.

We talk about 'modelling' good practice for our student teachers in the SoE, but I have frequently asked the question, what do we mean by modelling? There seems to be an assumption that we all mean the same thing, but I do not think that this is so. I hear students talking of 'modelling' in terms of the tutor 'showing and telling' to them, which they will then reproduce with their children in school. As identified by Myers (2002, cited in Loughran and Berry 2005) student teachers perceive learning to be a teacher as show and tell and being guided through what they do in the classroom. My view of modelling is that it should involve demonstrating the complex issues involved with being a teacher. Loughran & Berry (2005) discuss their ideas about approaches to teaching student teachers through their idea of modelling. Their self-study as teacher educators included working with students together in teaching and unpacking the episode collaboratively in

order to demonstrate what they did and why they did it for their students. They discuss the tensions in developing this approach to teaching new teachers. There were tensions relating to their desire to help students to grow and the students own pre-occupations and ideas about what they wanted to know. Some students could not see the point. These experiences resonate with me. I often try to make my intentions and actions explicit for my students. However, I am aware that they do not always consider this of importance, and would rather I focused on 'telling them what to tell' in the classroom. I am also *aware* that I might be *unaware* of how my actions relate to my intentions in the classroom. Loughran & Berry, identify the importance of gaining an awareness of oneself in order to be able to model one's pedagogical approaches, due to the complex nature of practice. This I am striving to do.

Conversation with colleague C

I have a conversation with my colleague **C**. She is feeling rather uncomfortable concerning the progress of her sessions with undergraduate students. She tells me that it was a real struggle getting the year 2 students to participate in her seminars. She tried to get them involved with the tasks but they sat back and would not participate. **C** thinks this is because students were required to do some thinking. They did not want this. What they expected was a set of tips for teachers.

C tells me that her year 3 group have complained about her approach to support. We speak of all the input from the taught sessions they have had, which in our view guides them through the assignment by the hand. They have even been given advice on how to structure the 4000 words for the assignment. We speak generally about students' expectations within the SoE. If undergraduate student teachers are not being sufficiently challenged to develop as critical thinkers, then it is no wonder that we find that some of our Masters students lack the ability to engage in critical analysis appropriately. I mention a student about whom we both had concerns. The student had told me that her previous module leader had 'held her hand' through her study. **C** and I are both concerned about 'spoon feeding' which does not help students to become independent critical thinkers. I mention how I have had conversations about practice with a colleague in the past, and we appear to disagree about approaches to supporting students' development as adult learners. I have the impression that students rate this colleague highly because she makes

them feel comfortable. They seem to complain about colleagues who try to challenge their thinking.

I think of my own year 3 group. Having seen the input from the taught sessions I expected students to be calm and clear about what they were doing. However, each of the ten students said she was feeling anxious, overwhelmed, and unsure about how to begin. I was surprised but decided to explore these feelings further. None of their previous assignments had been quite like this they said. They were required to choose their themes and conduct their own literature research. Previous assignments had specified content to focus on, which came from taught sessions and directed reading. They simply had to 'regurgitate' this in the assignments. I asked students individually to share their current progress with their projects. Some of them had very good ideas but were hesitant about expressing their own views. They were beginning to form ideas for themselves based on their actual experiences of teaching children. Students were concerned because their ideas went against the established voice of authority in educational practice. I encouraged them to go ahead and create their own arguments based on their own experience of practice. They were surprised and anxious about this approach. One student expressed a wish that their degree classification was based on the outcome of school placement, others agreed. I raised the issue that they were studying to become graduates as well as qualified teachers. I encouraged them to recognise the 'graduate-ness' of their study that would make them not just teachers but 'graduate teachers'.

My students were a group of women of mixed ages in the final year of their undergraduate programme. Our SoE is predominantly female. I wonder how well our approaches support women's education. This experience makes me consider the work of Belenky et al (1997) and their views on approaches to women's' education. Women need their tutors to help them to feel that their knowledge and experience has value in education. hooks (1994) raises these issues in her ideas about engaged pedagogy involving students own knowing and experience being encouraged and connected to learning in HE.

A few years ago in the SoE we began a research project funded by the TDA for recruiting and supporting men in becoming primary school teachers. The men's group was given high profile as a successful project within the SoE. I find it interesting that in a professional that is predominantly female, it is the male students who obtain their first

teaching posts quickly and easily, and we have evidence from the LEA that interviewing panels are less critical of male applicants than they are of female. Thinking of the lack of confidence and voice experienced by my year 3 students, I wonder if this is an example of hegemony in action among women. Do our practices continue to deny our women students a voice? How can we their tutors best support them in developing as confident learners and teachers?

Jasman (2010) discusses a research project involving collaboration between teacher educators and practising school teachers. This involved collaborative dialogue in which the teacher educators focused on learning about issues related to the reality of school classroom practice, involving current initiatives in education. Through this dialogue they considered how practice relates to theory and whether theory needed to be revised in the light of new experiences of practice. The implications of this were that teacher education programmes would need to be revised to better support the students who would be engaged in teaching practice. It seems to me that this approach might better support our undergraduate students in developing the confidence in their own theories of practice.

Another concern from practice

I have recently marked some PGCE first assignments. The focus was on their current level of understanding about theories of learning. They had only been on the programme for five weeks so we did not expect in-depth knowledge and understanding. I was however concerned how some of them were applying their understanding of the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, through using examples of their own learning as student teachers. Their approach suggested that they could not distinguish between their own learning as adult learners and that of the children.

I have an idea for an approach to teaching teachers. In addition to learning about theories of learning as applied to children, they should also learn theories about the nature of adult learning, in order to consider their own learning processes more effectively. This might enable students to gain a more critical and deeper understanding of learning. I think that too many of my colleagues think that they simply need to model how they would teach children to these students. They are caught up in ticking boxes to meet the standards, and fear about what Ofsted might be looking for. I would like students to be able to value their journeys in becoming graduate teachers, who are willing to grow.

My view of a good and effective teacher is one who understands her/his own learning, and the importance of learning how to learn. The challenge is in helping students to see.



Story 18: Voices in My Head (January 2012)

Adenike:

I have always had a vision for my learners. This is to see them develop and grow as individuals. Curriculum subjects only form part of the journey; so much more is involved. I know this from having valued my own journey as a learner. In my view a successful learner is one who is willing to open themselves to new experiences and ways of being and doing in the world. Successful learning goes beyond what can be measured through tests, exams and assignments. I like to think of myself as a successful learner according my ideal; but is this so? Am I willing to open myself to new experiences and ways of being and doing in the world?

I like to challenge my students in order to get them to shift in their thinking. I see teaching as drawing out and encouraging the abilities which lie within. It seems to me that lay people consider teaching to be about pouring knowledge in. My students ask me a question. I respond by asking another question. This is to encourage them to develop their thinking.

One of the hardest things that teachers have to learn is that the sincerity of their intentions does not guarantee the purity of their practice. (Brookfield 1995:1)

Undergraduate student teacher:

I want to be an outstanding teacher, and I want to get a good degree. Being a student is tougher than I ever thought possible. But teaching is what I want to do. I have always loved being with children. As a little girl I used to line up my dolls and pretend to be the teacher. In my teens I used to do a lot of baby-sitting. People have always said I am good with children.

So far I have loved my school placement experiences. This is where it all makes sense. I have liked some of the taught courses in uni, but they are tough. I wish they would spend more time telling us how to do the assignments, rather than wasting it on some of the other things. Some of it does not make sense. For example, in the science sessions this year, all she seems to talk about is making connections. Comparing children's questioning skills in science with how they use them in other subjects; the use of storytelling and problem solving as a stimulus for scientific enquiry. I don't get it. All I want to know is how to answer children's questions.

Then there is this talking about what she is thinking. Why do I need to know that? What happens if a child asks me a question that I don't know the answer to? I asked her this once and she said to say to the child, "what do you think?" She said that children always have ideas relevant to their stage of understanding, in her experience. I don't get this, and I don't believe it. I need to know the right answers so that I can answer children's questions properly.

Teaching innocently means assuming that the meanings and significance we place on our actions are the ones that students take from them..... Since we never have full awareness of our motives and intentions and since we frequently misread how others perceive our actions, an uncritical stance towards our practice sets us up for a lifetime of frustration.

(Brookfield 1995:1)

Adenike:

I think that some students come into teaching because they perceive a school as familiar and safe. I think though that students of teaching face a particular challenge. They come with years of classroom experience as learners and think that they know what it is that a teacher does. I find it such hard work at times in helping students to shift from their naïve views about teaching and learning. The second years have been discontented with the module. I am so disappointed that their assignments demonstrate that they hold on to the old view of teaching. I feel that we need to be able to help them to reflect on and capture their school placement experience in order to support their development. I have tried to do this in my science sessions, but it is clear that this is not what they want. I am tied by the module requirements and working in such a large team of tutors is not easy. It also seems to me that we work in isolation from the other modules. It is difficult to gain a true sense of the student experience.

Colleague teaching undergraduates:

I like my work but the students can be so critical and demanding. I want them to like me. I know that I am doing a good job when the students are happy. I tell students how important it is for us to 'model' good practice, to help them know how to practice in their own classrooms. They were complaining about not understanding what to do for the assignment, so I gave them some more written guidance and some of them stayed behind

after the session to discuss this. I have invited them to come and ask me anything they want to know about the assignment if they are unsure.

Teachers are almost bound to be liked if they never challenge students' automatic ways of thinking and behaving, or if they allow them to work only within their preferred learning styles. Since letting people stick with what comes easily to them is a form of cognitive imprisonment, one could almost say that anyone [tutors] who consistently scores a perfect ten is just as likely to be doing something wrong as something right.

(Brookfield 1995: 17-18)

Adenike:

We aim to 'model' good practice but, is my 'modelling' the same as your 'modelling'?

If teaching is to be regarded as more than achieving competence in the delivery of tips, tricks and procedures; if teaching is to be understood as complex, interconnected, dynamic and holistic; and, if teaching about teaching is to make all this apparent, then teacher educators need to develop ways of making the tacit explicit.

(Loughran 2006:62)

Thus the teacher educator needs to balance the tensions in practice while highlighting them in students' learning so that they might experience them for themselves as learners of teaching whilst also seeing them played out in the practice of their teachers of teaching.

(Loughran 2006:72)

Postgraduate teacher student:

I sometimes wonder whether it is worth doing this MA, but I thought I should take advantage of the funding for the first 120 credits. It is hard having to come to sessions after a tiring day at school. I enjoy the discussions sometimes when I am not too tired. It is nice meeting other teachers though. I like to know that others have similar experiences to me. We had that visiting speaker the other day talking about education and inclusion. Okay, he had a lot of interesting things to say about supporting learners with disabilities. It's all very well for him to talk about providing for children with disabilities in mainstream schools, but the reality is that teachers have so much to do. I have to think about the other 29 pupils in the class as well. I have my targets to meet. This year I have to work on raising the GCSE

grades for my Double Science groups. We also have a departmental review coming up and then we expect that Ofsted will happen next term; so everyone in the school feels under pressure at the moment.

I wish they would just let us focus on doing the assignment in this module. I was thinking about focusing on peer assessment because I hope to show that it is a waste of time. I think that peer assessment is just one of those trends that don't really mean anything. Peer assessment means that I have to give the pupils ten minutes at the end of each lesson to reflect on their learning in pairs. I think that they would learn more if I could continue teaching them for the ten minutes. I have been focusing on my two Year 8 classes for this small-scale enquiry. I chose them because I thought they were of very similar ability, but I think I have made a mistake here. They did get similar results in their tests at the end of Year 7. I decided to use peer assessment with one class and just teach the other as usual. I was then going to use the results of their end of term test as my data for comparison. The problem is that their unit test scores suggest that they might not be of similar ability after all. I think that the peer assessment group must be of higher ability, because their test scores are better. I think I will have to change my assignment focus. I will discuss this in my tutorial.

Adenike:

I had a tutorial with one of my Masters students today. He had a lot to say about his work. Like most of our teachers on the MA programme he spoke of the stress and pressure he is under. I find students are so caught up in the stresses of the job that they do not allow themselves to think clearly or critically. I listened and tried to make sense of his plan for the small-scale enquiry. When he paused for breath I was able to ask questions. He agreed that the two classes had been considered of similar ability at the end of Year 7. I then said to him:

“So you are saying that the peer assessment class have achieved consistently higher than the other class in their unit tests so far.”

He paused for once and thought. I could see that the ‘penny had dropped’.

“This suggests that the reflection and questioning seems to have made a difference. Maybe there is something in this peer assessment after all,” he said.

I like to think that Masters students come to my sessions willing to take a step back from their practice and reflect critically on what is going on. This can be a real challenge due to their fearful concerns about the reality of their day to day experiences of practice.

Colleague teaching postgraduates:

How can we get our students to be more critical? Most of these teachers seem to view their practice as problematic. They are good at reflecting on what is not working well, but not so good at viewing issues in a critical manner in order to make changes in their practice, or to influence change in their schools. Some of them are not good about attending sessions and when they do come they often do not engage well. I think that the more experienced teachers do value their learning, but I wonder about some of the younger ones. I think they see the MA as a way of advancing their careers, rather than as a way to develop themselves professionally.

Adenike:

I aim to ask Masters students questions to provoke and promote thinking and discussion. Sometimes this works and we have a lively discussion. I find myself thinking about aspects of my own practice in new ways along with them. I share some of my new thoughts with them.

All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions – and society – so that the way we live, teach and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice and our love of freedom.

(hooks 1994:34)

HoD

'If you can't do teach. If you can't teach, teach teachers'

That terrible saying from my student days still comes back to haunt me. I have a lot of confidence in the abilities of my staff. I know how hard working and dedicated that they are. When I address new cohorts of students at the beginning of each academic year it is important to let them know about the calibre of their tutors. I find it tedious to have to dispel the old myth about teacher educators. I tell students that all of my staff have been

chosen because they all have had very successful first careers in school as teachers, and bring their knowledge, understanding and expertise to the SoE.

I know that our students rate their experience in the SoE highly, although they can be very critical. Since education is what we are about they have ideas about what is a good learning experience. It is challenging being a School of Education within the University, because often our requirements do not fit well within systems. I find it a juggling act to meet the requirements of the University alongside those of the TDA and Ofsted, and also provide our students with the best learning experience. One issue is that our programmes require placements, and we are tied into the school term system. This can be particularly difficult for the undergraduate programmes.

We do well though in our student evaluations. We are above the average for the University, which is as it should be for a School of Education. However, I don't know why some schools score consistently much higher than us year after year. A certain other School within the University always does very well and was on top last year. I do not understand why. They teach in very large groups, and have so much less contact with their students. Their academic staff do not seem to have the same concern and regard for their students as we do. When I hear them talking many of them do not even seem to like their students. As HoD I am responsible for our development and progress. So many different ways to measure our success:

- The recruitment and retention of students.
- Generating income
- Maintaining our position with Ofsted and the TDA
- Progression and achievement of students
- Student evaluations of programmes and modules
- Student evaluations of staff
- And many more.

I must also consider my staff and their wellbeing. This is not easy with so many perfectionists around me. There are some colleagues who I understand well, and I recognise that these are personalities who are like me and approach their work in similar ways. There are others who are different. I must try to remember that not everyone is like me. Am I providing my staff with the support that they need?

Adenike:

I know that HoD cares about people and is concerned with our wellbeing. I know that she ultimately has responsibility for the successful progress of the SoE. She has demands made on her which she feels she must comply with. In among all of this is my little life. HoD is very different from me, and I see that she notices and understands those who are like her. I met with her some months ago, and I was interested that she acknowledged me as being 'quiet and reflective' which she identified as being different from her way of being. She said she must try to remember this about colleagues and ensure that we are all appropriately supported.

I was interested to note the agenda of our SoE annual conference in September that the focus was on each of us identifying our strengths and needs. I notice that this academic year HoD praises us as a team more than before. I wonder if this is me 'making ripples'? Then she said to me that she is pleased about the influence I am having on colleagues and students alike on the Masters programme. Maybe I am 'making ripples' which are spreading. However.....

By reinforcing the separation of people from their problems, problem solving often functions as a way of maintaining the status quo rather than enabling fundamental change. The problem solving mindset can be adequate for technical problems. But it can be woefully inadequate for complex human systems where problems often arise from unquestioned assumptions and deeply habitual ways of acting. Until people start to see their own handprint on such problems, fundamental change rarely occurs.

(Senge et al 2005: 51-52)



Journal extract 1.2.12 during winter school

I wanted to discuss the voices in my head; my dilemmas as teacher educator; student teachers' dilemmas and teacher students' dilemmas. The HoD situation was the least important of all. I realise the resistance might be about others wanting me to be what I am not. It occurred to me that when *M* smiled and nodded that she understood my meaning. I wanted to highlight the importance of 'being' there rather than 'talking' there. It seems to me that in a society that values 'talking' there, I have value in 'being' there. I am not prepared to become like them, and I am striving to be comfortable 'being' there. I have been beginning to be more comfortable being who I am. It is always gratifying when who I am is recognised. But I must be myself. This has always been of utmost importance to me. Since learners are diverse, then they need teachers like me who can understand. Someone who sees them. It seems to me that one cannot help but notice the vocal people, they are in our faces. A smile, a nod, a knowing is all I want. I realise that I want to be there for people; I realise that is what I want to do. I want to listen and support. I think that it is important that people like me are there. Much of the support I give remains hidden due to the sensitive nature of issues. It feels worthwhile when someone thanks me for my help and tells me that I am a good listener.

Story 19: Further Ripples (February 2012)

I walk into to tea room.

Z comes in two seconds later.

We pass the time of day.

I notice that he has a cold and does not look too well.

We dance around each other in the small space, manoeuvring mugs, teabags and coffee, taking turns with the hot water dispenser and passing the milk to each other.

Z says that he has been feeling rather fuzzy-brained today.

Then he tells me that he was at a meeting where two people said that I had made them think.

I ask who, when and what?

Z says he cannot remember.

It was an important meeting though, in the SoE.

I realise that he is talking about two of our colleagues.

I press him for further information, but he reminds me that he has been fuzzy-brained.

Through the fog he remembers that at this meeting with a lot of colleagues, two of them mentioned me separately about fifteen minutes apart and said that I had made them think.

Z's intention in telling me this is to be complimentary even though he cannot recall any of the details (so he says).

I am pleased but a little frustrated since I would like to know the context.

However, maybe this is another example of 'making ripples'.

I had said some things which made two colleagues think.

They had gone way and thought; whatever it was had made an impression.

My name had been mentioned at this important meeting.

I wonder if this happens with my students?

I would like to think that it does, although they might not recognise the importance immediately. However, maybe as time goes by they remember.



Story 20: The Reflective Teacher (March 2012)

How am I transforming as a reflective teacher?

Story 1

Undergraduate Year 1 Science February 2010:

During the workshop on LIGHT a group of students are planning an activity for children in Year 4. The children will engage in an exploratory investigation to observe what happens when light passes through a perspex prism. The students would like the children to observe the colours of the rainbow. They say they will tell the children about refraction, and light slowing down, and about different wavelengths. These are explanations for the phenomenon that I gave to students during the LIGHT lecture. In this moment I am aware from experience that student teachers think that science teaching is about telling the children everything they know. I intervene and suggest that the scientific explanation is rather too complex for young children. They argue that they must tell the children the right answer. I suggest that the appropriate response from the teacher is to ask the children for their own hypothesis. I explain that as long as the children's responses are reasonable explanations for the observations made, these do not have to be the currently accepted scientific point of view. It becomes clear to me that the students are unhappy with my response. They are indignant in their view that a teacher cannot allow children to continue thinking the 'wrong' answer. I try to explain about how children make meaning and how they will reject what does not make sense to them. The students are not convinced, and they are angry with me. I feel a sense of frustration. I am trying to help these students to learn about learning science and the teacher's role. I am disappointed that they reject my views and are angry.

Story 2

Undergraduate Year 1 Science February 2012:

It is the seminar for the FORCES workshop. A student asks me what she should tell children about the reasons why a ball bounces. I ask her to explain her own hypothesis, and she gives a good reasonable explanation. However, what she wants to know is whether it is the 'right' answer, and what she should say to children. I think that what this student is really concerned about is her lack of confidence in her subject knowledge, however, in this moment I am aware of some complex issues.

- My assumption about the student's real concern might not be correct.
- Many of the students have a real anxiety and a need to tell children the 'right answers'.
- It has always been my desire to move the students beyond their thinking about teaching as telling.
- Students find it difficult to consider primary science as being about exploration and discovery, and evaluating the evidence, rather than as the accumulation of facts.
- I recall my past experience of having positive learning intentions for my students in wanting to help them to grow and develop in their thinking, but these intentions have been experienced as negative and put-downs by the students.

I feel that I must respond with care and thoughtfulness. I am aware of my fear about upsetting students, but at the same time I feel that I must honour my values as a teacher. In that moment I am aware that I could simply tell the students the answer and not challenge their view that they must tell this to children. They might leave my session feeling comfortable, and consider that my response has met their expectations. Maybe this is what some other tutors do to keep their students happy. However, I know that simply telling what they want to know will not help children to learn effectively, and is not good classroom practice. I choose to challenge with care. I am aware of all of these complex issues flowing through my mind in that moment, and then I respond.

I give the students an explanation for the reasons why a ball bounces. I go through the concepts at their own level step by step, pausing to check understanding from time to time. A student says to me "This might be a silly question but what does dissipation mean?" This seems positive to me; I think maybe this question demonstrates that this student is comfortable with my relationship with her and the group; my response has not been taken in a negative way. Eventually all students say they understand the concepts. Next I ask them if they would tell the children the explanation I have just given to them. They agree that they would not. I then remind them that a teacher should begin with what the learner already knows. In the primary school we focus on what children can gain from concrete discovery experience. Asking the children to form their own explanations is good practice. A hypothesis which is reasonable is fine. The teacher's role is to find out about children's ideas and experience and provide them with learning experiences to take them forward. A student says "This is what we mean by scaffolding", I agree. Some of them have got it. Some say this is hard; I agree and confirm that teaching and learning are complex and can

be challenging. I remind them that they are in their first year, and things will start to make better sense when they go out on their teaching placement.

My first student thanks me and acknowledges that what she is really concerned about is her confidence in her subject knowledge. I realise that my original impression was sound. We finish the session with the students thanking me.



Story 21: One Thursday in Semester B (June 2012)

Excruciatingly busy, I have been teaching for seven working days in a row.

Earlier this week

Monday: Colleague A asked colleague B to cover his science teaching. Colleague B has lots of questions; I have to take time out from my preparations to answer them. Six hours of teaching today.

Tuesday: Another six hours of teaching today. I must catch up with colleague C today about her power-point presentation for Thursday. It is so difficult having to teach another colleague's materials. 4pm and C is in a tutorial, I don't know when she will finish. I am so tired I will catch up with her tomorrow.

Wednesday: C is not on campus today, I send her an email requesting a meeting tomorrow morning. At least I know that we both teach the session at 1pm tomorrow. I am teaching this evening until 8pm.

Thursday morning: C is teaching A's seminar. I did not know about this. I have to meet with her at 12 noon when she is finished. It is 12.30 before she arrives. I do not understand this session; it is not my area of expertise. I have not seen the materials previously. This is not how I wish to prepare for teaching a session. 12.50 I must now go to my seminar room.

Thursday 1pm: I start the Professional Studies session. This is my PGCE seminar group; my 'tutor' group. They are a more challenging group than I have had for some years. Half of the students in the group are lovely. I find them interested, motivated and engaged; always willing to make the most of any learning opportunities which they are presented with. However, the other half of the group consists of a number of young women who have rather a negative attitude. It seems to me that they feed off each other's negativity. I am showing the students some examples of English KS2 SATs papers. I give them the spelling task to try. One of the 'girls with attitude' queries what I am asking them to do. I repeat what I said. She tells me it is wrong. Another member of the group agrees with her. A buzz of voices erupts from the others in their table group. In this moment I realise that I am unsure. I leave them buzzing and go to see if I can have a word with C. I get her attention; she comes to see me. I check the task and realise that I have made a mistake; I have given the wrong instruction to the students. I return to my room wondering how I should deal with this. What should I say? I feel a sick, sinking sensation in my stomach. I go around the room distributing the remaining papers in order to calm myself and take a

couple of minutes of thinking time. I notice my positive students getting on with their task, seemingly unconcerned about anything. The 'girls with attitude' continue to buzz and exude negativity. It is time for me to speak. I say "You are correct about the spelling task; the teacher would read out the missing words". This acknowledges that what I said before was wrong. The seminar task continues. I am feeling dreadful and long for the session to finish; however, there are two more hours to go.

I made a mistake. This is exactly the reason why I like to prepare well in advance of a session, especially when I have to work with another colleague's materials. I am supposed to be 'modelling' good practice for these students of teaching. They have seen that I am not properly prepared. There were circumstances beyond my control but I cannot explain this to my students. But what is this really all about? I feel that I did not have control of the situation. What happens when a teacher is not in control? Then maybe chaos flows. What then is the result of chaos? Does this mean disaster?

I observe my students now fully engaged with the SATs task. They are writing, discussing, thinking and learning; even the 'girls with attitude'. So where is the disaster? It exists in my head because circumstances resulted in me not having the control that I would wish for, and not living up to my expectations of myself as a teacher.

' "Well what you think you are doing as the teacher is not always what the class think you're doing, and it's good to see that happening with our lecturers because it sure as heck happens to us. I think it's good that we see you struggle in ways just like us. But maybe your experience covers it up so that we just don't see the reality often enough.' (Berry & Loughran 2004:17-18)

Maybe for some of these PGCE students my mistake demonstrates teacher vulnerability. Maybe this is reassuring since it relates to their own experiences of practice. Previously with this group I have tried to explain more about the complex nature of teaching. I know that some students come looking for certainty. They want to get it right. I tell them that being a teacher is an ongoing process of development. I have admitted that I too am constantly learning and developing. I have told them that I too have sessions that go well and some which seem to be disasters; this is the reality of teaching. Maybe some of the students recall this and it gives them reassurance.

It is time for the break. The 'girls with attitude' choose to sit together outside the seminar room. I sense from their facial expressions and body language that they are having a complaining session; this is what they do. I need a drink (tea) and go upstairs. On my return

they stop talking as I walk past them. My positive students continue to smile and chat with me in their usual friendly and enthusiastic way. I feel I am existing between two parallel universes which occupy the same space in time.

In this second part of the seminar the students have been asked to organise themselves into small groups of three or four to discuss their progress with their school-based enquiries.

They were asked to come prepared, the intention is to enable sharing and peer support. I facilitate this session by going around the room to listen in and support some discussions. I

notice the 'girls with attitude' packing up and looking ready to leave. This should not be happening, there is still 40 minutes remaining in this seminar. I walk over to their table.

They say they have nothing to report back on. They argue that they can best use their time in the LRC. In this moment I need to think carefully how to respond to this situation. **I**

WANT TO TELL THEM NOT TO LEAVE. I think that they should not leave, but I ask myself *why* I think this. I know that they are not happy with the seminar; however, this part of the session requires an input from students, which this group have chosen not to come prepared for. I also think that to leave the seminar now would be impolite and inconsiderate of other people in this classroom event; this means the other students and the tutor. I respond with careful words; still aware of that sinking feeling in my stomach. I remind them that we still have 40 minutes remaining and suggest that they split up and join other groups who seem to be enthusiastically engaged. They might learn something valuable from their peers. I would like them to be able to see the opportunity for learning in this seminar. Two of them argue for going to the LRC. I repeat my request, aware of the tension and how I am feeling, but maintaining my poise. Now they begin to appreciate that my argument is reasonable, and they follow my suggestion. I watch them disperse. Soon I observe them in discussion with other positive members of the seminar group, and it seems to me that the tension dissipates and the atmosphere in the room changes. Now it is 4pm and time to finish. I am relieved.

Critically reflective teachers who systematically investigate how their students are experiencing learning know that much student resistance is socially and politically sculpted. Realising that resistance to learning often has nothing to do with what they have done as teachers helps them make healthier, more realistic appraisal of their own role in, or responsibility for, creating resistance.

(Brookfield 1995:24)

I recognise my highly charged emotions in that session. I realise now that the first part of the session did not have any real bearing on the second part of the seminar. In the moment I was so caught up in my uncomfortable feelings that it all seemed part of the same thing. During the break I sensed that the 'girls with attitude' were complaining, but I do not know for sure, or what they were complaining about. I know PGCE students very well. The PGCE is a very demanding programme, and I know that students become overwhelmed with it all. I consider the nature of our PGCE students' current concerns:

- ☞ They are working on an enquiry based assignment
- ☞ They are preparing for their final school placement
- ☞ They are applying for jobs and trying to find the time to visit schools and complete application forms
- ☞ They are completing their skills tests; some struggle with the maths and have to take this several times
- ☞ All of this in addition to personal concerns and family life

The reality is that I do not know about how my students experience life and learning. I am aware that I am sensitive to other people's moods. I know that when I pick up on a negative mood I tend to assume that I am to blame. I think of how many times in the past this has happened and I became aware later that the mood had nothing to do with me. I try to catch myself doing this. Maybe this is a result of my highly sensitive nature.

Highly sensitive people also process information about their environment- both physically and emotionally –unusually deeply. They tend to notice subtleties that others miss- another person's shift in mood, say, or light bulb burning a touch too brightly.'

(Cain 2012:136)

Throughout my career, I have never experienced an environment where the impact of teachers' emotions on practice was discussed in depth. This episode highlights some of the complexity of a classroom event. I recall my collaboration with CC and how significant it was on this journey of being and becoming. I feel that it is important to be well prepared as a teacher; however, I must be aware that the outcome of the classroom event is unpredictable. I should let go of the desire to control and allow chaos to flow. Order does come from chaos, sometimes resulting in beauty. On this Thursday in semester B I cannot feel the beauty; however, I do acknowledge the order arising from chaos.

Teaching is problematic. On the surface, teaching can appear to be well ordered, technically proficient and purposefully directed routine, but, as so much of the growing teacher research literature demonstrates, when teaching is unpacked by teachers, when their voice prevails, then the constant undercurrent of choices, decisions, competing concerns, dilemmas and tensions are made clear for all to see.

(Loughran 2006:30)

(Review of 2011-12 appendix D)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2012-13

Story 22: Reflexive Noise (September 2012)

The Unspoken:

We welcome our new student teachers warmly at the beginning of the academic year. We smile and tell them that teaching is “the best job in the world”.

They tell us how they have always wanted to become teachers. They want a profession that is worthwhile. They want to support children in achieving their true potential in life.

We continue to smile and say “we have chosen you because at interview you were the best; welcome”.

But what is it that we do not say?

You have come to ‘do’ teaching, but you must ‘be’ a teacher.

The system demands measurable outcomes from education in the form of test and exam results. But if you really want to help your learners to achieve their true potential you will need to let go of desired outcomes.

Doing teaching often involves attempting to control the learning. ***Being*** a teacher involves knowing that only the learner can do the learning.

Doing teaching often involves working towards predetermined learning outcomes. The teacher can only see what she/he is looking for. ***Being*** a teacher is being able to see the learning that is really taking place.

Doing teaching is a carefully devised plan of content that will be covered during a classroom session. Directing what comes first, what comes next and what comes last. ***Being*** a teacher is establishing a supportive learning environment, and walking with the learners in the direction that they are going.

Doing teaching is using the authority of one’s position. ***Being*** a teacher is leading with the authority of one’s experience.

Doing teaching is knowing and telling the right answers. ***Being*** a teacher is being open to multiple possibilities.

Doing teaching is having expert knowledge. ***Being*** a teacher is being a continuous learner.

Doing teaching is about being in control and objective. ***Being*** a teacher is awareness of one’s emotions in the moment of practice and choosing how to respond appropriately.

....the real preparation for life, the perennial role of education, comes about best through tertiary learning which cultivates the ability to live with uncertainty, without clear-cut goals and with a multiplicity of view-points.

(Dyson 2010:6-7)



Becoming Visible:

This is who I am.

I process first and then articulate. I articulate in writing before I speak.

I am so nervous, but I tell them who I am.

As I speak I pause and refer to my notes from time to time. I explain that I wish to ensure that I include everything.

Who I am is fine.

I say "Diversity Consciousness begins by knowing self and understanding how one relates in the world." I ask them to pause and reflect before discussing.

I am doing things my way; individual reflection and small group discussion. They share their thoughts on post-its. They have permission to share thoughts and feelings or not; they choose. No whole group 'discussion' involving so few voices.

I show them the video. There is silence when it is finished. I stand in front of them and feel the power of my silence. The minutes pass and no one speaks. Then my voice makes a ripple in the pool.

Later:

A tells me I have done well. She comments that I would not have done this two years ago.

B tells me that she sees how I have changed. She observes that I now speak with authority.

This is the result of considerable quiet time of processing. **B** says that this differs from others who might talk a lot but say very little.



Diversity Consciousness Voice:

Research suggests that the vast majority of teachers believe that the ideal student is an extrovert. (Cain 2012:6)

C stands in front of the entire team of staff and tells us that his approach makes the quiet students engage in discussion, rather than sitting back and letting the others do all of the work.

I am alarmed to hear this again from him. I am aware that I have an emotional response to this assertion, but I must challenge it again.

I speak out; I say I am using my 'diversity consciousness voice' to challenge the view. **C** says his conclusion comes from what the students told him. I want to know more. What questions did he ask? What alternative views might be made? I am concerned that he sees 'quiet' as doing nothing and therefore undesirable in a student. I am concerned that he does not consider the reasons why some talk and others are silent. I am concerned that he does not consider power in relation to voice. **C** is flustered and cross, this is not a good time, he does not wish to hear. I feel I must return another time.

I consider my emotional response. I am seeing myself as the 'champion of the quiet student'. This is my subjective view. I speak with **D**. She says that she had similar thoughts about **C**'s claims. **D**'s comments give me confidence to return to the challenge on another day.

None of this is to denigrate those who forge ahead quickly, or to blindly glorify the reflective and careful. The point is that we tend to overvalue the buzz and discount the risks of reward-sensitivity: we need to find a balance between action and reflection.

(Cain 2012:189-190)



Story 23: Losing Control (November 2012)

We who are teachers would have to accommodate ourselves to lives as clerks and functionaries if we did not have in mind a quest for a better state of things for those we teach and for the world we all share. It is simply not enough to reproduce the way things are.

(Greene 2000:1)

The government want us to 'train' teachers to teach effectively. 'Trainee' teachers are to be assessed against the Teacher Standards in England in order to gain QTS. My role is to make sure that all of the required boxes are ticked.

PGCE Science

There is an assumption that the good teacher has clearly stated learning intentions matched to clearly established success criteria.

It is the beginning of the academic year and my new PGCE students have come to me to teach them how to teach. Some are interested and excited about teaching science; others are anxious and fear that they lack the subject knowledge to teach science. They come to me to tell them what to tell.

I have my learning intentions as a teacher; 'For students to gain knowledge and understanding of the process skills of scientific enquiry, and how these might be applied through practical investigation'. I have planned and set up the learning environment. I have prepared and organised the resources. I give the students an identified starting point, then I let go of control. Yes I do have some desired outcomes, but I know much more will happen.

....sophisticated, skilful teaching practice is often confused with a good performance, a fun activity or an enjoyable experience.

(Loughran & Russell 2007:219).

I do not set out to entertain the students. My intentions are about helping to reframe these beginning teachers' ideas about the nature of teaching. I tell them "Some of you will be interested and excited about this activity, but others might be anxious or even cross with me for not giving you clear direction. Later we will come back together and 'unpick' this experience. Then I will share with you my thinking as a teacher."

I am aware that these students have undergone the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie 1975) and think that they know what it is that a teacher does.

Students use and apply the process skills without me ‘telling’ them what to do. They also learn so much more. They learn about science, they learn about learning and they learn about teaching.

I ask them, “Who does the learning in the classroom?”

They reply, “We all do, teacher and learners.”

I ask a student “Who does your learning?” He pauses and thinks for a while, a little uncertain if he has understood my meaning. Then he looks at me and replies, “I do.”

I say, “Exactly, that is my point. You do your learning and I do my learning. So, the teacher should let the learners do the learning rather than try to control everything that they do.”

The students start writing vigorously, making notes. This suggests that the ideas need to be remembered, maybe to be reflected upon after the session.

If the focus is genuinely on the student teacher as learner, then it is their ability to analyse and make meaning from experience that matters most – as opposed to when the teacher educator filters, develops, and shares the knowledge with the student teachers.....The knowledge developed may well be the same, but the process in developing the knowledge is very different. Who is doing the learning really matters.

(Loughran 2002:38)



Undergraduate year 2 Science

There is an assumption that subjectivity does not play a part in a teacher’s professional practice; a teacher must be ‘objective’.

I begin my first session of this academic year by asking students to share with me some of what they have learned about being a teacher, as a result of their first teaching placement. Some say that teaching was as they expected, others say it was very different from how they thought it would be. They speak of hard work and the need to be well organised, and of other things. I speak of the place of emotion in teaching. None of the students have mentioned this. I speak of the powerful emotions that teachers experience as they go about their classroom practice. Joy when a struggling child finally ‘gets it’; anxiety, fear, happiness and satisfaction. I experience one of those magic moments when all students are focused and listening; they ‘get’ what I mean, because they have experienced it. I say that we tend

not to address how to deal with the emotions of teaching on this programme, and teachers tend not to discuss the emotional side of their professional experience. It is important to be aware of how one feels in the classroom as a teacher, so that one can respond more appropriately and effectively.

It is seductive to underestimate the impact of what prospective teachers can learn from experience themselves and to overestimate the role of the teacher educator as one who can offer vicarious experience as substitute knowledge of practice, readymade for prospective teachers. Knowledge of practice developed and understood through experience, while generally slower to develop, is considerably more powerful in its effect.

(Berry 2007:124)

These beginning teachers are now able to relate these ideas to their experience. I tell them that although my session is about teaching science, I wish to make links with becoming a teacher as a whole. We move on to the main focus of the session which is learning through the theme of Minibeasts. The activity generates fear for some students. They are beginning to make the links.



PGCE Professional Studies

There is an assumption that a 'good' teacher provides well for *all* learners effectively in classroom practice.

Behaviour management is a focus of much anxiety for student teachers when they begin.

This is the focus for our seminar today. We are considering a scenario in which the teacher is in 'full flow' and notices that one child is disengaged. We are discussing approaches which might be taken. Suggestions are being made:

"Ask him/her to come and demonstrate something."

"Ask her/him to go and help another child who is struggling."

"Mention that you will be looking for volunteers."

Then **Y** mentions a case he witnessed in school; he says "What if it is a boy who refuses to do dance because he thinks dance is for girls"?

I think that this is a complex example which cannot be addressed easily in the moment. I think to myself, it had to be **Y** who raises this; I find that he is often rather out of sync with the rest of the group. His example means taking time to 'go off on a different tangent'. I want to say we will move on and focus only on ideas for dealing with disengagement in the

moment, even though we have identified that reasons for this type of behaviour might be diverse. I am concerned that this would sound dismissive, and I do not want to do this to Y. At the same time his example raises a number of complex issues, which I feel we do not have time to focus on right now, and this would really be 'going off on a tangent'. Then I think, why should we not do this? My answer is that by spending time responding to this one student's concern I will not be attending to the needs of the other 33 students, who were focusing on the scenario in hand. These are some of the dilemmas of teaching large groups of individuals. In any moment of classroom practice I have to make decisions. I realise that I often do not know if I have acted for the best. What is the best anyway? I cannot meet the needs of all students effectively all of the time.

...what a teacher attends to and what a teacher is aware of in the act of teaching highlight the essence of teaching as a discipline.

(Loughran & Russell 2007:219).

The reality is that a teacher needs to respond as events unfold in the classroom, and this comes with experience. I can discuss some general principles with my student teachers and model for them some aspects of my own thinking as a teacher. However, only they can decide how they will respond in the moment of classroom practice.

The problems beginning teachers face in learning what it means to teach are quite possibly more complex when seen as problems of teacher education, rather than just problems of teaching. In ways that might not happen from the perspective of a classroom teacher, teacher educators ground their decision-making with appreciation for the developmental process of learning to teach, amidst competing advocacy obligations, and foundations of knowledge (derived from both practice and research) germane to the field.

(Dinkelman et al 2006 pp. 133-134)



Story 24: Scenes from the Police State of Education (December 2012)

Accountability, Accountability, Accountability

Fear, dread, oppression, demoralisation

Synthetic phonics for all

- Reading must be taught through phonics
- All primary teachers must teach phonics
- All ITE institutions must teach how to teach phonics
- YEAR 1 pupils must be tested on phonics
- Results of the NQT survey show how well new teachers are prepared to teach phonics
- Ofsted will be sent in to judge the effectiveness teaching
- In schools there will be 24 hours' notice of inspection
- In ITE institutions there will be 48 hours' notice of inspection
- We score amber-red in the NQT survey score for phonics which is *not good*. Our former students say that they do not feel confident to teach phonics effectively.

'The Year 1 phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.

It will identify the children who need extra help so they are given support by their school to improve their reading skills. They will then be able to retake the check so that schools can track pupils until they are able to decode.'

(Department for Education)²³

Teachers know that reading is about comprehension and decoding together. Children learn to read through a range of strategies; phonics is just one of them. Children are also individuals and learn in different ways. ***One size does not fit all.***

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phonics-screening-check-administration> accessed 20.3.2013

'During the test children are asked to sound out a mixture of real and made-up words such as "drall", "halp", "snope", "thun" and "flarp", which can be confusing. Many children expect that what they read will make sense, so giving them alien words out of context removes the purpose of reading, which is to understand words on a page.'

(Jennifer Jackson Independent online 29th November 2012)



League tables: Teaching to the test.

- The assumption is that the higher the place in the league tables the better the school.
- The higher the percentage of pupils achieving grade C and above in 5 GCSEs the higher the secondary school's position in the league tables.
- The higher the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in KS2 SATs the higher the primary school's position in the league tables.

Booster classes are used in primary schools which target children achieving at level 3. These children receive intensive small group and individual tuition in preparation for their SATs tests in order to help them to achieve level 4. ***Imagine what children achieving at levels 2 and 4 might achieve if they also had booster class tuition.***

In secondary schools pupils are given GCSE grade predictions based on their KS2 SATs results at the end of primary education. Teachers are set targets for grade improvements in their subjects for GCSE. They make calculations to decide what pupils need to achieve in their coursework against the exam in order to achieve the desired grade C. Certain borderline pupils are selected for booster classes to ensure that they achieve the required grade.

Imagine what would happen if all pupils had individual classes to boost their attainment.



OFSTED

- Schools receive less than 24 hours' notice of an inspection.
- If you have not received the call by midday, you are safe for another day.
- You must be prepared at all times.
- You must update your documentation every week.
- It becomes possible to have a sense of when your inspection is due since they tend to occur in regional patterns. It is a bit like counting the seconds between bursts of thunder in a storm; you know the storm is coming towards you when the time between bursts is reduced. When the time between bursts of thunder increases you know that the storm is receding. ***However, in the case of Ofsted you know that the storm will soon return.***



Universities: Student evaluation

- There is an assumption that 'good' universities get good NSS scores.
- There is an assumption that the best teachers in universities get the highest scores from student evaluations.
- There is an assumption that the best schools and departments in a university get the highest scores in the student evaluations.
- ***There is an assumption that this is all about high quality learning and teaching.***

The survey is a measure of student opinion, not a direct measure of quality. It may therefore be influenced by a variety of biases, such as the effect of prior expectations. A top-notch university expected to deliver really excellent teaching could score lower than a less good university which, while offering lower quality teaching, nonetheless does better than students expect from it....

(The complete university guide)



The Resistance Movement

I receive the letter from the HoD about student evaluations and feel the fear. Then I decide to fight back. I compose a letter stating how I feel about this. It has little to do with effective learning and teaching and everything to do with consumerism. We must keep the

customer satisfied. I say I find this system of judgement demoralising and oppressive. I use the Brookfield quote.

Teachers are almost bound to be liked if they never challenge students' automatic ways of thinking and behaving, or if they allow them to work only within their preferred learning styles. Since letting people stick with what comes easily to them is a form of cognitive imprisonment, one could almost say that anyone [tutors] who consistently scores a perfect ten is just as likely to be doing something wrong as something right.

(Brookfield 1995: 17-18)²⁴

Students are asked to evaluate their tutors through three questions:

1. This tutor is good at explaining things.
2. This tutor makes sessions interesting.
3. This tutor is enthusiastic.

I send HoD one of my narratives and ask her to read it (Story 20). I would like to show her how I go about developing my teaching and responding to students. I make decisions based on what I consider to be in the best interests of the students' learning, not on whether the response will make them like me. I know that as a quiet and thoughtful person in a culture that values the extrovert, I am unlikely to gain the 'popular vote', however, I have my strengths which should be valued. This is important since the learners are diverse. I ask her to consider what scoring the 'perfect 10' actually means, and what will be the response to receiving the 'well done' letter. Will this encourage tutors to reflect on and develop effective teaching? The system also assumes that all tutors begin on an equal footing. Some of us teach all or mostly compulsory courses while others teach courses which are optional. Sizes of cohorts vary also. There are other inequalities since no two tutors teach the same courses for comparison. There is so much more I could tell her but I leave the letter brief, inviting her to talk to me about it if she wishes.

Afterwards I feel calm and pleased with myself. It feels so right.

Next day we meet in the tea room; we both have a busy day of teaching. HoD acknowledges receipt of my letter and says that I am absolutely right, and she agrees with me. We must meet some time to talk it through. I speak with confidence and passion and ask - how can we work towards social justice if we never challenge oppressive systems? I

²⁴ Quote also used in story 18.

wonder - if she agrees that the system is flawed, why then does she send out such oppressive letters? I think of the comments of colleagues that I have heard recently. "We are not allowed to give our students anything too challenging because they will give us poor scores in the evaluations."

"I watched this student in the assignment briefing session and she was not attending or focused. Now I have to spend time giving her an individual tutorial. If I don't do it she will give me a poor evaluation score."

I want my students to develop and grow on a personal and professional level. I wish to challenge them to step outside their comfort zones. I desire to make a difference; I hope that they too wish to make a difference in the lives of their own learners. I must move beyond my fear, and encourage my students to do the same. ***I must find ways to create 'ripples' of resistance as best I can within life in the 'police state' that is the education system.***



Story 25: Embracing More Chaos: Becoming and Being (January 2013)

The only hope is in the creation of alternative values, alternative realities. The only hope is in daring to re-dream one's place in the world – a beautiful act of self-becoming. Which is to say that in some way or another we breach and confound the accepted frontiers of things.

(Okri 1997:55)

Reflection 28th December

As I look back over the past week I am surprised by how much I have enjoyed myself. I always welcome the winter solstice as a time to recall the events of recent months and to look forward to the time of light and renewal. But then there is Christmas, a Christian festival that has become a secular season of over indulgence, enforced jollity and therefore magnified misery; I never look forward to this with any pleasure.

I made no plans; no rushing around. The term had been exhausting and I needed rest. I went with the flow. What happened was some quality time with friends and relaxing time alone. I felt good and happy.

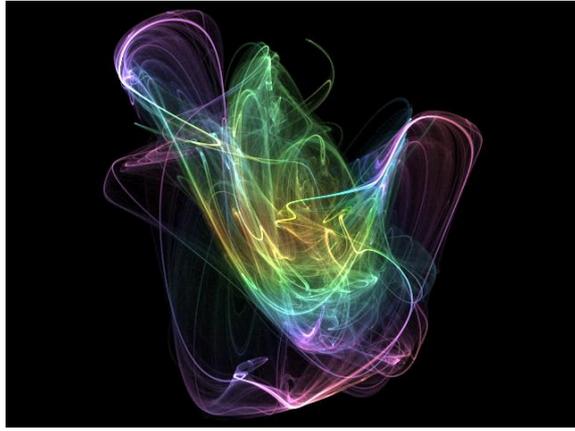
It occurs to me that the best and most enjoyable experiences arise unexpectedly when I do not try to control them. Maybe going with the flow is about embracing chaos and knowing that beauty will arise. This is about being willing to dwell with the uncertainty of how life will unfold.

Being and becoming a teacher and teacher educator

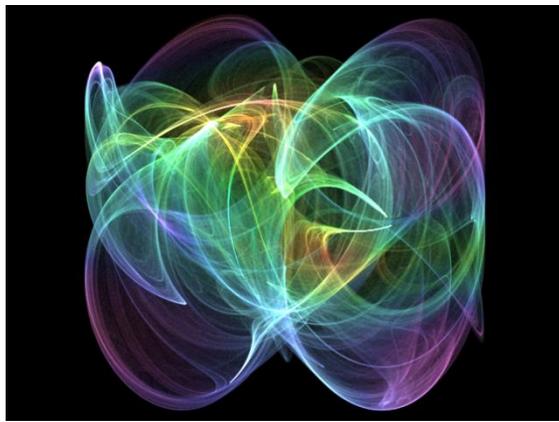
Sometimes we seem heavily involved with a narrative search for coherence and the sense of 'becoming'.....At other times, we are in a state of equilibrium, more concerned with 'being' and living out for a time a script, either self-created or socially provided.

(Goodson 2012:112)

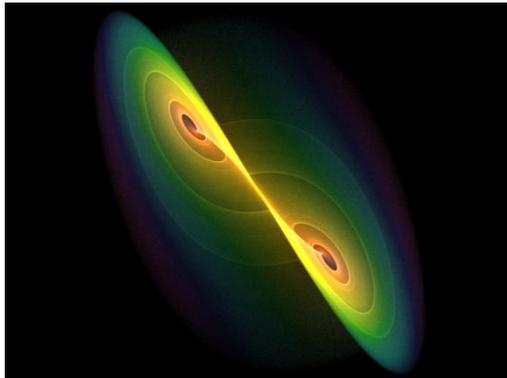
I find myself walking through the swirling mists



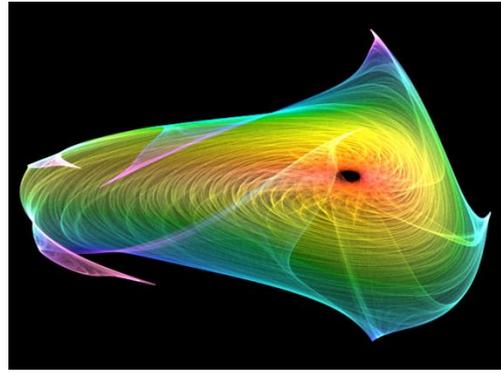
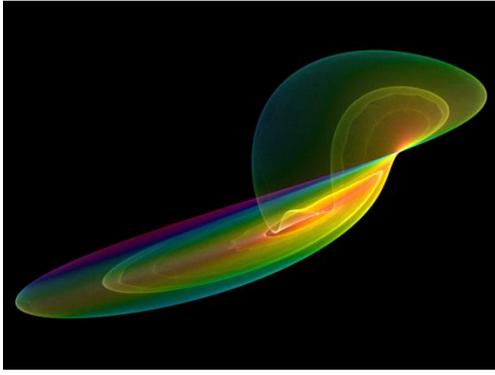
The mists continue to swirl and change their shape; I do not know what form they will take
next



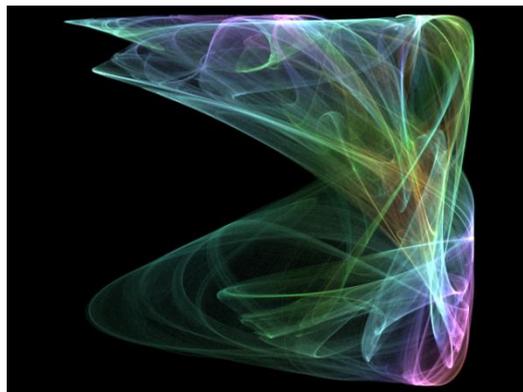
But I know that patterns and themes will emerge



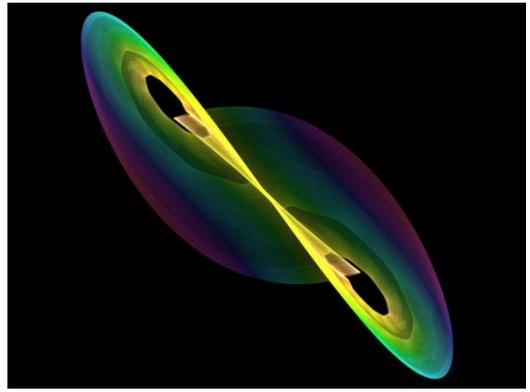
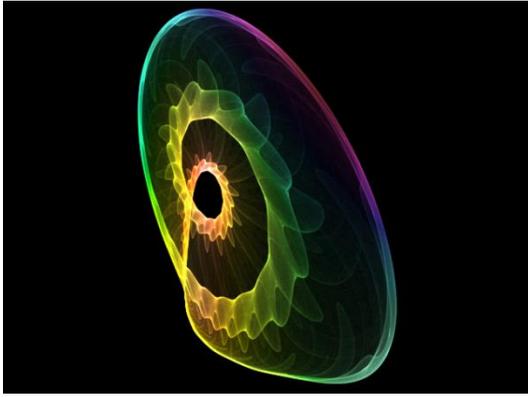
Ever changing



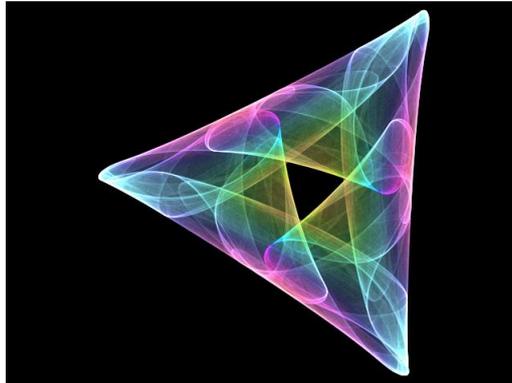
Sometimes the swirling mists appear again



But the patterns soon return



Now the journey makes sense



For systems to remain alive, for the universe to keep growing, information must be continually generated. If there is nothing new, or if the information merely confirms what already is, then the result will be death..... The source of life is new information – novelty – ordered into new structures. We need to have information coursing through our systems, disturbing the peace, imbuing everything it touches with the possibility of new life. We need therefore, to develop new approaches to information – not management but encouragement, not control but genesis.

(Wheatley 1999:96)

I realise that my journey of being and becoming has been and is about gaining understanding. Along the way themes have emerged, and I have paused to explore them in order to deepen my understanding. I understand better the nature of the education system that I must work within. I remain an inmate of the ‘police state’. I need to decide when it is appropriate or necessary to ‘play the game’ and when it is possible to create ‘ripples of resistance’. Maybe I can change the world by changing myself.



It was a long story, and like most stories in the world, never finished. There was an ending – there always is – but the story went on past the ending – it always does.

(Winterson 2005:11)

CHAPTER 4: DEEPENING INTERPRETATION OF THE INSIGHTS

It is the nature of life to organise into patterns. This recognition welcomes us into a different approach to organisational change. We can see that it is important to look for and identify the patterns that reveal themselves through behaviour. Together we can decide whether we would prefer different behaviours.

(Wheatley 1999: 130)

Introduction

The in-depth interpretation of the insights gained from the reflexive narrative is structured in this chapter through three main strands. The first strand concerns reflective teaching, and this provides the underpinning for the other strands. The themes that emerge from the first strand concern the nature of reflective teaching and how I transformed as a reflective teacher. The second strand concerns knowledge of self as a teacher, and the major themes that emerge concern the importance of emotions in teaching and what it means to be a quiet teacher. The third strand addresses gaining an understanding of my practice context which is the education system in England, and in particular teacher education. The themes which will be analysed are concerned with aspects of recent history of education policy, the place of power and control in education, the complexity of classroom experience, and the application of chaos theory to classroom practice. Interpreting the insights includes some retrospective reflection and analysis of some of my school teaching experiences resulting in understanding them in new ways.

THE REFLECTIVE TEACHER

4.1 The Nature of Reflective Teaching

The idea of reflective practice has been adopted as an essential aspect of teachers' professionalism over the years since Schön's work in the 1980s (Schön 1983, 1987). The notions of 'reflection' and 'reflective practice' have been important concepts in the language of teaching used during my years in higher education, and I have used them to describe my own practice and that of my students. I became aware among colleagues that different meanings were being given to the terms 'reflection' and 'reflective practice'. Although no explicit input on reflection was given in the courses taught, assumptions were

made that the students understood what was meant by 'reflection'. I chose to focus on supporting PGCE students in developing as reflective practitioners for my MA research project as a result of my interest, which required giving them some guidance on what it is and how to do it, as I understood it at the time.

Ghaye (2011) introduces his analysis of reflective practice by stating that most people involved with education would identify reflection as an important aspect of practice. Zwozdiak-Myers (2012) discusses how currently governments in many countries are focusing on promoting the importance of reflective practice in raising standards of achievement in pupils. Notions of reflection and reflective practice have become more embedded in the language of teaching, and Ghaye discusses the results of a study where a group of fifty teachers were asked to provide a definition for reflection-on-practice. They gave a range of positive and negative replies including the following:

- Learning from experience
- Improving what you've done
- Navel gazing
- Re-assembling what you do
- Helping you to see what you would or would not do again and why
- The latest bandwagon
- Learning from the day's chaos
- Hard work

(Ghaye 2011:22)

Through his review and analysis of literature on reflective practice Ghaye identified four views of reflection that he considered to relate directly to the teaching profession:

Figure 4

(Ghaye 2011:8)

It is my view that Ghaye has used ideas about the nature of reflection and reflective practice derived from Schön in an attempt to try to identify and articulate what it is that teachers do in practice, and these ideas attempt to capture the complexity of teaching. The idea of reflection-on-action relating to reflection after the event appears to be straight forward as discussed in the literature on teaching. However, the notion of reflection-in-action has been considered problematic as it relates to teaching, even though the term is used often in the language of the profession. As a result of engaging in self-inquiry study it became important for me to focus on gaining a deeper understanding of what it is that a teacher does from moment to moment in practice.

Schön identified teaching as one of the professions which had uncertain and ambiguous outcomes. He discussed how the dominant discourse for much of the 20th century favoured technical rationality which was linked to scientific determinism. Value was given to generalisable professional knowledge that could be applied continuously to yield the same predictable results. Teaching was a profession unable to operate successfully within technical rationality. Schön's work identified and brought to the foreground the issue that the 'major' professions, such as medicine and engineering, often face some of the uncertainties of the 'minor' professions like teaching and nursing (Schön 1983). This was at a time when it was becoming understood that positivist intentions for research and knowledge generation were proving to be inadequate in understanding human experience fully. Also at this time chaos theory as a way of explaining and understanding dynamic systems was being developed.

Schön identified some important issues relating to professions which engaged with ambiguity and uncertainty. Schön (1983;1987) considered professions like teaching to involve tacit knowledge which he called knowing-in-action. Professionals might be highly effective, but unable to articulate what it is they do. Reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action were the practices used as they dealt with the unpredictable and unexpected experiences of practice. In this way professionals developed their knowing-in-action, and hence their professional artistry as skilled and effective practitioners. Van Manen (1995) uses 'tactful pedagogy' or 'tact' to describe the tacit knowledge of teaching, described by Schön as knowing-in-action. Van Manen considered this to be intuitive:

Tact seems characterized by moral intuitiveness: a tactful teacher seems to have the ability of instantly sensing what is appropriate, right or good thing to do on the basis of perceptive pedagogical understanding of children's individual nature and circumstances. (Van Manen 1995:12)

Van Manen argues that theory cannot and does not explain how a teacher is able to do this. I believe that this demonstrates some of the challenges in becoming a teacher, which I feel current policy makers tend to ignore.

Schön explained the notion of reflection-in-action as reflection arising from a surprise within the moment of practice. My understanding of Schön's explanation is that the surprise generates either reflection-on-action, in which the practitioner seeks to find the cause by looking back over the action, or reflection-in-action where the practitioner tries out strategies in order to resolve the situation. The distinction between reflection-on-action within the moment of practice and reflection-in-action is not clear, however, Johns (2009) suggests that reflection-in-action involves the reframing of ideas in order to act differently in order to resolve the situation. Van Manen (1995) questions whether a teacher is able to engage in reflection-in-action in the classroom since it is crowded and fast moving. He believes that in this situation a teacher can only focus on one thing at a time. Eraut (1995) argues that reflection-in-action is not possible for a classroom teacher, and goes on to discuss whether what a teacher does in the busy moment of classroom practice can really be described as reflection. In his critique of Schön's work Eraut argues that no clear examples of reflection-in-action were provided that could be related to the reality of school classroom practice. He considers that the examples given by Schön came from tutorial sessions rather than the complex classroom environment. However, Schön (1987) does discuss his experience of classroom teaching in which students and tutor were engaging in the process of reflection-in-action. This was a situation where the students were all practitioners who were exploring how they might make their theories in use congruent with their theories in action using the theoretical models devised by Argyris and Schön (1974). In this classroom situation the outcome model of action was different for each practitioner. Schön discusses the challenges faced by the uncertainty of the process of understanding and reframing approaches to practice. Schön's classroom context differs considerably from

most of my experiences and those of my students. Schön also had the space and time to pause and reframe his thinking and to encourage his students to do the same.

School teaching involves supporting children in developing specific knowledge, understanding and skills. This means that teachers begin with specific desired learning outcomes for their pupils. The school teacher uses her/his knowledge and understanding of the content with appropriate pedagogical approaches in order to support the learners. I use the example of teaching a maths strategy here to a child experiencing difficulty to illustrate the process.

I would first elicit a child's current understanding through asking questions and talking through some examples. I would then use questioning to scaffold the child's thinking in order to help her/him move forward. The scaffolding usually involved questions which stimulate the child's thinking in order to help her/him find the solution for themselves. The questions might be considered to be helping the child to take 'small steps' forward until able to proceed independently. This process usually involved little transmission of information. The next step in the process would be to give the child some examples to try in order to consolidate the new understanding. This process enabled me to address an individual child's needs, taking them to a point in learning beyond where they were before the intervention. Whilst this process can be effective and appropriate for meeting the needs of individual children, the reality of the school classroom is that a teacher must find ways to achieve this in a class of thirty children. A teacher needs to scaffold the learning of a larger group of children attending to the individual in the midst of the many. Whilst some of the reflective conversations described by Schön (1987) are possible and appropriate on some occasions, this is not the everyday reality of the school classroom teacher. As a teacher educator of student primary teachers my practice includes teaching some of the concepts relating to curriculum content, and also the pedagogical approaches to teaching the content to children. Most of my teaching takes place with groups of around thirty students, which reflects the classroom situation that my students experience.

Eraut (1995) argues that disposition and time are important to consider in relation to reflection, and what he describes suggests to me that this includes space for reflection. Eraut considers the effect of the speed of response in professional action in his presentation

of a model. In the model an instant response would be unreflective action; rapid decision making would come as a result of some reflection; the final stage of deliberate decision making results in action taken after a period of deliberation (Eraut 1995:19). I would argue that the experience of classroom teaching relates to the instant to rapid response end of the model. My example of teaching an individual child relates more to the middle rapid section which allows for some reflection-in-action. In my view the deliberative section which requires time and space for reflection is likely to be rare in the school classroom. The significant issue for Eraut is that reflection for a teacher would involve making one's knowing-in-action explicit. A classroom teacher is unlikely to have such time and space while engaged in the action of teaching.

Johansson & Kroksmark (2004) argue that 'reflection-in-action' is impossible for a teacher, and consider that the practice of teaching involves 'intuition-in-action'. In their study they relate intuition-in-action to the tacit knowledge of teaching. They agree that it can be difficult to articulate, and even consider that it involves actions which might not involve explicit thinking. They regard a teacher's intuition-in-action as being embodied and developed through experience. Actions are influenced by the teacher's frame of mind. The place of reflection is to look back and consider what frames action and to help the teacher to gain awareness of their responses and actions. This idea relates to Schön's notion of reflection-on-action after the action has taken place.

In my view Schön's work allowed for valuable discussion on the nature of teachers' professional knowledge and how they go about their practice. It has helped scholars to dialogue with and advocate for teaching as a discipline (Loughran & Russell 2007). I have found the notion of a teacher's 'professional artistry' engaging to consider. However, the arguments proposed by Van Manen, Eraut and Johansson & Kroksmark demonstrate the challenges in attempting to provide a model for, or to describe and define the nature of teaching, and the place of intuition, tacit knowledge and reflection within its professional practice, particularly as it applies to the moment to moment act of teaching. I view teaching as a complex and dynamic practice, made especially complex when thirty or more learners are placed together. Although being well planned is highly desirable and expected of a teacher, the responses of the learners can never be completely predicted, and a teacher

needs to adapt and change in the moment according to the unique situation unfolding in the classroom. An additional aspect of the complexity is the issue of teachers working with specific content. However one articulates what it is that a teacher does during classroom practice, I do not think that the term 'reflection-in-action' is helpful in describing it. I believe that reflection is a dynamic and multifaceted process, and when chaos theory is considered, it might not be appropriate to try to define it, since to do so would make it predictable, certain and generalisable. In order to explain the practice of a reflective teacher it might be helpful to consider the *potential* as related to chaos theory, rather than having a clear definition.

The outcome of reflection on a practice event after action might result in reframing and changing what one does in practice, but not necessarily so. Johns (2009:9) discusses the development of the process of reflection from doing to a way of being. Johns devised a typology of reflective practices to demonstrate how one might move from doing reflection-on-action to developing reflection-within-the-moment and mindfulness in practice as a way of being. This suggests that if a practitioner focuses on in-depth reflection-on-action with the intention that this will inform future action, over time reflection will become a way of practicing rather than doing.

4.2: Transforming as a reflective teacher

Prior to this study I had always considered myself to be an effective reflective practitioner. However, I can relate my experience of classroom teaching to the rapid decision making section of Eraut's model, rather than the deliberative phase (Eraut 1995). This has been the reality of my experience of classroom teaching, in school and in higher education, since the majority of my teaching experiences involve the busy fast-paced classroom with around thirty students. As a result of engaging with Johns' (2010) six dialogical movements in deep reflection-on-action, I recognised a new awareness of what I was doing within the moment of practice. This new awareness was influenced by the systematic reflective writing and guided reflection that I was engaging with, and the new understandings gained through returning to read literature on reflective practice. In story 2 *Illumination: Concerning Seeing the Light side of the Moon* I attempted to capture my awareness of something significant happening to me, but it took some time before I was able to articulate it. Even reading through the story more than two years later I realised that I did not fully appreciate the

significance of the event at the time of writing. The story represents the first step in being able to articulate what it is that I do in practice as a teacher. The transformed practice that I engage in as a teacher is what I describe as 'awareness-in-action'. This involves a range of complex reflective thinking. I seek to demonstrate awareness-in-action in story 20 *The Reflective Teacher*, in which I presented two episodes from my first year undergraduate science teaching two years apart. In the narrative *story 1* from February 2010, what I demonstrate is my former dependence on tacit knowledge of practice. It demonstrates one of the tensions faced by teachers in higher education identified by Brookfield (1995), which has also been identified as a particular challenge for teacher educators (Loughran & Berry 2005). I had what I thought of as good pedagogical intentions for my student teachers but their experience was rather different. I thought that my actions would support their learning effectively, but what I was saying did not fit the students' ideas of teaching science, and they experienced my actions in a negative way. In the following narrative *story 2* February 2012, I sought to demonstrate my new developing awareness-in-action. I became aware that this situation was similar to the one from two years previously. In the 2012 episode I experienced fear when I remembered the 2010 episode, and had an awareness that the fear was due to how I would be judged if I upset the students. In addition I became aware of all of the other issues listed in the narrative. These were complex issues and I had to make a decision about how to respond. However, all of this thinking took place within the moment lasting a second or two; students would not have been aware of anything other than the usual brief pause that a teacher might make. I recognise that I was able to achieve this complex awareness-in-action as a result of the process of self-inquiry that I had engaged with for two and a half years. This demonstrates that deepening and developing reflection-on-action impacts on what takes place within action.

The features of awareness-in-action can be listed as follows:

Awareness-In-action Involves:

- I am aware of my emotions
- I am aware of my learning preferences
- I am aware of my feelings about individuals and groups of students
- I challenge my beliefs, opinions and assumptions
- I strive to understand the constraints on my practice
- I am aware of my reactions and responses
- I strive to turn my reactions into responses
- I am aware of when I make a change
- I am aware of when I maintain the status quo
- I am aware that there is so much that I do not and cannot know about my students
- I am aware that the classroom involves the complex interplay of factors
- I strive to make the most appropriate decisions possible based on the complex interplay of factors within the classroom at any given time
- I am aware that the actions arising from decisions might or might not produce the desired result
- I know that teaching is ongoing inquiry

Figure 5

Awareness-in-action might be linked to the idea of mindfulness in practice.

Mindfulness is the energy of attention. It is the capacity in each of us to be present one hundred percent to what is happening within and around us. (Thich Nhat Hanh 2007:33).

Thich Nhat Hanh explains the Buddhist idea of mindfulness as being entirely focused in the present and in the moment. It is a very different way of being to what is usual in current Western societies. Mindfulness is difficult to achieve and requires ongoing practice, however, its benefits are extremely valuable in achieving a peaceful and harmonious life. The benefits of mindfulness have become popular in Western societies in recent times as a way of finding balance in societies where life is fast-paced and people experience information overload on a regular basis (Smalley & Winston 2010). Awareness-in-action might be considered mindfulness since it allows for the complexity of the classroom environment to be seen. The practice of mindfulness enables individuals to heal and transform:

With the energy of mindfulness and the capacity of looking deeply, we will find insights to transform and heal the situation. (Thich Nhat Hanh 2007:97).

This links what can be achieved through the practice of mindfulness with development through deep reflection. I would argue that awareness-in-action enables understanding in practice which relates to mindfulness, enabling a teacher to respond more effectively in the fast moving complex experience of classroom practice, where the unexpected might occur among the learners who are a diverse group of individuals. I might use the term 'react' to describe the result of tacit knowing-in-action or intuition-in-action that a teacher practices without being able to articulate it effectively; and I would use 'respond' as a way to describe the result of awareness-in action. I would then argue that mindfulness in classroom teaching concerns being able to 'respond' effectively.

I have demonstrated the level of complexity in thinking in story 21 *One Thursday in Semester B* and story 23 *Losing Control*. I have demonstrated the emotions that were impacting on me in the moment and awareness of the causes. I demonstrated the significant concerns that I had at the time, and different actions I could take. In my thinking I considered the possible impact that actions might make. I became aware of some assumptions and even questioned these before making a decision about how to respond. In story 21 the main concern related to a causal assumption that the students' dissatisfaction came as a result of my lack of preparation for the session. Through reflecting on the episode I became aware of some of the challenges that PGCE students were faced with at that time which had little to do with my seminar. The narrative in story 23 is focused around my awareness of the existence of three assumptions, and that they can be challenged. Previously I would have engaged in similar thinking, however, I would have been unaware or only superficially aware of how my emotions might be impacting on my decision making and actions. What distinguishes awareness-in-action is this awareness of the impact of my emotions, and the questioning of assumptions within the moment of practice in making decisions about how to best respond. The two stories demonstrate aspects of the complexity of classroom experience, and how a teacher might not be able to know if her actions are most appropriate. I am aware that the details of the experiences I have presented represent only my partial knowing of self and the behaviour of others. However, this is the reality of the lived experience of teaching. Through awareness-in-

action I can demonstrate how I aim to move beyond the habit of tacit knowledge, and become more appropriately responsive in practice, which will be most supportive of my students to the best of my ability. How one determines a 'good' and 'effective' teacher educator has been a continuous question throughout this study. I still do not know how this might be determined, however, I believe that being open to and willing to challenge one's assumptions might be considered valuable attributes. In addition to this, being willing to demonstrate aspects of the uncertainty and vulnerability of being a teacher might be considered attributes of a 'good' and 'effective' teacher educator.

Loughran & Russell (2007:219) argue for considering teaching as a discipline: '*...what a teacher attends to and what a teacher is aware of in the act of teaching highlight the essence of teaching as a discipline.*' Loughran & Russell discuss the hidden nature of teaching and how current practice in teacher education is the 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie 1975). This is also the approach to becoming a teacher educator. Loughran & Russell call for reframing ideas about the nature of teaching which acknowledge the complexity of classroom practice, and appreciate the discipline of decision making that takes place.

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF AS A TEACHER

4.3: Emotions in teaching

A major insight and theme to emerge at the onset of the study was the place of emotion in teaching. Feedback from the inquiry group arising from the presentation of the first story *Fear and Dread* concerned how much the narrative exposed my emotional engagement as a teacher. This came as a surprise to me. Although on later reflection it seemed obvious that teaching involves emotions. I realised that the emotional side of teaching was not something that was usually identified and discussed explicitly within the schools where I had taught or the University School of Education where I was currently based. In guided reflection early in the study I was asked how teacher educators in my organisation prepare student teachers to manage their emotions in the classroom. I realised that we did not do this explicitly, however, we regularly engaged with student teachers who were immersed in dealing with their emotions within the classroom. This led me to inquire into research on the place of emotion in teaching.

In 1996 Nias wrote:

At present, they [emotions] are seldom considered in pre- or in-service education. By implication and omission teachers' emotions are not a topic deemed worthy of serious academic or professional consideration. (p293)

It seems that not much appeared to change in the following years, apart from further calls for more in-depth research into the emotional aspects of teaching and being a teacher (Sutton & Wheatley 2003; Zembylas 2006). Zembylas (2003) Identifies three reasons for the lack of research into the emotional aspects of teaching. The first is that there is deep prejudice against emotion in Western culture, which gives value to reason over emotion, and sees the two as being in opposition. The second reason is that emotion cannot be quantified objectively, and objectivity in research is considered desirable. The third reason is that emotion is associated with feminist philosophies which are not considered valid approaches to research within dominant patriarchal systems. However, there were some studies into the emotional aspects of teaching during the final decades of the twentieth century. The two earliest studies identified by Zembylas (Slazberger-Wittenberg et al 1990; Nias 1989) are important to consider, since the research was conducted shortly before I became a teacher, and the findings are relevant to the education culture that I entered. In order to analyse issues relating to the emotional aspects of teaching I must first reflect back on my career as a teacher in primary and secondary schools, and then consider how I developed as a teacher educator in a University.

The emotions of school teaching

As a PGCE student teacher I had a vision of my ideal class of nine and ten year-olds, in which I would engage the children in a range of creative and interesting activities. I taught in schools in inner London with its very diverse communities and range of social issues. I had not anticipated the reality of being a teacher in this environment. Very early in my career I would often find myself as a lone adult in a room with thirty seemingly hostile children. The emotional impact was unexpected and devastating. I experienced fear, sadness and emotional pain. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (1990) from the findings of their psychoanalytic study discuss how teachers attempt to deal with this reality. Teachers bring their own emotional selves to the classroom situation and also have to engage with the learners' emotional selves. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al identify how teachers can be overwhelmed

by experiencing large classes and challenging behaviour. The stress, frustration and exhaustion caused by having to deal with these situations results in teachers often leaving the profession. I recognise this situation and how often I considered leaving the profession. However, as I gained experience I found ways of managing the classroom and developing my resilience. I was driven by a desire to be and appear strong, however, the feelings of fear, sadness and pain were regularly hidden beneath my calm and composed exterior. I recognise that this too was the reality for the majority of my colleagues. We were able to maintain our composure in the classroom, but I recall how on some occasions teachers would collapse in tears in the staffroom. I recognise how much I needed to protect myself from what I would describe as 'emotional assault' from the children in the classroom. I have represented this situation in *Professionalism*, which is the first sketch in story 11 *Unravelling: Work in Progress*. Through this sketch I sought to demonstrate how I developed as a teacher over the years. As I became more confident and resilient I felt able to let go of my 'mask' and 'suit of armour'. Taking out my old masks and suits of armour to show to my students is a metaphor for supporting student teachers in developing what we describe as their 'teacher presence' in the classroom. This includes the appearance of calm and confidence, when the reality beneath might be different. I chose to share this sketch with a small group of colleagues in the inquiry group presented in story 14 *Becoming Visible: Finding My Voice*. Two colleagues expressed shock and sadness that I had felt this way. I was surprised that they claimed this had not been their classroom experience. I later wondered whether these colleagues had been aware of their emotions in their practice of teaching in any depth.

Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (1990) also identify that most teachers come into the profession with a positive vision about having an impact and making a difference in the lives of their learners. They go on to discuss how most teachers at that time saw themselves as promoting the education of the child in its broadest sense. These findings relate to some of my early experiences as a teacher. In the primary school I believed that I was working with the 'whole child'; I was concerned with children's emotional, social and physical learning and development in addition to the academic. The expression working with the 'whole child' was very much part of the language of primary school practice at that time. These children brought with them into the classroom everything that had shaped their lives, and

the positive and negative experiences that they faced on a day to day basis. Many children experienced challenging life events, which resulted in their fragile emotional state of being. However, it remains normalised practice to place thirty such individuals together in a confined space with one teacher for education.

Nias (1989) conducted a study which involved interviewing ninety-nine primary school teachers about their views and experiences. Nias found that these teachers had a very deep personal investment in their work. The study identified that due to the huge personal emotional investment in teaching, teachers needed to be able to practice in ways that were in tune with their values. If unable to do this they experienced a sense of loss and stress, which sometimes led to what was described as teacher 'burnout'. Nias discusses how many of her participant primary teachers were concerned with developing themselves professionally and had high expectations of themselves in supporting pupil achievement. Teachers felt that doing the job well took so much out of them. Teacher burnout might occur when they had been working under self-imposed pressure for some time, or when teachers found themselves working in a school environment that did not support their values or high standards. Nias's study was of significant importance at that time, since the years that followed saw the imposition of new pay and condition structures on teachers and the introduction of the National Curriculum. The implications for teachers were that they were subjected to more regulation and direction, and a loss of the autonomy which had made teaching so worthwhile for many. However, raising standards was considered to be at the heart of the new regulation, which might be considered supportive of teachers who had high professional expectations of themselves.

In my experience teaching is a profession that is extremely public and exposed, since in the United Kingdom all citizens spend many years of their lives in the presence of teachers. Teaching on the surface often might appear to be calm and controlled, but this might mask the highly charged emotions being experienced and hidden from view. Nias (1996) identified three main reasons for this which relate directly to the issues I identified through reflecting on my early career as a teacher. Firstly teaching involves working with people, and such professions usually involve an emotional dimension. Teachers engaging with relatively large groups of pupils in the fast moving classroom environment will experience

the impact of their emotions as events unfold, although they might not be fully aware of how they are responding. The second main reason is that teachers invest so much of their 'selves' in their practice, resulting in personal and professional being so inextricably linked. This means that teachers depend on their professional lives to support their self-esteem and fulfilment in life, however, this in turn also exposes their vulnerability. It is important to consider that high self-esteem depends on teachers being able to practice in ways which are attuned to their values and beliefs about the nature of good teaching. The third reason identified by Nias is that teachers feel deeply about their work and invest a lot in the progress and development of their pupils. Teachers also invest much in the values that they believe their work represents. Hargreaves (2000) also considers that teaching and other jobs involving human interaction involve emotional engagement. In his studies he identified the importance of teachers' own life experiences and how these impact on their relationships and approach to practice, in addition to the closeness and interplay of interactions within professional life.

The National Curriculum was first implemented in 1989, and for a while colleagues and I were able to continue with our aim to work with the 'whole child'. As the years passed I experienced the increased pressure to focus on National Curriculum subject attainment targets, which in my view were limited in presenting the whole picture of a child's achievement and progress. Kelchtermans (2005) raises the point that teaching involves more than the implementing of technical knowledge and methods, and the outcome of classroom events is uncertain. However, in my view since the implementation of the National Curriculum, education policy in England has been driven by a focus on technical knowledge and methods. This makes learning and teaching predictable and certain, and the implications of this belief are that the desired learning outcomes will be achieved if the teaching is good enough. Kelchtermans continues in considering a teacher's vulnerability when faced with the reality of the uncertainty of practice, and gives this as a reason why some teachers favour standardised ways of monitoring teacher and student achievement. In my view standardisation has its limitations, and through consciously exploring the 'undesirable' emotions, I might gain a much richer and deeper understanding of what is happening in my classroom. Through reflecting on the place of emotions in my career as a teacher, I recognise how powerful they have always been, and as Nias identified, I recognise

how much of myself I have always invested in my role as a teacher. The role of class tutor was of significant importance for my sense of self; I had a great need to be needed. Like many teachers I loved 'my children' and their good progress was a great sense of satisfaction to me. By the time I returned to primary teaching I had developed a more balanced approach to 'my children'. However, I did experience the primary classroom as being very intense due to spending six hours each day with the same group of children. Through this self-inquiry study I came to recognise how much I had not previously reflected on my emotions in teaching in any depth, although I had been aware of them. There was a great sense of pleasure when pupils were interested and excited by the learning experiences I had provided for them; the great sense of satisfaction when I reviewed my pupils' achievements over the school year. I also experienced anxiety when I felt a situation in the classroom spiralling out of control; a sense of fear and anger sometimes when experiencing a confrontation. However, I did experience confidence in my abilities as an effective teacher.

The emotions of higher education teaching

When I entered higher education I was ready for what I considered to be a more 'grown up' detached experience of education. I welcomed the less intense relationships and classroom experience; however, I was very pleased to be given a 'tutor group' of PGCE students who I came to know quite well. Working within a School of Education (SoE) with colleagues who themselves come from a first career in school teaching, I recognise those who in my view still embrace the school teacher need to be needed. There is some belief that an aspect of modelling good practice involves being with the student teachers as they will be with the children that they teach. I would however question if this is appropriate for adult students in higher education. It is appropriate good practice to demonstrate care and concern for the students; however, I would argue that this should be appropriate for their needs as adult learners.

The emotions experienced in higher education were quite different from those experienced in school. I experienced a sense to loss of confidence and self-esteem as a result of entering higher education. In story 17 *Articulating my Vision* presents insights on some of the tensions I experienced. I relate my experience to the findings of Clemens et al. (2010) who discuss the discomfort experienced by new teacher educators. They argue for considering

'how' to become a teacher rather than the 'what' of teaching, in developing a new identity as a teacher educator. Through this study I came to recognise that I had carried around my anxiety and fear about being a 'poor' teacher educator for a number of years, and had never regained a new confidence in myself. I recognised in retrospect that I would have benefited from some more focused support within the SoE on becoming a teacher educator, as discussed by Dinkelman et al (2006). The assumption was that I had knowledge and skills of teaching gained through my years of school classroom practice, which I would be able to apply to higher education.

Early in the study the idea of demonstrating my vulnerability as a teacher was raised in guided reflection. I relate this to demonstrating the 'how' of teaching, but this seemed challenging to begin with. Loughran & Berry (2005) discuss the complex issues relating to a teacher educator exposing her/his vulnerability. The value is that it demonstrates for students of teaching some of the hidden realities of being a teacher, and this might be considered an appropriate aspect of modelling. However, teacher educators need to consider carefully what it is that they expose and model for students. There are tensions between making aspects of being a teacher explicit for students and losing one's position of expertise as a teacher educator, which students need to have confidence in. I demonstrate how I work with some of these tensions in practice in story 20 *The Reflective Teacher* and story 21 *One Thursday in Semester B*. I was feeling extremely vulnerable during the classroom episodes presented. Through the awareness of my feelings of fear and anxiety I would argue that my professional artistry as a teacher educator is demonstrated in how I responded to my students, but maintained my poise and composure in the midst of the highly charged emotions experienced.

Emotions in education culture

Zembylas (2006) discusses emotional rules in school culture and education. Both teachers and students aim to keep emotions considered to be negative hidden, such as anger and anxiety, and display those considered desirable, such as empathy and calmness. He argues that the culture within education institutions has demanded the control of emotions in this way. However, he argues that postmodernism considers emotional experience as a valuable focus for inquiry which results in gaining insightful knowledge. As a result of self-inquiry I recognise the impact that my intense emotions have on my teaching. Although I am more

aware, in reality there will be much of which I am unaware due to only being able to have a partial view of self. At the same time my students will also have experienced intense emotions which will have had an impact on their learning. Control of emotions suggests the constraint of force proposed by Fay (1987). A teacher's belief that keeping one's emotions hidden and under control might relate to notions of legitimate power. French & Raven (1968:268) propose that this type of power is often self-imposed, and arises as a result of cultural and social influences. In my view control of one's emotions as a teacher comes from within the culture. Teachers then exercise coercive power over their pupils in order to contain the display of undesirable emotions. It is important to consider why emotional control has been so embedded within the education system.

Boler (1999) discusses the importance of emotion in education stating that '*Education is a social institution that serves the interests of the nation-state and functions to maintain the status quo and social order*' (ppxvii). Boler critiques the control of emotions in education, arguing that emotions exist since we all recall a range of positive and negative emotions from our years in the classroom. She also argues that emotions have such significance in our potential for transformative learning, and critical inquiry into the ideologies which shape our society, and might work towards social justice. Dismissing emotional engagement as undesirable seeks to maintain the status quo.

Boler identifies three characteristics which relate to emotions which might be useful in defining them. First emotions are partly 'sensational' which relates to the physical and embodied aspects. Sensational includes feelings such as the heart rate increasing and the rush of adrenaline. The second characteristic is 'cognitive' which concerns one's belief and perceptions. This third characteristic is 'linguistic' which relates to meaning and interpretation. In story 20 *The Reflective Teacher* and story 21 *One Thursday in Semester B*, I was aware of my increased heart beat and perspiration as a result of my anxiety and fear as the events unfolded. In the stories I sought to present the complex issues and thinking taking place in the moment of practice and how I resolved the tensions. The episodes presented in these stories occurred during the latter part of my third year of study, and demonstrate how I was able to seek resolution amidst the embeddedness of the cognitive

and sensational aspects of the emotions that were constraining me; which I relate to Fay's (1987) theory about the constraints in achieving desirable autonomous practice.

Boler (1999) considers in depth the issues of emotions in society and education. She chose to inquire into the 'absent-presence' of emotion in society from a historical perspective. Although different cultures have differing rules which govern emotion, Boler discovered that many cultures associated the display of emotion with women. Boler's research identified the privilege given to notions of truth and reason associated with the objective masculine, as compared to emotion associated with the subjective feminine. Boler discusses how emotionality associated with women was considered irrational and undesirable, compared to the rational reason associated with men. Women's propensity for 'hysteria' was used in the past to deny them access to education. Later on women's emotionality was considered to make them natural care givers, which resulted in them being well suited to teaching young children. Walkerdine (2005) in her discussion of the history of compulsory education in England, identifies the aims given for public education were to address crime and pauperism in society. The argument given was that the public needed to develop good habits which might arise through being able to read the bible. Although women's emotionality made them good care givers, teachers were required to keep their own emotions under control and train children to do the same.

Skelton (2010) and Johnston et al (2010) discuss studies conducted with student teachers on their views about the roles of men and women in education. These studies aimed to support efforts to encourage more men into teaching in primary school. The results of the studies showed that even in the twenty-first century there was still the belief that teaching young children was an extension of mothering. The male students had the view that women were probably best suited for the caring role involving teaching very young children, but men were better suited to the academic and disciplinary role of teaching older children. The female students agreed that they were probably better suited to the needs of younger children, but thought that men and women were equally suited to teach older children. The emotional aspects of teaching exist for men and women; they both experience feelings such as joy and elation, sadness and fear at various times in practice. Men and women teachers might acknowledge their emotions in different ways, however, in my experience of

working with student teachers, men and women respond to the impact of positive and negative emotions in similar ways. For example, as a tutor supervising students on school placement I have supported men in tears as well as women when the placement is not progressing well.

As a result of my process of self-inquiry I have come to understand much about the impact emotions have had and continue to have on my practice as a teacher. I would argue that this is a positive and productive outcome. In story 6 *Embracing Subjectivity* I explored the importance of being aware of emotions as a teacher. The importance of being 'objective' is so much part of the discourse of my practice environment as a teacher; however, I think that colleagues really mean a denial of emotion when they speak of being 'objective'. In my view it is important to be aware of emotion in practice in order to be able to act in the most appropriate way. This means being willing and able to confront the negative emotions as well as the positive ones, as identified by Zembylas (2006). In the reflexive narrative I identified episodes from practice when I became aware of how my emotions were having an impact on my responses. One such occasion is raised in the *journal extract 18.6.10* following story 4. I discuss an episode in which I became aware of how my intense emotions were preventing me from responding most effectively. This incident was a very powerful moment of insight, in which I recognised how engaging with the study was changing my thinking about practice. I was able to recognise how my actions were being driven by my feelings of pain. The deep reflective process enabled me to achieve this. Another issue concerning this episode is the importance of having feedback from a colleague. I recognise that in my moment of pain and stress I would not have gained the important insight without feedback from someone else.

Sutton & Wheatley (2003) conducted a review of literature on research into the emotional aspects of teaching. They discuss the lack of in-depth studies and call for more research to be conducted in the future. They identify a number of research methods that might be used in these studies. Methods include appraisals using questionnaires; interviews, laboratory testing of physiological measurements such as heart rate and blood pressure; diary studies; and experience sampling using beeper technology. They argue for a multi-componential model to understand teachers' emotions in practice rather than a focus on the subjective

aspects alone, which these methods would allow for. Aspects of my study relate to Sutton & Wheatley's diary study approach to researching teachers' emotions, and I am focusing on the subjective view. Through my study I have sought to gain an understanding of the impact of my emotions in my professional practice. I am aware that no other teacher will have the same experience as me; however, I do know that my representations of experience result in resonance for other teachers (Akinbode 2013).

Early in the study as I was becoming aware of the place of emotions in teaching I began sharing my thoughts with students. An episode is presented in chapter 3 in the journal extract for 12.12.09, which is the second of two included after story 3. I mentioned emotions to my PGCE students the last time I saw them before they went out on their first school placement, and asked them to take care of themselves emotionally. I was very interested in the episode presented, since my words seemed to have had an impact on the students' thinking.

It is important to consider why teachers might not wish to explore how their emotions might impact on practice in any depth. Immediately before coming into higher education I worked for a large children's charity for a year, within a multi-disciplinary team of professionals. The project supported children in school to prevent exclusion. Colleagues came from disciplines such as counselling and social work. Some colleagues discussed how the clinical supervision in their previous practice had helped them discharge uncomfortable emotions experienced as a result of engaging with other people and their emotions. There was a view that teachers would benefit from some clinical supervision, given the intensity of emotions experienced in the classroom. Colleagues thought this might ultimately have a more positive impact on the children. At the time I did not agree with this view since I could not see how clinical supervision could work in teaching, and I also thought it best for teachers to not focus too much on the pain of classroom experiences. Through reflecting on these issues during my study I considered how it is that teachers do in reality manage their emotions.

Menzies-Lyth (1988) conducted a psychotherapeutic study into how nurses manage their emotions as they face the reality of illness and death in their practice. Through the research she identified defence mechanisms which had been established within nursing organisations

and culture which enabled nurses to avoid engaging with the reality and pain of the emotions. Mechanisms included moving nurses around regularly so that they did not become attached to the patients; a rigid hierarchy for control, and a focus on tasks to be performed for a body rather than engaging with the person. Menzies-Lyth had the view that although these defence mechanisms existed in order to deal with the painful emotions, nurses were still very stressed and dissatisfied. Although a similar study has not been conducted in teaching, and teachers do not usually have to deal with the emotions arising from illness and death in their day to day practice, I do think that there might be defence mechanisms used to deal with the reality of highly charged emotions experienced in the classroom. The school classroom is a crowded and busy environment, which means teachers are usually engaged in constant action and reaction. Awareness of emotion would require time to reflect. Teachers are often engaged in constant activity when not teaching, such as marking, paper work, meetings, preparing resources and displays, which does not allow for the reflection in depth that would enable them to consider how their emotions might be impacting on their practice. It is possible that constant action serves the purpose of avoiding the need to think about the uncomfortable emotions experienced in practice. In my experience teaching in a School of Education in a university also involves a high level of action and reaction for many teachers, and making the time to reflect in depth is a challenge.

4.4: The Quiet Teacher

Issues of diversity, promoting equality and inclusion are of particular importance in professions like teaching which involve working with people. A significant insight to emerge through this study is the issue of being a quiet person, a quiet teacher, and a quiet teacher educator. In my view it is this aspect of diversity in 'human being' that has presented me with the greatest challenge practising within a School of Education in a University. I have chosen this aspect of diversity to focus on for in-depth analysis due to its significance in my practice, and it seems to have been given very limited attention in the literature and research. I was only able to find two studies into quiet teaching (Pailliotet 1997; Collins & Ting 2010), and these are discussed later in the section on the introvert student. Like Collins & Ting I was unable to find any discussion of the notion of quiet teaching in the literature on teacher education. Teaching involves a high level of communication with people, and my

experience within the culture of education in Britain suggests that teachers should be vocal and have outgoing personalities. Whilst this is not the situation for all teachers, in my view there is the expectation that these are desirable characteristics in a teacher. There is also an expectation within British education culture that learners should demonstrate their learning through significant vocal participation in the classroom.

As a child in school I recall not wanting to be picked on in class to speak out unless I felt ready. I did not like to have the attention of everyone focused on me. As a student in higher education I felt the same way. As a qualified teacher I chose to listen and not speak during staff meetings. This continued in my role in higher education. However, I did not remain entirely silent. The issue is that I need to think through my ideas before I vocalise them. This means speaking when I am ready, not when someone else commands. As a child I was told that I was shy and that I would 'come out of my shell' as I became older. At various times throughout my life I have been told to 'speak out', 'let my hair down', to 'be more sociable'. It seems that value has been given to having a lot to say. I might be described as being an 'introvert', however, from my experience of how the term 'introvert' is used in the language of British society it is often considered a flawed way of being, that should be changed if possible.

Issues relating to introversion and extroversion

Pennington (2012) explains that the notion of the personality types 'introversion' and 'extroversion' were devised by Carl Jung. Introverted people gained their energy from internal events such as thinking and feeling, whilst extroverted people gained their energy from external events such as social interaction and being active. Collins & Ting (2010) discuss how given the opposite flow of energy attributed to introversion and extroversion, these were assumed to be opposite personality traits. However, Jung had considered them both to be present in everyone, but he thought that people were predisposed to mostly favour one or the other. Jung sought to differentiate between the work of co-psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler (Pennington 2012). Jung considered Freud's focus on the effects of the external world on the patient to relate to extroversion, and Adler's focus on the internal processes to be introversion. Pennington provides an explanation for why extroversion might have been favoured. Pennington discusses how

Freud, being angry with the other men, used his position of authority to present introversion in a negative light, a situation which has continued to the present day.

Collins & Ting (2010) discuss how Jung's conceptual framework was used to develop the Myers-Briggs personality types including sixteen categories. These categories would link two ways of perceiving, sensing and intuition, with two ways of judging, thinking and feeling (Myers & Myers 1995). These ways of perceiving and judging were linked to the extraversion-introversion preference to form the personality categories. Although popular the Myers-Briggs framework has limitations since it tends to reduce personality into discrete types. The arguments suggest that personality should not be conceived as being made up of discrete and/or opposing types. Personality might be considered complex, and people differ in behaviour and response depending on the situation that they find themselves in (Collins & Ting 2010; Cain 2012). Another way to consider personality might be as a spectrum with complete introversion at one end and complete extroversion at the other end (Pennington 2012). With the latter concept of personality most people would be somewhere in between, since the ends of the spectrum would be extreme introversion and extroversion, and considered to be abnormal. These arguments suggest that although an individual might favour introversion or extroversion, personality behaviour might be dynamic.

The issue of personality in teaching generally arose during the first year of the study through the very important collaboration with my colleague CC, presented in story 3 *When Worlds Collide*. A significant insight from the collaboration was that as teachers we tend to relate positively to students who we consider similar to ourselves. As a quiet person I recognised that I tend to relate positively to the quiet students. In the *journal extract for 13.5.10* following on from story 3 I describe the events of the narrative inquiry group where I presented this narrative. This was a powerfully insightful and transforming experience for me, which came as a result of the feedback from the student nurses who attended the session. I was aware that certain people tend to stand out for me in any group. These include quiet people who I perceive to be like myself, and very vocal people, since I have the view that one cannot help but notice them since they tend to dominate sessions. During this narrative group session I had been aware of the two students first described in the

extract; one because she had not spoken, and the other because she had spoken a lot in the two hours we had been together before my presentation. When the quiet student gave her feedback first, my thoughts were that I was vindicated as a teacher; that I need to be who I am in order to support students like her. This feeling was reinforced when the second student fed back that she had not considered how her vocal behaviour in sessions might dominate and hinder quiet students.

Issues from professional experience

I had always been aware of the quiet pupils that I had taught as a teacher, and had on occasion been their advocate. I recall how some colleagues considered quiet pupils to be 'not doing any work'. As a form tutor in secondary school for girls I recall challenging a drama teacher who had written rather dismissive reports for two of my pupils because they were quiet and did not perform as she would have wished. The assumption was that the girls were being lazy. I also recall teaching in a primary school where colleagues were disturbed by the behaviour of two quiet little girls. These children had a very caring, quiet and harmonious friendship, where they were happy to sit together without talking. Other teachers were disturbed by their apparent silent communication abilities. I taught these children when they were in year 6, and had been advised of their 'strangeness' by their former teachers, who had kept them apart in the classroom. I felt that I understood these girls' quiet way of being, and did not consider this as a hindrance to their learning and development, and as a result I permitted them to sit together in class. It interested me that other teachers did not consider friendships involving argumentative behaviour strange or a cause for concern in the same way.

In the time that I have taught in higher education I have experienced the notion that students need to be vocal. This is considered to be a given for a student of teaching, and I am also aware that colleagues in other Schools within the University have similar views. Cain (2012) discusses how so much value is given to the talker even though they might not have the best ideas. She identifies that often talking is confused with constructive action, and silence is considered to be unproductive inaction. I have had colleagues say the following to me:

"Come on, you say something; we are doing all the work"

“Enough of reflection, I want to see some action”

In order to consider the nature and value of quiet teaching and learning in more depth I will first examine the issues in relation to society in general.

Introversion and extroversion in society

Aron (1999) and Cain (2012) both identify the value given to the outgoing extrovert in society. They both refer to their own USA society and Aron includes Canada. I believe that the factors discussed also apply to UK and Nigeria as societies. This means that from my perspective the two cultures that influenced my upbringing both value the extrovert way of being. Cain argues:

Extroversion is an enormously appealing personality style but, we've turned it into an oppressive standard to which most of us feel we must conform
(Cain2012:4)

Cain (2012) continues to assert that introversion as a personality style is considered to be inferior and can even be pathologised. This includes additional traits associated with introversion, such as sensitivity, seriousness and shyness. Extroversion traits such as fast moving action, fast talking and risk taking are favoured. Aron (1999) focuses largely on high sensitivity, which is mostly but not entirely linked with introversion. She discusses how highly sensitive people in societies like the USA and UK are often considered to be flawed. Both Cain and Aron discuss how as a result of this introverts and highly sensitive people struggle to change themselves to fit in with the societal ideal, which results in stress and lowering of self-esteem. I can relate these discussions to my own experiences of life, and being told as a child that I would 'grow out of' the shyness and apparent fearfulness. Cain and Aron discuss how extroverts give the appearance of confidence, and argue that shyness and the apparent lack of confidence, considered to be demonstrated by introverts, might be related to the messages that they receive from society about their 'flawed' way of being.

Pennington(2012) discusses some of the negative ways in which introverts are viewed within our society. He suggests that :

Male introverts suffer in Western culture, often described as lazy, soft, gay or unsociable. Female introverts can be taunted as weird, distant, aloof and arrogant and are therefore ostracised (p.1)

Kahnweiler (2009) identified some of the challenges faced by introverts within organisations. Introverts can be perceived by extroverts as insensitive and sometimes rude, as a result of their silence, and unsociable for not wishing to have constant company. Introverts might be judged as slow thinkers for not choosing to share their ideas immediately. They might also be considered 'weak' due to avoiding confrontation and an aggressive stance. Introverts who might also be highly sensitive experience stress of overstimulation in the busy work environment; this will include exhaustion through so much interaction with people. I recognise these experiences from my work environment. Kahnweiler also identifies being invisible and not actively putting oneself forward in the workplace as challenges for introverts. I recall how many times senior colleagues have told me that I need to be 'proactive' in order to get what I want, and were quite taken aback when I suggested that their real meaning was that 'pushy' people get what they want. I felt that they did not understand me.

The introvert practitioner

When using the concept of personality spectrum to position myself I would say I tend towards the introvert section. I have come to describe myself as an 'internal processor' needing time to think before responding. Colleagues who have come to know me now understand about this and know that I will produce valuable results. However, I am also aware that others sometimes feel a sense of frustration in their desire for an instant vocal response. In story 13 *Becoming Visible: Finding My Voice* I have presented some of the issues concerning how it felt to be an introvert in the midst of 'pushy', vocal people. In story 14 *Re-framing* I have presented some past experiences of explaining myself and my way of being to colleagues.

I have always felt that being true to myself is most important for my well-being rather than attempting to meet someone else's ideal. I have experienced the fear that who I am is not enough. The forward to Kahnweiler's book was written by Douglas R. Conant former president and CEO of Campbell Soup Company. Conant discusses how he is an introvert who

has also been a very successful business leader. He explains how he realised the need to be himself rather than trying to live up to the extrovert ideal. He explains:

I began to realize that the best thing for me to do was to tell everyone with whom I worked the simple truth – I’m just shy.

I found that “declaring” my introversion was a very freeing exercise – more preferred than going through painful contortions in attempting to adapt to other people’s styles.

(Conant in Kahnweiler 2009:x)

Conant’s approach to working with people who might not understand the quiet way of being resonates with my own experience which I present in story 14 *Re-framing*, in which I recall an experience of ‘finding my voice’. Since then I have found it necessary at times to explain my way of being. This can be a challenge because having to explain oneself in this way is not normally a regular way of interacting with people. However, teaching is a ‘people’ profession and there might be the assumption that teachers need to be outgoing, and therefore the best teachers are extroverts. In story 8 *Becoming Visible*, I present a number of aspects of my self that I have felt rendered me ‘invisible’. These are being a woman, small and Black in addition to being quiet. In the *Recollection* following story 8 I recall some past experiences as a teacher when I felt unseen. Although I resonate with Conant’s views, I feel that as a white man he had advantages in promoting his quietness that I do not have.

The introvert student

Cain (2012) and Kahnweiler (2009) suggest that almost 50% of the population are introverts. Pennington (2012) claims that it is 25%. Whatever the percentage, populations are made up of diverse personalities, which might be positioned on the introversion to extroversion spectrum. This means that the pupil and student populations are composed of diverse individuals. Cain identifies the idea that most teachers in our society consider that the extrovert student is the ideal. I have heard colleagues across the University complain about how their Chinese students are reluctant to ‘participate’ during seminars. By this they mean that these students will not speak out. Colleagues regularly try to think of ways to change these students into the ‘ideal’, although they do agree that Chinese students seem

to perform better in the exams than many other students. Aron (1999) identified China, Japan and Sweden as societies which value the quiet and thoughtful traits most associated with introversion. Cain discusses the experiences of Asian American students in schools and their quiet and more serious approach to learning that goes against what is most valued in USA society. These issues of how personality styles are valued in society are important for teachers to consider. The UK is a diverse society, and London particularly so. During my career this has had implications for the teaching profession to consider. I have heard on many occasions from senior colleagues of the importance of employing teachers from the same community backgrounds as the learners. In terms of ethnicity and culture this has been about promoting equality and inclusive practice, because this enables the connection of similarities. Brighouse (2006) presents a different view. He suggests that it is important that students experience others who are different from themselves, so that they can understand alternative ways of being in the world. I would argue that given pupils and students will have personality styles all along the introversion to extroversion spectrum, then teachers are also needed who have a diverse range of personality styles. This is needed for the recognition of similarities and also gaining an understanding and acceptance of different ways of being.

Pailliotet (1997) wrote of a case study that she conducted with a student teacher in the USA who came from an Asian background. The student formed good relationships with the children and with her school-based mentor, but her progress and achievement were not seen by her faculty tutors. The student was described as quiet and felt that she was invisible. The tutor failed the student after her first observation on school placement. The student described the faculty tutor as being really fast and pressured, as compared to her school-based mentor who she described as quiet and patient, being willing to listen to her. Pailliotet came to understand more about the student's background through her research. The student said that in her culture the teacher is respected, and students were expected to be quiet, and this is the reason why she did not speak out in class. The case presented concerned cultural communication, and the importance of faculty tutors listening to their students in order to be able to make the connections. It was hoped that this would lead to encouraging and recruiting more students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This was considered to be good practice in supporting students from all backgrounds.

The research conducted by Collins & Ting (2010) focused on student teachers on school placements. They discuss the situation of two quiet student teachers; the first was expected to 'act up' to mimic the behaviour of her extrovert mentor, and the second was encouraged to develop her own style. The first student had to withdraw because she found the experience difficult to maintain, and she was exhausted. The second student made very good progress. Collins & Ting discuss the importance of supporting students in developing practice in their own way. They use the idea of 'actors' and 'act-ers' in teaching. In my experience being an 'actor' is often how many student teachers begin since they have a script that they have planned and rehearsed to perform in the classroom. As they gain experience they develop themselves as teachers who respond to the classroom situation as it unfolds, and this is what Collins & Ting describe as 'act-ers'. Collins & Ting (2010) argue for encouraging diverse ways of being a teacher, and supporting students to develop in the way that best suits their personality. They identify the strengths of quiet teaching. They observed that quiet teachers tend to work more with small groups and give attention to individual children by moving around the class and engaging with individuals. I have been told on a number of occasions that I am a 'good listener'. I believe that a particular strength that I have as a teacher is in supporting students who experience difficulties. Due to the sensitive nature of these students' concerns, these experiences have been hidden from public view. Students have expressed their appreciation for the support that I have given them, and this has been worthwhile for me as a teacher. I believe that this is an aspect of quiet strength, which remains invisible within a culture that values vocal action. Goleman (1995) in his discussion of emotional intelligence identifies ways in which people manage emotional exchange in their interactions, and appears to support this view. He argues that moods can be transmitted from one person to another, describing this as emotional contagion. Emotional contagion can be experienced as positive or negative, and effective emotional intelligence results in managing the exchange so that it is experienced as positive. Goleman identifies 'popular' and 'charming' people for their skills in making others feel good (p131). He also identifies the significant value of people who help others to 'soothe' their feelings, since it is this aspect of emotional intelligence that is able to help people in emotional stress or distress. I have raised some issues relating to these experiences in story 13 *Becoming Visible: Finding my Voice* and the *journal extract for 1.2.12*. which follows story 18 *Voices in my head*. In personal and professional life I find myself from time to time in

the position of listening to someone who is experiencing emotional suffering, for example when coping with a loved one's terminal illness. It is only when I am thanked for being a good listener that I remember that others have also said this about me. It seems that 'being' there with someone rather than 'talking' there is much valued in these times of suffering.

Understanding my practice and the implications

I had been aware that student teachers' initial approach to practice is influenced by their own experiences as learners. Prior to this study I had only considered this in relation to subject knowledge, rather than to emotion or personality. Kosnik's (2007) discussion of her inquiry into teacher education supports my experience. Kosnik's research included sharing her own stories of experience with her students and encouraging them to do the same. Although I had some awareness of my interest in quiet students, who I perceived to be like me, I had only considered this on a superficial level before beginning this study. In chapter 3 I presented a moment of significant insight in the journal extract for 4.10.09 between stories 3 and 4. In that moment of reflection I became aware of the importance of considering how my approach to teaching might not have been fully supportive of the outgoing and vocal students. It seemed to me that many teachers were trying to coax quiet students into being vocal and active in ways that did not support their nature. However, was I limiting the progress of the more outgoing students by trying to keep them contained? In reflection I considered some past experiences as a teacher. I recognised in retrospect that in noticing child **A** I was taking care to the child in me who had been made to feel invisible. I then realised that I might not have supported the more outgoing children effectively, some of whom I considered to be pushy and attention seekers. As a teacher in higher education I could be aware of how I respond to students like **Z**, and also how I might encourage my students of teaching to become aware of the different personalities in their classrooms, and consider how they can best support the learning and development of all. I would need to emphasise the importance of being aware of one's own preferences and biases.

Implications for teaching

Cain (2012) presents an argument that there are times when it is desirable for an introvert to act extrovert. She argues that some highly successful individuals are able to do this. I

must acknowledge that teaching does require an appropriate level of outgoing communication with people. The implications for my practice as a teacher mean that I should to be aware of when I need to 'act' more extrovert than I might feel in order to be successful. However, learners need to be provided with an environment that best supports their learning, and all teachers need to be aware of their personality preferences and how this impacts on their learners. This issue supports the value of gaining an awareness of self as a teacher through in-depth reflection as discussed earlier in this chapter.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF PRACTICE CONTEXT

Working through Senge's (2006) idea of creative tension involves gaining an understanding of one's practice situation. Through engaging in this study I have become aware of how much my desire to achieve my vision of practice has been constrained by tradition and force, as theorised by Fay (1987). Through the study I have come to understand how much the education system has changed since I qualified as a teacher. In the analysis it has been valuable to consider aspects of the history of education in England, and I have chosen to consider recent history from the 1988 Education Reform Act, since this period of time has had such a major impact on my professional life. In many respects it is valuable for me to consider my career in terms of before and after the 1988 Act.

Since 1988 there have been regular and rapid changes in education policy and practice, imposed by successive governments, which have resulted in increased regulation and direction for the teaching profession. I recognise how many teachers experience the tensions between the desire to maintain the traditional autonomy in practice, and the force of government imposition of policy which seeks control of teacher professionalism, to align it with their political agendas (Furlong 2008). The regulation and direction of the profession began with the Conservative government (1979 – 1997), but was developed in depth by the New Labour government (1997 – 2010). It is this policy of taking control of teachers' professionalism that has resulted in the technical rationalist approach to learning and teaching being imposed by successive governments. The Coalition government (from 2010) have taken the approach further by reforms which seek to direct teaching strategies. These include imposed methods to teach reading, changes in how GCSE and A level are assessed, and the introduction of performance related pay for teachers, which is based on targets.

Teacher Training is now being directed away from universities and into schools, resulting in reducing the influence of university based research on teacher education, apart from that which supports the government's own agendas. However, I begin by exploring the impact of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Experience of Recent Education Policy in England

The 1988 Education Reform Act saw the implementation of the National Curriculum, and gave the following purposes:²⁵

2. The curriculum for maintained schools satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which –

(a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and

(b) prepares such pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

These purposes appeared to be reasonable, and in 1989 when the National Curriculum was first implemented teachers in my school were positive about the potential benefits of a common curriculum, but we were also rather apprehensive about how future developments would unfold, especially the new assessment procedures including the SATs testing. As the years went by it seemed that we were subjected to the imposition of continuous developments to the school curriculum and the assessment of it. I came into higher education believing that I could pass on aspects of my successful school practice to future teachers. However, I soon came to understand that initial teacher education practice now focused on developing a new breed of teachers whose professionalism was controlled by government imposed standards in England. Furlong's (2008) analysis of the Labour government's policies resonates with my experience at the time. The positive aspect of policy included attempts to raise the status of the teaching profession in order to encourage more people to enter it. I was interested to see the advertising campaigns entitled 'Those who can, teach'. This was a challenge to the old negative myth 'Those who can't do, teach'

²⁵ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/pdfs/ukpga_19880040_en.pdf page 13

which I had encountered during my year of PGCE study. Furlong discusses the increased technical rationalist policy based on performativity where school decision making needed to be based on evidence and performance data, which supported government priorities. When I became a teacher in higher education, the standards for Qualified Teacher Status had been introduced, and some years later the professional standards were extended to become the competencies to regulate all teachers in England, and were linked to career progression. I can relate my experience to Furlong's argument that although many teachers disagreed with government policy they maintained their sense of vocation in order to cope with and adapt to the new professional environment. I continued to experience this situation over the years. Furlong discusses a study in which teachers claimed that they found ways of continuing their previous practice with some modifications in order to be compliant with new policy (Furlong 2008). Since 1989 the teaching communities within which I have practiced, in school and university have had an ethos of quiet resistance. We considered what we needed to do in order to be compliant, but at the same time maintaining our focus on what we considered good practice. As a result of engaging in retrospective reflection on my experience, I recognise that I had a particular view of the purpose of education which was different to that of the government. I assumed that others had a similar view.

In considering the purpose of education within society Smith (2012) discusses how for many policy makers it concerns producing an effective and productive workforce. Others in society might have the view that education should enable people to live satisfying lives and aim to work towards social justice. Brighouse (2006) put forward the view that the main aim of education should be to promote 'human flourishing' which will enable young people to be able to engage with economic factors, as opposed to the notion that education should address the needs of the economy in itself. Brighouse has the view that human flourishing involves becoming an autonomous adult. I recognise that the idea of 'human flourishing' best relates to my long held belief about the purpose of education. The aims of the 1988 Education Reform Act appear to support the idea of promoting 'human flourishing'. However, Brighouse goes on to argue that current education policy with its emphasis on academic outcomes does not support this view. Smith(2012) discusses how industrialised nations have linked education with economic outcomes in recent years. There is an

assumption that better school outcomes will result in better economic output. Judgements on school effectiveness in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations have been based on the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) given to 15-year-olds every three years, and the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) given to pupils in the equivalent of years 6 and 9 every four years. These comparative tests have resulted in nations undertaking radical reform in their education systems in an effort to improve standards. It is this situation that has resulted in the current state of accountability. Smith argues that the international PISA and TIMSS tests are complex to devise and administer, their focus is rather narrow and can be difficult for pupils to interpret. Smith discusses how politicians in England have used the results of these tests to support their political designs. Relative success in the tests is argued to be as a result of the current government's policies, and relative lack of success of the policies of the previous government. The market led arguments feed into the current system of accountability, in which schools' and teachers' effectiveness are based on the end of key stage tests and GCSE results, upon which the league tables of school effectiveness are devised. Throughout my narrative I have questioned policy and practice that bases effective learning solely on perceived academic measurable outcomes. The range of complex factors which might impact on any group of people is not considered. According to the Sutton Trust report teacher effectiveness has the most impact on pupil achievement²⁶. However, Smith (2012) discusses how the schools at the top of the league tables in England are mostly located in affluent areas, whilst those at the bottom are in areas with high levels of poverty and disadvantage. The Sutton Trust report focuses on research which 'measures' teaching and learning, and seeks to predict future PISA test outcomes as a result of the value addedness that more effective teaching has on pupils attainment. The current model of accountability puts the blame on schools and teachers for the apparent 'failure' of the pupils. In my view this accountability model with its emphasis on measurable academic outcomes does not attend to the notion of 'human flourishing' and does not ultimately address the promotion of social justice.

Prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act primary school teachers were able to direct the content of the curriculum within their own classrooms to a great extent. As a result of the

²⁶ Interim findings (September 2011) – Improving the impact of teachers on pupil attainment in the UK

1988 Act the National Curriculum provided statutory requirements for what children should be taught. With the implementation in 1989 I thought that it was a good idea to have a curriculum that every child in the country would experience. At that time I still had the professional autonomy to teach the content of the National Curriculum as I chose. The early documents provided a range of ideas for teachers to adapt. However, I was aware that the National Curriculum with its focus only on subject content was limited; it did not include all aspects of learning. I was concerned that the new National Curriculum did not attend to the 'whole child'. As the years went by teacher autonomy was reduced with the production of government sponsored schemes of work and the imposition of strategies to be employed, tests and league tables.

Accountability in Higher Education

As a teacher educator on initial teacher training programmes I experience the Ofsted inspection system. In addition as a university teacher I experience the performance indicator which is the National Student Survey (NSS):

The National Student Survey (NSS) gathers students' opinions on the quality of their courses. The purpose of this is to contribute to public accountability, help inform the choices of prospective students and provide data that assists institutions in enhancing the student experience.²⁷

The major assumption relating to this survey is that student opinions are an appropriate way of determining the effectiveness of courses. As a teacher I would argue that gaining student feedback is important and essential in order to evaluate and develop programmes and courses effectively to support learning. However, the NSS and the internal university evaluations that feed into it are concerned with market forces rather than learning and teaching. Rolfe (2012) discusses developments in higher education which relate to my experience as a university teacher. Rolfe identifies policies which have resulted in students in England and Wales having to pay for their higher education, which has made it into a commodity, with the student as consumer. The result of student as consumer is that they desire value for money, and Rolfe argues that some students might not even be interested

²⁷ <https://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/it/publicinfo/nationalstudentsurvey/> accessed 12.2.14

in the study or learning, but only in the degree awarded, due to its potential for future employment. The fees for undergraduate students have recently risen significantly, and are higher than they have ever been previously. This has led to significant concern within my university, and discussion about how to ensure that student demands for quality are met. As a result of this the NSS is considered to be of utmost importance since, the institution's score and position within the league tables will have an impact on attracting future 'consumers'.

There are significant tensions here between student opinion as expressed in the NSS and internal university evaluations, and the nature of learning and teaching. I have always aimed to focus on good practice in learning and teaching, with a desire to support my learners to achieve as best they can. I came into higher education with the assumption that the university was concerned with learning, and developing critical thinking in particular. In my view, whether one considers a university education to be about learning to promote 'human flourishing' or to gain the skills required for a 'good job', it would be helpful if students were able to understand more about their process of learning. This would mean some analysis of previous learning experiences in school, and an awareness of what needs to be developed in higher education. In chapter 3 I have presented some of my experiences of the impact the student evaluations have had on me. The system generates much fear. The ultimate concern is that low NSS scores mean that fewer students will choose to study in the university, resulting in less money and loss of jobs. This means that there is continuous scrutiny of the evaluation scores for the individual programmes, modules and teachers since these are considered the indicators that feed into the NSS. As a university teacher who teaches teachers I have to attend to the tensions and constraints placed on my practice by school and university education accountability policies.

Power and control in education

The issue of a teacher's control of classroom events arises as a theme in chapter 3, particularly during the first year of study. As a result of deep reflection I became aware of and questioned the nature of control. It has been important to analyse the nature of control and power in the classroom, and how it pervades the education system, since in my view they involve practices which have become hegemonic and normalised in education institutions. I practiced within a school system where maintaining control was and is

considered to be an essential attribute of a good teacher. Although engaging and motivating learners is important in promoting learning, teachers can and do lead classrooms through the power of their authority.

French & Raven (1968) propose five types of power which might have an influence on human behaviour. These are referent power, expert power, reward power, coercive power and legitimate power (pp268)²⁸. I can relate four of these types to the education system as I have experienced it during my career as a teacher. In my view expert power, reward power, coercive power and legitimate power are deeply embedded in the education system; however, how they manifest has altered over the years since I qualified as a teacher. Coercive power and reward power have been used to a great extent to control the behaviour of the learners in the classroom. In my experience over the past twenty years there has been increased emphasis in schools to use more positive forms of classroom management, which means that there have been attempts to emphasise the use of reward power, and reduce the role of coercive power. I have seen the increasing use of extrinsic motivators such as house points and stickers to encourage the desired behaviour in children. On the PGCE programme that I have taught since entering higher education, the emphasis has always been that our student teachers focus on promoting positive behaviour when developing their classroom practice.

The Panopticon

Foucault (1977) used Bentham's notion of the panopticon as an idea for social analysis, which I consider a valuable focus for analysing education practices. Bentham devised the plan of the panopticon as a disciplinary system for a prison which kept the prisoners docile and under control. Foucault used the panopticon as a way to explain how power might operate in society and within institutions. The panopticon system was designed to control bodies in confined spaces. The panopticon prison placed the prisoners in individual cells in an arrangement that was overlooked by a guard in a tower. The system was organised in such a way that the prisoners could not see each other or the guard, but they knew that they could be seen by the guard in the tower. Prisoners' behaviour was kept in order due to knowing that they were being watched, however, they could not be sure when a guard was

²⁸ Descriptions in appendix F

present in the tower. Over time this resulted in the self-regulation of the prisoners' behaviour; they became docile and compliant. This arrangement was ideal for the prison governor, since exerting this type of self-regulatory power did not involve force of any kind; there would be no need for coercive power in the panopticon. Foucault's use of the panopticon in social analysis included its application in schools.

In the classroom the teacher is always scanning the room in order to remain informed about what is happening. I relate this to Foucault's idea of the supervisor seeking to control bodies. The teacher seeks to control the bodies of the learners within the classroom. This way the teacher can control the movement of learners within the classroom space, and call on any learner in order to modify his/her behaviour to ensure compliance. As the person with authority and power the teacher has freedom of movement within the classroom and can position herself/himself out of the learners' view. I recall how I used this in the school classroom.

As a result of self-inquiry study I recognise how I sought to control the behaviour in the classroom in school; I expected passive and compliant pupils. I once had a Year 5 class with some very challenging behaviour. I would position myself at the back of the room where I could not be seen when the children were sitting at their tables facing the front of the room. From this position I could call on any child who tried to move, stop working, or hit another child. I would say the child's name and they would return to task immediately. The undesirable behaviour calmed down, and soon children would simply turn to see where I was. Their gaze would meet my eyes and they would turn back quickly. Soon they gave up trying to see where I was and focused on completing their work. In retrospect I can relate this practice with the idea of the panopticon. Many colleagues I have worked with speak of the teachers 'look' which concerns controlling a class of children without use of voice. The children know that they are being watched and challenged and choose self-regulatory compliance. Teachers do need to begin by exercising coercive and reward power in order to achieve the desired behaviour, but eventually this might give way to the full benefits of the panopticon use of power which does not require coercion. In my experience the 'look' is a practice also used by teacher educators with student teachers, and is given as a model of a desirable method of managing behaviour.

In addition to normalised classroom practices, power and control pervade the entire education system, given the agenda of accountability which has grown since the 1988 Education Reform Act. School performance is based on the outcomes of end of key-stage statutory assessments, which are used to compile league tables, as these points from the Statement of Intent show (DoE 2013):

1. Performance tables continue to sit at the heart of the accountability framework. They focus the debate on standards and strengthen the accountability of schools and colleges.
2. The tables also provide a reliable and accessible source of comparative information on pupil attainment and progress, absence, workforce and finance, and are a key element of our transparency agenda.²⁹

This system of accountability is based on a number of assumptions. First that the end of key-stage assessments are accurate and appropriate ways to determine achievement and progress. The second is that the better the teaching the better the results in the assessments. A third assumption is that the best schools with the best teaching obtain the best results. As a result of these assumptions, the final assumption is that the league tables are an accurate and appropriate way to demonstrate school effectiveness in England. It seems to me that the publication of the league tables represents the presence of the guard in the tower of the panopticon. Schools' successes and failures are there apparently for all to see. From the early days of the implementation of the National Curriculum there seems to have been a development in the way power is exerted on education institutions, from the coercive power that dealt with the early resistance, to the current working of the panopticon which features much self-regulatory compliance.

I can also relate the panopticon to the power of the Ofsted inspection experience. School and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions are subjected to Ofsted inspections. The purposes for the inspections are given as follows:

²⁹ http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/download/Statement_of_Intent_2013.pdf accessed 14.2.14

Ofsted's inspections of ITE perform three essential functions. They:

- provide trainees and prospective trainees with an expert and independent assessment of how well an ITE partnership is performing and the quality of teacher training offered
- provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of ITE partnerships and the extent to which an acceptable standard of teacher training is being provided (This provides assurance that minimum standards are being met, provides confidence in the use of public money and assists accountability, as well as indicating where improvements are needed.)
- promote the improvement of individual ITE partnerships and the education system as a whole.

(Ofsted 2012, ITE Inspection Handbook)

The same functions are given for school inspections. In my experience of practice in schools and an ITE institution, there was a sense of quiet resistance among teachers to the imposition of Ofsted inspections. Prior to 2012 schools and ITE institutions were given some weeks' notice of an inspection, which enabled them to prepare and compile the required paper work. Since 2012 there has been a new system in place. Schools now receive only one day's notice of an inspection. ITE institutions are informed on a Thursday morning for an inspection that will begin on the following Monday. This uncertain situation has generated considerable fear and anxiety concerning Ofsted inspections. In my view teachers' time and energy is now focused on compliance, and what Ofsted might be looking for rather than a critical appraisal of good practice. In my view this demonstrates the self-regulation that arises from life in the panopticon.

An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning. (Foucault 1977:204)

Foucault's views seem a very appropriate way to describe the increasing attempts to keep education institutions under control. As a teacher I have always sought to support my learners to achieve and develop to the best of their abilities, and this vocational aspiration

has been shared by my colleagues. This ideal supports the political rhetoric concerning raising standards; however, the system of Ofsted inspections is experienced as disciplinary power that is punitive and controlling, rather than supportive in achieving positive outcomes for learners. In my own ITE institution I observed the anxiety of colleagues who had the responsibility of ensuring that the Ofsted process ran smoothly. The acute anxiety impacted upon an entire academic year as week after week Thursday came but no 'call' was received. Throughout the year as a staff group we were required to ensure 'Ofsted readiness'. Prior to 2012 one of the activities of the Ofsted inspectors was to observe a sample of students teaching during school placements. The current arrangements include observing recently qualified teachers who have graduated from the university. This is to ensure that judgements are as accurate as we say they are. The inspection team decide which students and teachers will be selected for observation, which seems to me a tactic to prevent the organisation from selecting the best students and avoiding the weaker ones. In my view Ofsted is an excellent example of the panopticon at work in our society because as Foucault states:

In each of its applications, it makes it possible to perfect the exercise of power. It does this in several ways: because it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised.
(1977:206)

All state schools in England and ITE institutions are governed by Ofsted, and exist in fear of the consequences of not meeting the required standard. In my ITE institution the fear of being judged non-compliant concerns losing our involvement with ITE, which has been a major SoE activity. The numbers of student places given to ITE institutions is government controlled, and a reduction in numbers as a result of an unsatisfactory Ofsted inspection, or a loss of ITE status, it is believed would result in the punishment of loss of jobs.

It is interesting to consider the education system in Finland since this is one of the best performing European countries in terms of the PISA tests. The Finnish National Board of Education has produced the following statement of intent for the nation's education system:

FINNISH EDUCATION IS BASED ON

EQUITY

Equity means both the equal access to education and equal opportunities for good learning within every school

SUPPORT

Support is regarded important – national authorities support municipalities, municipal authorities support schools, principals support teachers and teachers support their students. We believe that support, not control, leads to the development of teaching and learning.

TRUST

Trust is an important prerequisite in a system where there are neither national tests during basic education nor inspections.

(Finnish National Board of Education 2007)

This is a very different approach to the system of education in England. The ethos of Equity, Support and Trust appear to result in good progress and achievement for pupils, as evidenced from the international comparative test results, which the government in the UK consider to be an important indicator of economic success³⁰. Although there are no inspections and league tables in Finland, self-evaluation is a statutory requirement with some external sample evaluation conducted by the Education Evaluation Council. Despite the increased regulation and direction in the Education policies of successive governments since the Education reform Act 1988, pupils in England do not perform as well as those in Finland. It might be helpful for the UK government to consider a different approach to education. I would argue that the disciplinary power driven current approach to developing education should be replaced with one that promotes equity, support and trust as a way to ensure progress and achievement for all learners. In my view the emphasis should be on support for schools and teachers, rather than the punitive accountability which is currently experienced by many teachers. In 1973 Postman & Weingartner wrote:

.....there are so few men currently working as professional educators who have anything germane to say about changing our educational system to fit present

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/2012-oecd-pisa-results> Michael Gove's response to the publication of the PISA league tables.

realities. Almost all of them deal with qualitative problems in quantitative terms, and, in doing so, miss the point. (Postman Weingartner 1973:14)

It seems that despite decades of direction, regulation and the accountability agenda, education seems to be as problematic as it was forty years ago. The government has used research such as that produced by the Sutton Trust as evidence to support its accountability agenda. The research is a current example of attempts to deal with qualitative problems in quantitative terms. In my view the way forward is to address qualitative problems in qualitative terms. This would involve acknowledging the complexity of the educational experience.

4.5: Complexity of classroom experience

The complexity theme emerged during the first year of self-inquiry study as I sought to find an aspect of practice which linked all of my classroom experiences of teaching learners of all ages and stages. The significant insight that the classroom situation is extremely complex was gained through collaborating with CC, as presented in story 3 *When Worlds Collide*.

This aspect of classroom experience is known by teachers and often discussed in the literature, as mentioned by Loughran (2006) and Berry (2008). Although teachers are aware of the complex nature of the classroom, I do not believe that most are able to reflect on and understand the implications of this situation in depth. The fast moving 'busy-ness' that is classroom practice, and the many demands made on teachers result in there not being the reflective spaces to consider the implications of the complexity of the classroom in depth. Policy makers do not consider this when devising and imposing educational policy, and in my view take a simplistic approach to education.

The *When World Collide* experience made classroom complexity powerfully explicit for CC and myself. I came to recognise just how much all learners and the teacher participating in a classroom event bring to the session. I have reflected on these insights in story 4 *Reflection: The Butterfly and the Volcano*. I recognised that each individual participating in a classroom event brings aspects of self to the session. This includes life experiences, previous education, and whatever is currently happening in life. An individual would bring her/his current emotions and mood into the classroom, and these would impact on how the

individual would respond, react and interact. All of this would ultimately have an impact on the learning that takes place; this includes that of the teacher and the learners.

Loughran (2006) discusses issues which resonate with my experiences identified through the study. He argues that since the classroom is complex, then teaching is uncertain. He considers that teaching needs to be viewed as continuous inquiry into practice, and a dynamic and evolving process. The uncertainty of the situation would mean that the outcome of the inquiry could not be easily measured or matched with any pre-determined targets or standards, which is counter to the government's desire to control, and creates a tension with the agenda of accountability. Loughran discusses how students of teaching would like it be simpler and straight forward, which has been my experience of the expectations of student teachers, more especially since they are learning within a system that will assess their development as teachers based on the established success criteria which are the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status. The grand narrative of the system is that successful learning and 'outstanding' teaching can be determined and measured effectively. In my view classroom complexity is not fore-grounded, instead an over-simplified view of teaching and learning are emphasised through focusing on targets, standards, test and exam results. I practice within a system that makes judgements on effective learning based on what can apparently be measured easily, considering anything that cannot be easily measured to be insignificant. As a result of this, teaching as technical knowledge has been emphasised, with prescribed methods expected to produce the desired measurable outcomes. The reality is that the complexity of a teacher's thinking and decision making remains hidden from view. This experience is supported by Loughran & Russell (2007) who discuss how students often consider teaching to concern the superficial delivery of information. In my experience student teachers expect to be able to 'see' how I am delivering the information, and then be able to replicate this themselves. It is a challenge to change this view of teaching. When teaching student teachers Berry (2008) raised a number of tensions which I can relate to my own practice as a teacher educator. One concern is the tension between *telling and growth*, which I have experienced as the tension between my students' expectation that I will 'tell them what to tell', so that they have a repertoire of strategies to replicate in the classroom, and my desire for them to grow and develop as teachers through finding their own way to build upon the principles and

approaches that I introduce them to. Another tension raised by Berry concerns *confidence and uncertainty*, which I experience as trying to support students in developing their confidence as teachers, in the midst of the complexity and messiness of the classroom experience. Berry suggests that for the teacher educator there exists an additional tension here in exposing one's vulnerability.

I have presented examples of how I became aware of and managed complex decision making in story 20 *The Reflective Teacher*. The story demonstrates some of the complexity of the situation, including my feelings of vulnerability, which I sought to demonstrate for students in acknowledging that teaching can be 'hard', and it would take them time to develop in practice. I was aware that I could have given the students a subject knowledge answer, and not challenged their view that this was all that was needed to teach the topic FORCES successfully. The students might have left the session feeling happy that I had 'told them what to tell', but I knew that this would not support them in being able to respond to the children effectively in the classroom.

The official language used to describe becoming a teacher in England is 'training'. Loughran & Russell (2007) suggest that this dismisses the notion of teaching as a complex discipline. They argue for reframing ideas about becoming a teacher to include attention to the complexity involved within the practice. Stacey (2001) discusses ideas about how complexity operates among groups of humans. He draws upon Foucault's ideas about how disciplinary power operates, and how in recent years organisations have sought to control knowledge generation through controlling people. Stacey argues that this cannot happen because knowledge arises through the complex interaction between human bodies, and this cannot be controlled. This suggests to me that people are in a continuous state of becoming through their interactions and therefore knowledge is continuously evolving. This situation does lead to coherence. Stacey suggests that the way forward in the 21st century is to move beyond a control and systems approach. In my view this concerns the complex uncertain nature of experience, which is the reality of the classroom where learning does take place.

Later Stacey (2012) discusses the dominant discourse within organisations which produce strategic plans in order to achieve certainty in outcomes. He argues that these seem to fail. Through his research into a number of different organisations Stacey has found that

productivity will occur often when an organisation lets go of its strategic plans. Productivity will happen for a time, then dissipate for a while. After some time, a new period of productivity will arise. Stacey's theory of complexity is that the universe is basically uncertain and non-linear; however, the dominant discourse is driven by a desire for certainty. Through the complex and uncertain interaction of humans some coherence arises, bringing rationality and order. This is the opposite of the dominant discourse that considers that rational human interaction results in order. These ideas relate to chaos theory which suggests that order arises from non-linear chaotic systems. This suggests to me that society changes as a result of the unplanned interaction between people. Society changes in ways that might lead to rational order; however, this is not brought about as a result of human intentions since these do not attend to the complex and uncertain ways in which people might respond. I believe that this idea is useful to explain why learning outcomes cannot be controlled with certainty. This situation continues despite governments' attempts to regulate and produce predictable learning outcomes, by imposing the curriculum and prescribed methods of teaching. It seems that in order to apply complexity theory to the complex classroom environment one would need to embrace the non-linear and uncertain nature of this event. I will move on to consider how chaos theory might be applied to classroom practice and experience.

4.6: Chaos Theory and Education

Chaos has been a recurring theme throughout this study. I have used it as a theory which is useful to apply to my experience of the research, and I have also found its application to learning and teaching valuable to consider. It might be argued that if my self-inquiry process of being and becoming a teacher and teacher educator has been experienced as complex and non-linear, and can be related to chaos theory, then these ideas will also be used to interpret my experience of teaching and learning. Stacey (2001; 2012) discusses how chaos theory contributes to complexity sciences. The use of the word 'chaos' in the language of experience is often in relation to something undesirable, and often to be feared. I would argue that the notion of 'chaos' in the classroom is considered to be definitely undesirable and dangerous, since it suggests that the teacher needs to surrender power and control over the classroom environment.

Throughout chapter 3 I have identified aspects of the complexity of classroom experience, and how I have worked with this reality. *Messy* is the second sketch from story 12 *Work in Progress: three more sketches*, in which I present an analysis of the uncertain and unpredictable nature of learning. In the sketch I attempt to argue for embracing the 'messy' and 'chaotic' nature of learning rather than fearing it. In story 15 *Embracing Chaos* I engaged in dialogue with some of the few researchers who have considered the application of chaos theory to education. Iannone (1995) and Trygestad (1997) argue that predictability and certainty in outcomes are inappropriate since uncertainty is an essential aspect of education. This means that learning cannot be driven by curriculum content. In my view these ideas go against much of what is currently practiced in schools in England. Cvetek (2008) discusses changes in ideas about education in a postmodern world. She identifies tensions in practice through the desire to promote reflective practice at the same time as imposing competency driven assessment. I experience Cvetek's view that current teacher preparation is based on technical rationality, which contradicts the notion of teacher as effective reflective practitioner. Cvetek and Wang et al (2009) apply chaos theory to classroom events. They discuss how small changes can impact on what takes place in the classroom resulting in the 'butterfly effect'. A particular response from the teacher or an unexpected action could have a significant impact on the learning and experience in any classroom event; however, the impact cannot be predicted. Cvetek argues for teacher educators to 'chaoticise' their classrooms so that students of teaching can come to understand the uncertainty, unpredictability and complexity of the practice. She goes on to suggest that student teachers should be open to the possibilities within the classroom, rather than simply ticking the boxes. I relate this idea to Wheatley's (1999) view of potential rather than prediction. I consider this to mean that the teacher needs to be creative in order to devise the possibilities which will unfold in the classroom, and these will relate to each unique classroom situation and how the relationships between individuals develop. The teacher's role might be considered as Strange Attractor. The teacher's actions will cause changes, which result in learning. No two classroom situations will ever be the same which means that the teacher will need to respond according to the unique situation she/he finds herself/himself in. The order and pattern that emerges through the proximity of the Strange Attractor is the learning, however, the nature of the pattern cannot be

predetermined. This means that the teacher needs to be open to observing the 'pattern' which is the actual learning that takes place.

Hunter & Benson (1997) in their critique of chaos theory discuss chaos as applied to weather systems. They argue that weather concerns molecules, but that human behaviour is socially constructed. They understand chaos theory as being applied to things not connected. I have a different view, which is that chaos theory is applied to events and phenomena that are linked in complex ways. Scientists found that ignoring what they did not consider to be relevant did not help them to understand what was happening. It seems that they benefited by attending to the small and complex features. Understanding came through being willing to look at the universe in a new way.

The chaoticised classroom

In my experience the dominant discourse within education is that if the right course of action is taken by the teacher then the desired learning will take place. If specific strategies are employed then learning will take place. Most formal education is practiced in ways that do not attend to the complex nature of the classroom event, even though teachers and policy makers know about the complexity, at least on a superficial level. A classroom event is deterministic in that the change will occur as a result of the interaction between the humans involved; however, the specific outcome of the interaction cannot be predicted. The dominant discourse within the education system is that learning outcomes can be predicted provided the teaching is good enough. Targets are established with insufficient attention given to the complexity of the unique situations that schools, pupils and teachers find themselves living with.

There have been schools which have adopted methods that differ from the traditional approach to education. Iannone (1995) discusses the case of Sudbury school in which the curriculum was based on what each child wished to learn. This meant that the long term outcomes of learning were uncertain and teachers had to plan on a day to day basis depending on the desires of the pupils. In England a similar approach was taken by A. S. Neill at Summerhill School where adults did not impose their authority on the children, and all important decision making included the voices of even the youngest children (Bailey 2013). Lesson attendance was also voluntary. Neill's approach to education had a major

focus on the development and happiness of the children. He stated *'Is education to mean better scientists, engineers, doctors, instead of more balanced, happier, more tolerant human beings? A good education would mean both.'* (Neill 1972:84). This idea supports the purpose of education suggested by Brighouse (2006) as being about promoting human flourishing, and it also supports my early view of education as supporting the development of the 'whole child'. However, the system at Summerhill was made possible because it was a private school, and was able to have a much smaller adult to child ratio, which meant that individual needs were able to be attended to appropriately. State controlled maintained schools currently continue to place learners in groups of thirty which present teachers with much more of a challenge to meet the holistic needs of all children as effectively as Summerhill.

Iannone (1995) identified how the chaos approach to learning in schools such as Sudbury and Summerhill was considered to be unacceptable, since it did not appear to offer clear outcomes and direction for learning. I believe that there is a middle path involving chaos theory that differs from the Sudbury and Summerhill approach, and the traditional approach which reduces learning to predictable learning outcomes. I believe that my idea for the chaoticised classroom would attend to the complex nature of a classroom event *and* ensure that progress is made. The teacher's role is crucial. The teacher establishes the conditions for learning, which is the Strange Attractor. The teacher would have learning intentions for the lesson. The conditions considered would be what the teacher says to the learners when introducing the session; how the learning environment is organised, and the provision of appropriate resources. Then the learners engage with the learning environment. This would include relationships with the teacher and other learners in addition to engaging with the resources provided. The teacher's role would be to engage as appropriate within the environment, which might mean conversation with learners and asking and responding to questions. The teacher would be aware that it is the learners who are doing the learning, rather than the teacher controlling. The teacher would need to approach the session knowing that although there are learning intentions, the actual learning outcomes cannot be predicted; the 'pattern' that emerges cannot be predetermined. This means that the teacher needs to be open to observing and really seeing the learning 'pattern' that is unfolding. The traditional way of only assessing evidence of the predetermined learning

outcomes relates to classical scientists only choosing to observe or measure what they consider to be relevant. The traditional approach to education focuses on deficiency too often. It is my view that if learners are able to experience success they might be more motivated to strive for further progress. In the chaoticised classroom learning is accepted as being dynamic; therefore classroom and school ethos would encourage learners to understand that their learning is a continuous process of development.

A new approach to the assessment of learning would be needed. I have raised this issue of grades and marks for assignments in chapter 3 in journal extract 6.5.11 and in story 13 *Becoming Visible: Finding My Voice*. The concern expressed by the student in story 13 about the lack of acknowledgement for effort is one shared by many students in my experience. Effort is an attribute that cannot be measured easily and is therefore mostly ignored. This is an example of an aspect of learning that is dismissed because it cannot be quantified. I suggest that a radically new approach to assessment is needed. This would focus on recognising the pattern of learning of the pupil or student. The learning profile could include some of the current written forms of assessment, such as exams and assignments, but these would not be taken as the summative total of learning. The learning profile could include oral elements, reflection and self-evaluation. A significant challenge with this approach to assessment would be that it is time consuming and would require more from the teacher than in current practice. I do however, believe that this approach would be more inclusive of diversity among learners, and therefore it is more equitable. Chaos theory offers a valuable way to approach education, which in my view would support learners in engaging within an uncertain world more effectively.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

Introduction

In this chapter I reflect on the research journey and discuss my contribution to knowledge about teaching and classroom practice. I discuss the value of my approach to using Johns (2010) six dialogical movements as a reflexive narrative methodology for researching teaching as practice.

Reflection on the research process

I found the first year of study particularly challenging and often a painful to experience. In chapter 1 I describe my metaphor for my Vision Quest experience as being surrounded by a 360 degree mirror with self being reflected back continuously. I found the Vision Quest experience to be illuminating and joyful. I also relate the 360 degree mirror metaphor to my process of self-inquiry. If one looks in a flat mirror one can turn away when the gaze becomes uncomfortable. However, one cannot walk away from the 360 degree mirror since everywhere one looks self is reflected back, forcing one to see and acknowledge aspects of self, one might have been previously blind to. During the first year of study I found that uncomfortable aspects of my practice, and beliefs about practice were being exposed and illuminated. I came to realise that this was the cause of my discomfort. I wondered at times why I chose to put myself through this experience and whether I should give up the study. Some of these concerns are raised in *story 4 Reflection: The Butterfly and the Volcano*. This story was written nine months into the study, when I was beginning to see my way forward after what I described as experiencing 'dark night of the soul' that Wheatley (1999) suggests one might experience before change and new understanding emerge. Although I had previously considered myself to be an effective reflective practitioner, I came to recognise that prior to the process of self-inquiry I had reflected on a much more superficial level, which allowed me to 'walk away from the mirror'. I was becoming aware of new understandings about myself and my practice as a teacher. After one year of study I was able to look back and see where I had come from. I was able to see the progress that had been made, and how my practice as a teacher was transforming in ways that I considered to be desirable for supporting students' learning more effectively. I have demonstrated some of the changes in *story 7 Transforming and Remodelling*; the insights changed my approach to teaching. I revisited teaching the first science session to PGCE students at the beginning

of the following two academic years. In story 15 *Embracing Chaos*, the insights consider the application of chaos theory to classroom practice. In story 23 *Losing Control*, the insights are concerned with the need for the teacher to practice in ways that enable the learners to do their own learning, rather than trying to control what they do. Entering my second year of study, I felt a positive determination and commitment to my study, and the work of the community of inquiry.

The experience of working within the established inquiry group in guided reflection was crucial for continuing with the research. Although the study was very challenging, the group experience was very supportive, and I found it nurturing. I looked forward to the monthly sessions, which provided a safe and supportive reflective space. I begin story 15 *Embracing Chaos* with a metaphor of walking through the swirling mists to describe the first year of the research experience. I recognise that the inquiry group provided me with a 'scaffold' to keep me upright and supported so that I could keep walking through the mists. Once the way forward became clear the scaffold could be removed as I was able to walk on my own two feet. Guided reflection within an inquiry group was also an extremely valuable approach to doctoral research in that we were a community learning together, which is very different from the isolated experience that many doctoral students face. We were all on our own journeys, but travelling together for part of the time.

In chapter 1 I began by considering Etherington's (2004) questions for the reflexive researcher. These include a consideration of one's personal background, including gender and ethnicity, when engaging in a research project. I went on to discuss the idea of dynamic centring in positioning myself at the start of the research as a Black British woman of Nigerian Yoruba parentage. Through guided reflection in the inquiry group, there were times when I felt that I had to defend my position as an individual bringing my own professional concerns to the research process. There was an assumption that I would foreground my narratives with the experience of being a Black woman within the education system, and the challenges that this might bring. The reflexive narrative does include some episodes from practice and experience in which I focus on being a Black woman; this is part of the reality of my life experience. However, these are not the only characteristics which I use to define myself as a human being. The issue of establishing myself with a named

identity was not important to me as I engaged with the research. I believe that the issue of my identity demonstrates another aspect the dynamic nature of chaotic flow which I have used to interpret my experiences during this study.

There were so many episodes from practice that I wished to write about, that it was often a challenge deciding which to focus on to develop into a narrative to take to the monthly inquiry group sessions for guided reflection. I found writing quite compelling. I have presented some of the stories in chapter 3, but there were many others I would like to have written. There came a time when I had to stop generating data in order to complete my reflexive narrative and prepare for examination through writing the thesis. I recognise that my in-depth reflection on practice continues to impact on my professional actions; the process of transformation is ongoing. Although I have to stop at the point of examination, I know that the journey of transformation continues.

Contribution to research into teaching

My approach to research can be compared with the work of other teachers who engage with reflection via the process of self-study. Self-study in teaching and teacher education relates to a special interest group of researchers attached to American Education Research Association (AERA). The majority of the researchers are involved with teacher education. I have been able to make links between self-study research and my own self-inquiry involving engagement with Johns (2010) six dialogical movements. However, my self-inquiry approach has enabled me to go further in terms of reflection.

Barnes (1998) proposes the main characteristics of self-study research to be openness, collaboration and reframing. I believe that I have demonstrated openness to examining self, which has exposed my vulnerability on occasions, such as that described in story 21 *One Thursday in Semester B*. The collaboration with my colleague CC, as presented in story 3 *When Worlds Collide* relates to the type of collaboration that is central to self-study. In self-study research collaborations include groups of teacher educator colleagues and their student teachers, as they work together in framing ideas about classroom practice, and reframing in order to develop their future practice. In my self-inquiry framing and reframing have been central, however, the research process was different, it involved engagement with an established inquiry group, which is a more indirect form of collaboration. Self-study

collaboration of teachers as colleagues or student teachers focuses on gaining an understanding of the 'doing' of teaching and how this impacts on the learning. These are the usual concerns of communities of teachers. An important beneficial aspect of my engagement with an interdisciplinary community for inquiry was that my thinking was challenged in unexpected ways by colleagues who do not have a background in education. This led to insights that I might not have gained through engagement with a community of teachers. An example was in identifying the place of emotion in teaching practice, which arose very early in the study, and became a major focus for inquiry. Emotion is implied in accounts of self-study research, but it tends not to be explored explicitly. The place of emotions in teaching has been considered an important aspect of practice to explore, and has a contribution to make to self-study research. This resulted in the publication of my article in the journal devoted to self-study in teaching, which focuses on insights gained from the early part of my self-inquiry (Akinbode 2013).

Loughran & Northfield (1998) emphasise the fact the self-study differs from reflection, but they consider reflection on practice to be an essential component in self-study research. They suggest that self-study takes reflection beyond a teacher's professional development, and leads to the generation and dissemination of new knowledge about practice. This is an additional aspect of self-study that I can relate to the process and purposes of my study. However, I would suggest that my self-inquiry study differs in emphasis considerably from self-study, even though both concern teacher development. In my reflexive narrative I have sought to represent aspects of the lived reality of my classroom experience which includes some aspects of self that self-study researchers usually do not focus on. In self-study reflection focuses on the strategies and techniques of teaching and the reception and perceptions of the learners. The practice of teaching is developed as a result of reflective evaluation, framing and reframing in order to develop the strategies of practice. In my study reflection focused more on the complexity of my experience as a teacher. This included the impact of my emotions in the classroom interlinked with reflecting on my teaching strategies. A range of factors had an impact on my emotions, which included concerns about the broader issues relating to practice, such as policy, systems and procedures. My reflections also included raising questions about the students' own complex range of concerns. The complexity of classroom experience is implicit in self-study

research, as compared with the explicit focus and analysis in my self-inquiry research approach. Self-study research might be considered epistemological in that the focus is on knowledge and the 'doing' of teaching. My self-inquiry can be considered ontological in that the focus is on the experience of 'being' a teacher, and epistemological in questioning knowledge about styles and types of teaching.

Being quiet as a learner or teacher had been a recurring issue to reflect on at various times during my career. The publication of Cain (2012) during my study, and the issues that she raises inspired me to seek out research on quiet learning and teaching. It seemed important for me to focus on quiet teaching since there have been so few studies conducted on this. My study makes a contribution to knowledge about teaching in that the insights gained and issues raised will raise awareness of what it means to be a quiet personality and a teacher. In addition my study raises teachers' awareness of the nature and needs of quiet learners in the classroom, since in my experience, this is an aspect of diversity that is not often acknowledged, considered or understood. As a quiet teacher within my practice context, I have often been identified by colleagues as a reflective person. This occurred before I undertook any research involving reflection. I believe that my interest in reflection as a focus for research partly arose due to my quiet reflective personality. In chapter 4 I discussed the importance and value of creating reflective spaces to support teachers and student teachers in developing their practice. I would argue that demonstrating my practice of quiet teaching, which includes creating the space for reflection, has a valuable contribution to make to the profession, which is so often driven by fast-paced action. This is important if reflection in professional practice is considered valuable.

Contribution to narrative research

A narrative approach to research enables aspects of human experience to be communicated in a way that is not possible through the use of numbers. My reflexive narrative self-inquiry focused on understanding and transforming self. The transformative nature of the research approach makes a contribution to knowledge about approaches to narrative inquiry. I discussed in chapter 2 how I have been able to relate aspects of my study to Moon's (2010) ideas about personal life story narrative, and Goodson's (2012) theories about life history narrative. For Goodson the intentions of the narrator were important to consider in his

classification of the narrative as descriptive or elaborative. My narrative approach was deliberative in its analysis and intention of using reflection for framing and reframing in the transformative process.

I have demonstrated the value of reflexive narrative as transformative inquiry. As a result of the new understanding about my practice context, I have become aware that I cannot change the system, but through understanding I can find ways of working that are liberating rather than limiting. Given that the current accountability climate of education policy generates so much fear, I believe that my stories of transforming self might inspire other teachers to seek their own ways to become liberated from fear. Returning to my metaphor of weaving, I recognise the beauty of the pattern that has emerged in the woven fabric. Sometimes the process of weaving is hard but the outcome can be a thing of beauty.

Conclusion

An essential aspect of my contribution to knowledge about reflective teaching concerns the complex issues that have an impact on any teacher in the classroom from moment to moment. These issues impact on professional practice and life. Since teaching and learning go hand in hand, my reflexive narrative identifies the complexity of the experience of learning. Ultimately I have demonstrated the complexity of classroom experience for all participants. I demonstrate how reflexive narrative can make a contribution to demonstrating aspects of teaching as lived experience. Engagement with the six dialogical movements can support the development of the reflective teacher. In this I demonstrate how it is possible to develop reflective practice as an ongoing way of being on a professional and personal level. This is reflexivity on a professional and personal level. The sixth dialogical movement concerns communication and has a focus on social action. In my view human beings who strive to promote social justice need to develop reflexivity as a way of life. This results in continuously checking and considering the impact of the actions of groups and individuals within their social and political contexts. I do believe that my narrative is valuable to others in that my experiences might result in resonance for other practitioners as well as for teachers. My experiences are also valuable in that they might inspire others to examine their own practice in new ways. I finish this chapter with a quote from *The Wounded Storyteller* which resonates with my learning from the reflexive narrative journey:

People tell stories not just to work out their own changing identities, but also to guide others who will follow them. They seek not to provide a map that can guide others – each must create his own – but rather to witness the experience of reconstructing one’s own map. Witnessing is one duty to the commonsensical and to others

(Frank 1995:17)

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Postmodernism

The postmodernist movement seeks to look beyond the meta-narratives prevalent in our society, which seeks to maintain current positions of power and authority. This relates to the neo-positivist view of education which seeks generalisable knowledge based on scientific methodology. Lincoln & Guba (1985) challenge traditional scientific views about research as it relates to researching human behaviour and experience. They argue for the value of the 'human instrument' in research since humans are capable of using their tacit knowledge and intuition in collecting and interpreting data from natural human settings. Proponents of positivism would probably argue that this approach is inappropriately subjective; however, in my view this is the only way some aspects of humanity can be inquired into. Lincoln & Guba identify four ontological positions for the notion of reality (1985:82-85). The first is *objective reality* which is considered to be a naïve view that reality exists and is independent of human knowledge of it, and it might be known eventually through inquiry. The second position is *perceived reality* in which reality exists but can only be partially known by humans. People have different viewpoints in perceived reality, but inquiry might eventually result in consensus. The third position is *constructed reality* in which reality is made through the meanings that people give to phenomena. This position allows for multiple realities to exist simultaneously. The fourth position is *created reality* which arises from quantum mechanics. This final position asserts that reality does not exist but is created by the observer. It is *constructed reality* which is of interest in this study since it relates to the postmodern idea of multiple realities. Lincoln & Guba discuss how constructed realities include the interaction with what they describe as 'tangible entities'. In relation to my study a classroom full of students can be described as a tangible entity, however, no two encounters with a group of students will be experienced in the same way. In addition I might describe working with a particular group of students which will differ from a description given by a colleague who works with the same group.

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) identify how the conventional scientific approach applied to research into human experience might result in over simplified explanations, which lead to generalised meta-narratives, which perpetuate historical oppression. Postmodernism considers the smaller narratives. The ideas of Greene and Goodson can be situated within postmodernism. In researching self I will focus on an even smaller narrative. Grbich (2004) discusses how positivist research seeks findings through a universal notion of truth, reason and logic, and positions the researcher outside of that which is researched, maintaining a notion of 'objectivity'. I relate this to the notion of objective reality as considered by Lincoln & Guba (1985.) Postmodernism considers how knowledge is constructed within a particular social and cultural context. Truth, logic and reason would have different meanings depending on one's particular social and cultural setting and experience. We also make meaning based on our own subjective view within our social and cultural settings. It must be acknowledged that not all claims to knowledge are equal. Authority is given to the knowledge claims of those with power. Ideas of validity and reliability in research need to change as a result of this. The idea of coherence in research might be more appropriate to consider than validity and reliability.

Postmodern research is based on multiple ways of knowing. It focuses on small individual narratives, and allows for knowing to differ for people in different contexts. Grbich argues that 'reflexive subjectivity' replaces objectivity (Grbich 2004:28). Self-reflexivity is essential for the researcher in order to continuously check their knowledge and process of knowing. This suggests that the researcher acknowledges their partial subjective view, however, they are continuously weaving this awareness through that which is researched. This idea suggests to me a willingness to dwell with the uncertainty of continuously becoming. Grbich (2004:31) discusses how some of the critiques of postmodernism suggest that it continues to engage with some of the practices of modernism at the same time as being critical. In my view this relates to attempts to deal with the 'messiness' of uncertainty. It seems to me that in acknowledging the importance to giving voice and presenting research into the complexity of human life, the resulting representations for research are the 'messy texts' described by Denzin & Lincoln (2005). Postmodern research approaches allow for the communication of lived experience which has until now remained hidden due to being 'nonscientific'. Denzin & Lincoln suggest that the differences between positivist and new-paradigm forms of inquiry cannot be overcome. There cannot be one single 'truth' but multiple 'truths' which are in themselves only partial.

Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000) discuss how proponents of postmodernism argue that research is communicated through language, and they question whether this can accurately represent reality. The researcher would need to consider the meaning that they are trying to convey and the meaning given to the text by the reader. This is an argument about whether scientific researchers are actually able to present facts as arising from their research.

In my study I am presenting a 'small narrative' and demonstrating a small voice within the meta-narrative of education policy and practice in England. I am aware that my small narrative is my highly subjective view and way of knowing. However, this is the case for all of us involved within education. Postmodernism allows for my knowledge to be one way of knowing and understanding the world in the midst of others. Brown (1990: 89) cited in Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000) states *'postmodernism shifts the agenda of social theory and research from explanation and verification to a conversation of scholars/rhetors who seek to guide and persuade themselves and each other.'*

It is helpful to think of my journey of being and becoming as a 'conversation' with self and others in exploring the experience of practice and what it means to be a reflective teacher. It seems to me understandable that policy makers seek out certainty and the notion of objectivity in the form of what can be measured, since it appears to offer an easy and simplified way to proceed in practice. However, human experience is complex and 'messy'. This research is involved with engaging with and dialogue with this lived reality of being human.

Appendix B

Review of academic year 2009-10

These five stories in part one interwoven with journal extracts, chart my process during the first year of study. During the early part of the study a consideration of cue 9 from Johns' MSR (2009), *what knowledge did nor might have informed me*, presented me with a challenge. I had interpreted the cue to mean professional or theoretical knowledge. Through reflecting back over the years to my experience as a beginning teacher, I could not identify how I had come to gain the professional knowledge that informed my practice as a teacher. This question stayed with me in the months ahead. I was only able to begin to address this as I completed my first year of study.

My early focus on the literature concerned the nature of narrative as a form of inquiry. Mattingly's ideas about the anti-mimetic nature of narrative were an important influence (Mattingly 1998). I considered narrative as a way of representing what I wished to communicate to my audience rather than an accurate presentation of the reality of the events. This also resulted in raising questions about my highly subjective views and how my audience would gain a much richer picture of a classroom event through knowing the stories of lived experience of all participants. I also considered what I would learn as a teacher from my students' stories, and what my students might gain through knowing of my story. Later collaboration in gaining an understanding of the lived classroom experience had a powerful impact on my process of inquiry and progress during this first year.

An insight identified early in the study was the impact of my emotions on my classroom experience. I had not considered this previously. It seemed obvious that emotion plays an important and essential role in learning and teaching, but teachers' emotions had not been considered or discussed explicitly within any of the educational settings that I have worked in. In addition I was also aware that the impact of teachers' emotions was not addressed explicitly on the ITT programmes that I was working on. I had previously been aware of the ideas of Boud et al (1984) in relation to the affective dimension of reflective learning. They argued that negative emotions can hinder effective learning and positive emotions can support it. They identified that with any class of learners there might be factors which impact on learning, about which the teacher is unaware. This presents the teacher with a challenge since there might be factors which need to be addressed in order to support students' learning more effectively. Boud et al suggested that it was important for negative emotions to be discharged in order for effective learning to take place. I considered these views in relation to my own reflective learning and development as a teacher. Attending to my feelings was essential in gaining an understanding of how I was responding in practice. I found Johns' influences grid valuable in considering reasons for some of my responses (2010:38).

As a teacher I had taught at all stages from nursery up to MA level in my career. I was aware that my teaching opportunities might change over the years, as they have in the past. I sought to find some common thread which links all of my classroom teaching experiences. I eventually identified the common thread as the complexity of classroom experience. I had been aware of this, and educational researchers write about it (Loughran 2006, Berry 2007); however, I realised that I had only engaged with this issue of a superficial level previously. The reality of my day to day practice has been that the classroom is a 'busy' place, and there is little time to dwell on issues of complexity

before moving on to the next 'action'. The complexity of classroom practice needed to be explored in some detail in order to deepen my understanding.

As a result of engaging with the deep reflective process, I came to recognise that how I was acting in the moment of busy classroom practice was changing. I was gaining a new awareness and understanding of my practice. This is highlighted in the story *Illumination: Concerning Seeing the Light Side of the Moon*. I was becoming aware of something, but at first I could not bring it to consciousness and articulate it. Up until then I had a view of what I thought reflection-in-action was for a teacher (Schon 1987). The significant insight which arose from reflecting on this classroom event was that I did not do what I thought of as reflection-in-action. I was actually demonstrating my tacit knowledge of teaching as I responded to my students, which is more intuitive; however, I became aware of my strategy. This consciousness enabled me to explain the strategy to my students in order to help them to understand an aspect of teaching.

Appendix C

Review of academic year 2010-11

This year has been the second year of the study. During this academic year I had been problematising issues from practice and exploring a number of themes. I continued to explore the themes of emotion and subjectivity identified early on in the study. It seems to me that the notion of objectivity is valued since it is used so often in our language of practice. I wished to consider the value of focusing on subjective lived experience, which is advocated by the researchers in auto-ethnography (Ellis & Flaherty 1992; Ellis & Bochner 1996). I identified the importance of embracing our subjectivity in practice rather than trying to persuade ourselves that we are objective as professionals.

By the end of the first academic year of my study I wanted to 'throw out' my previous approaches to practice and start again. I realised that much of my approach was driven by the system and culture that I was working in. I began the new academic year with ideas for changes in teaching approaches and I did find one or two colleagues who were willing to take the risk, as demonstrated in *Transforming and Remodelling*. In this new approach I considered how I might let go of trying to control my students' learning. I had recognised that control is an important issue in education. I do not think that many teachers give this much thought. My colleagues and I agreed that our new approaches to learning and teaching were successful and desirable. These views were based on our observations of students in sessions and from their verbal feedback.

As my practice evolved I discovered that I was learning so much through my teaching on the MA programme. Most of these students were practicing teachers, or other practitioners who work with children. I discovered that we shared many dilemmas of practice, although in different contexts. As I planned and taught these sessions I became aware that we were a community of teachers all inquiring into aspects of our practice. As I presented my students with challenging questions about their own practice, I was also asking myself the same questions.

I experienced another period of time that I would describe as 'dark night of the soul'. Wheatley (1999) describes this as a descent into chaos before emerging with a new sense of being and purpose. I was trying to explore what it meant to be a 'good and effective' teacher. The more I considered this the more I doubted that this was something that I could be. In the story *More Beauty from Chaos* I have described an episode from practice where my group of MA students really seemed to 'descend into darkness and despair'. I recognised that their comments echoed some of my own complaints, although my context was rather different. From this experience I emerged with a renewed sense of being a teacher, remembering why I had chosen to remain in the profession. Together we began to look for the unexpected 'magic' moments from practice which made it worthwhile. I began to recognise that we are all constrained in practice; however, it is important to look beyond the tick boxes, test and exam results, evaluations and other ways that we are measured by the system, to focus on 'magic' moments when we see true progress being made by our learners.

Visiting the Susan Hiller exhibition inspired me to consider what I had been achieving on my narrative journey so far. I was interested in her work described as 'Unravelling: Work in Progress'. I recognised that I had been deconstructing my experience as a teacher through this journey of being and becoming. So much was emerging about the complexity of classroom experience that I decided to continue to deconstruct through a series of sketches which focused on significant issues. My

question 'what is a good and effective teacher' became 'how is a good and effective teacher determined'? The descriptions 'good' and 'effective' are commonly used to describe teaching within the culture, but I was becoming more aware of how problematic these terms are particularly when related to teaching in higher education.

After a period of deconstruction I began the process of reconstruction in the next phase of my journey of being and becoming. This was about gaining a new sense of myself as a teacher. This was where I found myself at the end of the academic year. I was beginning to find my voice and sense of self as a teacher.

Appendix D

Review of academic year 2011-12

Part three focuses on my progress during the third year of study. During this third year of the journey I have moved towards reconstructing myself as a teacher. It is important to note the fluid nature of the journey; in order to reconstruct myself as a teacher I needed to continue with deconstruction. Susan Hiller in her work in progress unravelled her canvass and reconstructed a new piece of art each day of the exhibition. I consider this to be a useful metaphor for my reflexive journey as a teacher. As a result of my deconstruction and reconstruction I recognised how I can change and let go of ideas about my practice that no longer serve me, and to find new ways of working.

I began to see the impact on my work resulting from the changes and transformation. I related this to a 'ripple effect'. I had been taking small steps and these were being noticed; I was aware of having an influence on colleagues' thinking. It was interesting that the effect of my 'ripples' was spreading beyond the SoE to elsewhere within the University.

Through having gained an understanding of issues relating to practice in more depth, I was able to articulate my vision of practice. I recognised that my vision of practice relates to my experience of learning. I like to consider life as providing unlimited possibilities. This means being open to the unpredictable, the unfamiliar and unexpected in order to develop and grow as a whole person. I would like my learners to be able to make the most of opportunities to develop and grow. I believe that every person is a successful learner. My vision of practice is to be able to support my learners in realising this. Since there are diverse ways of being, knowing and doing in the world, there should be diverse ways of identifying successful learning. John Keats' idea of *Negative Capability* resonates with me:

'...that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without the irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Colvin ed. 1925:48).

In relation to human achievement Keats had the view that Beauty arises from this state of uncertainty and mystery. I believe that learning and teaching could unfold in this way, resulting in Beauty. However, this is my view and my vision. I am aware that other people might have different ideas about learning and its purpose.

During the academic year I became aware of having gained a better understanding of the reality of my practice situation. As a result I found myself engaging with the challenges of how the system does not support my vision for practice. I experience classroom practice as being uncertain, yet the system demands certainty, and makes judgements based on what is believed can be measured easily, without due attention to the assumptions behind the claims made for the data. I view chaos theory as being relevant as a metaphor for the classroom experience. Learning happens anyway, but I need to consider the teacher's role. Chaos as applied to education would mean that teachers need to let go of control. This presents a serious challenge in a system that is based on the expectation that teachers can control the learning outcomes. Teaching and learning are judged on the desired learning outcomes. Effective teaching and learning are determined within the system by numerical data. I have explored the limitations of some of this data. I feel that it does not

determine my students' learning effectively, and it does not determine children's achievement in school successfully. Through examining my own experience of being judged from students' feedback data, and considering my MA students' experiences of league tables and exam results, I came to the understanding that fear pervades all areas of the education system. This fear is driven by the performance indicators which are imposed by the policy makers. This situation presents serious challenges for those of us who practice within the education system.

Having a better understanding of the constraints was helpful. I aimed to demonstrate how through my continuing journey of being and becoming I was able to work within the constraints on practice. I have come to understand that being an effective teacher is complex and not something that can be easily measured. I am willing to embrace the uncertainty of classroom experience and go with the chaotic flow. I do believe that planning is important. My view is that the teacher's role is to establish the conditions to support learning, but not to control what learners do, which seems to be what the system demands. Rather than striving to produce a perfect session, I need to view teaching and learning as ongoing inquiry.

Appendix E

INTRODUCTION TO PROCESS SKILLS

Process skills for scientific enquiry

- Observing
- Questioning
- Comparing
- Predicting
- Testing
- Hypothesising
- Evaluating
- Concluding
- Interpreting

Suggested model for systematic scientific enquiry

Observation

- Make as many different observations as you can about the materials/objects/phenomena
- Make a list of the vocabulary used in your observations

Raising questions

- Raise as many questions as you can about the materials/objects/phenomena
- Identify questions which you might investigate

Planning

- Plan how you will carry out your investigation

- List the resources which you will use
- Make **predictions** with possible **hypotheses**

Testing

- Carry out the investigation and record the results

Evaluation and reflection

- What **conclusions** did you make?
- Can you form **hypotheses** to explain your results and conclusions?
- How successful was your method? What might you do differently on another occasion?
- Can you identify further questions relating to your findings which might be the focus of a future investigation?

Scientific Enquiry methods

- Exploration
- Pattern-seeking
- Classification and Identification
- Fair testing
- Reference enquiry
- Testing an explanation
- Technology

Appendix F

Five types of Power (French & Raven 1968)

Reward power: Positive outcomes are perceived to be mediated from those with power.

Coercive power: Promoting behaviour which conforms through the risk of punishment for not conforming.

Legitimate power: A social form of power which relates to the need to conform to group norms.

Referent power: Deferring to those with power due to the desire to belong to their group.

Expert power: Deferring to the perceived expert knowledge of those with power.

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