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Research as a boundary activity: Stories of trainees' transition into teaching told through an auto/biographical gaze

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Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

2014

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis grew out of a concern shared by others that, in an era in which teacher educators are required to place increasing faith in the utility and objectivity of ideal end-of-training competencies, 'the messiness, muddle and ambivalence that education is always and inevitably heir to' (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p.5) and the consequent complexity that typifies student experiences as they learn to teach and make their subsequent transition into teaching, can be too readily ignored. Drawing on extensive data from interviews, research participant's self-writing and their contributions to on-line forums, the experiences of two trainees as they make such a transition into and through their first year of teaching is examined in detail.

As an experienced educator *the author* makes use of an auto/biographical approach in which aspects of *his* personal life history are acknowledged both as sources of insight but also as sites of *my* partiality. The importance of key incidents and individuals in my own development are acknowledged and in so doing, I recognise both the manner in which the familiarity of past experiences can provide a source of insight, but may equally act to shape or stifle alternate stories.

A range of 'critical friends' are used to aid my analysis and to chart both the trainee's transition to teacher and my own transition to that of auto/biographical researcher. Bourdieu and Brookfield provide a starting point for an examination of the participants' reported experiences and the contexts in which they work. Turkle points towards an understanding of the online world where identities can be created, played with and critically evaluated. Mezirow and Dirkx provide contrasting views of what it means to be a transformational learner whilst Goodson and West support my development towards that of a researcher, whose fascination with the individual stories of the students with which I have worked provided the starting point for the research.

As the thesis ends, the shades of friends return to remind this researcher that it was the experiences of the participants which resonated with, but did not mirror my own. For, whilst the boundaries between individuals is at all times honoured, it is in the shared boundaries that we meet and our mutual human dependency is framed.

Reference

Bainbridge, A. & West, L. 2012. Psychoanalysis and education: Minding a gap. London, Karnac Books.

CONTENTS

Introduction

The research began with a simple purpose; to examine the experiences of a group of undergraduate primary education students as they made the transition into and through their first year of teaching. Indeed my original research question was simpler still; to investigate how trainee-teachers' understanding of the term 'professional' changed during their first year of teaching. However, as the research proceeded the researcher gaze, that is, 'my' gaze, became ever more introspective and came to examine both students in transition and my own transition to that of a narrative researcher. For the experienced researcher-reader this will of course not be surprising, there is no damascene revelation here. It is, I was later told, an assumed part of the research process. Indeed, even at the start, I was aware through reading and discussion that this would be the case, but as I began this was a cognitive awareness only. I could voice the creed but without full understanding. So it is that through the process of research I came to consider more fully the importance of the instinctual and sub-rational motivations which form a part of the learning process. The thesis therefore reflects the often messy and always non-linear process of transition; students to teachers, tutor to narrative researcher, for each in varying degrees a disruptive process not smoothly nor easily achieved and, for one at least, a process full of false starts and missed opportunities.

I relate in 'Anna's Story' how at the end of our first interview, she asked me very directly, 'Why this research?' and 'Why this approach?'. My immediate response had been that, having seen many students come and go in the past I had 'always wondered what had happened to them when my office door closed'. And so it was with the participants involved in the research, they were, like scores of students before, ones I met by happenstance. For a time we work together in university and/or school then move on in our separate lives. Some remain in contact, emailing from whatever part of the world they are now to tell me about their new jobs or partners and their growing families. Others I meet again working in schools where they have become established teachers or senior managers. But for most, their lives beyond that closing of the door, remain a mystery to me. Our chance meetings had been, in Philip Larkin's words, a 'frail travelling coincidence…'. But whilst 'coincidence' connotes an accident of time and space there is in the word a further meaning; perhaps an intentional inter-lingual pun on the part of Larkin and certainly one revealed by the

final lines of the stanza. For in Italian 'coincidenza' carries two meanings; both the initial chance event but also it also means a connection on a journey, a place where a transfer is made. So the 'coincidence' of meeting carries with it both a sense of chance encounter but also the prescience of transference from one stage or route to another. Thus the final time of meeting with students is always a time when they, (as the verse continues)'… stood ready to be loosed with all the power that being changed can give.' (Larkin, 1964, p.20).

But as Ivor Goodson warns, 'Stories should not only be *narrated* but also *located*' (Goodson, 1992, p.25) and so it is with these.

They are located in space. The six who 'stood ready' in this research were final year undergraduate students of a Teacher Education programme in the Faculty of Education of a university in the south-east of England. The thesis details the transition of two participants (though more fugitive references are made to others) as they work through the complexity of their first year of teaching in separate English primary schools during the academic year 2011-12.

They are located in time. If I answered Anna's question, 'Why this research?', I would tell her that, whilst the transition from trainee to teacher has always been a time of personal stress and professional uncertainty I believe that she and the other participants were making their transition into teaching and early adulthood at a particularly uncertain time when such transitions are increasingly complex and non-linear. As we will see with one of the participants, they negotiate the move into independence at a time when they find themselves being forced through economic circumstance to return to the family home and back to the room and circumstances that they left before their university life began. So it is that, within the context of the schools, they enter an arena of particularly rapid and ever uncertain change. Thus to Anna's first question I would add a second, ''Why now?' and answer that, whilst change may be a constant, the speed of change in the English educational sector appears to be rapidly increasing.

Moving the research from questions to wonder

In reply to Anna's question, 'Why this approach?', I would draw on Merrill and West who, drawing in turn on the words of Miller assert that, 'choosing a topic for a biographical study tends almost always to be rooted in our own personal and/or

professional biographies.' (Miller, 1997 in Merrill and West, 2007, p.5). This research is no exception.

At the start of the research process the trajectory seemed set and pleasing in its simplicity. Yet even at the initial stage I realised that simple questions may yield simple answers, but a long professional life in education made me wary of simplicity. As Colm Tóbin wrote recently in his critique of the remembering and retelling of the narrative of Irish history as a single unified whole, 'Simplicity is a foreign land; they do things differently there.'; lives are more complex than that and life stories less easily resolved. No I reasoned, this would not do. What, I asked myself at the start was actually driving me to carry out the research beyond a general interest and curiosity? As I will explore later, my professional life in education has alerted me to the complex inter-relation of the personal and professional. So this research must, I reasoned, attempt to provide at least a brief glimpse of the complex circumstances in which the participants began their teaching lives and provide a space in which the participants could tell stories and tell them in their own words. Then I read Clandinin and Connelly, who suggested that narrative enquiries are not composed around research 'problems', a term which carries with it 'qualities of clear definability and the expectation of solutions' but rather it is based around a research 'wonder', more a sense of re-search, a search and a searching again (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.124). So it is that this thesis - one member of the narrative research family – begins with a 'research wonder' derived from my professional work as a teacher educator.

The research is however not a neutral act but rather begins from the same disquiet felt by Linda Haggarty:

> I feel as though I have been facing a crisis in my professional life in recent years [as an experienced mathematics teacher and teacher educator, *who has worked in numerous schools, led school-based professional development projects and had been a part of various collaborative research projects* [my paraphrasing] I thought I understood schools and teachers… (but)… I have started to feel increasingly out of place in many of the schools I visit.
>
> (Haggarty, 2004, p.589)

I have had a similarly long career in education first as a teacher in a primary school in the North-East of England, later as various iterations of Local Authority advisor, as an external examiner, a school governor, and latterly as a university tutor working in a Faculty of Education. In more than four decades in education I have visited numerous schools in England and multiple other countries, worked with scores of staff,

organized professional development sessions at individual, and institutional level both in Britain and internationally, have trained as an Ofsted inspector, have been a part of research activities and groups, have joined national working parties and been called as an inappropriately named 'expert witness' to give my views on curriculum changes. Perhaps because of this long and varied career I related immediately to Haggerty's words for like her, in recent years I have also felt patience-tried, out-of-time and out-of-step with much recent educational discourse and developments that appear to retread past arguments. But was this I wondered at the start of the research process (and a good many times throughout) simply an inevitable reaction to coming to the end of my career? Simply an ineffectual raging against the dying of the professional light? An alternate, more compassionate and therefore, for me, more preferable interpretation is that the research activity represents what Frank Kermode (in Goodson, 2012, p.66) sees as 'a search for intelligible endings' (Kermode, 1967). Whilst I do not see my own professional life in such mythic or epochal terms as those discussed by Kermode, the research does perhaps represent a final pause and reflection before the end.

Positioning myself in relation to the research and the participants

So to answer Anna's second question, 'Why this approach?' and why the need to prefix biography with an 'auto/'? I would begin to answer her by saying that, to seek or pretend a feigned objectivity in this research is neither a possible nor an ethically worthy position. To paraphrase Michael Walzer, such a 'God's eye' view of the 'ideal observer in which 'His omniscience is in the service of abstraction' leads only to a situation in which 'He is likely to miss the deep gorges and impassable streams' of human experience (Walzer, 1988, p.139). But here we have the rub for when I confidently claimed that, 'the speed of change in the English educational sector appears to be ever increasing' my claim was without warrant as was my assertion that research should allow the participants 'to tell their own stories and to tell them in their own words'. In the thesis I struggle constantly with what Goodson terms the 'perilously difficult act' of reporting on the lives of others whilst co-opting their words for my purposes; as Goodson continues (drawing on Denzin):

> If the text becomes the agency that records and re-presents the voices of the other, then the other becomes a person who is spoken for. They do not talk, the text talks for them. It is the agency that interprets their words, thoughts, intentions, and meanings. So a

doubling of agency occurs, for behind the text as agent-for-the-other is the author of the text doing the interpreting.
A process of colonization occurs. The other becomes an extension of the author's voice. The authority of their "original" voice is now subsumed within the larger text and its double-agency.

(Denzin, 1995, p.323 in Goodson, 2005, p.323)

But the complexity of this process cannot be answered by the 'passivity' of a 'voiceless-scribe' for, whilst 'life history research forces a confrontation with other people's subjective perceptions' (Goodson, 2012, p.33) it cannot be a party to the the 'bloodless universals' (ibid., p.26) of the simplistic datasets, the cumulative Likert scales and the colour-coding of individuals which so beset my recent professional life.

So from the start I acknowledge that through my own professional biography I am implicated in the research and that the words of the other are interpreted through the lens of my personal experience. It is for this reason that the research adopts an auto/biographical approach that, to borrow from Elbaz is both a methodology and a methodological device and challenges the myth of Technical Rationality underpinning a positivist view of epistemology (Schön, 1983) a myth I will argue, that has again become the dominant in Teacher Education discourse. So more than a methodological device the auto/biographical approach is an ethical stance that attempts to make the researcher visible in the research. But that this remains an 'attempt', is acknowledged at the start. For both researcher and participant remain elusive and incomplete through error and omission but also Kirsty may add through the conscious act of with-holding. Speaking of her experiences in one school she reflected that //'what a head teacher tells you of a school is one story, what happens is very different. They just tell you what they want you to hear. But I guess we all do that all the time, you only hear what we chose to tell//'. Perhaps. Or perhaps the untold parts of the stories, the focusing on the actuality of the everyday occurrences in the work place may be attempts to hide the shades of past and current events held to be irrelevant or too personal to disclose. The stories told therefore remain, as is acknowledged from the start, a series of partial glimpses.

The structure of the thesis

Methodology.

Following the introduction I present my research methodology. This section has two functions. Firstly, I begin by considering what in my own biography has drawn me to the research-approach beyond a general interest and curiosity. However there is no strict chronology here, no calendar of years and ticking off of personal events. Rather, and, this remains true throughout, I use elements from my biography to locate the argument in time and place.

Next, I describe in detail the research procedures undertaken to maximize the participants agency in the presentation of their stories whilst retaining and taking responsibility for the overall analysis and structuring of the final thesis.

Positioning the research in the current debate.

The research opens as the participants reach the end of their final term in university and is located within an examination of a key issue raised throughout their training process, that of 'teacher professionalism' and the inter-linked theme of 'reflective practice'. In this section I broad-brush the historical development of the term 'professional' when applied to the role of the teacher, particularly the growing linkage made to certification against pre-specified criteria of professionalism, the 'Teacher's Standards' (DfE, 2012). In this section such terms as, 'reflection', 'critical reflection' and 'critical practitioner' have, I will argue, become an ubiquitous and often under critiqued part of Teacher Educational rhetoric.

Bookends and Case Studies.

The main part of the thesis is composed of three stories; those of two of the research participants drawn from an original five students with which I began the research activity and my own. Whilst my presence in the research is always evident through my unasked questions, implicit assumptions, interpretations and the framing of the participant's stories into the final thesis, I also use my own story in a more transparent manner. My personal story is used in two ways.

Firstly, through the thesis I will argue that models of teacher education based on a utilitarian notion of the teacher as a 'rational agent' (Schön, 1983) who is able to stand back from daily activity and, through a process-model of reflection on the teaching process and teaching context, improve practice, fails to take into account the

more complex non-rational, emotional aspects of teaching lives. It follows from this that an honest engagement with adult learners requires the adult educator to move beyond compliance and the transmission of work-place tactics to challenge both the habits of practice and thought and their sources. Such openness requires a reflexive approach in which the reflective gaze is also turned inward. So it is then I begin by drawing on limited number of experiences from my career in a search to locate the source of the drivers of my current research and work-place concerns.

Secondly, using a number of key experiences that act as nodal points, I seek to illustrate the trajectory of the research activity itself and chart my changing concerns during the process. Key incidents are used to disclose both a developing cognitive understanding and the affective impact of the research activity on my thinking and understanding. The totality of 'my story' is, for constructional clarity, used to 'bookend' those of the participants, both introducing the key initial themes and the manner in which these fell back as the research developed and my confidence in the narrative form increased. The second of these two 'bookends' is also used to bring the thesis to a close, to indicate some personal resolution and to indicate a next step toward a future research activity, an activity in which lessons learnt from the current research will form the starting point.

As I began the research I record that I first turned through Stephen Brookfield and others to the work of Pierre Bourdieu in order to develop, or perhaps more accurately, to challenge my own thinking. At the start I was concerned with the use of language in teacher education and the manner in which it is changed and used to shape discourse. Bourdieu provided the possibility of insights into the process and through this back into my own story. But my turning to Bourdieu is a part of my story not theirs, for these stories are not used as data to support or interrogate a theoretical position or utilitarian argument. Rather, the individuated stories remain key. Whilst I draw on a wide range of literature to support my analysis it fumbles around the edges of understanding for, like Kermode before me, though with a good deal more justification, 'I am well aware that neither good books nor good counsel have purged it of ignorance and dull vision' but like him I also 'take comfort from the conviction that the topic is infallibly interesting' (Kermode, 1967).

However, a reliance on general interest is insufficient and so between the bookends lie two named stories.

Bookends, Case Studies and construction of the main section.

At an early stage of the research process I had noted in my field notes Dianne Watt's comment that:

> Learning how to conduct qualitative research may seem a daunting task for those new to the task, especially given the paradigm's emphasis on complexity and emergent design.
>
> (Watt, 2007, p.82)

At a later time I had circled the word 'may' and added an exclamation mark. It was suggested at the start of the research that I need only use two participants for in a work of this length they would generate sufficient material to complete the study. Having just completed a piece of commissioned research (Griffiths et al., 2010) which had used sixteen participants I was not convinced and with all the confidence or perhaps hubris of the novice choose to widen this number. The research began with five willing participants and as a consequence of the number the data burgeoned. Towards the end of the process two of the participants (Collette and Rebecca) were unable to continue with the research as the interview schedule conflicted with their work commitments. A final group interview was planned but when it took place the original participants were joined by a colleague (Hannah) - a fellow student and friend who had graduated at the same time. I felt some initial anxiety at first about her presence as she had not been part of the original research. I decided however that her presence may help to change the dynamics of the group and so it proved. Whilst I gave some prompting at the start of the interview and provided direction throughout, the interview was marked by high levels of interaction and cross-questioning by and of the participants. The arrangement also afforded me the chance to observe the participants' interactions and listen carefully to their group exchanges and to do so in a way which would not have been possible otherwise. Indeed it was this affordance that provided a powerful insight when one participant (Kirsty), disengaged from the immediacy of the discussion in order to reflect on her own situation.

So, whilst the numbers of participants had reduced through natural circumstances during the research, as I reached the final writing stage of the thesis I still had a wealth of material from the three who remained in the form of extensive transcripts and email, electronic and written communications. At the design stage of the thesis I was faced with the question therefore of how the material could be arranged which would both avoid fragmentation and could in some coherent manner do both justice to

their stories and my unfolding experience through the research process. At one level this was a simple pragmatic issue; so much material and so little space to do it justice. But there was a more important issue at play here than this simple practical problem.

The methodological approach I had adopted does not require large numbers for its claim to authenticity large numbers, but is predicated at its heart on, in Michael Bassey's words, a:

> systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom about the experience and nurture of personal and social development towards worthwhile living and the acquisition, development, transmission, conservation, discovery and renewal of worthwhile culture.
>
> (Bassey, 1999, p.35)

From this stance, the experiences of, in this case three, though two or even one participants, provides a sufficient depth of experience for claims based on their *relatability* to fellow practitioners (Bassey, 1981). Whilst Michael Bassey is writing here more generally of case study research, the same claim can be made of auto/biographical approaches in which deep immersion, the quality of involvement and reflexivity of the research approach is axiomatic (Merrill and West, 2009).

I had begun the research with an assumption that my own position, my long professional life experiences in education, would inform and perhaps shape my perceptions and that these should be made transparent. The acceptance of the need for transparency was the ethical position adopted and an assumed self-evident facet of its ontology. What I had been less prepared for was that by the end of the research I had found that my own position had changed and was changed by the research process. Indeed, this latter element had become a far more important aspect of the research than I had initially thought and had therefore to be reported in greater depth and detail than I had originally planned. My starting position had assumed an initial position in relation to external changes at both a national and local level and it would have been tempting to use the experiences of the participants to support this first view of both the changes and the means through which they were being implemented. This was at times a tempting proposition but the participant's stories demanded more than their reduction to functionary pawns in my narrative conceit. The two participants, whose stories I finally relate, provided both a sufficient breadth of material through their consistent presence throughout the research process but importantly, their stories

present contrasting positions in relation to external pressures and it was in my interactions with their stories that my own had begun to change.

For one participant we see great struggle and a career almost cut short before it began. For the other, there was a smoother and ostensibly untroubled passage into teaching. Drawing particularly on the work of Bourdieu and Brookfield, at the start I saw two participant stories which intertwined, which were reflective each of the other and spoke to theoretical insights. But equally, the stories highlighted the complexity of the transition process and the manner in which external pressures are implemented at a local level. In the construction of the thesis therefore I chart this research journey not simply at a level of practical detail, but at a more deeply reflexive level. Consequently, the final thesis therefore tells of three acts of transition, my own and two others.

A note regarding terminology.

Whilst I have used the term case-study to describe the stories they do not follow the traditional form in which a single case is observed from multiple positions. Kirsty's experience of *unnaming* for example is not examined from the position of the head teacher. It may be more accurate therefore to consider these cases as conglomerations of critical incidents retold by participants around which I wrap and with which I meld my own developing researcher story.

Methodology

Towards the narrative turn

Marianne Horsdal begins her book, '*Telling lives: Exploring dimensions of narratives*', by reminding the reader of Elinor Ochs words:

> Imagine a world without narrative. Going through life not telling others of what happened to you or someone else, and not recounting what you read in a book or saw in a film. Not being able to hear or see dramas crafted by others. No access to conversations, printed texts, pictures, or films that are about events framed as actual or fictional. Imagine not even composing interior narratives, to and for yourself. No. Such a universe is unimaginable, for it would mean a world without history, myths or drama; and lives without reminiscence, revelation, and interpretive revision.
>
> (Ochs, 1998, p.185 in Horsdal, 2012, p.2)

Reading this I thought, 'imagine such a world indeed'.

In the Faculty of Education in which I currently work the recognition of personal voice in research has until, recent years, been dismissed at turns as emotive, deficient, psycho-analytic and, most damning of all in our new-university context, non- or even anti-academic. I have found this research-positioning deeply perplexing, as my own working life and educational experience and has been solidly grounded in engagement with individual and collective experiences of students and tutors, teachers and pupils, parents and families.

I have spoken in the past (Merrill and West, 2009, p.147) of students who had been told that their early life experiences were to be excluded from their research writing as either being, 'not relevant', 'too personal or 'too subjective'; students who were told that 'good' research must at all times systematically seek for objective, replicable truths. So it was that those who were bullied as children, whose siblings had profound and often unmet Special Educational Needs, who still felt driven to prove to former teachers or schoolmates that they were not to be 'written off' as failures because of the happenstance of their birth or their early life experiences. Of others who fought and continue to fight to overcome the pressures to conform to fe/male gendered stereotypes and yet others fighting to overcome the prejudice they experience against their ethnic, cultural or religious heritage. As I moved through the research I recollected many such conversations. There came the echo of a late evening conversation in India with H* who had hidden her traveller identity for three years at university because of disparaging remarks made in her presence about 'gypos' and 'people like that', to which through silence she felt implicated.

I remembered Z* who declared herself //'happy to be seen as an 'Asian girl', something unique and rather exotic in our university'// but was equally reluctant to admit post 9/11 to being a Muslim. She told me that she, 'juggled her identities', dressing as a student in university but increasingly in traditional dress at home. Her choice she said was driven by who in her local community may see her and, as a conscious response to the anti-Muslim rhetoric she heard both in and out of university.

I remembered also the powerful story of K* whose father had committed suicide when she was five. In one of the conversations we had, K* reflected on the influence of this event on her childhood, the fractured relationship with some family members, the bullying she endured during secondary school, the ending of a relationship with a man who wanted a 'mother not a wife', her determination to enact an interventionist approach to Early Years education and, she asserted, her choice of the particular age group with whom she worked; children who were the same age as she when her father died. She reasoned that in some way she wanted to return to that age and live through but importantly, past it.

Such exchanges, powerful as they were because of their emotionally charged nature, highlight a particular concern in the writing of this text, that of honouring the participant's stories whilst avoiding an illusion of false causality. The process of writing and re-writing and through this the re-storying of the encounters leads too easily to an assumed causation, that events which proceed others are their cause. Attempts to tie up the loose end of a life lived (Beck, 2013) to make sense of life events can too easily lead to the re-structuring of random events to provide a narrative closure. In a world in which narratives abound the writing recognizes that correlation is not causation but equally recognizes that some events have both direct and indirect causes and that the perception of cause is as much a part of the story.

At other times the influences appeared more benign and more directly positive. Students spoke of former teachers who had acted as role models and provided early experiences that they wished to replicate for future generations and perhaps relive. Such experiences were distilled into convictions couched in grand terms, 'shaping the next generation', 'doing something useful with my life', or the more recent mantra of, 'helping all children to reach their full potential'. The latter so ubiquitous, but also so indicative of the manner in which concepts of national assessment have become embedded in English concepts of pupil learning. Such early and on-going experiences

were said by students to have shaped their views and approaches. They gave such reasons as their decision to teach and they appeared to maintain them through times of difficulty. Yet the importance of the experiences, the partial insights and consistent desires, derived from personal experience, were until recently denied and their contribution to their research interests rejected as partial, atypical and lacking in appropriate academic objectivity. The personal was simply not seen as relevant and was to be third-personed from their writing.

To argue for the importance of the insight of personal experience - or more generally, the person - in research, placed me in conflict with the then dominant research discourse in the faculty. Whilst feeling at times that I was, in Margot Ely's words, 'shouting across a paradigmatic rift,' (Ely, 1991, p.180) I began to recognise that this was not a new or perceptive revelation except perhaps to myself. Nor was I unique in finding that my sentiment was not universally shared. Writing almost three decades ago Nel Noddings wrote of the process of teaching and learning, 'we approach our goal by living with those whom we teach in a caring community through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation [but] again we see how unfamiliar this language has become.' (Noddings, 1986, p.502).

I took strength from my early reading, (notably Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, Dominice, 2000, West, 1996, 2001) and recognised that what I saw as personal, perhaps more accurately *personalized,* struggles were simply part a far wider educational research debate which at times appeared to descend into sterile binary positioning. I noted, Bruner's proposal that (drawing on Richard Rorty (Rorty, 1980), 'whilst the mainstream of Anglo-American philosophy is preoccupied with the epistemological question of '*how to know truth* we should engage with the broader question of *how we come to endow experience with meaning,*' (italics in the original) (Bruner, 2001, p.15). Bruner suggests that the later question is one which preoccupies the poet and the storyteller but by extrapolation I reasoned, we must expand this list to include the novice teacher and the novice qualitative researcher.

A change of staffing in the faculty loosened the grip of the then dominant gate-keepers of research and with a growing body of like-minded staff and researcher colleagues, enabled this current research to proceed in its current form.

As the research process unfolded I recognised and began to articulate with growing clarity that the experiences shared by students and others had a direct influence on me.

At the time that I started to plan the research process I was finalizing my part of an earlier research project in which, working as part of a team, I conducted a series of interviews with head teachers and senior managers in a number of Academy schools (Griffiths *et al.*, 2010). An incident during one interview finally confirmed the validity of the approach I wanted to use. Using an agreed semi-structured interview proforma I carefully gathered responses to a series of carefully constructed questions. As I neared the end of one interview, an interview in which the head teacher had moved far beyond simply replying to the questions asked and told me of his frustrations with the Local Authority and their preoccupation with the gathering of 'simplistic data', of Ofsted inspectors who appeared unaware of the changing organizational nature of the 'school', of difficulties with a particular member staff. At the end of the litany of annoyances I asked what appeared an obvious question:

> If there are so many frustrations to your role can I ask, why do you do the job? What makes you come to work every day?

The head teacher paused for a number of seconds before replying.

> Do you know… that's really interesting… no one's ever asked me that before.

He then began to tell me about his early life. About a father who was 'intelligent but of that generation, who was not allowed to go to university' but worked all his life in a job he found frustrating. A father, 'robbed of life chances'. He continued:

> Whenever I get frustrated or have a difficult to decision to make, it's as though my dad is sitting on my shoulder looking down… and I don't want to let him down.

The research is therefore predicated on the principle that it should be developed through a process of collaborative relationship, a relationship in which both the researcher and participants have a 'voice' and a voice that should be heard. I use the term 'voice' here in Deborah Britzman's sense:

> Voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community. The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself and feeling heard by others, are all part of this struggle… voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to the meaning of her or his lived experience and hence to language, and the individual's relationship to the other since understanding is social.
> The struggle for voice is therefore always incomplete.
>
> (Britzman, 2003, p.23)

The text moves beyond what Clandinin and Connelly (1990, p.12) term the 'two-part agenda…' in which a mutually collaborative relationship, presents a co-

constructed account of the research inquiry. It is not an inquiry into a single context, but is an examination across encounters. The thesis uses the well-established device of presenting a series of participant 'stories' that are used in turn to develop a wider narrative structure. But at all times these stories remain selections interpreted through the lens of my own experience and in so doing it adopts what Liz Stanley termed the auto/biographical approach that:

> …disrupts *the* conventional taxonomies of life writing, disputing its divisions of self/other, public/private and immediacy/memory. Relatedly, the auto/biographical 'I' signals the active inquiring presence of sociologists in constructing, rather than discovering, knowledge…
>
> (Stanley, 1993)

and what Zinah Barnieh (Barnieh, 1989 in Cladinin and Connelly, 1990) term a 'plurivocal' approach in which the researcher and participants remain one person, but whose multiple roles transform throughout the process of writing. At times the 'I' (even when the personal pronoun is absent) is the researcher, at other times the tutor/ex-tutor, sometimes there remain traces of former (but always present selves) the teacher, examiner, governor or school adviser. And always there remains lurking in the shadows, the thesis writer. At other times the 'I' in the text is the participant present often in their own words but always in the changing guise of student or ex-student, friend or daughter, emergent or qualified teacher. Roles change and meld but at all times an effort is made to clarify that which is dominant. So to the research I turned and like Heaney before me, I go digging, not with a pen between squat finger and thumb (Heaney, 1998), but more prosaically with recorder and keyboard I go tapping into the experiences of others to present a thesis that is always refracted through a gaze which remains my own.

The research participants and generalizability

The participants in this research were drawn from one cohort of Primary Trainee Teachers, in a single university setting in the south-east of England. They were drawn from a teaching group (of twenty four) that I had direct contact with during their final undergraduate year and were therefore known to me at the outset of the research.

Being drawn from a specific tutorial group, the participants in the research had had a direct connection during their three years at university though my assumption that this had led to a particular friendship between the individuals was questioned during the research. That said, being drawn from a single programme in a single Institution did mean that the participants shared similarities:

- *They are of the same age, ethnicity and gender.*
- *They have each been formally educated in English state schools in line with the same centralized National Curriculum,*
- *They have been trained in the same Faculty of Education,*
- *They have undertaken the same centrally certified training pathway which may be seen as the most conventional route into primary teaching: attendance at school, an undergraduate programme of study and an immediate appointment to a first teaching post,*
- *All have been judged as qualified to teach against the same centrally prescribed teaching standards, (Teacher Development Agency, 2007)*
- *They were new teaching entrants into English primary schools in the autumn of 2012.*

But in a text that represents a polyphony of voices, the research participants and my own, what of generalizability?

Alasuutari (Silverman, 2010, p.150) suggests that 'generalizability in research terms is a word that should be reserved for surveys only', a similar view to one expressed directly to me at the start of the research activity . So, is that it for generalizability – does it have no role in the world of the qualitative researcher?

In a paper written in 2004, 'Generalizability and qualitative research in a postmodern world', Mark Stoddart asks the same question. Drawing on Klienman, Copp and Henderson to propose that, the manner in which 'ideas about how scientific work should be done' are 'deeply entwined in the positivist tradition of social science' (Stoddart, 2004, p.303). He proposes that what he terms 'folk notions' of research, lead to a ready acceptance of 'the official definitions of 'reliability', 'validity' and generalizability' (ibid. p.304), definitions which are drawn from another research tradition, that of quantitative research. Within this field, effective generalizability is premised on the researcher's ability to gather data from a sample which is deemed to

be 'representative of a larger population and allows inferences to be drawn about the whole from an analysis of its parts' (Myers, 2000, p.2). We will see later that this conceptualization of effective or at least officially acceptable research based upon such unquestioned 'folk notions' is fundamental to the dogmatizing demands of central government made evident through their inspection agency of Ofsted.

Yet this is not a phenomenon solely of the present Coalition government. Writing in 1999, Michael Bassey wrote, that 'those of us working in England and Wales, go into the new millennium with the governmental endorsed exhortation to produce evidence based research which, (and here he references David Hargreaves 1996 lecture to the Teacher Training Agency)

> --- (firstly) demonstrates conclusively that if teachers change their practice from x to y there will be significant and enduring improvements in teaching and learning; and (secondly) has developed an effective method of convincing teachers of the benefits of, and means to, changing from x to y.---
>
> (Hargreaves and Britain, 1996, p.5)

Whilst an analysis of the Hargreaves speech and its subsequent critiques need not concern us here, two points (drawn from Harvey Goldstein) provide a cautionary note. Firstly, that, 'Hargreaves' attempt in the speech to draw an analogy between educational and medical research was later dropped with an admission, 'that he did it 'merely to add force (and colour) to the argument', and secondly, that his 'promotion of OFSTED as a potentially big player in the research field flies in the face of present evidence about the competence of OFSTED so to do (Mortimore and Goldstein, 1996)' (in Goldstein, 1998). We should remember both, this deliberative construction of educational research as one which parallels a romanticized medical model and, Ofsted's self-declared capacity to lead such a research process, when we look later at Tooley and Darby's attack on Dianne Reay's work (Tooley and Darby, 1998, p.75).

As for this research, it would of course have been possible to have followed Miles and Huberman's recommendations and seek to add to my carefully transcribed interview transcripts, 'careful measurement, generalizable samples, experimental control, and (the) statistical tools of good quantitative studies (which are the) precious assets that should not be ignored by qualitative researchers' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.42). To follow such a course would however have required me to (a) bow to a view that there exist methodological shortcomings in qualitative research approaches and that (b) these can and need to be, overcome by the simple expedient; of simply

making qualitative more like quantitative research. Indeed, this was exactly the advice given to me by a former supervisor. If I would only change the research approach from //'woolly, auto/biographical methodology to a more grounded, mixed methods approach then it would have more validity and more generalizability'//. Indeed, it was my refusal to do this that delayed the start of the research and was a position only resolved by a change in Faculty staffing and a consequent alteration in its educational research philosophy. Whilst this was at my individual level a traumatic experience, it was one which was not unique to me. So it was at the start of the research that I found myself like Margaret Myers before me, having to 'stand firm with Proteus' (Myers, 2000) rather than taking the expedient decision to change the research methodology to give my research 'more clout' (ibid.) but in so doing, shape-changing the very ontological paradigm on which it is based.

Let me state clearly at the start therefore, the research reported in this thesis is predicated upon an alternate principle. In it I will make no claims for generalizability grounded upon folk notions of research, for like Myers, I understand 'the mission of qualitative research… is to discover meaning and understanding, rather than to verify truth or predict outcomes.' (ibid.). This is its form.

Thus the *convenience sample* of students were not - as would have been the case with a *systematic sample* - selected for their supposed generalizability to the other 45 000 or so trainee teachers who qualified to teach in the same year; how could they be? More particularly, in the context of my auto/biographical approach, the writing explores both the extent to which I have used others' stories to make sense of my own biography as well as how I have used my own story to make sense of those of others. And so it was at the start of the research that my concern was primarily with the told stories of individuals. Where generalisations could be offered these would be, Michael Bassey's phrase, 'fuzzy generalizations' only. The research aimed to depict individual lives not lives as a representative sample of the wider group. Support for this approach was found in Popay et al. who suggest that a primary aim of qualitative researchers is to, 'make logical generalizations to a theoretical understanding of a similar class or phenomena rather than probabilistic generalizations to a population.' (Popay *et al.*, 1998). In this approach, 'the certainty of scientific generalization ('it is true that ...')' is replaced by 'the uncertainty, or fuzziness, of statements that contain qualifiers ('it is *sometimes* true that ...')'. (Bassey, 1981, p.1). Now, whilst I recognized also Bassey's warning from the start that 'alone a fuzzy generalization is

no more than the researcher's equivalent of the politician's sound-bite, and as such has little credence'(op. cit.), I also recognized that such perceived fuzziness could be enhanced by (in Bassey's words) 'a research account which makes clear the context of the statement(s) and the justifying evidence, provides a user-friendly account of research findings, which invites replication and by leading to augmentation and modification of the generalization, contributes powerfully to the edifice of educational theory.' (op. cit.). My research approach was as Stake has suggested, due in no small part (and as is often the case in with research in health and educational settings) to its 'conceptual harmony' with my and my potential reader's professional experience. The research methodology therefore becomes in itself a natural basis for generalization' (Stake and Jaegger, 1980, p.64). Such an approach is firmly grounded in Bruner's contention that, 'a good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds… arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof, the other establishes not truth but verisimilitude.' (Bruner, 1986, p.11). In the research therefore, rather than seeking to establish truth claims based upon generalizations easily transportable from one context to another, I seek to establish the link between author, participants and reader through narrative authenticity and human resonance and relatability. This was my starting position.

Ethics as an on-going relationship

At the start of the research I had taken note of Silverman's assertion that narrative forms of research can descend into narcissism and that they may be seen as the product of a mass-media interview-culture's demand for confessional and ever deepening levels of authentic experience (Silverman, 2007, p.127). I had also noted Molly Andrews' less colourful observation that whilst narrative is used freely in popular discourse it is a 'popular portmanteau term used in contemporary western social research' (Andrews *et al.*, 2008, p.2). Whilst Silverman and Andrews would no doubt agree that the *popular* the *journalistic* and the *political* use of such terms as, *narrative*, *personal experience*, *life story* are often an attempt to 'connote a particularly acute understanding [and] as a means of ascribing unwarranted validity to contestable positions' (ibid.), I would assert that, despite my loose early use of terminology, within a teaching context my pedagogy had been more circumspect. To paraphrase Mary Kramp, I held to the position that narrative is a way of knowing, a

natural part of our cognitive repertoire that can be used effectively to 'air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences.' (Kramp, 2004, p.3). Whilst the research text reflects the development of my knowledge and understanding and the deepening and strengthening of my capacities and expertise, it does not change this fundamental position. The use of narrative forms in research are not simply a collection of research techniques nor an amalgam of pedagogic tactics but at their heart they represent a system of core values and beliefs which place the individual and the individual's inter-relationship with others at their centre. It is for this reason that the ethical considerations of the research process are not seen as a singular event, a required step simply undertaken to enable the research to begin or access to the research participants or context to be achieved. Rather ethical considerations remain a continuing concern throughout and beyond the process undertaken.

At the start of the process I drew heavily on Merrill and West to shape my approach to the research activity. In the chapter, 'Thinking about ethics' (Merrill and West, 2009, pp.169-178) they suggest that four key questions should shape a researcher's ethical considerations when working with human participants:

- *How can we make the relationship between our participants and researchers as equal as possible and avoid exploitation?*
- *How can we ensure that our participants are fully involved in the research process, including analyzing material?*
- *How do we deal with painful, sensitive and emotional issues? What might we choose to ask, and why?*
- *How do we ensure confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, particularly in situations where it might be easy to work out who the participants are?*

At the start I drew up a series of strict research protocols which were adhered to throughout the process but there remained a point more important still. Whilst the questions acted as a pragmatic means of focusing the interview, it is the manner in which the process as a totality is imbued with ethical considerations that first spoke to me. Meeting ethical requirements could have been seen as a means of reaching the research 'starting gate', a requirement met before the research begins. In this manner it is reduced to a mechanistic process comprised of individual elements. But we do not live in a binary world. Adherence to protocols does not preclude a deeper understanding that the research process is infused with an ethical dimension. It would be a logical fallacy however to argue the reverse, that the systematic following of

protocols and procedures automatically equates to having an embedded ethical dimension in a particular research activity.

I rapidly recognised, but did not fully articulate at the start, that ethical considerations had always governed my professional practice in one form or another. My initial and maintaining interest in the research was driven by the human dimension of my professional work and the growing sense that it was this that was rapidly being driven out in an educational culture driven by an adherence to the unquestioning collection of naive data-sets. I was not alone in this concern and as we saw at the start it was the interactions that I had had with previous students and with the participants that sustained my belief in the centrality of the human dimension in educational contexts. The ethical dimension of the research is driven by a cherishing of the individual within systems and as Merrill and West write (2009, p.182) a desire to provide a 'transitional', a 'good enough' 'space' in which we as researcher listen attentively and respectfully *to* not listen *for* the other. In this approach the participant is not 'othered' nor are they seen as a dataset to be garnered for the researcher's purpose.

Knowing the participants before the research began added further ethical dimension to the process. At the start of the research we had already developed a relationship as tutor/student, it meant that as the research moved forward though the previous bond was severed it remained in some vestigial form. Clearly there was an ease to our discussions from the outset but I recognised that in this familiarity there was the continual and unresolved issue of of how the participants viewed me and I them, of whether they shaped their responses in particular ways, of whether I shaped my questions and techniques. There was no resolution to this nor more latterly do I think that there could have been. It was part of the human dimension of the research a dimension I reflected on and - through the re-telling of a particular incident - write of in my own story. There were specific times when I felt the powerlessness of the researcher. Robbed of the 'I' of previous roles, I was unable to intervene in situations which which years of experience and practice called out for. Was this driven by a sense of professional loss or status-loss perhaps, or simply a humane response? Later I recognised that this was not simply an uncertainty that I had to live with, but one which enriched my understanding. Acknowledging my vulnerabilities as a researcher aided my understanding of the possible vulnerabilities felt by participants in their own process of transition. The interview process and subsequent analysis of transcripts

required what Tom Wengraff termed a constant engagement in an 'hermeneutic process' in an attempt to get closer to the original meaning of what the speaker said to move beyond the 'self presentation' and 'told story' of the participant. Equally, this requires that I recognised also that I am also implicated in a process and that requires a need to:

> recognise that my consciousness is shaped by my history, and by the history of the cultural tradition of which I am a part. I cannot be fully aware of these effects and their operation, so I accept that my subjectivity is provisional and historical.
>
> (in Chamberlayne *et al*., 2000, p.176)

Whilst the process is complex and requires a sometimes painful openness to the participant and a constant active act of de-centering, this was I believed close to the 'dialogic process' (Alexander, 2006, 2008) that I have attempted to develop in my work with adult learners. Such a process demands the use of carefully planned discussion, a process of active listening *to* and professional engagement *with* participants which seeks to extend rather than fragment argument and debate. Whichever terminology employed the engagement remains respectful to the other and is marked by an intent to seek an understanding of what is meant beyond what is said in each interchange.

Thus the ethical considerations which underpin the research were not procedural nor incidental but fundamental to the process. I was later to conclude that they paralleled Roland Barthes' insight into the power of the visual image, recognizing that this was what my body as well as my mind now knew of research.

The research process: procedures

After ethical clearance for the research was gained I contacted the whole teaching group by email in which I briefly explained the proposed research and invited them to a short preparatory meeting to explain the nature and duration of the research and answer their question. Of the group several had decided not to go directly into teaching or to begin their career outside the UK and did not attend the meeting. Of the rest many expressed interest and appeared keen to take part. I asked them to think about the commitment and to commit to the research at first via an email response. Having been advised by my supervisor to select a small sample of two or three I naively persevered with my original intention of selecting the first five volunteers. As

is noted, due to the now foreseeable logistical demands and the amount and depth of data generated, the stories of only two participants are used in this final piece.

I selected the first five respondents and sent them email confirmation together with the two attachments, 'Consent Form parts (a) and (b)' (Appendix 2 and 3). As can be seen, the two-part form (previously agreed by the internal ethics committee) laid out in clear detail the research procedures and protocols for safe storage, handling and use of the data collected and any subsequent research reports produced. Participants were asked to read and, if they were still willing to continue, to sign and bring a copy of Consent Form (b) to the first interview. Participant's were invited to select a pseudonym which would be used throughout the research and in any subsequent written materials. Only 'Anna' decided to adopt a pseudonym. The other participants, though reminded again that their total anonymity could not be guaranteed, were adamant that their names should be used in the final text and this wish has been respected.

The use of digital recording

Whilst contemporaneous notes were kept, interviews were digitally recorded. Twin recorders with powered microphones were used to provide technical-resilience and safeguard against recording failure; a precaution which proved important in one interview. Whilst modern digital recorders are small and unobtrusive I felt that the visibility of the recording technology was an important part of my ethical protocol. Similarly, I saw the procedure of setting up and recording participant's assent to the interview in the same way. I reasoned that the equipment and procedures helped to establish the research setting and signaled that the interview, whilst a safe space, was separated from the general social conversations which surrounded it. In retrospect this may have indicated a desire to mask some uncertainty in my researcher role for the participants were also experienced in the use of digital recording and confident in its presence. On a number of occasions they double-checked that the recorders were working correctly before starting their interviews and as Anna remarked in her second interview, 'I have things to say and I want to check that they are being recorded'.

Each participant was interviewed three times and interviews lasted between one and one and a half hours each. The first round of interviews were carried out in University whilst the second were took place in a 'quiet space' arranged by the participants in their own schools. Where this had not been possible and appeared important in the

context of the research, it is commented upon. The final interviews were carried out either in school, electronically or as part of a group interview in university.

The use of a digital recorder allowed for the production of high quality recordings which could be immediately emailed to the professional transcription service which I used throughout the research. Apart from speed this meant that interviews were accurately transcribed and allowed me to email copies of the transcriptions in WORD format together with recordings of the interviews where requested to participants and to do so within five working days. After checking for accuracy, making any amendments to the transcription the final agreed version was used for analysis.

I recognised at the outset that there was a clear possibility that I may - even inadvertently and even when adopting an open framework of questions - lead the interviews and that my concerns would become paramount. Whilst the interview questions were deliberately kept open and flexible in order enable an act of *listening to* rather than *listening for interviewee* responses I remained aware of Molly Andrews warning of only hearing what I wanted to hear in the interview (Andrews *et al.*, 2008). This concern remained with me throughout and became an issue that I returned to at each interview and throughout the research, as was the awareness that working as an individual researcher without the support / criticism / comfort of a research group was at times a lonely place. While I may have fallen prey too often to 'hiding my lack of insight behind a 'flowery and self-indulgent discourse,'' (Van Manen, 1990, p.10 in O'Dea, 1994, p.162) the strict protocols and my adherence to them are my response in part to Clandinin and Connelly's warning that in research of this type there remains the danger that:

> Falsehood may be substituted for meaning and narrative truth (for) … Not only may one 'fake the data' and write a fiction but one may also use the data to tell a deception as easily as a truth.
>
> (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.10 in O'Dea, 1994)

Transcription and analysis: methodological consideration

In earlier research activities I have often worked as part of a team which has used to varying degrees a form of first transcription analysis that has been described by Kathy Charmaz as 'crystallization' in which the researcher sorts and labels bits of data according to what they indicate [and uses codes] to 'crystallize' sentences, phrases, words, in an act of separation, sorting and synthesis.' (Charmaz, 2006, p.11). In a recent research the team of which I was part, had used a modified form of this

approach (in Griffiths *et al.*, 2010). On this occasion however, working as an individual and focusing on the totality of individual stories I felt that the approach would be inappropriate. Rather I wanted to retain the integrity of the interviews and the stories told in all of their complexity and lack of linearity; they were to be viewed as a whole, rather than as an assemblage of parts (Merrill and West, 2009, pp. 136-7).

I began the formal process of analysis through the use of a proforma first suggested to me by my supervisor Professor Linden West. At the most basic level the proforma was used to record details of the interview *Process* (the what/why, where/how of the interview). Its systematic use also began to disclose the various *Themes* examined during the interviews. More importantly it provided a means of retaining the interview's *Gestalt* its meaning-complexity which allowed the elements of individual interviews to be linked across time. In this way the proforma was considered to function as part of the 'analytic space through which to understand more of the whole, including the relationship in the here and now, which might provide clues to how a life had been lived' (Andrews, 2007, in Merrill and West, 2009, p.74). To further this end it was seen to be important not to carry out individual single-site interviews, but to carry out a series of interviews across time and across locations.

Transcription and the 'life lived'

It became increasingly clear as the research progressed that 'the life lived' was not solely the participants' lives. I had begun the research process with the naive view that I would create a honed digital space equipped with hyperlinks flicking me effortlessly from experiential nodal point to point; I was after all experienced in the use of multimedia technology, taught it and used it in my work life and had produced many such environments commercially. But the 'failure' as I first saw it to create such a space was not a failure of technology but rather a failure of imagination. So began the process of annotation. High technology abandoned in favour of pencil and paper, I engaged in a physical act of analysis. To the transcripts were added questions and notes, links to and from half-remembered literature which might, I reasoned, highlight connections to my own experiences and assumptions. As my field notes grew I found myself lurking on the edge of conversations; actively listening but less obviously engaging. I will recount later how my remaining on the periphery of a workshop session allowed me to attend in more detail to what was said and in so doing allowed a key thought to surface.

The use of digital recording had the expected benefit of sheer convenience and portability when files were downloaded to an MP3 player. This for example allowed me to reacquaint myself with a previous interview as I drove to the next. Less expected was that, through the act of re-listening to recordings I began a process of re-imagining interviews. Missing the immediacy of the surface visuals of body language, I listened with more care to the audible paralinguistic features of speech that both consciously and unconsciously shape our understandings. The pauses and changes of pitch and tone that indicted a point being made, or a missed point being re-stated with increasing firmness. The final moments of the last interview with Kirsty provide an example of this when the possible significance of her 'thinking aloud' in a group interview was missed to only became apparent in the re-listening. More unexpected still, the transportability of the recordings allowed me to listen to interviewees in different geographical spaces. I will record in my own story, presented in 'Bookend TWO', that reading and considering Mezirow's notion of Transformational Learning outside my familiar English environment, had itself a transformative effect on my response to what I read.

Additional data used

At the start I had recognised that most of the data would be drawn from the recorded interviews but that there would be other sources of material which were either already available or may be developed as the research proceeded. The additional comprised:

- *Lesson observation notes provided by university link tutors;*
- *Reports written by school mentors;*
- *Introductory written notes produced by the participants at the start of their University programme;*
- *Written notes produced by university tutors;*
- *Email and text communications.*

Whilst previous written materials were not extensively used there were times when, for example, participants had discussed their experiences in schools, that these provided a useful and additional resource.

I had decided at the start that I would 'allow an option for the participants to develop an on-line forum' which, I reasoned, would offer participants a space where they could communicate and share their views. My use of the word 'allow' here is perhaps retrospectively telling. Whilst I had simply meant, 'provide', I later reflected that perhaps I saw myself at the beginning as a gate-keeper of the research process

who was reluctant to allow the locus of control to move from my hands? If so, I was rapidly disabused of the helpful option. As I will explore in more detail in the section, 'Developing an online identity', the participants had already created several online forums in the form of Facebook groups and I could if I wished join these. So it was that I was 'friended' by the participants and it was *they* who allowed *me* to join *their* pre-existing online groups.

Locating the research stories

Ivor Goodson draws a clear distinction between the life story and life history. The former is he argues is centred on the personal story of the individual but the latter situates this within its historical and cultural background. He writes:

> Only if we deal with life stories as the starting point for our understanding, and as the beginning of the process of coming to know, will we begin to understand their meaning. If we use them as starting points we come to see them as social constructions which allow us to locate them in historical time and social space. In this way the life story that is told individualizes and personalizes. But beyond the life story, in the life history, the intention is to understand the pattern of social relations, the interactions and historical constructions in which the lives of women and men are embedded.
> The life history then asks whether private issues are also public matters. It sets our understanding of our life stories within an understanding of the times in which we live and the opportunity structures which allow us to story ourselves in particular ways at particular times.

(Goodson, 2012, p.6)

So it is with this research. It is set at both a particular historical and geographical point of time and place, in English primary education schools in the year 2012. More precisely still, the research is situated at two specific life history points for, as the participants in the research reached the end of their time at university and took up their first teaching posts, my career was drawing to an end. Indeed, by the time that the first draft of the research writing was complete, I had retired.

The significance of these two events which bookend the research only became clear to me when I arrived to clear my office shelves. I found that the University's Human Resource department had demonstrated somewhat unusual efficiency and perhaps unnecessary haste by removing my name from what I had considered until that time to be *my* office door. As I analysed later interviews I wondered to what extent this single trivial logistical activity, which must I assume occur many times each year, had on the shape of the research. Without it I wondered later, would I have been so alert to the 'unnaming of individuals' which appeared to me as such an obvious feature of the participant's stories which are to follow? And by extrapolation, in what ways did my professional story colour and shape research. So, whilst the clearing of the shelves alerted me to the various competing themes which have governed much of my latter professional life, set the agenda of the research participants training and, shaped the school contexts in which the participants began their working lives, my own

unnaming equally alerted me (though perhaps only in retrospect) to the deeply human nature of the research I was engaged.

The starting point for the research began, as with much of my professional development as a teacher educator, with an identifiable learning event and a subsequent seminar discussion. Such events represent for me the importance of what Gordon Turnbull describes as the willingness to 'listen with your sensors open', to listen not for evidence *of* but as challenges *to* your preconceived theoretical positions (Turnbull, 2011, p.67). Whilst not all such 'critical incidents' appear immediately challenging or *stressful* or *traumatic* revealing themselves through after a period of extended reflection (Cunningham, 2008b, p.161), more slow revelation than epiphany (Ely, 1991), they have each carried with them the same capacity to *accelerate* (my) *professional learning*. Similarly, the potency of the event is not always apparent to the outside observer but as Turnbull argues, that even in an atypical clinical context, a traumatic event is marked not by reference to external objective measures of trauma but by their impact on the individual (Turnbull, 2011, p.211). As such I deliberately call upon such events to fix the essence of this research.

The trainees are asked a question: Are teachers professionals?

During the participant's final undergraduate year the cohort of which they were a part had been posed a question during a lecture; 'Is Teaching a Profession?'. The lecturer was clear in their stance, as far as teachers in England were concerned, the answer was an unequivocal 'No'. At first the students were taken aback both by the question more particularly by the answer. Some were outraged.

They argued that they were; trained to meet a set of Professional Teaching Standards, they were constantly judged against these standards in university and schools, and that furthermore they had a burgeoning portfolio of evidence to prove their varying levels of progress against these same standards. So why, they asked, this question? To argue that teachers as a group and that they as individuals were professionals appeared straight forward and contentious. The logic was both clear and comfortingly circular. In a later examination many drew on Jacques and Hyland to suggest that professions are marked by the following key characteristics: (2007, p.202)

- *Membership of an organised body involved in testing competence and regulating conduct.*

- *Possession of specialized knowledge and skills;*
- *Successful completion of intellectual and practical education and training;*
- *Conformity to ethical standards when dealing with clients;*
- *Commitment to the competence and integrity of the professional as a whole;*

And that if teaching met each of the criteria then ergo, teaching was a profession. Whilst the question had been posed to challenge what was felt to be their lack of criticality, their responses were not unsurprising. Drawn from their experiences as pupils or teaching assistants, from their university course and their school experiences as trainees, they focused in large part on the *scientific* and *situated certainty* of the surface features of teacherly performance which they had experienced and against which they were judged (Hargreaves, 1994 in Goodson and Heargreaves, 1996).

A broad-brush with history: How did we reach this point?

The criteria presented by Jacques and Hyland draws on the earlier work of Geoffrey Millerson (Millerson, 1964) who wrote during the start of the Plowden era, that is at a time when the nature of teacher professionalism has often portrayed as being more certain (Dale, 1979, Barber, 2005). Whilst the accuracy of Barber's 'official account' (Whitty, 2006) and his 'crude analysis' (Dainton, 2005) have been challenged, the supposed recollected certainty of the golden age of teacher autonomy has been equally dismissed as a comforting myth by Robin Alexander (Alexander, 2009). My own recollections as a teacher who began work when the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967) was a contemporary document[1], equally cautions me against such retrospective mythologizing of the past. What is more certain in the context of this debate is that in the intervening years the nature of teacher professionalism has become a more contested area of public debate.

The starting point of that debate is often linked to Prime Minister James Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College (Callaghan, 1976). Whilst raising a wide range of issues his comment that 'it is not my intention to become enmeshed in such problems as whether there should be a basic curriculum with universal standards - although I am inclined to think there should be', as much as others set the tone of the subsequent developing educo-political agenda for the next two decades. Changes in education during the years of the succeeding Conservative administration including the introduction of proscribed National Curriculum with its attendant assessment

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[1] I started teaching in September, 1969

[2] 'Every Child Matters' (2002), the 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload national agreement' (2003), widening of Ofsted's inspection remit and the creation of the single Inspection Directorate

requirements, the replacement of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools with The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) who reported directly to government are well attested as are there impacts on the life stories of a generation of teachers. Martin Lawn (Lawn, 1990, p.389, in Goodson and Lawson, 1996) drawing on the biographies of teachers of this time writes powerfully of the manner in which the period was seen by many as marking a move from teaching as a moral craft, to that of educational worker whose work was to be depoliticized and 'managed' to be more 'effective'. As I address my experiences in the 1980s and the development of the *reflective practitioner* we will begin to see how my current concerns are routed in this time and these events.

In the context of this research, a further and key change occurred when Tony Blair was called on to give the annual Ruskin College lecture which marked the twentieth anniversary of Callaghan's speech. Where Callaghan has entitled his lecture 'A rationale debate based on facts', Blair chose the more portentous title, 'The agenda for a generation' (Blair, 1996), and chose as a focus what he termed, 'the Standards not Structures Agenda'; again the tone for the next decade was set. It should be remembered that the speech took place whilst Blair was leader of the Labour Party but was not yet Prime Minister and was still fashioning his rhetorical electoral slogan of *'Education Education Education'* (Blair, 2001). This choice may be seen as an example of the *manufactured uncertainty* (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996) which has become such a part of our current politico-educational discourse.

New Labour changes

Once elected the then recently re-branded New Labour government initiated a range of education policies[2] including the rapid introduction of the White Paper, 'Schools - Achieving success', (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). Though first targeted at secondary schools it presaged many of the subsequent changes that were to later effect all sectors of education. Referencing this, Gray and Whitty (2010, p.5) argue that amongst the most significant of these changes was the development of competing models of Initial Teacher Training, developed within local settings which have led to a fragmentation of the concept of teacher professionalism. The linked

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[2] 'Every Child Matters' (2002), the 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload national agreement' (2003), widening of Ofsted's inspection remit and the creation of the single Inspection Directorate (2003) encompassing all educational provision including Early Years Provision, Further Education and Initial Teacher Training, development of the revised Professional Standards for Teachers' (2009).

themes *localism* and consequent *fragmentation* predicted a decade earlier by Goodson and Hargreaves (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996) has perhaps led to what Craig and Fieschi described succinctly as a state of *DIY Professionalism* (Craig and Fieschi, 2007). The latter argue that, whilst the profession of teaching has always been in a state of change, current changes are fundamental as they impact directly upon the actual nature of the job of teaching suggesting that, '(the) current workforce is (now) subject to new burdens in terms of work practice control, societal and government demands' (ibid., p.4). It is perhaps the use of the term *workforce* in this context which gives the clue to this act of reframing. Through a process of collocation, the word *workforce* had been linked to that of *reform* and in turn re-formed into the single the unified phrase of *workforce reform* and eventually to that of the *workforce reform agenda*. So in part through repetition - discussed later in terms of *evacuation* and *reification* - and re-framing the need to reform the workforce was presented as a necessary response to uncontested fact rather than as a chosen political policy[3]. Importantly also was the credentialization of teaching through the development of pre-specified teaching standards and the expansion and application of such standards to all members of the newly designated *educational workforce*. Assuming a single workforce assumed a single set of standards which would, it was argued, allow seamless transition from a first post of teaching assistant through to that of head teacher. The reduction of the teaching role to generality of such pre-specified standards had a predictable outcome as generality was turned to ubiquity and the need for teaching standards of any type were questioned[4].

Beyond these officially designated changes one, more subtle in its announcement but as far reaching as any in its effect, was Secretary of State David Blunkett's decision to re-designate the end of Key stage National Curriculum criteria levels as 'targets' rather than their original more neutral but more accurate designation as 'median points of progression' (DES, 1988). Accepted almost without question by the teaching force, the seemingly simple change in terminology, has resulted in embedding an assumption that children's learning can now be predicted, controlled and measured by direct reference to a simple pre-determined linear axis of

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[3] For a longer discussion of the manner in which New Labour language was used to establish their political agenda as a normative process see Fairclough, 2000.
[4] At the time of writing there is no longer a requirement for those that teach in Academy Trust and Free schools to have any form of training, nor a requirement to have Qualified Teacher status.

progression. This belief has now become an entrenched part of schools' daily practice and appears as a largely unquestioned part of teacher education programmes.

We will see in the case studies which follow the manner that (to paraphrase Goodson and Hargreaves) the imposition of policy changes from above are experienced in the daily lives of the research participants and, as they continue, 'for at the end of the day, teacher professionalism is what teachers and others experience it as being, not what policy makers and others assert it should become.' (*op.cit.* p.22). And so whilst, for example, the assumed accuracy of National Curriculum levels as an accurate linear measure of pupil performance may be embedded in required daily practice, case study discussions demonstrate that this assertion remains both questionable and importantly, hotly questioned.

Coalition and the changes continue

The change of political administration and the formation of the coalition government in 2010 did nothing to halt the changes of the previous decade. Whilst I do not want to debate the warrant of the changes here it is ironically interesting to note that amongst the first changes wrought by the coalition government was the abolition of the General Teaching Council (GTC). Axed as part of the 'burning of the QUANGOs' in June 2010, at a stroke it removed the possibility of meeting Jacques and Hyland's first criteria of professionalism, that of;

- *Membership of an organised body involved in testing competence and regulating conduct.*

Claiming that his action was done not as a policy decision, Minister Francis Maude MP invoked the amorphous concept of 'the people' to state that:

> What people find so irritating is the sense that there is this huge amount of activity incontinently set up, much of it by the last government, by bodies which are not in any way accountable - no one can be held accountable for what they do and that is what we are seeking to change,
>
> (Maude, 2010)

Thus in 'the name of the people' the GTC which had by its nature been accountable to its members, was replaced by a 'government appointed panel of experts' accountable only to its appointee, the Secretary of State for Education.

As for credentials and credentialism? The cohort of NQTs of which the research participants formed a part, were trained through a programme designed to meet the requirements imposed by the New Labour government and certified in line with the

series of 'Professional Standards for teachers' (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2009) introduced at the start of their training. A further irony is that during the three months between the end of their training programme and them taking up their first post these standards were replaced by a new set of standards; a set of standards written by the government appointed panel of experts. In so doing, the sheer arbitrariness of and the politicization of the process is made apparent. A further irony is that in none of the schools in which the six participants worked were the Teaching Standards directly referenced in discussions. The portfolios of evidence so carefully gathered during the participant's years as trainees, so carefully checked, assessed and referenced throughout the programme, appeared to act simply as a badge indicating their passage through and successful completion of a training programme that allowed them into the separate school-world of teaching.

Changes in the wider educational landscape did not of course cease as the participants took up their posts but continue at an ever-increasing pace throughout the participant's first year of teaching. However within the context of this research it is the participant's knowledge of and impact of such changes that is paramount.

BOOKEND ONE

On reflection and 'stuff like that'

While I had first begun the research process by considering the changing nature of the term *teacher professionalism*, I was also concerned at the start about the apparent ease that in teacher educational discourse the term *professionalism* was easily yoked with the further term, *reflection*. It appeared possible to speak readily about, being a *reflective teacher* and *reflecting on teaching*, but to do so without interrogating the nature of the term. Such language could it seemed, be used without a shared meaning or a debated understanding.

As the participants started their first week as teachers, I was immersed re-reading interview transcripts and reading Stephen Brookfield's contribution to Jack Mezirow's 'Learning as Transformation' (Mezirow, 2000, pp.125-147). I was also starting my new academic year and as with all such years, it was to begin with a series of Staff Development Workshops. In a moment of serendipity or perhaps of chance favouring the prepared mind, I attended a workshop whose effect was to focus my thinking in an unexpected way.

There had been significant changes during the previous academic year. The Head of Department had moved on and their replacement came with significantly different experiences and expectations. Having worked originally in the secondary education sector they had spent several years directing one of the recently developed school-based training routes. With a programme ratified as 'outstanding' in an Ofsted inspection the programme and such route was, it appeared, to serve as a model for future developments. The HOD's apparent personal certainty ushered in a time of uncertainty for others. The director of the programme on which I largely taught decided that this was an appropriate time to retire. Their successor's temporary appointment was not ratified. They decided to retire also as lead posts were filled by variously-experienced colleagues in preparation for the Department's proposed future changes.

In preparation for the forthcoming developments workshop groups were composed of staff drawn variously from across the programmes and the multiplicity of training routes in which the Faculty was engaged. I was attached to one such group in which we were set the task of, devising '… a series of grading criteria to assess student's knowledge and understanding of child development'. Drawing briefly from my field

notes, the group of five tutors immediately positioned them at different sides of the table. The two tutors from school-based (s-b) routes at one side with campus-based (c-b) tutors opposite them. There was no social chat. Tutors did not announce themselves, say who they were nor on which specific programme they taught. One of the s-b tutors announced that: (from contemporaneous notes)

> …students don't need to know anything about … certainly nothing about, what's he called? Piaget? Or stuff like that … just as long as they can teach really well in class.
>
> Just as long as they can be an 'outstanding teacher' (quotation marks indicated by hand gestures).

What was perhaps most interesting about the next thirty minutes or so was the lack of engagement between the s-b and c-b routes. The tutors rapidly separated themselves into two sub-groups who worked alone, or rather, one group worked whilst the other group looked on in seeming bemusement. As I wrote at the time:

> The c-b tutors sat in muttered discussion or simply looking on.
>
> The s-b tutors rapidly created a list of criteria against which they might judge student performance. It was interesting to watch as they cut and pasted criteria from a range of seeming crib sheets that they had brought with them and only adjectivally modified.
>
> How had they known about the task? Had they been told in advance. Did they normally carry such materials with them?
>
> They worked on.
>
> The c-b tutors talked and watched.
>
> As they worked one s-b tutor said to the other…
>
> 'Oh give me some more good words to put in there… I know what, oh this is a good one; we need to put in this one. 'Students must be able to *reflect* on'…, no no that's not it; 'Students must be able to *critically reflect on* their teaching'. Yes, that's a good one'.
>
> (extract from personal field notes)

Though depressed by the dismissal of the need for students to have any knowledge of child development, I was not surprised. As Leaton Gray and Whitty (2010, p.13) point out, there has been since the 1980s a significant reduction in time allocated to educational studies or professional studies elements of programmes. In the Teach First programme - on which it transpired the two s-b tutors worked - the pre-service element of the programme has been reduced to a four-week summer school split equally between professional studies and subject studies. Whilst this is a somewhat extreme example (though other programmes are more truncated still) even the

archetypal three year campus based programme which I taught, the professional studies element of the programme had been reduced from an annual ninety to sixty hours course with greater inclusion of non-critical practical work. Such moves, as Leaton Gray and Whitty continue, in which specialist professional knowledge is made profane represents what Beck describes as an 'inner emptiness' (Beck, 2002). My notes reveal that I was particularly intrigued by one manifestation of that state, the use of the language. I noted that the meaning of *reflection* was not discussed and that a shared understanding was assumed or its need unconsidered. Pragmatically, 'success' in the workshop was assumed to be measured by task-completion of fulfilling the brief and creating criteria in a somewhat naïve performance of teacher/child roles. My response was a concern about the way in which language can become so easily debased and robbed of meaning. As someone who had worked in the field of Special Educational Needs (as it was termed at the time) I was aware of the manner in which the meaning of terms changes across time and assumptions about attitudes and values can be associated with the use of terminology.

For me, the workshop represented an example of the manner in which a term which I felt was so fundamental a part of my professional discourse could be reduced to the status of 'a good one'. That it could simply serve to be tacked together to produce what appeared to be a meaningless assemblage, a construct of assessment by pseudo-criteria. That one of the s-b tutors had begun the session by announcing that they had been part of the government's working party which had recently devised the new Teaching Standards against which trainees, my research participants progress, was to be judged was alarming. In retrospect, I considered why this information had been given and would my response have been so quite so visceral had this information been withheld? Beyond this, did the incident simply represent a debate about educational terminology?

Re-reading the extended notes later I note that I referred throughout to the individuals as 'workshop participants' as 'tutors' or as 'colleagues'. Never did I call them 'teachers', though in a later workshop one s-b tutor had made it clear at the start of the session that he was certainly not a university tutor because he 'didn't do lectures' but, as he empathized, he was 'a real-teacher'. Clearly there are many issues at play here but a retrospective gaze revealed another powerful lesson. I had written that there was a group of five tutors to realize only later that there were in fact six tutors and that I was the sixth. Had I already begun at the start of what was to be my

last year in the Department, to disassociate myself from the departmental changes and to seek a new identity?

Making a link to a previous experience

In discussing the incident later with a colleague I was reminded by them of an experience we had shared when co-tutoring a student group in Southern India. The mornings had been spent teaching classes of children and the afternoons in seminar discussion. In one such the students remarked on the size and organizational layout of classes: each had approximately fifty children with a strict segregation by seating of boys and girls. The teaching style was described variously as formal, didactic or more judgmentally, 'old-fashioned'; in either case it was considered to lack what the students felt were 'appropriate levels of differentiation'. As the discussion proceeded it became increasingly heated. Eventually we tutors paused the debate and asked them to consider for a moment what they individually understood by the twin terms 'inclusion' and 'inclusive practice' which they so easily used; and to then, in turn to define each to the rest of the group. Their definitions were unsurprisingly different but what surprised them most was their degree of difference. For some it meant a change of teaching style or content or expected outcome dependent on the basis of an individual child's needs, for others it meant a separation into groups or classes which would allow a different learning focus. It was this recognition that whilst words were used, their meanings were not jointly understood that allowed the discussion to more constructively proceed. Remembering the incident later I recognised the way in which I had too easily become fixated on my own view, my own unquestioned understanding of what it was to be reflective. Rather than engage I had been willing only to observe in feigned neutrality. So at this point of the of the research the *simple question* (though not simple answer) of 'NQTs changing perceptions of teacher professionalism' was widened to encompass a wider consideration of the nature of 'reflection', to challenge assumed and easily agreed definitions and to consider more critically my personal position within the research process.

At the level of language my reading of Brookfield allowed me to examine more critically the manner in which the lack of agreed definitions can speak to other, more deeply held beliefs. Stephen Brookfield suggestion that the terms, 'reflection' and 'reflexive practice' must be some of the most commonly invoked terms in the world of educational theorizing today.' (Brookfield, 2000, p.125). He also asserts that the

situation is complicated further by the 'frequent conflation of the terms *reflection* and *critical reflection*, [it is] as if adding *critical* somehow makes reflection deeper and more profound,' (ibid., p.126). Whilst the argument is self-serving in that it is used to introduce a deeper discussion of criticality his general proposition (that these terms are now so ubiquitous, so much part of the general educational rhetoric that their meanings having become debased) is one which resonated with my experience. Although familiar with his earlier more practice-based work, after the workshop I thought more carefully about the way in which language may be used. Rather than acting as a means of opening up a discourse it can become part of an oft repeat mantra which through its very ubiquity evades debate and, ironically in this context, being used to avoid the need for reflection. My reading of Brookfield provided a clearer frame of reference for the process whereby words are robbed of meanings or placed into a category where contestable meanings cease to be contested. Brookfield calls this the twin process of evacuation and reification (ibid., p.140).

Evacuation describes the manner in which the constant use of words, and their use in an ever-widening range of contexts robs them of their original meaning and power. Brookfield offers *empowerment* as an example of one such word, highlighting the way in which its constant widening usage in literature - particular popular literature in the form of self-help books - has removed the word from its original meaning when first used by Paulo Freire or Myles Horton. To this word I would add the word 'outstanding'; once a word that meant a practice which stood out from others, and something that was unique and thereby special and notable, is in an educational context used to described the *only* standard of practice acceptable to Ofsted. All practice, all teachers, all students must constantly not strive for but demonstrate *outstanding* performance but not through the practice of originality but increasingly through a practice of conformity judged against pre-specified criteria.

We will see in Kirsty's Story the impact of this changed meaning in her own and another's experience.

The second term which Brookfield presents, *Reification,* describes the elevation of an idea or word to a point to which its meaning is no longer questioned as they are raised in status so that they 'become revered, imbued with mystical significance and placed beyond the realm of critical analysis or acceptable uncritically as a 'good thing'.' (ibid., p.140). Through this process the word is raised to the status of an object, or as Wenger describes, 'reification congeals an experience into 'thingness'

(Wenger, 1998, p.294). It is through this process that we will see when considering the insights provided by Bourdieu within this research, that Wenger's 'thingness' and Bourdieu's misrecognition of common sense collide. We will also note later that whilst Bourdieu's work was dismissed by Ofsted as having no relevance to *research* in schools, his term 'cultural capital' has been rapidly cleansed of its discomforting political challenge and with meaning pinioned, subsumed into the Govian monologue of journalistic crudity which has replaced rational discourse.

As the research moved forward and the participants began their first school year, I considered how such words as *reflection* and *professional* as with *inclusion* before, are used as though their meanings are unambiguous and uncontentious and how my understandings are as shaped by the easy assumptions of my life history. So I paused to ask, what did *reflection* mean to me and where had my personal understanding come from?

Stepping back for a year: the development of personal reflection

I cannot remember the exact point at which the term *reflection* entered my professional vocabulary but in a formal sense it was probably in the early 1980s when I was seconded from my school to spend a year at Newcastle University. My Local Authority wanted to develop the teaching of literacy across its schools and our local Adviser for English had put his daughter into my class to gain some teaching experience before she began her teacher training course. It was on this rather fragile basis that I was chosen to be part of the vanguard and on this happenstance that my career path changed, took me from the classroom and began a professional journey that has led to this point.

As part of the formal aspect of programme we were taught statistics by Carol Fitz-Gibbon. Whilst the course allowed me to develop some limited skills, what understanding I developed was that such understanding must be situated within a skeptical approach. That data had to be investigated and interrogated not simply accepted nor generated to support a pre-conceived conclusion. Clearly my distrust of data-naivety, enhanced a decade later in courses with Caroline Gipps and Harvey Goldstein, stems from this time. I have always realised this and referenced it in conversations. But perhaps more so, without this formative experience would I have later thought to ask students what they understood by the term 'inclusion'? Whilst the programme introduced me to the literature which was to influence my thinking across

the next decades (though perhaps more accurately, it opened up to me the importance of engaging with literature) a chance conversation with my course tutor was at least as influential.

Over coffee one day he told me something of his early life and that as a child he had found learning to read difficult and that had not become fully fluent until his early teens. John's story surprised me. Whilst I thought that I was very much a product of what I had thought was a similar background to that which he described - traditionally working class in which books rarely figured - my own reading development had been untroubled. My reading was first enabled by an archetypal 'wonderful teacher', in my case Miss Jacques, who I remember once whispered 'somnambulist' to me during a reading test and perhaps in so doing seeded a life-long scepticism of the accuracy of school-based assessments. This was also a time when the importance of libraries was uncontested and here I found a further trove of books. Eventually a brief but important foray into a local church increased my literary diet further. So it was that by the time I was in my own early teens I had variously, sailed the high seas with Jim Hawkins, crossed the moors with David Balfour and fallen into the Slough of Despond with Christian.

From this conversation we could draw a clear lesson. We could use it to assert the need to put in place strategies to variously 'raise' (Clegg, 2013) rather than 'waste' (Field, 2010) a child's 'life chances' and much of the educational effort which followed was focused on this aim. Indeed the programme was directed at just this. It may perhaps have been the driver for John's engagement with the programme; notably after his time at Newcastle he went on to become an HMI and later still Director of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998). But there was within this brief conversation a more recurring human dimension. At a personal level I have since found it difficult to read Alan Ahlberg's poem 'Slow Reader' (Ahlberg, 2003) without thinking of John and of the individual who at the moment was a seemingly confident and assured university lecturer but in an earlier time had been condemned to being the 'slow reader' that 'hated it". As I come to the work of Bourdieu I may want to use the word agency, but I will want to consider why some continued 'hating it' whilst others used it as a spur for their future development.

At a personal level the story speaks to a further truth as it challenged my naive view of what it was to be a university tutor. Had I thought until this time that university tutors simply sprang into the world intellectually fully formed, just housed in smaller

packages? Clearly those that espouse the neat linear model of learning development currently embedded within National Curriculum assessment may believe this. But from the conversation with John I took as a future starting point that, personal development is a constant and often messy process of becoming in which the public and private are constantly enmeshed and that, what may be presented as objective professional positions can often find their source in responses to life history incidents. Yet this is only a retrospective realization for at the time my thinking had a different focus, for this was the age of Donald Schön and the 'The Reflective Practitioner' (Schön, 1983).

As Connelly and Clandinin (1986, p.294) suggest, from the point of view of the use of theory in the practical professions, Donald Schön's work was particularly influential. At its heart lay the concept of *reflective practice* which was designed to challenge the view of professional knowledge as simply:

> … technical rationality in which… professional activity consists in instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and techniques.
> (Schön, 1983, p.21)

For Schön the starting point of reflection was not the 'ivory-towered contemplation of theory' (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996, p.12) but that practice was to be based on the development of skilled and thoughtful judgment enabled via a process of *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. Within this conceptual frame, daily practice could be problematized, errors rectified and teacherly performance enhanced. Teacher professionalism is thus presented as a rational activity in which practitioners both reflect on and later articulate their daily practice; teacher professionalism is thus seen as the capacity to exercise discretionary judgment in situations of unavoidable uncertainty (Schön, 1983 in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996, pp.12-14). At its best this approach allows teachers to carefully examine their practice and to share insights with colleagues, particularly those who are at an earlier stage of their careers; a particular driver perhaps for its ready adoption by teacher educators? But this is not the whole story.

The assumption that teacher practices are uniformly agreed and neutrally beneficial process marked simply by differences in their technical efficacy, is I would hazard false. As an adviser who worked in the late 1980s and early 1990s with schools to develop their practices to support pupils with designated special educational needs, *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* often needed to be supplemented by the

more critical *reflection about action* as assumptions about, expectations of and attitudes to pupils and parents (and consequent school practices) had to be challenged. The deputy head who dismissed the suggestion that pupils ought to be encouraged to engage in self-assessment as '…. they'd just lie about themselves' or the other who retreated to a store-cupboard to nosily put up a set of shelves during one meeting whilst declaring, 'SEN was nothing to do with him, as he didn't teach thick kids', are two examples which stay in the mind. Looking later at Anna's Facebook messages when seeking advice on her first day in school, or listening to Kirsty's interview experience, demonstrates that such crude brutishness still remains a feature of some teacher's vocabulary and conceptual frames. More widely still, we may want to question agreed assumptions about what constitutes concepts of 'good practice'. Ciaran Sugrue (in Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996, pp.154-177) draws attention to the manner in which the beginning teachers in this study drew heavily on their early personal experiences of teachers and classrooms to shape their own early practices. I would also add to Sugrue's argument that practice based on such folk wisdom and native knowledge (Papert, 1980) is not confined to new teachers only. In her study, 'An Inspector Calls', Carol Fitz-Gibbons examines the impact of Ofsted inspections on school function and teacher behaviours and challenges the view that teachers share an agreed concept of 'Good Practice'? Asserting that,

> as for the knowledge of 'good practice', this can be a shared prejudice rather than accurate knowledge. Indeed, teachers are all too aware that views on what constitutes 'good practice' have changed over the years like fashion. The evaluation of process, in an endeavour as complex as teaching, is hazardous since the link between processes and outcomes may be tenuous indeed.
>
> (Fitz-Gibbon and Stephenson-Forster, 1999, p.105)

She goes on to suggest that Ofsted inspection teams unsurprisingly carry with them their own conceptualizations of 'good practice', but we may also argue that the development of a single uni-dimensional definition of quality is a deliberative act of succeeding centralizing governments.

My own experience provides some evidence of how such a 'shared prejudice' maybe consciously constructed and actively embedded into practice. Before the start of the new millennium I had moved from LA authority work into Teacher Education. So it was that when the remit of Ofsted was increased to include ITTs in 2004 a number of tutors, including myself, were asked to undertake Inspection training in order we were told to better prepare the Faculty of what lay ahead. During one of our

training sessions we were shown videos of teaching sessions which we were required to assess and grade against the criteria of performance that we were given. Those that met the criteria were graded highly. Those that failed to meet the criteria were deemed to have failed. The technical process was clear, simple and direct both for the grading of lessons and for grading the trainee inspectors. Only those that graded the videoed lessons highly passed this element of the programme. We were not allowed to discuss the lesson nor question the criteria.

I remembered this experience when interviewing one of the research participant's (Collette) in school who had recently been observed as part of the school's Ofsted inspection. An exchange after the lesson reveals the clear clash between the competing frames of inspection and professional development. At the end of the observation she asked for feedback that would help her to improve her teaching and but was told simply, 'I am here to judge you, not to make suggestions about how you can improve'.

Clearly within this discussion we see a clash between the competing agendas of inspection and professional development. Whilst in the years after Schön's initial work alternate models of Teacher Professionalism were developed, (Sachs, 2001, Sachs, 2003, Cunningham, 2008b, Griffiths *et al.*, 2010, Sangster, 2012) in this thesis, it is the contested adoption within many Teacher Education programmes of a view of Teacher Professionalism based upon an explicitly reflective process which has been most important. It was such a model derived from her own training experiences that Collette was drawing upon.

The training programme which she and the other participants had undergone made use of, as do many others (Warwick, 2007), the work of Andrew Pollard and made use of *Reflective* series of writings (Pollard and Anderson, 2008, Pollard and Triggs, 1997, Pollard and Tann, 1993, Pollard, 2002). Building on the earlier work of Dewey (Dewey, 1910, Dewey, 1933) Pollard, together with teacher and teacher educator colleagues has developed an influential framework of *Reflective Teaching* designed to integrate his thinking with that of Schön (Schön, 1983) and later writers (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, Van Manen, 1991, Zeichner and Liston, 1996). The framework has seven characteristics through which he links the twin silos of *reflective teaching* and *professional competence* through a *constructive spiral of professional development* (Pollard and Anderson, 2008, p.5). In this way reflective teaching is presented as a necessary component of future professional development and is turn linked naturally

the wider *school improvement* agenda most closely associated with the work of Michael Fullan.

Whilst it may be argued that at its heart Pollard's framework presents *Reflective Teaching* as a process centred upon the work of individual reflection, a concern with critical *reflection about action* remains apparent in its assertion that:

- *Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.*

Other authors (notably Elliot 1993 and Hall 1996) suggest a wider and more critical approach in which the *reflective gaze* of the individual is turned outward to examine the institutional constraints and cultural assumptions of the practice setting, whilst also turned inward to recognise that such an examination takes place though the lens of personal attitudes, assumptions, prejudices and the suppositions that inform their teaching.

Though Pollard suggests that one consequence of teachers engagement with reflective practice is that it 'enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning' (Pollard, 1997) - a seemingly optimistic claim following his public resignation from the National Curriculum Review group (Pollard, 2012) - the view of the educator as a *proactive critical change agent* rather than simply a *reactive reflective agent* (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991, Zuber-Skerritt, 2002) has gained little traction in the context of the participants training where the reflective gaze remained for most part turned firmly inward. This was made evident to me during discussion with final year undergraduate students, a discussion which included some of the participants. In this we examined Warin and Nias' view that individuals feel a sense akin to Piagetian dissonance when their personal schema is challenged by a colleague's views or a school's expectations (Warin *et al.*, 2006). The group became particularly animated when discussing Nias' metaphor of 'mirrors'. For some the metaphor spoke of a critical examination by others as the mirror was revealingly interpreted as a 'hand lens' or 'microscope' focused on their performance. For the rest the reflective surface of the mirror' spoke of self-examination with one student giving the powerful example of buying clothes and comparing her reflection unfavourably with those seen in magazines. Whilst the metaphor was differently interpreted, for all it was understood in terms of a process of

checking their teacherly performance in line with a proscribed template of expectations.

Reflection and criticality were seen as inward-facing processes with questions such as, 'Am I good enough?', 'What will teachers/children/parents think of me?' coming to the fore. As I began the research interviews I was interested in the extent to which the participants critical gaze was also turned outward on the contexts in which they had gained experience and to support my thinking I turned back to Brookfield and through Brookfield and Reay to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Could his sociological work provide a way of analyzing the related experiences of the participants?

Bourdieu challenges my common-sense

We saw earlier that Brookfield expresses concern with the way in which terms are evacuated of meaning and placed beyond the possibility of critique through a process of reification. We saw also that for Brookfield it is in particular the term 'critical' had been subverted and had through general usage lost its original potency. For him the term remains 'sacred' and when conjoined with *reflection* must focus on an interrogation of the power relationships existing within society and social groups. Brookfield further suggests that 'what seems to us to be natural ways of understanding our experiences are actually internalized dimensions of ideology (what) Bourdieu calls the 'habitus'.' (Brookfield, 2000, p.129).

Though Diane Reay has suggested that *habitus* is a complex concept which takes many shapes and forms both in Bourdieu's own writing and more so in the wider sociological work of academics (Reay, 2004), as I began the next series of interviews I felt that his conceptual framework may provide not a prescription for my analysis, but rather provide a useful series of 'thinking tools' (Davey, 2009, p.277) with which I could begin.

The term habitus is not original to Bourdieu but was co-opted by him from earlier classical sources (Nash, 1999) and (as Bourdieu noted) 'the notion … has been used innumerable times in the past' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.12). Lizardo for example traces the origins of Bourdieu's 'conceptual apparatus of the habitus' back to Piagetian genetic epistemology (Lizardo, 2004). I was familiar from my early secondment from teaching - which led to an abiding interest in manner in which visual imagery shapes our understanding of reality (Dorman, 2009, Dorman in Sangster, 2012) with one acknowledged source, the work of Erwin Panofsky. Perhaps I thought later (and to

paraphrase Panofsky) it was the habit-forming force of my own scholastic education (Panofsky, 1951) which was shaping my current thinking?

Drawing on Panofsky's earlier work (he translated and provided a foreword to his *Gothic Architecture* (Panofsky and Bourdieu, 1967) Bourdieu challenges the view of the individual as a self-contained body separated from the society in which it functions. Later, in *Men and Machines* (Bourdieu, 1981), Bourdieu reflects on the manner in which seemingly prosaic cultural habits, such as for example the raising of a hat by one man to another, has deeper significance for the way in which we more generally function in the world.

For Panofsky the Iconological meaning of the act 'is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion - qualified by one personality and condensed into one work' (Bourdieu, 1981, p.30). Thus seemingly prosaic acts can function as cultural and social signifiers.

For Bourdieu - who traced the historical process of hat-raising to its faint social echo of knights raising their visors to be recognised for *who* and importantly *what* they were - it evidenced the manner in which history shapes bodily practice. His concern lay with how our thoughts and actions are normatively constrained and constructed (rather than simply construed) in response to socially constructed norms and demands. Such acts therefore function as a *performative component* of the *habitus* which 'speaks directly to the motor functions in the form of patterns of postures… charged with a host of social meanings' (in Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel, 1981). So it is, Bourdieu argues that through the bodily hexis, the body is both *in* the social world and that the social world is *in* the body.

Whilst for Bourdieu, Panofsky did provide a means of considering cultural phenomena and 'ways of thinking' which resisted general claims to historical trends based on a call to some historical trend or undefined 'spirit of the times', he rejected his philosophical reliance on the need for a *transcendental conscience* to account for operation in the social world (Brown *et al.*, 2006, p.26-30). Rather, he proposed a re-conceptualization of *habitus* designed he said to 'transcend' Panofsky's position of binary opposites (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977) and in so doing, ' to rescue Panofsky from the Neo-Kantian tradition (of Dualism) in which he was still imprisoned' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.81). In contrast to the Panofskian view of the individual constructed as an 'active subject confronting society as if that society were an object

constituted externally' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.50-51) Bourdieu asserted that his re-conceptualization of *habitus* formed a:

> system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an expressed mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.72)

So for Bourdieu our capacity to operate within such *structured structures* is a freedom set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production and is a conditional freedom derived from our unconscious adherence to the assumed reality of daily practice (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp.112-113). Central to this is our failure to recognise the arbitrariness of social practice. The assumption that subjective practices, our ways of being in the world are objective representations of an external reality is what Bourdieu terms *misrecognition*. And it is through what we may think of as a process of historical forgetting that we derive what may be simply called a *common sense* view of the world or more succinctly 'what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying.' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.12). It is this act which is 'neither the result of free will, nor determined by structures but created by a kind of interplay by the two over time' that is central to Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, p.170).

Whilst some see Bourdieu as presenting a deterministic view of the individual shaped by unconscious response to cultural and social forces, Diane Reay argues that Bourdieu conceives of habitus at the individual as well as at the collective level (Reay, 2004 in Leaton Gray and Whitty, 2010, p.7). She reminds us that he writes: 'Just as no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p.46 in, Reay, 2004, p.434) and suggest that the process is more fluid and more open to creative possibilities. They do this she argues by the development and utilization of their individual *capital* within the *field* in which they operate.

The term *capital* particularly in the phrase *cultural capital* has gained recent traction in educational discourse. Michael Gove for example argues that 'cultural capital like every other kind of capital should not be the property of an elite' as a justification for basing a changed National Curriculum on teaching of pre-specified body of core knowledge (Gove, 2013). Gove's studied superficiality in his appeal to a surprisingly

wide range of inspirations for his view that ranges between the late reality TV star Jade Goody and the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (Walker, February 4, 2013), is used to render 'cultural capital' into the immutable transportable teachable (and thereby testable) 'thingness' noted previously (Wenger, 1998, p294).

For Bourdieu the definition *capital* is wide and includes both material things as well as 'untouchable' but culturally significant attributes such as prestige, status, authority (referred to as symbolic capital). For Bourdieu, 'capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange and the term is extended to all goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation.' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.81). More generally *capital* can be taken to be anything that is significant for individuals operating within that *field*. However, whilst all individuals have capital, the distribution of such capital is not equal, nor is it necessarily equally valued in all *fields*. From my own and colleague's experience for example gaining additional academic qualifications can be viewed negatively when returning to the field of their school setting.

Bourdieu uses the spatial metaphor of *field* to describe the social arena in which individuals operate. It can be defined as 'a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy and which produce and authorize certain discourses and activities' (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977, p.167). Such *field*s are distinct from what may be more generally thought of as contexts or domains and are for Bourdieu sites of struggle (though the struggle may be both unacknowledged or unrecognized). Bourdieu writes, '*fields* present themselves as systematically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and can be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them).' (Horvat in Smart and Paulsen, 1998, p.211). *Fields* are for Bourdieu a site where forces are constantly at play (Harker *et al.*, 1990, p.1) a site in which participants compete, a site where those with a 'feel for the game' (Webb *et al.*, 2002, p.21) are most effective as their adherence to the 'rules of the game' (ibid.) are an unconscious part of their *habitus* absorbed through long immersion in the *field*. Bourdieu argues that, whilst participants in the game are agentic, their agency can only be understood in terms of their manipulation of the rules of the game. Further and changing metaphors, those who succeed most effectively, those 'fish in water' (Bourdieu, 1993b) are those whose capacity to operate in the *field* appears to be

something not something 'worked for' - for such obvious striving would diminish the potency of its seemingly 'naturalness' - but is or appears to be an integral feature of their personality.

Beyond the terms *habitus*, *capital* and *field* lies one other, *practice*. Presented through the quasi-mathematical formula [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice] the term is used to relate the conscious and unconscious dispositions of the individual and group represented by the *habitus*, to the various forms of *capital* that are brought to bear within the particular conflictual *fields* in which social interactions occur. For Bourdieu *practice* represents:

> the structure of the life-style characteristics of an agent or class of agents, that is, the unity hidden under the diversity and multiplicity of the set of practices performed in fields governed by different logics and therefore different forms of realizations.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1979, Nice translation 1984, p.101)

Warde however suggests that such definitions render the term impenetrable. He asks, is Bourdieu suggesting that there are different practices in each field or just one? He goes on to observe that whilst *practice* was an important term in the earlier part of Bourdieu's career it was later demoted and finally replaced by the term *field* which at the start had served only as a minor theme (Warde, 2004). Perhaps an answer to why the term was used in the earlier work lies in the concern which Bourdieu shared with Noam Chomsky, 'to give to practice an active, inventive intention' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.180). It is clear that Bourdieu wanted to align himself to the '*generative capacities* of dispositions' he found in this formulation (Bourdieu, 1984, p.101) and similarly his use of a diagrammatic form perhaps reflects that used by Chomsky when outlining his own conceptualization of the relationship between 'deep' and 'surface' structures of language within a proposed overall framework of 'transformational grammar' (Chomsky, 1957).

Warde observes that the term was later 'quietly laid aside' suggesting that this was done as Bourdieu 'abandoned his conscious theory-building project' and further suggests that as practices are conceived as the activities which provide the content of fields, over time practices came to be seen as isomorphic with fields (Warde, 2004, pp.2-8). Perhaps the earlier usage is sufficient in which practice is presented as actions directed by the internal dispositions of the individual habitus and their adherence to or utilization of the rules of the game. It is therefore not a single but dual concept combining both a *practical sense* or *logic of practice* (the 'feel for the game')

and a *reflexive* relation to the *field* (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.13). From this we can extend the common usage of the term the *practice* of teaching to incorporate not simply the external activities but the multiplicity of internalized assumptions which are seen to be at play.

Bourdieu asserts the importance of effective *practice* being enabled through early immersion in the game and that this is particularly important in relation to individuals operating in the 'vocational' fields of, law, medicine and (particularly important in the context of this research) education suggesting that:

> 'to know is to be born with' and the long dialectical process, often described as 'vocation', through which the various *field*s provide themselves with agents equipped with the *habitus* needed to make them work, it is to the learning of a game very much as the acquisition of the mother tongue is to the learning of a foreign language.

(Bourdieu, 1990b, p.67)

If we re-consider the student discussion of the metaphor of mirrors, this may be seen as the manner in which a training programme comes to '(produce) individuals, durably and systematically modified by a prolonged and systematic transformative action, tending to endow them with the same durable, transposable training (habitus) i.e the common schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p.197). Bourdieu and Passeron would perhaps further argue that as training programmes 'bow to the historical demand' and become more practice-based the process is both intensified and becomes circularized as trainers train trainees who in turn become trainers to train trainees. As we see in the remark, //'they don't need to know about Piaget, just as long as they can become an outstanding teacher'//, the self-referencing loop is closed.

Stephen Ball draws attention to the manner in which the performance management culture made evident through the use of targets (SMART[5] (Doran, 1981) or otherwise), performance indicators, success criteria, quality indicators and the like have come to act on the *subjectivities of the individual*. Ball calls this process one of *performativity* through which the internalisation of externally produced targets alters our practices, our goals, our satisfactions, our identities (Ball, 2008, pp.51-52). Thus through misrecognition and collective forgetting we may construct another's targets as our own and in this way the individual habitus may be shaped. But for Ball and

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[5] The notion of Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related (SMART) targets was first devised by George Doran as a way of writing management goals and objectives and became a technique more widely used in other contexts including that of education.

Bourdieu this is not a totally hidden process there remains *slippage between pleasure and tyranny with rewards and satisfactions (at least for some)* and for Bourdieu there is *illusio* the 'virtue made of necessity' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.372) but for whose commitment to participating in the field ceases to outweigh a shared commitment to the practices which the field demands, comes the point at which resentment builds and resignation or burn-out occurs.

As I embarked on the second round of interviews the research had lost its initial 'simple' focus and had widened to examine the participants' experiences in a more general sense. Reflecting on my autobiography had alerted me to the manner in which I brought to the research a personal concern with changing definitions of *reflection…* and that the concern with a single term acted as a marker for concerns with the wider political, cultural and sociological forces I saw to be at play in contemporary English primary educational settings. As I began the next step of the research I was cognitively alert to the reality that narrative forms of research would bring me into 'messy confrontation(s) with human subjectivity' (Goodson, 2012, p.33). However, I willingly engaged with these in the belief that, as has been said of Seamus Heaney's poetry (though I had more prosaic intent), 'that, the local can articulate the universal... (for) God is in the bits and pieces of the Everyday' (Östen, 1995). I knew indeed that concerns with the individual and individual story had underscored much of my working life and I had come to believe that it was in such 'confrontations' with adult learners that effective learning can occur. As such they should be cherished rather than avoided.

I was aware also of my growing sense of disquiet by what I saw around me as a rapid return to uncritical reductive technical rationality and the rise of a process model of training driven by unquestioning reaction to a central dictat. What I was less prepared for was the personal impact that the research process was about to have on me. As I felt a sense of transformation as I moved from tutor to researcher which perhaps paralleled the participants' own transformation from student to teacher, I began to re-examine the transformative nature of the educational process in general.

Were my concerns the participant's concerns?

Was my sense of disquiet shared by them or simply a projection?

As the case studies evolved could I allow my own concerns to fall away and allow me to be more open the narratives I was to hear?

Whilst these questions were less voiced at the start they were there in embryonic form and developed through the slow iterative process of research but for the sake of stylistic clarity rather than chronological accuracy I will return to this aspect of my own story after the following two case studies.

Case Study ONE: Anna's Story

Introducing Anna

Anna is the eldest of two sisters and, following a gap year year, came directly to university from school. Her family's Christian faith is a declared key feature in Anna's life and has been played out in a number of ways. She attended Christian summer camps from early childhood, first as a participant then taking on increasingly more responsibility; she refers to this transition in the notably alliterative phrase of, 'Moving from mascot to manager'. A keen musician who sings, dances and engages in a range of drama-based activities Anna describes herself as a child who 'didn't have much time for TV'.

At the age of nine her parents began fostering children though this is referred to only briefly in the interviews. Similarly, her father is referred to only once and then in peripheral terms as a 'house husband'. Her mother however plays a central role in Anna's story though the relationship remains ambiguous. As first a head teacher and later in increasingly senior roles in the educational infrastructure of her Local Authority, the impact of her mother's professional commitment on family life is noted. Whilst her Mother's work appears to have provided Anna with knowledge of how primary education operates at both an institutional and administrative level the experiences remain problematic at a more profound level. Its impact on her declared future personal professional development is a feature of discussions. The values and ethos of the Christian Aided school to which Anna is appointed closely match her own and consequently she reports to be at ease within the institution. These aspects of her story allow us to consider whether such declared ease represents, the unconscious automatized actions of a situated and an *embodied social actor* (Lizardo, 2004, p.5) or her more agentic engagement with her new teaching role.

We will see through the course of the interviews, Anna drawing attention to the behaviours, values and accomplishments of a range of individuals outside of her immediate family circle. The first is a visitor to her Christian Union group who influenced her later gap year visit to Mexico five years later. A later encounter with a university tutor provided Anna with a further possible personal and career goal. Through her reporting of such encounters we see, not simply acts of copying individuals in toto, but rather an active amalgamation of facets of individuals and the possible desire to occupy a constructed role model's future life situation (Gibson and

Cordova in Murrell *et al.*, 1999). Whilst one such individual referred to by Anna is her school mentor I will argue that in Anna's story and, by extrapolation possibly in all stories, the difference between mentors and role models remains fundamental.

Anna's use of online communication is a further feature of her story. Constructing a series of Facebook sites, each of which appears to perform different functions in her life. She demonstrates a sophisticated ability to engage critically in online spaces where she is seen to story her life-history through a series of carefully selected images and deliberately worded postings and, declares in one interview that she evaluates replies to Friend's postings in light of their perceived motivations.

Anna recounts her story

In Anna we see a young woman confident and seemingly practiced in telling her story whose narrative retelling is often marked by clear and untrammeled enthusiasm. Her engagement with the research process was equally enthusiastic. She was the first student to volunteer to be a part of the research activity, emailing her response within minutes of the request being sent out. As we will see, this was not unusual in the case of Anna. During her second year she had demonstrated her desire to take on a leadership role when she volunteered to provide advice to Year One students as they produced their first assignment. The assignment was a seemingly complex activity for many students as it required a combination of first-hand school-observation and report writing but was to be presented as a 'final product' in a form which was only partially specified. The tutor in charge had assured students that this was done in order to allow them to be 'creative and individual in their responses'; many seemed unconvinced by this explanation. The combination of supposed freedom and the production of an outcome, that was after all to be assessed, appeared a contradiction. Many expressed their anxiety to tutors whilst some were more publicly vociferous in their complaints; one described this as 'trickery' on the part of the course team.

In response it was decided by the Course Leader to ask for a volunteer from the Second Year students of the programme to provide both guidance and reassurance to their student colleagues. Anna quickly volunteered. Deciding that the guidance should also model to some extent at least what the students were to do in their assignment she wrote a script, gathered examples of previous student responses and recorded a video-presentation which she posted online in order that, 'the year ones can get at it easily, because Blackboard (the Virtual Learning System (VLE) then used in the

university) can be a pain like that'. She also decided to record this in the kitchen of her flat in front of a backdrop of her boy-band posters 'to make it seem more real… less formal'.

The student reaction to the perceived pressures of the first assignment may be partly accounted for by the increasing numbers of students entering directly into Higher Education (HE) from schools and the consequent impact on student identity wrought through the massification of HE. Referencing the Finnish scholar Tapio Aittola (Aittola, 1995) Field and Morgan-Klien (2011) suggest that, 'apart from anything else, one result is that going to university increasingly feels like an extension of school'. But in this instance their first assignment had been deliberately left open-ended and less directive than the course team perceived was the case with the school-based assignments with which students were familiar. It should also be remembered that the students were part of a primary teacher training programme in a Faculty of Education and in this we perhaps hear echoes of Kirsty's remark regarding 'the type of person who wants to teach'. It may be that some students had a more pragmatic approach to the assignment set or that it reflected their more deeply held attitudes to learning. If we couple this with the rapid growth of student fees in English Higher Education and the increasing importance of the National Student Survey (NSS) which perhaps brings with it a change in the relationship between significant numbers of students and the HEI, we can begin to understand both the reaction of some students and the consequent institutional response. The response was made clear by a senior manager who consistently referred to the NSS as the National Survey of Student Satisfaction.

As for Anna, whilst the activity had been recorded in her student file and was mentioned in her future university reference, she had not known she said that this would be the case nor her reason for volunteering. She saw it she said as simply an activity that had implicit worth. 'Yes', she said later, 'it had' [to paraphrase] 'taken her time, but helping other students, students at an earlier stage of their careers, was simply, something that you do… I knew how they felt… I thought that I could and should help'.

Perhaps in this we see someone demonstrating an empathy with others and knowledge, gained from her own experience, of how educational groups, teachers/children, tutors/students, might work collaboratively. We certainly see someone willing to take a central role in leading others, using her natural abilities but

in so doing gaining kudos for doing what she did well. There may however be deeper currents at work here. Phil Mollon, drawing on the earlier work of Heinz Kohut, suggests that the individual organizes itself around a series of 'selfobjects'. The deliberate removal of the hyphen by Kohut indicates that the selfobject is not conceived by Kohut nor experienced by the individual as separate from the self but rather in terms of the psychological function which it provides. It is only perceived as being distinct when it fails to provide its required purpose (Siegel, 1996, p.54). At first such selfobjects are provided through the organizing functions of the primary caregiver but later tend to be replaced by systems of knowledge and belief, tribal and professional organizations and daily routines which are used to form a 'bulwark against fragmentation… in order to aid our attempt to 'organize our inner states of mind by linking these to external sources of stimulation, soothing and order' (Mollon, 2001, pp.5-6). So with Anna, the acts of 'volunteering' and of 'helping others' may represent selfobjects that satisfy a need to feel useful or special and functions as a form of 'psychological nutrient' which Anna uses to maintain her own feeling of self-worth. It may be argued that by extension the teaching activity itself provides such a selfobject, a means through which the individual can 'gratify their need for self-expression and self-promotion' (Banai *et al.*, 2005, p.225).

At the most extreme this simply provides a delusional mask covering what is an inherently a narcissistic activity in which the response of the other is sought to satisfy the needs of the self. Certainly in the various narrative fictions or representations the archetypes of apparent self-denial and pathological narcissism often appear vie for precedence. Think of Mr. Chipping in *Goodbye Mr.Chips* (Wood, 1939) whose final death-bed words are, 'I thought you said it was a pity, a pity I never had children. But you're wrong. I have! Thousands of them, thousands of them - and all boys.'. Contrast that with the the posturing quasi-Bobby Charlton of the PE teacher Mr. Sugden in Ken Loach's film 'Kes' (Loach, 1969), scoring the 'winning goal' against a team of bored Barnsley teenagers. In each the actors, Robert Donat and Brian Glover, play not characters but cyphers.

Such positions, when appearing in the narrative forms of film, book, and television may present us with mildly diverting mutually exclusive binaries; they may. But when such positions are used to drive public opinion in preparation for and support of changing educational policy they become less diverting and far more directional.

I believe they also speak to the wider, what David James terms, *troubling dichotomies* of which the structure/agency dichotomy is one of the oldest. How can we, he asks, in an examination of the life lived avoid 'portraying people (or institutions) as completely in control of their own destiny, or conversely as being simply determined by their circumstance?' (James, 2011, p.2). James suggests that one method is through the work Bourdieu. In 'Outline of Practice' (1977) Bourdieu examines a common activity in most societies, the giving and receiving of gifts. Whilst an objectivist analysis of this act of mutual giving (James cites the anthropologist Levi-Strauss as one such advocate of this position) might focus on the value of the gifts, that such acts tend to be reciprocal and used to cement social relations, another analysis of the activity is possible. A subjectivist analysis may focus on what the gifts mean for the giver and receiver of the gift. Such an analysis may conclude that the gift giving is intended as a simple act of kindness without further motive. But here, suggests James, lies the tension, for it may be that both interpretations may be at once true. Asking, 'How can this be true?' James answers by drawing on Bourdieu's interpretation. In such an act - an act which simply stands for the wider societal commerce - the giver and receiver of gifts, whilst gaining pleasure from the act itself, simultaneously conceal from themselves what the objectivist analysis reveals. He suggests that, 'Whilst we genuinely enjoy receiving a birthday present… at the back of our mind is the question of whether or not we bought one (or should buy one) in return.' (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977, p.3).

The subtlety of what is happening is what Bourdieu termed misrecognition, that we reveal from ourselves our true motivations and that this is brought about by the time lag between acts. Rather than simply being an immediate exchange, '… the interval between gift and counter gift is what allows a pattern of exchange… to be experienced as irreversible.' (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977, p.6). But how we are to interpret these acts remains problematic. Bourdieu may provide a set of 'thinking-tools' (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1992, p.160) for analysis but it is clear that these are best designed to allow an examination of the wider societal context in which the individual is situated. For, whilst Bourdieu may, as David James asserts, have been passionate about helping people to change their lives for the better, he firmly situates the individual within the constructing forces of the wider society stating clearly that, the 'socialized body (what is called the individual or the person) is not opposed to society: it is one of its forms of existence.' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p.15 in James, 2011).

So in these stories Bourdieu provides a means of examining the wider relational context, the field, in which the individuals are situated.

So Anna may in one analysis be engaging in a simple act of generosity, giving her time for the benefit of others. Or she may be unconsciously acting a learned role; generally, this is how individuals operate in groups, and specifically, this is how teachers operate toward less experienced learners. Or she may be engaging in an activity which may in some manner bring her delayed benefit. As we have seen, that benefit may be seen not in terms of direct equivalence but in terms of an unspoken internalized dialogue which speaks to the healthy narcissistic need for self-fulfillment.

Speaking to the latter, it is clear from many instances throughout, and in my previous experience with students, that participants speak variously of 'getting a buzz' (Kirsty, Rebecca) or 'feeling that you have done something well… when you see the light go on in their eyes' (Collette) that participants are perhaps simply reflecting a necessary and positive narcissism, the emotional feedback loop which maintains their engagement in teaching and provides a sustaining 'consolidation of a cohesive self-structure, providing a sense of identity, value, meaning, and permanence and promoting the actualization of a person's potentialities [their] native talents and acquired skills.' (Banai *et al.*, 2005, p.227). Anna's stated assertion was that spontaneous support is simply how people should operate in both a personal and professional context. It is simply how people should behave. This model of assumed behaviour is a recurrent theme in subsequent interviews and will be seen to be evident in the manner in which she presents herself online and gathers resources in an apparent act of future self-construction.

On role models and mentors

Whilst the other research participants were willing and to varying degrees proactive in their engagement with the research, Anna was also keen to understand the nature of the research process. I have alluded to her questions at the start of the thesis, 'Why this research?', 'Why this approach?'. But Anna asked more; 'What did I expect to find out?', 'Who would read it?', 'Could she read the interview findings or any papers that came from the work?'. Interestingly, she was the only student who asked to be referred to in the research by pseudonym. Whether this was to do with protecting her anonymity or how she felt a participant should act in research I do not know. Perhaps in this we see a wider willingness to play with identities, to construct a persona and

provide a performance. Rather than feeling challenged, such a conversation was an important part of the 'interactive or relational form(s) of interviewing' (West in, Field *et al.*, 2011) and represented a confidence in the research space created. During the second interview Anna again returned to the theme. The head teacher of Anna's school had set aside his office for the purpose of the interview. Before beginning the interview, Anna had checked carefully that the recorder had been switched on before proceeding. Reflecting later, I remembered Anna's response to a lecture given to her year group in the weeks immediately following our first interview. The lecture focused on the theme of 'Teacher Resilience' and the lecturer had drawn heavily on own recently completed PhD thesis (Chapman Hoult, 2009). As Anna came out of the lecture theatre she dashed across to me and - whilst other students could be heard stage-muttering how hard the lecture had been and asking what was it all about - said, 'Peter, how great was that. That's what I want to do - I want to be like that to have things to say and to say them as well'. It appeared from this incident that whilst many students had felt that the lecture had been both demanding, and to those who found it too demanding, irrelevant, Anna saw the lecture as stimulating and more importantly the lecturer-researcher as a role model. The tutor was not dismissed as more able or more gifted, but as a future possibility; an inspirational figure at a later stage of her professional life and development who represented an alternative option, a possible-Anna projected into the future.

This was not the only person who Anna spoke of in such enthusiastic terms:

> So my mentor here is... oh she is just a fantastic teacher, so enthusiastic about teaching, she has been teaching probably only… I think it's only five or six years, and so she's sort of relatively new to the profession, and still will teach a really creative lesson, really exciting, and I got the chance to come in, and she had my class last year, so she sort of passed them on to me, so I got the chance to come in and spend a few days with her in the class, and just see what she did with them, and what she did was fantastic, and I just sat there thinking that's what I'm going to be like next year. That's what teaching really is like.

It appeared in these instances that Anna saw individuals that she might emulate. However, whilst there is 'some overlap between the concepts of role model and mentor critical distinctions also exist' (Murrell *et al.*, 1999, p.116). At the time that the research took place there was a requirement that Newly Qualified Teachers would be provided with a mentor whose function was to act as a bridge between their period of training and their entry into the teaching profession. The statutory regulations have

changed since this interview took place and where such a designated role continues to exist is now termed 'Induction Tutor' (Department for Education, 2013).

Even at the time of interview, whilst there may have been a generic mentoring role, it was perceived differently and consequently acted out differently by individuals in their own institutions (Sundli, 2007). It is this diversity, not least in local terminology, that can lead to confusion when reading the research literature (Hennissen *et al.*, 2008). However, this study is not concerned primarily with mentoring relationships of which the participants are part of the dataset, but rather examines the experiences of the participants of which mentoring relationships are a part. In this context, it is the distinction between the mentor and role model which is important. Mentors within the context of the English educational system have been developed as part of the school's organizational hierarchy and transitional induction processes.

Phillip Donnelly suggests that:

> Mentoring appears to have the essential attributes of: a process; a supportive relationship; a helping process; a teaching-learning process; a reflective process; a career development process; a formalized process; and a role constructed by or for a mentor.
> The contingent attributes of the mentoring phenomenon appear as: coaching; sponsoring; role modeling; assessing; and an informal process.

(Donnelly, 2004, p.2)

In the context of this study we will come to see that certain of these attributes are of particular importance. Whilst both Anna and Kirsty have officially designated mentors this was not the case for one of the other participants who was provided with only a titular mentor throughout her induction year. But in each case the mentor role is clearly constructed locally. In 'Kirsty's Story' we see a mentor who appears to perform a fundamentally instrumental role in relation to the mentee and whose function is perceived, by the NQT at least, to be primarily that of an assessor and gate-keeper; as clearly a representative of the organization. Notably also, in Kirsty's perception at least, the role appears to change at the point when the mentor herself resigns from the school. Her relationship with Kirsty changes and appears to become more social and perhaps even deceptively benign as she voices her own frustrations with the school. In other participant's stories (Rebecca and Collette) we would see the mentor acting differently again. Here they are seen to provide a buffer, or in Audrey Murrell's phrase "run(ning) interference" (Murrell, 2007), between the external pressures of local and national initiatives and inspection accountability, and the

participant's daily teaching role. At other times they are seen to provide opportunities for the participants to become safely visible in the school, for example by supporting their participation in staff meetings and school development sessions. This is clearly the situation in the case of Rebecca and Caroline and, as we will see, in Anna's story also. Yet this remains a mentoring or perhaps a coaching role, however the role model differs in a quite fundamental way from that of a mentor. As Gibson and Cordova suggest, the internalized role model is a construct 'because identification resides in the head of the beholder and interaction may or may not be a component of the role modeling relationship', so it is that the beholder 'makes another role model by a conscious cognitive process of selectively viewing and assimilating desired attributes' (in Murrell *et al.*, 1999, pp.116-17). Rather, and here they draw on Bandura to assert that, through a process of identification, the individual enhances various aspects of a range of individuals and in so doing creates 'new amalgams' (Bandura, 1977, p.48), that differ from any single source, so that, 'the resulting behaviours may in fact be characterized by considerable novelty as well as emulation' (in Murrell *et al.*, 1999, pp. 115-117). In this act we may see individual agency at play with evidence of constructive self-creativity whereby an individual selects those aspects of others from which they generate a unique future form. Conversely, we may be seeing an unconscious act of re-creation in which those aspects of individual exemplar role modes are utilized to re-construct or reinforce a pre-existing template of performance or attitude. The role of the mentor in supporting not simply a reproductive reflective process but, I will argue later, a reconstructive reflexive process is clear. But in this current story a question remains, what accounts for the process which enables some to filter out the white-noise of the multiplicity of competing personalities experienced each day? Why for example did Anna respond to the lecturer in a way which differed to that of many of her peers? I will return and re-return to this ground in my own story as I seek, if not to resolve this tension, but to to accommodate to it and argue that, a willingness to live with constant dissonance remains a core attribute for the reflexive practitioner.

The habitus of faith: an Ichthys in water

As we move further into the story of Anna we become increasingly aware of the manner in which the school in which she works reflects the ethos, the value system with which she feels most comfortable, at ease and in empathy with. We will see also

in glimpses of her early life some of the factors which have helped to develop her world view. In this way we begin to see in play Bourdieu's conception of the interrelation of field and habitus. The *field* in this conceptualization is not the locational space of the school but rather the complex social entity of which *the school* is a particular example. It is this *field* which confirms Anna's unspoken ways of being in the world that allow her to operate with seeming ease. For,

> When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself as a 'fish in water' it does not feel the weight if water and takes the world about it for granted.
>
> (Bourdieu in, Wacquant, 1989, p.15)

Anna's spiritual life and religious beliefs are important to her. Anna is a member of a professing Christian family in a household in which supporting others is a declared concern. She was and remains active in Church groups, voluntary work, and children's charity work and explained this as the reason for her interest in children's development. In a later interview when she had been in post for some months, the importance of Anna's Christian beliefs in her choice of the schools to which she had applied became clear. She had applied to five schools three of which had specific Church of England affiliations. Such schools were, she said her 'preferred choice' as she wanted to be in a school, 'where my values are also the school's values'. Pausing for a moment she then modified this position reflecting that, her first year 'might not have been hugely different in a school that's not a C. of E. school or doesn't have that link… [pausing again she further reflected] … but I think I wanted it'. The school to which Anna has been appointed is termed Church of England Controlled. Reflecting a confusion in English terminology, think also of private and public education, Church of England Controlled schools are less *controlled* than those more simply termed Church of England Aided schools. Anna explained that:

> …The vicar at the local C. of E. Church comes and takes assembly every Thursday and the school goes to the Church four times a year, for Easter, harvest, Christmas and for sort of graduation leavers service at the end of the school year. So there are links there. The church provides the school with lots of volunteers and they sort of encourage that. Their members come.
>
> …It means that as a teacher I get to meet people who are involved in that side of it, and it means that the children also get to get that link with the church as well.

When asked about whether the connection with the Church influenced the ethos of the school Anna was clear that it did:

Self:

What about the ethos? Do you think that has a direct impact or an indirect impact? On school?

Anna:

Definitely. I think the CofE-ness of the school has had a direct impact in, like the mission statement, and the values and the aims of the school. You can see it there throughout… they mention that, and then that's filtered in through the staff and the pupils and sort of some of the language that we use in school.

Self:

Give me some kind of examples of how this happens, how it is made visible…

Anna:

Well the mission statement is about making a positive impact in God's world, so sort of recognising that... … Now you are testing me on the School's work [Laughter…] its Aims.

Having assured her that this wasn't a 'test' just a genuine interest Anna went on to list the various ways in which this connection with the local Church community is made explicit in the school. Each class for example has a Christian symbol displayed in it together with an information card. In her Year five class this was the traditional 'Ichthys', the fish symbol which translates into English as 'Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour'. She then went on to compare this with the position of Christian beliefs in her final placement school in which the phrases 'Dear God' and 'Help us' are used to draw a distinction between values and faith.

…It didn't have any sort of religious... anything religious in the classroom and in my placement school again in assembly there weren't bible stories told, the only hint of it was there were prayers in assembly, but they weren't specifically Christian prayers, they weren't 'Dear God...' they were just, 'Help us to.. Amen…' kind of thing.

…There was no like.. they didn't say, 'We are going to pray to God now… we're going to read from the bible', there was no bible involved. In our classrooms here, we've each... there's a bible in every classroom, so obviously that is an impact from the C of E link.

When asked about how the Christian faith was made explicit in the school's or her own values Anna seemed less sure. She felt that what she termed 'faith-values' were implicit in the manner in which the school operated. She suggested that, 'treating each child, loving each child, supporting each child' were derived from its Christian values but not explicitly so, they were 'filtered.. filtered in and through the staff', there may be specific symbols and references to the faith promoted in the school, but for Anna the Christian faith was made evident in the school's daily workings, in its human relationships. Most notably the staff are not presented as gatekeepers *to* but as part *of*

the process. It seems that the value-systems to which Anna refers have become objectified within the school context becoming the unquestioned ethical schema, the 'common-sense' that underpins both the personal and organizational habitus in which she works. It is also noteworthy that in the interviews with two other participants (Rebecca, Kirsty) both with declared Christian affiliations, they equally thought, whilst neither taught in church affiliated schools, that school values and Christian values were simply interchangeable terms. Anna explained that:

> …they [the school] don't say there is a link to the Christian faith, but the 'Christian values' are there in the 'school values'… [just] not explicitly put as that.

As a visitor to the school though it was evident to me that the school's value system from wherever it derived clearly informed its work. This is a theme to which I will return to in my own story. Anna had also noted that when she first visited the school:

> …even as I came for interview it was just such a friendly office staff and the TA [Teaching Assistant] that I was with in the class when I was having my lesson observation was really helpful, really positive.

Dependence and self-reliance

At school she had been a member of the very small Christian union group of 'only seven or so'. As a young teenager she had been impressed by the leader who 'was really passionate and planned amazing activities,' even though they were such a small group. One such activity had been a visit from a Christian Aid worker who, she remembered, 'was really tanned and spoke enthusiastically about his work experiences in Nicaragua'. She determined to do something similar when she was old enough. Her mother was completely supportive but cautioned that, 'of course this was something [she] should do when she was older'. Indeed her mother also supported the charity in her own school. As a school they had sponsored a child and bought products made by children in one of the supported orphanages.

She told me that her parents have a second home in Spain and she was used to travelling back and forth to it and, importantly, she was learning to speak Spanish. She wrote and received letters in increasingly confident Spanish to the aid worker and to the children. It seemed natural to her therefore that when she completed her sixth form she should take a gap year and use it to gain some experience and to finally achieve her ambition of travelling to South America.

Being self-reliant was clearly important to Anna and so she worked for some months as a teaching assistant, to earn enough money to finance her trip. Her first

choice destinations of Nicaragua and Guatemala were deemed too dangerous for a young woman and so she went to Mexico where she was to work as part of a team of volunteers.

Her ability to speak Spanish was an advantage but later became a source of tension.

She was immediately, and without discussion, given the role of the translator. It was 'just assumed and she was happy to go along with it', but, whilst she had not 'really resented' taking on the role, she thought that it had made her 'more… passive, more part of the team, less visible… [and it didn't] allow others to take the lead'.

She did she felt looking back on it enjoy doing it, but she had found it a 'difficult and tiring role'. Yes, 'it improved [her] Spanish', she 'became a fluent speaker because she had to up her game' at first, then later, less tied to 'her trusted dictionary'.

But conversations were made doubly long as the constant act of Spanish-English, English-Spanish translation meant that she had to both speak to others but had also translate for the rest of the group. Acting as a translator meant that at a personal level she was unable to interact freely.

With conversations slowed down by the constant act of being a two-way conduit, she felt separated from the people with whom she wanted to talk. If she had been there alone instead of in a group she would 'have only been able to communicate with the Mexican family in Spanish because I wouldn't have had anyone to translate for or to keep entertained'. The last phrase of keeping what we are to assume the rest of the group, 'entertained' is notable. She went on to say she became 'tired by the emotional stuff', always feeling 'like a cushion on which the other English girls could fall back'. Perhaps we see in these remarks another aspect of Anna, part self-reliance part frustration with some aspects of team working.

On her first school placement she had equally felt the limitations and constraints of working with a second person. Due to the limited number of participating schools students had been placed with another member of their year group. This had been presented to students as an opportunity to develop the skill of collaborative working.

Anna was not convinced by the argument.

She said that, she 'did fine' but felt that the arrangement was 'contrived'. What she really wanted to do was to work independently, 'to just sit down and plan *my* lesson'.

Perhaps paralleling her earlier experiences in Mexico, she had an image of what the function of the placement was, it was she said, 'what I had come to university for… I wanted to get on with it'.

Understanding complexity

Whilst Anna had a great deal of experience of teaching and schools through the lens of her mother's work, and particularly the way that it impacted on her as a child, she had little direct knowledge.

> …I think before I came to university, I'd done a bit of TA*ing* and I think I thought teaching was quite an easy thing to do and it was, there was not much to it and I was a bit like… well why do I need to go to university for three years to do something that seemed very easy?

For Anna it appeared that her time in university was important and that it had changed her view of the complexity of teaching.

> …But in my first year I learned so, so much I don't think I've ever learnt that much in a year *let alone when I was doing my eleven subjects at GCSE level*. I learnt so much and it really opened my eyes to how it was so *much* deeper than I expected it to be and I didn't think that it was unnecessarily deeper, it was necessary for it to be that deep *such as* the pedagogy of it and how it's a science and an art combined rather than just being something that you just do. You just tell people stuff and they learn it… no it isn't, I learnt a lot about how it goes deeper than that.

Perhaps in this she was telling me something of what she felt that I wanted to hear. I cannot be sure but I think from the way in which she rapidly extemporized on the theme, and the way in which she recounted her experiences in school, I believe that the remark was genuinely held. In her first interview Anna recounted with ease and at length about her experiences during school placements. The narrative is one of an individual demonstrating tenacity when faced with negative events and a capacity to learn from them. For Anna there appears to be an element of pushing herself to achieve and to do so visibly. It appears that Anna sees effort as directly related to reward. She found her second school placement to be unsatisfactory because 'I wasn't pushed'. Final placement was for Anna a traumatic experience and she said almost brought a premature end to her career.

Signifiers of control: PowerPoint and the importance of un-naming

Anna had examined the school's Ofsted report before starting her placement and found that it had been graded as 'satisfactory'. She was aware from university and discussions with her mother' that 'satisfactory' was now seen as an for 'not good enough'. She therefore started the placement with a feeling that there may be challenges within the school.

The context of the year group was interesting. Her first focus was on the size of the children. Anna is petite.

> …They... they were year five, they're quite physically tall and big… some of them… and they hate sitting on the carpet but she'd have them all on the carpet while she'd read the PowerPoint to them

The reference to the pupils 'sitting on the carpet' suggests a view of children and childhood in which the strategy of sitting children on a carpet whilst the teacher sits on a chair and therefore on a higher level, signifies hierarchical control. There was a clear link in this section of the interview to an informal discussion that we had had some weeks previously. A fellow student had been criticized by a school mentor for sitting on the carpet alongside and therefore at the same level physical level as the children. The tutor who made the criticism had rationalised her view by saying that sitting at the same physical level could be equated to a loosening of proper levels of control. She was told to 'sit on a chair so you can keep an eye on them… so they can look up to you'. The metaphorical meaning of 'looking up' had not been lost on Anna.

Behaviour management, often a concern for students, was Anna felt an issue in the class and particularly as it was not being tackled as a school-wide issue. Rather, teachers developed and implemented individual approaches. The inconsistency in approach was both a practical issue and for Anna and acted as analogous to wider school dysfunction.

> … I'd follow the school policy and children would lose golden time and I'd write down that they'd lose golden time but golden time was my PPA and so I'd take the children out to join me and the teacher would drag them back into the classroom and I'd say that they're meant to have missed their 5 minutes golden time and she's like well they were good today and I'd try and get the point across that actually I'd said that I'd do that and I need to do that and so that didn't work… so I'd brought in my whole new strategy for when I was teaching that I did and I did it fairly and it... the children knew what was going to happen and the first week they pushed it, they pushed the boundaries and they thought I wasn't going to do it but after that they kind of settled down but what also helped me quite a bit is that the teacher was off sick for quite a long time, so it meant that I got to do some really creative lessons with them which was complete chaos because obviously they're not used to being in charge of their own learning.
>
> They're not used to working in groups and like discussing in groups. They weren't used to like having food in the classroom during maths lessons though they all, they all got excited at that but after a few lessons they'd... they started to really enjoy it… but then she came back…

During the time that the teacher was absent Anna had the opportunity to begin developing her own behaviour management strategies. For her this was both an issue of doing the 'things I had heard about in uni' but more importantly 'because they were what I believed in'. She developed her own system for ensuring that all children

questions were fairly distributed and that all children were actively engaged. For Anna the issue of classroom behaviour was closely linked to a sense of 'fairness and justice' and children's subsequent 'motivation'. She related that they were given stickers for 'good' behaviour but that this was done without any objective measure. Worse still she said, the 'good children' were given stickers and rewards often for quite dubious reasons, whilst the 'bad children' had these withheld even when they behaved well. The groups had it appeared been determined in advance by the teacher and their membership seemed fixed. Anna saw no justice nor rationale to the system. When a ''good' child behaved badly there were no punishments; when a 'bad' child behaved well, there were no rewards'.

> …The teacher always asked for hands up and the same five children would put their hands up and the eleven naughty boys would just sit there and like look at the wall, look out the window …

Shortly into the placement the teacher had become ill and was absent for a long period of time. Anna thought that whilst this might be unfortunate for the teacher it had been fortunate for her; she was at the point of withdrawing from the practice. Despite the legal requirement the school did not employ a supply teacher as they had a student in the class; Anna was left in control. This gave Anna the opportunity to develop her own strategies. Anna gave each a differently coloured lolly stick with colours related to ability. She kept these on a pot on her table and when asking questions.

> …I could either pick without looking and then it would be completely random or I could aim my questioning (especially in maths) towards different abilities and so that worked really nicely and the children at first when a lolly stick came out they'd be like oh it's your lolly stick!!! But then towards the end they knew that it could have been theirs so, they really liked that.

I was reminded by Anna of a seminar conversation that the group had had two years previously about the perennial concern of students (and more recently of government ministers) 'Behaviour Management'. The discussion had moved from generalities to the specific area of rewards. During the discussion one student, who was normally very reticent to offer an opinion or make a contribution in front of the full-group, cut across the rest and began to speak passionately. She related that, when as an eight-year old her teacher had given out rewards, //'just stars you know, really petty stuff but when you are eight they are important'//. As a self-described 'quiet' child she never received rewards or encouragements, only the children who misbehaved were

given rewards for 'being less naughty'. For this student the sense of injustice clearly still aroused a visceral sense of injustice. The group sat in silence listening; the tension was palpable as her recounting of the incident gave an insight into her experience, an experience that had shaped her response to a general topic of discussion. The nature of the student conversation changed immediately. At first this had focused simply on the efficacy of the strategy and whether rewards 'worked' in some pragmatic sense. Whilst the students had evidenced their views from their observations and more probably the opinions which their thinking actually changed or whether the circumstance had made an alternate position more preferable was impossible to tell. What was evident was that students began to question both the impact of the giving and the withholding of rewards on individuals and groups of children. From that example they began to question the wider nature of values that underpinned their everyday classroom practice. Rather than speaking simply of unnamed groups they began to speak of named individuals.

Relating this incident to her placement Anna linked the poor behaviour and lack of pupil engagement in her placement class with what she called the teacher's specific 'management-by-teaching style'. When asking for advice about planning her lessons the class teacher told Anna that she needed to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for each session. Anna told me that she felt that this was inappropriate but remained quiet. She stressed in the interview that this was not what she wanted to do, nor what she had been taught during her University course.

> …I didn't want to… I knew it was… I knew it was not what I should be doing. But more importantly I knew that it wasn't how I wanted to teach, I didn't want to be that kind of teacher. I want to be the kind of teacher that does the best for their children rather than the kind that just you know... did the easy. Did the quick, did the, 'is already on primary resources that you just have to download.

In a later interview she returned to this when discussing planning and assessment in her NQT year:

> At my placement school the plans were done a week before the lessons were going to be done, all the worksheets were printed out and handed to me, and the entire Power Points that had been used for the last 500 years. [Laughter]

She described this style as 'teaching to death by PowerPoint'; she empathized with the children and related this to her own experience as a student.

> …I *hate this* at uni., I *hate* people who just read their PowerPoint to you because I could be doing that at home and this is what the teacher was doing she was reading her PowerPoint to the class.

Notably her remark does not focus on the strategy or on the software. Nor does it focus on the affordance of the software; whether the technology affords a particular approach or has some specific pedagogic usefulness, rather she focuses on the person. 'I hate people who…'. The software is acting here as a signifier for what she appears to see more generally as a particular teaching approach used by a particular type of teacher who exhibits a particular form of what for Anna is pedagogic and perhaps moral inadequacy. A pedagogy related to delivery of content not engagement or involvement. We will see later a link made by Anna to her mentor's use of creativity in teaching, a model which she wanted to emulate.

Mother and mentor: continuum of development

The 'need for women to have role models in organizations as exemplars of achievement' (Murrell *et al.*, 1999, p.115) has been long accepted, though the relevance of the gender of mentors for young women is perhaps less clear (de Tormes Eby *et al.*, 2012) and outside of the scope of this thesis. What is certain is that of prime importance in Anna's story is that of her mother and her career achievements. We have seen earlier in Anna's story the manner in which she has responded to individuals in what appears to be an conscious or unconscious act of role model construction; a female tutor provides a possible model of an academic Anna. We also see identification in respect to her construction of a possible future career-self. Whilst other participants thought that it was 'crazy to think that they (the government) think I may be still teaching in forty years time' [Rebecca], or were clear that, 'I will definitely change jobs over my working life… well, that's what everyone tells us will happen' [Collette], Anna has a clear sense that her first appointment is simply step, 'an important step', but a step non-the-less, towards a future and as yet perhaps unknown professional self. For her career development appears, if not planned, at least following a trajectory. It is full of possibilities rather than prey to happenstance events.

At the start of the research Anna's mother had moved from being a successful head teacher to that of a School Improvement Partner (SIP) [6], a form of mentoring head teacher whose prime function was to initiate and support professional development in a consortium of schools in a neighbouring local authority. By the time of our second

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[6] For a fuller explanation of the role of SIPs see Keats, J. 1891. *Letters of John Keats to his family and friends,* London, Macmillan and Co.

interview her mother's role had changed again and she had been appointed temporarily to a school which had been placed into Special Measures following an Ofsted inspection. As I was to find out in the second interview this was not the first time she had had such an appointment but was one which clearly raised for Anna conflictual emotions of pride and concern.

I had asked:

> I remember Anna you spoke in the last interview about your mother, that she is a head teacher. Tell me a little more about her.

Her response was interesting both for what she said, and how it was said. There was in her reply almost a sense of being made privy to an internal dialogue. It was as though I was hearing her constructing her thinking in my presence and was delivered, not in the same easily flowing form that she used at other points of the interview, as a series of interrelated responses. Some were delivered directly to me but at times they combined with the remarks that appeared to self-narrate a conversation – imagined or real – with her Mother. The written text gives only a flavour of the response.

> She's just taken over a failing school, so she's sort of put me off doing that.. at the moment… like going... stepping into something that has been in such a tricky situation for so many years and then... sort of… the manager of that place leaves.. and then.. she has had to take it in on only for two terms… and pick it off its feet.. and get it ready for the next manager to come in and she's just... I said to her before she took it, don't take it… she's not being paid anymore to do it… it will be, like she wants an easy ride to retirement and so I don't know why she took it, but I just keep wanting to say to her now I told you so!

Whether she had had such a conversation with her mother I am unable to say. But when I prompted to consider why her mother might be taking on what was clearly a demanding and potentially stressful role Anna paused before replying, she began to reply, paused again clearly in thought and clearly constructing a reply before saying:

> But I think… … that's it... …she she just *likes* doing that.
> It's her third or fourth time she's taken... it's the second time she's taken a school from a sort of special measures point… Well she hasn't taken it to outstanding.. *yet,* but the last one she did, but the third time she's taken a school that's in a very tricky situation, so...
>
> I don't know, she obviously likes doing it, but then... I don't know, she thinks she likes doing it before she takes it.. and then now she's just pulling her hair out.
>
> All these situations that she's having to pick up someone else's mess and make it into a situation which can be taken forward by a not-as-experienced... well she doesn't know who is going to take it forward yet… but it's probably going to be a less experienced head teacher.

So we see in Anna's mother someone whose apparent success as a head teacher provides Anna with a possible model but not template for a future career-self. For in that success there lies another seed, a sense perhaps of dissatisfaction, a sense of wanting to do things differently and in a way which does not have as much impact on her private space and future family life. She talked [to paraphrase] of her childhood and the way in which her mother's career had impacted on her when she was young. She said that her mother was always very busy and she did not see her very often. On one occasion she recounted that the school of which her mother was head teacher was to be inspected inspected - 'they were going to be Ofsteded" in a few months time. This was at the time when school inspections were announced in advance, the rationale offered for this was that it would allow them time to prepare effectively. Anna saw the delay rather differently, she saw it from the position of a head teacher's daughter and whilst the incident had happened ten years earlier it was still clearly viscerally felt. She recounted being:

> *dragged* into the school with my sister at weekends to clean the school, to clean the stair wells.

She continued as forcefully:

> I will *never* become that kind of a teacher… the kind who *drags* their children.. *drags* them into their work life.

It is notable how both Kirsty and Anna use metaphors which relate to physical force when they wish to express a deep emotional response to an incident. But if Anna felt so much animosity to the impact of her mother's headship, then I wondered why did she want to teach? Had this always been something that she wanted to do. Unlike other research participants who had they said wanted to teach from early childhood, though notably these were not the children of teachers, Anna had had no such desire. Her route was different though her desire to work with children was similar.

> Well I have wanted to do many different things in my life; I... my initial plan was to be an air traffic controller, when I was about ten and then because... I don't know why I just really liked the idea of it and then my dad found out that it was the most stressful job in the UK at the moment so I decided against that.

> Then when I did my A levels - I took economics and I *absolutely* loved it and decided that I wanted to do Management with Spanish at Southampton. *So*, I had my heart set on that and then I went home for a holiday and in my holidays [well] a lot of Christmas, Easter and summer [holidays] I spent a lot of it volunteering doing kids camps, kids clubs, play schemes, after school clubs and children's church. I spent a lot of my free time volunteering for children so I was thinking about this and thinking [that] if I went and did Management and Spanish and became a like Managing Director of like a

company or something like that, I would still spend my free time volunteering doing children's work because I like spending time with children and seeing change in them.

So over that Christmas holidays I decided that actually I should do the children bit as my job and then I can get some free me time in the evenings and in the holidays so that's how I came around to it ...

For Anna there appear to be two parts to life, a 'work bit' and a 'children bit' which need to remain separated. She expresses a desire to engage with children and 'see them change', but this should not be to the detriment of her own personal life. Teaching, or head teaching, is seen as a dangerous occupation that can become all encompassing, stressful and causing separation. Yet we also see that, drawing at least in part from her own childhood experiences, a desire to spend time volunteering. So, whilst she 'had set her heart' on a job in Management using her language skill and her love of economics' she felt the call or compulsion to serve.

Self:

Where do you think this interest in children and changing children… where does that come from?

Anna:

I think it comes from the fact that I grew up through play schemes and kids camps. I've been going along to kids camps since I was two because my parents would help out and so I'd be like the little camp mascot and then I went through the camps as a camper from age... I went from nine to eighteen because as I grew older, they'd add on an extra camp and an extra year group and so the final year group I was fifteen and next year they made it plus one and then another one so I went through from nine to eighteen and then I became Leader of the camp and then I became Deputy Director of the camp and I've been leading them for a few years [since].

Self:

Do you enjoy that role; I mean do you enjoy that *managing* role?

Anna:

I love it; yeah I absolutely love it...

Self:

Where does that come from do you think?

Anna:

I don't know I think I enjoyed the organization of it all. I think that probably come through my mum because she likes to be organised and... I just really enjoyed being part of the team so whenever I was Deputy Director of the camp, it was never me in charge of them, it was always we're a team and I like that team spirit and it was nice like... everyone had gone to bed just sit down as a team and gel and like socialize really, so I like that part of it.

The story of Anna as mascot-to-manager appears an important part of her narrative re-storying and appears again in her online presence. Where other participants have images drawn from their present lives, pictures of friends, celebrations and special occasions, Anna presents us with an introductory series of pictures which re-tell this story. We see images of her as a tiny bearded wise man smiling to the camera as she offers a gift in her first nativity play, to a managing-member of her camp groups… the images track this same progress, from mascot to manager. So in the story we see an interesting and seeming dichotomy. Anna wants a job in which she can separate out aspects of her life, to keep a balance and avoid *dragging* her children into her working life which is what she clearly feels happened to her, yet she equally feels the same need to control and manage, though the management will she asserts be by consensus, by collaborative working, by 'just sitting down [at the end of the working day] as a team [to] gel and… socialize.'. As she concludes, 'I like that part of it'.

Mentor and model combine

Whilst I drew an earlier distinction between the officially designated mentor and the self-selected role model, it is possible that the two functions are found to meld in an individual. This is the case in Anna's story. In her final interview Anna returned to speak of the influence of the role model/mentor, the 'fantastic teacher' of whom she spoke of previously to describe a series of joint observations which had been made of her teaching by the mentor and her head teacher. In the debriefing session which followed one such lesson the head had asked her about the manner in which she was carrying out pupil assessments and where the information was held. Anna explained (to paraphrase her comments) that assessment information was written in the pupil books and carried out as part of her marking process. The head teacher had suggested that this was not the most effective strategy and had requested that she develop a form of record book which was kept available to any observer and could be used by her or another teacher for future planning. In her account she did not she said, demonstrate any sense of defensiveness but remained 'objective'. She did not speak about the contrary advice that she had been given by her university tutor and placement mentor, but 'just played the game' and 'said thank you' for the advice. The extent that she remained 'objective' in this encounter could be questioned but that her decision to act on the advice was perhaps an act of pragmatism rather than simple objectivity is less in doubt.

More productively she thought was the manner that as an new teacher she was supported in developing her own practice, Anna referred back to her experiences during a staff meeting, an In-service Training (INSET) day and the consequent developmental changes to practice in the school.

Anna:

Well a lot of... in a lot of our staff meetings, if it's about a specific thing, people will mention you know, research has said that actually this is like a really positive thing that we can do, or research has said that actually what we were doing is... has not had as much an impact as we thought it would, so… so [research is] mentioned in terms of that, I mean (in terms of what) we do... (for example) we've started peer coaching in schools, so as part... that's a little bit like our own research.

Self:

So tell me about peer coaching then; give me a handle on what you are talking about.

Anna:

Okay, well it was introduced to us in an Inset day, my first Inset day, as... the lady put it… as she said it to us. You are going in and you are making a sort of OFSTED judgment, but you don't actually officially make that judgment, so you go in and basically observe a lesson, that's how it was presented, proposed to us, and as a staff team we all said "Actually we don't feel like that's going to have positive impacts on our teaching'… so the senior leadership team met and decided on how... they *still* wanted to do this peer coaching thing, and have teachers supporting each other by going into classes, *but* to actually think how can we do that so it is a positive thing and it does improve our teaching and how we manage the classes?

So they came back to us and said, 'Actually what about this? What about... you are paired with who you are paired with and you give the person who is coming to observe you a specific pointer that you want them to look at. It can be a specific area, so… like behaviour, or assessment, or transitions, or resources, or a specific child to like look at, so then that person has something to come and look at, and to think of how is it working at the moment? How can I help this person to improve it?

Because it's something that they have said, they want that help with it. So rather than going in and saying I am about to make a judgment, this was good, this was good, this was good, this was not so good, this... you are actually asking for the help.

So I went to the lady who is doing my... who I am peer coaching with, and said I have got this child in my class who just doesn't seem to be producing much work at all. His results from last year show that he can produce work like this, but I am not seeing it, why am I not seeing it? So she came in, and watched him for ten minutes, and every minute wrote down everything that he did when he was meant to be doing independent work.

It was really interesting just to see what he did, so we talked that through, and then she said right, well here are some things that you could set in place that would mean that maybe he would be working, and it's made a difference to him *and* this morning I just went and did the same things for her in her class, so we are going to talk about that at lunchtime.

In Anna's recounting of the events we see some telescoping of the chronology where activities and decisions taken at various times and at different occasions are

simplified and arranged to present a more coherent account. The roles of individuals are also conflated. The 'lady' presumably refers to an outside provider, from later discussions this appears to have been someone employed by her Local Authority, an adviser or consultant, or somewhat ironically when considering her own Mother's professional role, a School Improvement Partner head teacher. Whilst the individual is noted, she is clearly positioned by the use of a somewhat archaic sounding term, 'the lady'. This may mark an acknowledgment of their different professional status or perhaps a differentiation between their respective ages. It does appear to be offered both as a descriptor and a form of respect rather than as an act of the previously conscious unnaming of an individual noted earlier. It is also notable that she speaks of a 'staff team' of which she clearly feels a member; it is the team that responds, it is the team that speaks, 'Actually, we…'. In this story, the Senior Management Team, unlike that in Kirsty's school, is a group whose membership is restricted to those with actual hierarchical management roles in school. It is this group who present an alternative model that is focused on development and the making of 'positive impacts on our teaching' rather than on the 'making a sort of Ofsted judgment'. Whilst the strategy of giving ownership of the process implicating the whole 'staff team' in the decision making is apparent, and whilst the activity is designed in part at least to fulfill a requirement of the school's development plan identified on its annual Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

Prompted by what she said and sensing her enthusiasm I asked if she saw herself becoming a mentor, if this was a possible area for her own professional development.

She was clear and direct in her answer:

> I hope so, I'd like to do that… (then more emphatically aside as though contemplating it for the first time) Yes, I'd like to do that.

A composite link: Developing an Online Identity

In this section I use a what Ely terms a 'composite', a narrative device in which a theme applying across a number of research stories is considered (Ely, 1991, p.167). At the design stage of the research I had suggested that I might set up an online community that would serve as a shared space for the participant contributions. Whilst this had been a considered possibility my earlier experiences with such Virtual Learning Environments (Dorman, 2006, 2007) allowed me to approach such a possibility with some skepticism. I remembered the way in which students who had been expected to use a university VLE for their sole means of communication rapidly rejected the constraints imposed on them. I reflected also on my earlier reading of Robert Dunn, Sherry Turkle and Kenneth Gergen and particularly the manner in which technology is implicated in identity formation and change.

In his discussion of the manner in which the image in all of its technological manifestations of TV, film, video and stills, Dunn highlights the earlier work of Guy Debord (in Davis, 2000, p.125) and the way in which the power of the camera to create 'the spectacle', defined as a series of visual images 'fuse(d) into a common stream *to* create a pseudo-world set apart from lived social relationships'. He further asserts that this represents, 'the degradation of *being* into *having*… a generalized sliding of *having* into *appearing*' (paragraphs 2,3 and 17, 1977 (emphasis in the original)) a manifestation of what he termed the 'commodity form'. Dunn presents us with what he variously terms, a 'less apocalyptical' 'a weaker' but, he argues, 'a more compelling version of this postmodernist argument'; he speaks less of the 'dissolution of identity than of changes in the subject's formation', he continues:

> A contrast might be presented between a modern form of identity secured by the internal mental structures and emotional states of individuals but produced in multiple structures of social interaction - a postmodern form arising from the effects of externally mediated forms of signification and technology based models of cultural experience.
>
> (Dunn in, Davis, 2000, p.109)

By extrapolation we may apply Davis' insight to the field of digital technology.

Networked communication technologies: development and subversion

From its inception, networked technologies *designed* to share practical information were also *used* also for social purposes. For example ARPAnet, the progenitor of the

internet and often wrongly dismissed as being created primarily for military purposes, was in fact developed to enable collaboration on research papers by investigators who were geographically separated and had limited access to powerful computer systems (Dunn in Davis, 2000, pp.109-134). Despite its original purpose however, networked technologies soon provided a place where participants could gossip, flirt, chat about their children and develop into what its founder Herzfeld later described as, 'a never-ending worldwide conversation' (Lukasik and O'Neill, 1987). So it was that the *technologies of information* rapidly developed into *technologies of relationship* (Flew, 2002) as the means of information sharing were used as a means for social interaction.

Alternate technologies however provide the user with different affordances. Email, Instant Message Services (IMS), and the like simultaneously enable and limit the forms of communication they provide. An email or text sent to an individual is in its essence different from one sent to a group; in the former, communication is tailored to individual need, in the latter the individuation is minimized as the group becomes the unit of communication. In early iterations of networked technology, users were forced to subvert the software design and find 'workarounds' to make the technology conform to their needs.

More recent developments in the form of Social Networking Sites (SNSs), were developed ostensibly to provide further technological affordances to fill these communication needs, the internal essence of communication in the products however differs and does so because of their differing purpose. Whilst SNSs are generally designed to allow individuals to 'present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others' (Phulari *et al.*, 2010, p.93) different sites have differing social orientations. They may be focused on the development of romantic relationships (e.g., Friendster.com), towards work-related goals (e.g., LinkedIN.com), connecting those with shared interests (e.g. MySpace.com), or, as was the original purpose of Facebook.com, towards student groups. This latter, and now ubiquitous SNSs had two original functions: to allow students to maintain connections with friends when moving away from home thus alleviating what Paul and Brier (Paul and Brier, 2001) have termed 'friendsickness'; and providing a means of allowing students to establish and maintain new social groups (Ellison *et al.*, 2007, p.1143). Due to their specific social focus SNSs vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing; the manner in which the

personal profile which the user creates is made available to other users; and their underpinning philosophies (2007). Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, has said that his underlying philosophy (to paraphrase) is to make the world a better place by being more open, more connected and more transparent to do this by making privacy redundant (Dash, 2012). Facebook is the SNS favoured by the research participants. Thus whilst a previous generation of networked technology users had to learn to work both with what the technology designs allowed and despite what they prevented, current users are required to learn more subtle understandings; individual and group relationships are simultaneously enabled and tempered by the technology used.

Turkle asserts that in the context of Facebook, the much vaunted *friends* become fans as the user lives out their virtual life onscreen (Turkle, 2011, p.168). It is clear from my discussions with each of the participants that whatever the actual volume of their Facebook postings, each expresses to differing levels, an understanding of the technological functioning of the software: the method in which profiles can be viewed or protected, the way in which Facebook postings can be consciously used to present various aspects of their personality, the manner in which they weigh the value of responses they receive to such postings. The technologically mediated worlds in which these participants engage does not supplant their geographically based communities as a resource for moral action but rather reflect what Kenneth Gergen suggests, that they rather provide a single, but not exclusive, 'site of action' (in Davis, 2000, p.136). In so doing they reflect the ancient argument attributed to Socrates in the Phaedrus which asserts that new technologies automatically replace and corrupt earlier forms (Plato, in translation, 1972); a binary position not allowing for their continued and parallel existence. In their use of SNSs participants distinguish in their discussions an implicit understanding of what Putnam describes as bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). The former provides a series of what may be termed 'weak ties,' or loose connections between individuals who provide useful information and new perspectives but not close emotional support. In contrast others, notably close friends and family, provide 'bonding social capital'. To these distinctions Ellison et al., add a further category, that of 'maintained social capital', that is valuable connections *social, emotional, pragmatic and so on* [my additions] which are maintained as one progresses through life changes,' (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). In interviews and online discussions with the participants their flexible and informed

use of email and SNSs is apparent, as is their capacity to tailor their messages, responses and postings to their target audiences. The most avid user of the technology, Anna, exhibits a particularly developed, and knowingly playful use of multiple identities whilst retaining a skeptical stance when evaluating the value of respondent's responses to her postings.

Support from the virtual community

Before the second round of interviews I had become aware of how ubiquitous was the research participants' use of SNSs. When I first examined the sites and their usage it appeared that some participants saw them in purely utilitarian terms; as a means of 'staying in contact' (Collette), 'finding out what everyone is up to' (Rebecca), 'gossiping and organizing girls' nights-out' (Caroline). For Anna and Kirsty the sites however seemed to be used in a rather more extended and complex manner. When students the group had set up a Facebook site which they entitled 'Group Four Students'. On leaving university the group was renamed by Kirsty 'Group Four Teachers!!!!' (exclamation marks in the original). She did this without discussion with the site members giving her reason as:

> **Kirsty★**
>
> Thought it should be updated as we have MADE it !!!! end of an amazing era but the beginning of the next :).

It was notable that none of the group responded to this message either by writing a comment or by clicking the 'Like' button beneath it, the standard way in which group members indicate their support for a statement or message. The message with its excess of exclamation marks and quizzical emoticon appears perhaps to betray Kirsty's own uncertainty and anxiety about the future.

Anna was also proactive in her use of the Internet. As with all the research participants she had her own Facebook page and before the start the of the NQT year established a group as a means of sharing information, teaching resources and ideas. The site was focused exclusively on the activity of teaching. Anna's first messages were used to both organize a vote for a site name and to organize who might edit the pages and take responsibility for its day-to-day running.

During their NQT year the two sites have continued to run in parallel with each retaining a distinctive focus and, whilst both groups have the same membership they notably use different language patterns. The renamed-group, despite its renaming,

continues as it did during their student years with a clear social function. Members refer to each other on the site as 'girlies', engage in social chat, discuss their non-teaching lives, share photographs of social gatherings and holidays and use it to set up week-end meetings. The new group focuses solely on teaching ideas, the sharing of resources and discussion of their lives in school. Whilst the discussion is at times light-hearted and always socially supportive, it maintains a more impersonal and business-like format in which participants present a distinctive teacher-like identity.

Anna's third Facebook site, her own personal page, has a different function. Members have been invited from friends and acquaintances with teaching/non-teaching and faith/non-faith backgrounds. The age-profile of members is much wider drawing its audience from teens to post-retirees. She updates her status regularly with short statements or message[7] from her mobile phone which both comment on and appear designed to elicit a responses from site members. In one series of messages Anna narrates her first non-teaching day at school.

> **Anna★**
>
> Is printing and laminating like a mad (wo)man!!
>
> August 15 at 6:11pm · Like ·
> Friend three and 3 others like this.

The messages provide the start of a clear narrative structure beginning with the (clearly gendered) central character nervously poised on the eve of the first day. Interestingly the structure of the message that follows directly from the name of the author rather than using the personal pronoun begins the narrative in the third person. The author is thus presented as a character in an epistolary narrative about, not by, the author. Message one also seems to require a response, a response rapidly provided by 'Friend ONE'. The friend is clearly a more experienced teacher; she demonstrates sympathy through the rapid response and empathy through her choice of message.

> **Friend ONE★**
>
> And so it begins, again!
>
> August 15 at 8:32pm · Like

The message tells Anna that she is not alone, that Friend ONE understands her predicament and that she too has been in a similar situation and importantly, has survived the experience. Friend ONE is then responded to through the use of a shared

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[7] At the time of writing Facebook messages were limited in length to 420 characters or less.

reference (stapler in hand which implicitly acknowledges the shared experience) and additionally rewarded with a smiling-face emoticon.

> **Anna★**
>
> Exactly!! stapler in hand!! Thanks :D x
>
> August 15 at 8:48pm · Like
>
> **Anna★**
>
> is ready to set up her first classroom...possibly!!
>
> August 15 at 11:42pm · Like ·

The tension is built by the penultimate message; is a reply expected in the forty five minutes before the day begins or is its statement sufficient? In later discussions it appears that Anna along with Kirsty keeps her Blackberry switched on and available at all times and uses them specifically for messaging and Facebooking. Thus she may be net-surfing on her computer, watching TV or going about her daily life whilst in parallel electronic communication electronically. As I discovered, it was quicker to contact participants by using IMS on Facebook than by sending emails.

> **Anna★**
>
> had potentially the worst night's sleep ever!
>
> August 16 at 8:13am via mobile · Like ·

The final message in the sequence provides a positive conclusion and completes the narrative arc with a message which is reminiscent of countless early morning matinee serials, 'At one bound she was free'. We note also that the day was not simply 'very successful' but 'verrrry successful'.

> **Anna★**
>
> Has had a verrrry successful day in school...and is hoping for another tomorrow!!
>
> August 16 at 5:11pm via mobile · Unlike
> Friend Three and 9 others like this.

The message-set narrativizes Anna's experience and provides an example of what Turkle has described as 'a deliberate performance that can be made to seem spontaneous' (Turkle, 2011, p.200). This performance-feature was also apparent when the participants received their first recordings and interview transcripts in the month before they began to teach. Whilst they all readily agreed to the technical accuracy of the transcription and their willingness to have it used, all but Anna commented on how their spoken language 'looked' when transcribed. Collette felt that, 'It all looks ok, [but it is] quite an eye opener when you see how you sound!'. Indeed, Caroline

was so concerned by, 'how much I say 'like' and simply stop in the middle of a sentence' that, whilst she thought that 'the content is fine', she nevertheless asked if she could edit the transcript to 'make it flow properly'. Rebecca commented that, 'it was very embarrassing to read back!' She went on to suggest, in what appeared to be a written equivalent of the spoken self-comments that she often made when interviewed, that she needed 'to cut out the number of times she said 'like' and 'I don't know' so that she could sound more like a teacher. Kirsty also responded to the transcript through what appears to be the lens of her coming identity.

> This is so funny to read.
> I say like far too much (need to kerb[sic] that before september![sic])

The response appears at first jovial starting with the introductory, 'this is so funny to read', but the additional comment in which she disparages her language (the overuse of 'like') then notes that she must modify this before she starts teaching (in September), demonstrates a first sign of the anxiety which comes to dominate how she feels over the next months. During August for example she posted a message to her Facebook site that she:

> **Kirsty★**
>
> Has a car :) unfortunately means no excuses for going into school next week :(hahaha mixed emotions!!!

She later added that she had been into school to attend an In-service training day ('I/inset') and that:

> **Kirsty★**
>
> Inset was good I now feel more prepared and totally unprepared all at once … bring on the next inset mon!!! :S

Seven Facebook friends rapidly 'liked' the comment with two adding further support. One, a serving teacher, suggesting that this was:

> **Friend ONE★**
>
> A usual feeling at the beginning of the year and after an insett[sic], bring on the children and you will be fine! Good luck! Xxx

It is notable that whilst the majority of the responders were teachers, none asked what the training had entailed and whether it had had any relevance or value. Indeed the final comment appears to belittle the usefulness of such activities, it is how teachers feel 'after Inset', but 'bring on the children and you will be fine!'. Teaching appears to be represented in these comments as having no worth other than in act

itself. Most messages, and this appears a consistent pattern across the observed Facebook usage, remain as emotional responses and acts of virtual support. These Facebook sites appear not to be places where discussion happens with great depth. But this does not mean that its users were unaware of this or uncritical in their reading of the replies.

In the week before the school year began Anna posted a message ostensibly seeking advice as she prepared for her first day in school[8]. The request, in which Anna positions herself as an NQT, appears straightforward, 'Does anyone have advice for NQTs starting their first week of school??'. Replies came rapidly and within four hours she had ten. Reading through them I was interested in the differences in their tone. Most were of the usual, supportive type and written in a quirky or jokey format. They referred to the teacher's apparent unending need for tea or coffee or to act in a confident way and 'get to know the kids'. Another made reference to the traditional image of the teacher with a cane. The final message however presented teaching in a way that could have been written by Mr. Sugden four decades earlier; 'you play ball with me and I'll play ball with you; but remember: it's my ball.'.

Starting the second interview, I was interested in how Anna viewed the messages and her use of the Facebook sites.

To begin with she said, she made little use of the 'specifically social site'.

The other 'teacher site' which she shared with ex-students from her group, had she thought two functions: firstly it was a way of maintaining contact with the 'students now teachers', secondly, it had a pragmatic purpose.

Anna:

> Teaching is stealing.
> You are welcome to come in and steal any of my ideas any time. So I mean that's what that page is being used for a lot at the moment.

Her personal page was different again, when asked about this she replied:

> My personal one? Yes, that's a bit more... because I know that within my group of friends, in life and obviously on face book, virtual and cyber friends if you like, a lot of them are teachers and are... some of them are relatively new teachers, I've got some friends on there who are... have been teaching for 20 years, some have been in teaching for five or ten years and left, some have been teaching for like one year and left, so that was really sort of advice on my behalf.
>
> I think if it was my first day, now knowing what I now know, I probably wouldn't put that on face book but I have on my... I have a professional twitter account which is

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[8] The complete message string can be found in Appendix 7.

mainly for the blog, because there are lots... I had no idea how big the education community was on twitter, but its huge, and there thousands of people who every Thursday night they get together and have what's called Ed.Chat, and they just chat about different issues in education.

So I think now I would probably put it on there rather than on Facebook, which sounds weird because my Facebook is locked down, whereas my Twitter isn't, and my Twitter has my full name on it, so any parents could see that if they wanted to, but actually I think on Twitter I'd get that sort of professional feedback, because everyone... all the education...educators on Twitter are aware of the sort of professionalism of that I never see any swear words on my feed.

Self:

So you are aware of that being in the public domain and one being in the private? And then the subgroup being in an even more private domain.

Anna:

Exactly, and I think putting something like that asking for advice on my private face book wall means that the other people are aware that its private, so they'll put things that maybe aren't professional, maybe things about some of their experiences or something…

…but on Twitter I know I'd get professional responses.

Self:

Are you aware of the community that you are speaking to? Does that mean also that you weigh the kinds of remarks that you get because I mean I was intrigued by the types of remarks that you got about your advice for your first day into school, and then you were saying well I know that some people have been in teaching for 20 years and some have been left, did you actually consciously weigh up the advice against the person that it was?

Anna:

//'Well some people put remarks and you do think, well, that's your view'// (but) not in that sense, I did in the sense that some parents commented, some people who are parents of children in primary schools not in this primary school, but who hadn't been teachers commented.

Self:

It was quite an emotional one.

Anna:

Yes exactly, so I did weigh that up, as in "Has this person been a teacher?' 'Is this person a teacher?' 'Is this person going to be a teacher?' Or 'Is this person involved on the other side, on the sort of parental side of it?' …

Here Anna referred back to the Facebook comment from the parent, Friend FOUR:

Anna:

…So that I weighed up, so one of the things was which I still remember, like I keep it in my head all the time, is whatever you're doing, always keep the parents informed, we want to know as much as possible rather than as little as we need to know.

> …So that's why I've tried to get the parents in as often as I can, because that sort of stuck in my head, thinking actually at the end of the day, what the school is judged on is academic progress if you like, but actually what the parents care about is knowing what's happening in schools, so while trying to keep the government side of it going, I also want the parents to feel like they know what's going on in their children's life which from the responses sounds like they do know what's going on, and they are pleased with what's going on, so, yes.

Anna's separation of 'what the school is judged on - what she terms the 'government side of things… academic progress' - and what she perceives to be, what parents are actually interested in - their 'actual daily concerns', may at appear a somewhat naively binary response. A response in which she appears to assert complete mastery of what parents want.

Alternatively perhaps we see in this an example of Anna drawing from her experiences one more weapon in her 'armoury of narrative resources' further 'narrative capital' with which she negotiates the *conflictual demands* of teaching (Goodson, 2012, p.64). Or perhaps in her use of online communications we see a modern 'naming of parts' (Reed, 8 August 1942), in which such *conflictual demands* are responded to through the use of new online guerilla tactics in a current educational war.

Case Study TWO: Kirsty's Story

Introducing Kirsty

Kirsty is the eldest by four years of two sisters. At eighteen she had not taken a gap year before coming to university nor had she indeed travelled outside of the UK citing finance as the reason for this. Her route into primary teaching was the most stereotypical and the currently most traditional one of, school, Sixth Form and university-based training. She was she declared, '.. the first member of my entire family to attend university'. Her aunt had gone for a term, 'but didn't finish it and [my] dad had decided it wasn't for him'. He had gone into banking, worked his way through the banking system 'but got bored. and started his own booking-keeping thing… there's not really anyone in my family as such that I am following'.

Her choice of university had been governed by its proximity to home. It was sufficiently far away to give a sense of separation from childhood and allow her to develop some independence whilst sufficiently close to provide the security of a return home if she felt the need for support. It appears however that she did not in fact ever need to do this beyond going home for the usual university vacations. She was a member of her local 'home-church' as were her family and many of her 'home-friends' but 'church and religion' were, she felt were not paramount features of her life. She did not attend church during term time.

At the end of her training programme she applied to several schools close to the University but found herself like others of her generation driven by financial necessity to return home and so at the time of the research, Kirsty was 'back in my bedroom but saving to move out'. An ambition she had fulfilled by the time of this reading.

Her ambition had always been, she said, to become a primary teacher and, for her eighteen-year-old self, a degree in Primary Education was the most direct route. Before university she developed some experience of teaching, limited to a few weeks as part of her Sixth Form course. Much of her general experience in school had been through and with her mother who worked as a Teaching Assistant in a secondary school. It was from her and the praise and encouragement of a class teacher - later to become a head teacher - in the school that she drew her first inspiration and desire to teach. She had more extensive experience of working with children through her church, guiding and sporting interests. A keen netball player, she had completed a coaching award and continued to be actively involved in sports coaching in her local

community. She described herself, and was described by others variously as, 'lively', 'bubbly', 'gregarious, friendly and outgoing'. She appeared to have a wide network of friends and an active social life.

Kirsty appeared to have a largely untroubled entry into the 'inherently temporary… betwixt and between status of studenthood' (Field *et al.*, 2011). Where she acted as leader to other students and seemed, in the words of her first school mentor, 'Just one of those students who has got it… she's a natural'. In Kirsty's transitional year we see perhaps more vulnerability and malleability than her seemingly confident and extroverted self-presentation suggests.

An inevitable trajectory?

As with each of the participants Kirsty's decision to teach was not presented as an arbitrary decision, a decision taken in desperation at the end of a sixth form or university course. Rather it seemed to her to be a natural and inevitable consequence of early childhood experiences. As with Rebecca and Collette[9], Kirsty assumed that:

> …all little children want to be a teacher… you play teachers at school and I was… I thought.. maybe I could do that.

For these participants the desire to be a teacher, to play at being a teacher as a child, 'setting out their teddies in rows' (Collette), 'giving them homework to do,' (Rebecca) was simply an assumed commonly accepted feature of childhood. They interpreted their current career choice as being the result of a natural and inevitable trajectory set by such early experiences, consciously followed and to be developed into a future teacher identity. Kirsty spoke in the first interview of how she had long experience of 'being around young children' through her mother's activities as a child-minder and an active member of the Parent Teacher Committee of what would later become the school which she attended as a pupil. A feature of Kirsty's story which I only recognised later, was her use of 'physical metaphors'. Thus she remembered that she was 'often *dragged* along to school events and trips'; later she will represent herself variously as being be 'knocked…' and 'kicked…' '…back' but at this point she saw a positive outcome from being taken seemingly unwillingly to such events for she retrospectively saw the way in which school activities appeared to be organised:

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[9] Two research participants who appear only peripherally in this final thesis.

> I just saw how everything kind of worked as well… there we were early.. setting it up and afterwards packing it down

For Kirsty, an important part of these early experiences was the way in which she had begun to develop a closer, more confident relationship with the various teachers with whom she would later come into contact with as a pupil. Through these contacts she had developed an understanding of what she felt constituted appropriate teacherly attitudes:

> I knew a lot of those teachers better than maybe some of the children in the class … as I got to secondary school … I took quite an active role. I was chosen to be on the [pupil] interview panel in year seven and I think seeing … the people who wanted to be teachers and hearing their answers were probably quite helpful.

At the start of the interview Kirsty clearly felt that she had followed an inevitable trajectory in her career choice and for her it had been 'a natural decision'. Later in the interview however she returned to this theme to question her assumption. Perhaps the expectations of others had played an important role in shaping her choice?

> …I think also.. you get told a lot that if you're good at something, 'Oh you're really good with children' [spoken as though it were being said by another person] and I mean I worked a lot, I did I mean like dancing shows. I helped with the younger ones.. so dancing.. *and I've done that all my life* and at church I've helped out with the children but because of my mum… I've always been kind of been there with the children… so maybe… I don't know, maybe [they] reinforce it again… 'Oh, you're good with children you should try teaching'.

It may be that seeking the approval of the other, in this case by responding to their suggestion that, 'You're good with children you should try teaching', by actually seeking a career in teaching, constitutes an important aspect of Kirsty's sense of self. We could describe this choice as an example of misrecognition, in which the scripting by others has become seen as an independent and natural, just common sense. Equally we could see in her later questioning of these assumptions a move from a purely reflective to a more reflexive stance in which she begins to question her assumptions. We will see later that what appeared to Kirsty at first to be a wholly positive relationship (we will find that the teacher intervenes to ease Kirsty's first appointment) was reinterpreted in a subsequent interview as setting the seeds for her early career difficulties.

What kind of person wants to be a teacher?

When I asked Kirsty about her route into teaching she first focused first on a general desire to work with children. But when I first met Kirsty or rather, when I first

became aware of Kirsty as an individual rather than as a member of a teaching group, she demonstrated rather more insight into what she described as 'the type of person who wants to teach'. During her first year of undergraduate study Kirsty, along with the rest of her year group were given a lecture on the use of 'Brain Gym', a popularized form of what its creator, Dr. Paul Dennison, termed Educational Kinesiology. Whilst its developers had proposed a complex medical and neurological rationale for the technique together with an equally complex series of movement exercises administered by trained practitioners, by the time of the lecture, its use in local schools was largely confined to a generalized series of boisterous exercises carried out as a whole-school activity to the accompaniment of loud music. The lecturer did not explain the historical developments of the system nor provide any clear rationale for the use of the now discredited techniques, (Hyatt, 2007) but insisted that all students should join in with what she said were some typical activities. As all but a small number of students complied with the instruction to join in, Kirsty came across to talk to me. She thought that it was '/telling that everyone was simply doing as they were told. Could you imagine/', she continued, '/a lecture theatre full of history or law students doing this. It just shows that you get a certain kind of personality type wanting to be a teacher or, maybe these are the only kind of people that you accept on to the course/'.

In a subsequent discussion she offered the view that, 'playing the game was a part of being a teacher'.

The type of person I am, the person I will be

Whether she saw herself as being good at playing the game she didn't say but she did suggest that a further reason for her career choice was her practical rather than academic ability. She 'wasn't the best at academic things… (and) I've found some of the assignments (at university) quite difficult'. Indeed for Kirsty there appeared at times a disconnection between work carried out in university and the practical work that she had engaged in. She couldn't 'get her head around things to begin with. The *theorist* one (referring to her first written assignment), that was really good researching them so you know what they're all about but then… [when] you've been on placement they make sense.'. The need to 'make sense of things' in what was seen to be the 'real world' of the classroom was a recurrent theme in this and subsequent

interviews. For example, the reasons why she had to gather assessment data in her earlier school placements was at first similarly incomprehensible:

> You're like okay, I've got these red dots and orange dots and green dots, Traffic lighting what they can do but what am I going to do with it now? (My final placement school) was a leading APP[10] school I got to use all the stuff that we learnt at uni from all the observations and questioning to put it all into context of .. using the government initiatives and what the school uses to create something that I'd actually.. oh, I can see why I'm doing it now, it actually makes sense ... I just didn't understand why I was doing it [before]...

> ...I was told that the reason you're doing it is so that if you were teaching your real class and you have a parent's evening in October you need to know everything you can about that children say what you're, what (strategies you're trying) rather than just say they can't do it'.

For Kirsty then the reason for gathering the assessment data appeared to be less focused on supporting pupil's learning but more upon a future purpose, to enable her to speak more authoritatively to parents. Whilst this may simply be the way in which Kirsty reported the conversation and represented her understanding of the process, we see in this incident a slippage from the intended reason for a strategy (in this case APP) to the novice's classroom practice. In a wider sense we may also see in it an example of the manner in which when 'practice is re-rendered into measurable outcomes' (Ball, 2008, p.58), fulfilling the outcomes may become an end in itself.

What type of person am I?

Kirsty had a clear view of herself as 'an active person' '[I] was (am?) very sporty so I liked getting out and I like competing in all the sports and different things… and did dancing'. As a pupil she had spent hours, she said, behind a desk and decided that a future career 'sitting behind an office desk' was not for her. It maybe that what she described as her father's boredom with his career in banking had had some effect on her view; a need not to be bored by a sedentary life. Whether this was the case I could not tell but it appeared that the focus on activity coloured her view of the type of teacher that she wanted to be. During her second year Kirsty had undertaken a four-week placement as part of her university course. She admitted to being 'annoyed (with herself?) that she hadn't gone abroad' rationalizing this both as not want to 'go alone' and more prosaically because of finance. It may be that Kirsty was a less

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[10] 'Assessment for Pupil Progress' was one of a number of a New Labour government educational initiatives. APP guidance for schools in England and Wales was completed in 2008 but with the change of government in 2010 the status of the guidance was changed from 'recommended' to 'non-statutory'.

independent and less confident young adult than she was reputed to be. It was certainly a decision that she clearly regretted and a point that she returned to in her second interview. It may also be notable that she did not make her first journey abroad until the end of her second year of teaching, that she did this with a friend and to a standard tourist destination of Thailand. Her Facebook page was alive at this time with pictures of her riding variously elephants and bicycles and indulging in the usual holiday pastimes. She did however clearly enjoy her actual choice of placement. Working in an outward bound centre represented 'the other side of school' that part which takes place outside the confines of the building and one can suggest from the 'seat behind the desk'. More than that, she worked with children for an extended period of four weeks and in so doing began to form 'real' relationships with them, typified as she said (and in the recording the enthusiasm is clear):

> by tying children into high ropes, I was helping children across high ropes encouraging them, working with everything from young offenders to nursery school children to adults, to leaver's party kind of thing…

at this point Kirsty drew a much wider principle, her perceived relationship to the children:

> I want to take *my* children *outside* the school.

As with each of the research participants, Kirsty referred to 'children', 'class', and 'school', in a possessive manner; they were, *my* class, *my* children *my* school. It appeared that she saw teaching in terms of a wider nurturing role in which children were individuals, possessing different skills, skills which need to be developed and cherished and sometimes this was best done outside of the school classroom. This is of course not unusual or unique feature of Kirsty's or the participant's attitude to the teaching role. In a report for the General Teaching Council Craig and Fieschi suggest that the central focus of teacher professionalism is presented in relation to schools and children, asserting that:

> Ask a politician about teachers and they will tell you about schools – ask a teacher about themselves and they will tell you about their pupils. Teacher professionalism is inextricably linked to doing what is best for children – this is the end of teacher professionalism…
>
> (Craig and Fieschi, 2007, p.2)

Yet there appeared to be a sense in the interviews that Kirsty was projecting herself into the situation; perhaps the desire to respect children's individuality reflected her

own desire for respect? If so, this may again not be unique. Our own needs and desires may be be storied as the needs and desires of others which in the present we begin to recreate and correct the past. In an unprompted aside during the closing moments of our final interview, Kirsty returned again to the need to value children's individuality and how this may parallel her own experiences.

Being proactive: taking control

Beyond her interest in children she also liked to be proactive and being in a position where she could take her own decisions and make things happen. When she reached year eleven she organised the school prom, but did this she said, because. 'I wanted a prom and no one else was doing it so I got on the committee. Did the whole prom did all the balloons, set it all up, had the most amazing time and then [I was] voted head girl and like got to be part of the school running, as in like making decisions about the new system that was coming in which actually was really influential.' This combination of teaching for personal fulfillment, a desire to 'be influential' whilst coupled with supporting children to be individuals and to develop their individuality is a recurrent theme in the discussions with Kirsty.

Developing as an individual

For Kirsty the choice of university had been 'a big decision'. She wanted to experiment with independence but to also retain the safety-net of remaining close to home, to friends and to her church community. She limited her choice of universities to those within an 'hour and a half (`s drive?)' from home. She had toyed with living at home and attending a university which she could attend on a daily basis. In the end she decided to 'take the plunge', at the 'last minute she swapped her choices' and decided to attend a university a little further afield, one which would require her (perhaps force her?) to live away from home. This desire to use university not simply as a pragmatic means of academic development but also as a context for developing personal independence is of course not unique to Kirsty. The lack of recognition of the importance that would-be students select their campus-based university courses at least in part to develop personal independence and not solely for academic purposes is a key reason for the failure of the UK E-University instigated by the New Labour government (Dorman, 2006, Laurillard, 2001).

Hesitant as she may have been to leave home she threw herself enthusiastically into university life when there. Whether because of the interview context or not I could not

tell but her focus was on her academic life. She spoke with enthusiasm of her professional studies group as a place where:

> people are good at different things, there are no right or wrong answers everybody in our professional studies group has various views and just… I think our professional studies group has been the kind of group that can just get on with that.

> If someone disagrees with you it's not because they don't like you it's because that's just their opinion, but having that, seeing someone else's opinion I think really helps because it makes you think oh actually, okay I see where you are coming from.. so maybe if we use some of your idea and mine and maybe that would work and...

The type of teacher I will be

In her first interview Kirsty spent time explaining the type of teacher that she intended to be, a teacher perhaps modeled by those first early childhood experiences when in school with her mother. At first she voiced this in general terms of 'being of help'. When asked what she meant by this she explained:

> As in, if someone can't do something I'd like to think that there was something I could do to help them achieve… which is something that I'd like to think that maybe I've brought into teaching.

In the earlier parts of our discussions Kirsty talked at length about the nature of teaching and the manner in which her understandings had developed during her three years at university. She remembered how, just before starting the programme, she had been required to spend two weeks in school observing but that this had been ill-focused, 'basically reading stories [and] doing all the fun things that teachers let you do… doing this that and the other'. As part of the programme the students had spent a series of days in school accompanied by a tutor. They worked in groups of three or four per class, carrying out small teaching activities. It was during these first days in school that Kirsty had placed herself centre stage, had led the activities in the group of students with which she worked, had organised activities both inside and outside of the classroom, she had brimmed with external confidence. It was at this time that she and had been described by her mentor as 'a natural'.

In contrast her second placement had been, for her, a disappointment. The first disappointment was the lack of outdoor space, 'it only had a small playground and didn't even have a field'; she looked forward she said to the space and the potential that her NQT school offered her 'because of the things I've learnt'; what she couldn't accomplish on placement she thought could at least do later in her own school.

More problematic for Kirsty was the manner in which the second year placement required Kirsty to develop and deploy personal negotiation skills, skills which were

be tested to near breaking point during her time in school but revealed a capacity for negotiation, for survival and gamesmanship.

The paradoxical profession

As Hargreaves and Lo have suggested teaching is a 'paradoxical profession'. The paradox which they highlight is that, at a time when they are:

> charged with the formidable task of creating the human skills and capacities that will enable societies to survive and succeed in the age of information they are doing so at a time when public expenditure, public welfare and public education are among the first expendable casualties of the slimmed-down state that informational societies and their economies seem to require. Just when the very most is expected of them, teachers appear to be being given less support, less respect, and less opportunity to be creative, flexible and innovative than before.
>
> (Hargreaves and Lo, 2000, pp.1-2)

Whilst this may be the view traditionally held by many teachers, it was expressed very directly by the head teacher of the schools in which one research participant worked. There is I believe however a further paradox, that, whilst schools do not exist in isolation from each other, they often appear to operate as though this is exactly the case. So, whilst schools may be written of as a series of similar unified enterprises whose outcomes in the form of student achievements can be easily compared, their internal differences remain and are rapidly experienced by those who work in them. Schools are examples of what Etienne Wenger describes as 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998, Wenger *et al.*, 2002) what may be thought of as an institutionalized field of practice. Wenger also argues that whilst such communities are shaped by 'external mandate' they must be viewed as a product of its participants. Whilst this is not to say that 'they cannot be influenced, manipulated, duped, intimidated, exploited, debilitated, misled or coerced into submission; nor… that they cannot be inspired, helped, supported, enlightened, unshackled, or empowered… the individual community where the practice of education occurs, is the product of its members.' (Wenger, 1998, p.90). It is, to paraphrase Wenger, the community that negotiates its enterprise and in this sense they remain an 'indigenous enterprise' (Wenger, 1998, p.79). Recent government policy initiatives, formalized through 'the 2012 regulations' (Department for Education, 2012), appears to contribute to the paradox. By turns it encourages the development of institutional autonomy through the development of changed funding arrangements and organizational structures whist strengthening centralized control. The level of actual and perceived autonomy experienced by

schools and the manner in which this is enacted on a daily basis is the site of persistent conflict (Griffiths *et al.*, 2010) and it is in these conflicts that the tensions of the research participant's lives are played out.

As Kirsty moved from her first school placement she took with her a conceptual model of 'school' based upon her earlier experiences both as a pupil and as from her first school placements. She now found herself in a different school community whose mores had been negotiated locally and were played out differently. The placement took place in a Federated school, an organizational form created as part of the government initiative noted above. As Kirsty explained, during the placement she rapidly realised that there were significant differences between the rhetorical claims made by the head teacher of the 'freedom to experiment' and 'take risks', to 'try things out' when she first arrived and the reality of that which she encountered. The Federated school was composed of two previously independent schools. As is often the case in such federations, this had been formed from an amalgamation of a larger school deemed more successful in terms of inspection by Ofsted inspectors, with a smaller and less successful school. We will see this arrangement again played out in Caroline's story. Kirsty was placed in the larger school. The head teacher was 'demanding', always requiring 'all of the work completed by children to be marked by the end of break time, all work completed after break to be marked by the end of lunch time and all work completed in the afternoon to be marked by the time staff went home'. The routine of plan work, teach work, mark work in an endless cycle seemed at variance with model of education which Kirsty sought.

The pressure from outside school, narrativised in terms of raising and maintaining standards is differently negotiated in individual communities. The performance management culture represents what Stephen Ball calls 'endogenous privatisation' that is a culture drawing its ideas and practices from the private sector in order to appear more businesslike' (Ball, 2008, p.51), is seen in increasing numbers of schools. He goes on to suggest that this approach 'invites and incites us to make ourselves more effective, to work on ourselves, to improve ourselves and feel guilty if we do not' but does so within a framework of judgment imposed from outside and judged against external measures of quality imposed from outside. Its success, as Ball continues, is when it is 'inside our heads and inside our souls' for it is at this point that we cease to consider it as an external imposition, regarding it as simply the way things are. In Bourdieu's terms it is a misrecognition of the relative and arbitrary.

However, whilst such external pressures and institutional requirements remain the same, how they are enacted in individual school settings differs significantly. So as we read the stories of the participants we see individuals not simply struggling to come to terms with direct external pressures, but with their differing manifestations acted out in individual school contexts. In the stories of some research participants we see a stories of confident head teachers and mentors openly acknowledging the pressures that they feel from outside, but as openly trying to, in one participant's words, 'act as a cushion' between such outside pressures and the trainee and new teacher. This function of the mentor is discussed further in Anna's story. However, for Kirsty the head teacher of the school appeared less willing to or less capable of translating the pressures they themselves clearly felt from outside agencies into effective school procedures or positive human interactions. On the contrary they appeared to act as a conduit directly transferring these pressure to the lowest and most vulnerable element in the school hierarchy, the trainee teacher.

> She'd come in halfway through the day, just walk in and pick up the stuff on your desk and just slam it down and then just walk out and you're like..? but I'm *teaching*..!

The act of 'slam[ming] it down and just walk[ing] out' – said with clear emphasis in the recording on the word 'just', was clearly viscerally felt.

The experience in the placement school was thrown into stark relief for Kirsty when she visited the smaller school of the pair where she found the atmosphere to be 'just so different'. There was less emphasis on the constant working/marking cycle. She was able to do the 'trying out' the 'risk taking' that she clearly felt to be an important element of her practice. The experience, painful as it seemed at the time did help her to focus on her own sense of what type of teacher she wanted to be. She reflected on the experience in order to contrast it with both her final trainee experience and a notable comment made by the head teacher of the first school to which she applied:

> My final placement was amazing they let me do a lot of 'tryouts' a lot of things which really helped whereas when I went for th[e first] job he (the head teacher) said 'We are a white British middle class school and if you don't like it, don't apply.'
> … and I [thought] okay. I've had Sir Isaac Newton on 'Crazy Talk' talking to my children in a question and answer session and I sat there [thinking] 'I don't think he would allow me to do this… I've had children running around the playground measuring things I don't think he'd allow me to do this so maybe… that negative experience of knowing what it could be like made me straight away go, no, I'm not applying here!

Kirsty determined she said that some types of school, 'were just not for me'.

Treading on eggshells

Whilst there were very clear pressures on Kirsty, pressure to work and operate in a particularly prescriptive manner in the classroom, the placement revealed Kirsty's ability to pragmatically negotiate around the boundaries of an experience in order to maximize the outcome for herself. The placement had taken place in an increasingly severe winter. As the weather deteriorated students were instructed by the university officials to use their discretion and only to travel if safe to do so. Most students with cars were by their nature not experienced drivers and particularly not experienced in driving in such extreme conditions.

> My second year placement was like threading on egg shells because I went with a person to begin with and then it snowed and the uni told us not to go if we didn't feel like it was safe and the person who was driving me because I was a passenger, didn't feel it was safe so we emailed and phoned the school to see if they were opening and there was no reply and this was all like six o'clock in the morning and then it turned out so we couldn't go in, the trains weren't working there was no way we could have got there because it's in Sittingbourne so it's quite far away and we got a snotty email from the head telling us that it was unprofessional, she wouldn't have employed us as a teacher and that she practically didn't want us back and so we had all this sorted out and I just emailed back look I'm really sorry and if you want to like dump the person who's driving me in but I physically couldn't get there any other way, the trains were closed, my driver wasn't driving me and I had no other means of transport, whereas the person I was with sent back an email saying well you should have told us this, this, this and this and it ended up that, that person was chucked out but I wasn't.
>
> We had two emails, one was like 'Oh that's amazing thank you Kirsty for doing this we really hope to see you next term.'. Whereas the other person's was, like, 'Like you're not coming back, we don't want you.'.

SELF:

> So you?...

Kirsty:

> So… I had to then go in pretending like I didn't know anything and that everything was fine and then ended up having a car crash half way through that one as well and then not being there for a week and then having to come back and do an extra week and getting the train and taxis, it all just added up to being... yeah, it was a difficult placement.

Whilst critics of Bourdieu have suggested that his conceptualization of the relationship between practice and the habitus appears to limit an individual's agency within a given field this appears not to have been the case in this instance. The placement may have been 'difficult', but the manner in which Kirsty negotiated around the experience and called on well-developed social skills including feigned ignorance, demonstrated an implicit understanding of the micro-politics of the social situation. As Bryan Cunningham suggests us, 'Experience is a brutal teacher, but you

learn fast' (Nicholson, 1990 in, Cunningham, 2008a, p.161). She appears to have shown an ability to have done just that. Perhaps we see in her capacity to negotiate the dangerous terrain of this particular field using an example of what Bourdieu would refer to as 'practical sense' or the 'logic of practice', what we often describe as having a 'feel for the game'. So whilst the ' bad player is always off tempo, always too early or too late, the good player is the one who *anticipates*, who is ahead of the game. Why can she get ahead of the flow of the game? Because she has the immanent tendencies of the game in her body in an incorporated state: she embodies the game.' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.80). Whether we could claim so much for Kirsty is less certain, but we do remember the first mentor's description of her 'being a natural' and we do know that, unlike the student ('the bad player') with whom she was placed failed to play the game with skill and whose placement was consequently terminated, Kirsty appeared to demonstrate an implicit understanding of the the rules and a capacity to get ahead of the game. Perhaps we see in this, a fledgling capacity to enact successful strategies in her individual project of eventually becoming the teacher that she wants to be?

Falling into a job

The school to which Kirsty had been appointed as an NQT was in, as she described before taking up the post as:

> …a small village school in Hempstead which is actually more of a mixed area, I thought it was more of an affluent area, but they've got... she (the head teacher) told me they've got social housing in one end but they've got the complete up market million pound houses at the other end so she says you have quite a mix.

For Kirsty this came as something of a relief. She had recently completed a final placement in a inner-city school which had the associated range of social and behavioural challenges. She had done well in that school had 'learnt a great deal from my mentor who was brilliant' and was finally graded as 'outstanding'. She began her job believing that it would be 'interesting' and a 'good grounding' but not 'as challenging as my final year placement in […] not as diverse'. Despite the fact that she had 'enjoyed having that cheekiness and sometimes the behaviour that you had to [say], 'That's enough',' she looked forward to a situation where she could concentrate on getting the practicalities of teaching, assessment, planning..:

> …all in order and teach children without worrying about things like (referring back to her final placement) having parents that maybe can't come and pick them up because

> they've been arrested or they're in prison for the night or because they are like alcoholics and things like that and I think that would be quite nice to maybe do that …

She then appears to draw on her second placement to suggest a possible gap between rhetoric and reality,

> …but then obviously you don't know what happens behind closed doors so it may be completely different when I get there.

Her concern was, as might be expected with a first post related to the practicalities of teaching, on getting classroom practice 'all in order'. She spoke excitedly of her new job and her delight in the manner of her appointment, that she did not have an interview for the job but had been simply offered it when simply paying a pre-application visit to the school:

> I went for a school visit and then the job came up that day and she just offered it to me then and there which was amazing really, I just literally went round and she (the head teacher) was like, 'Can I be straight with you? Put all my cards on the table? I've got a Year four job. Do you want it?'
>
> I was like, 'Yes please!'.

This was clearly a relief, she was aware from discussions with her friends that there was a great deal of competition for first teaching posts but this one seemed to have everything she wanted. It was near her home where, because of finance she would need to live, it was close to pre-university friends but more than this it was a boost to her confidence after an earlier interview experience. In this she and a male candidate had got to the last round, to the last pair but 'the man got it'. She had been told that her teaching had been 'great' but that her interview had been 'rubbish'. Whilst it is was unlikely that that the interviewers had used such a term, it clearly indicates her visceral reaction to what was clearly for her a personal rather than simply a professional rejection. Though she had demonstrated her innate 'practical sense' to negotiate around obstacles during a difficult second placement, Kirsty appears less attuned to the wider politics of schools and the way in which these may impact upon her. Problems which she experienced during her first year became inextricably linked to the context and manner of her appointment and an issue to which she returned in our final interview a year later.

Finding a quiet space

As I will note later in my own story, on meeting Kirsty in school I immediately noticed a change in demeanour. The bubbly, enthusiastic young woman I knew from

university seemed cowed and was from the first moments of the interview tearful. She was 'so glad' that I had been able to come as 'she really wanted to talk…' She now set the temper of the first part of our discussion by continuing '(but) first we had better meet the staff'. I was told to 'prepare my(self) for the staff room as, it's a place for ladies and babies'. Whilst schools may have moved some way from the prevalent view which marked my early years in teaching, that:

> no country should pride itself on its educational system if the teaching profession has become predominantly a world of women.
>
> (The Year Book of Education, 1963 in Burn, 2002)

The issue of the percentage of male teachers in primary schools (approximately 25% in 2012) remains an issue of constant and current debate. Usually presented in terms of boys' underperformance which can only be countered by increasing the number of male teachers in schools, simple stereotypes remain prevalent. An advertising campaign run by the Teacher Training Agency in the late 1990s used the slogan "Every Good Boy Deserves Football." (TTA advertisement, 1999) and in so doing both: made the simplistic link between football, male teachers and boys' motivation and emphasized the manner in which 'dominant masculinities are constructed in primary schools' (Burn, 2002, p.2). Perhaps the current Teacher Agency campaign is marginally less crude than that which went before? Perhaps. Though still theorized in terms of raising boys' attainment through the 'common sense' policy of 'getting more men into teaching', it is now done through the development of Employment Based Training routes (EBITT) and incentives presented as privileging male students. Training Bursaries of £5 000 for a 2.1 and £9 000 for a first, pre-Training Experience programmes in which male students are placed with 'outstanding male teachers' and the promise of rapid promotion to managerial posts. The most recent TA website uses an example teacher, Darren McCann who became a deputy head teacher after seven years teaching, as an example of such a career path. It appears that both male students and boys need male-teacher role models and that the place of the male in school is no longer on the playing field but in a position of dominance in a managerial role. In this most recent advertising campaign which is linked to a policy document entitled 'Improving the quality of teaching and leading' and held on a website with the illuminating URL of:

> https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-numbers-of-men-teaching-in-primary-schools-but-more-still-needed

and its success in increasing the percentage of male trainees in training with the fatuous data-claim-bite that:

> Latest data from the Teaching Agency (TA) shows more men are becoming primary school teachers. The number of male trainee primary teachers has increased by more than 50% in the last 4 years and has grown at 5 times the rate of women.
>
> (Teacher Agency, 2013)

Kirsty and I had discussed the privileging of male student colleagues in a first interview. The perceived ease with which many were appointed and their often expressed assertion in university that they would be promoted. It had been the 'glass escalator' of promotion for men in majority female profession (Williams, 1992, p.253, Snyder and Green, 2008) that Kirsty felt was the reason why she had not been appointed after her first interview and why the job had gone to a man and clearly a man who fitted the stereotype required by the male head teacher who interviewed her. Yet whilst she resented the privileging of males in primary schools she also thought that their absence changed the dynamic in the staffroom. Perhaps this is true or perhaps an example of what George Orwell famously termed doublethink (Orwell, 1949) or yet again an accepted part of the 'taken for grantedness' of the habitus, (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.142). Whichever, for Kirsty this was part of her reality:

> I think you know this is a school full of ladies because [of] the way we work and the way we don't… because I think men just get on with things a lot easier that women, whereas we like to have a chat and ask everyone if they are okay with everything before we just go on and do it.

The nature of gender stereotyping and what factors set the dynamic of the staffroom is outside of the scope of this study, but for Kirsty at this point this was her perception. But more criticality for what was to follow the extent to which the staff actually 'ask [/ed if] everyone was okay' or whether this was simply a hoped for reality became a central theme of our second meeting.

Primary schools are usually small institutions lacking flexible non-teaching rooms. With each of the other participants however, a space had been set aside in advance for the purpose of the interview but this school presented a particularly hectic and noisy environment. As we started the interview, the children and staff had moved into the school hall where an assembly was being led by the local vicar. Kirsty told me that his teaching technique seemed to be to get the children 'high and then send them back to the classrooms to be calmed down'. From the volume of noise which could be heard

reverberating around the school, this seemed to be an accurate description. We found a space and started the interview but after a short time abandoned the room due to the noise. We moved further away from the hall to find an alternative but this was also soon abandoned. Moving to the furthest corner of the school we found a third place. Whilst quieter, it was a utility space used to house the photocopier and boxes of fruit as part of the school's 'Healthy Eating' initiative and so the the room was in constant use. Eventually we abandoned even this space and completed the interview whilst walking around the school, as a consequence this multiple-part interview seemed somewhat furtive and marked by a general lack of privacy.

Acting on advice

The Teaching Standards against which Kirsty and her contemporaries had been assessed during their time in university and supposedly during their NQT year make specific reference to the student's willingness to:

> Act upon advice and feedback and be open to coaching and mentoring.
> (Teacher Development Agency, 2007, Q9)

Whilst the preceding standard couches this within a more critical framework:

> Have a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation,
> being prepared to adapt practice where benefits and improvements are identified.
> (ibid., Q8)

For many schools it appears that it is the single capacity of students and NQTs to 'act on' that is a feature of their mentoring activities.

In the weeks leading up to this interview I had been involved in the writing of student references each of which required the reading and synthesis of numerous mentor observations and reports. During this process I noted that it was student's perceived willingness to 'seek and act on advice' that was always remarked upon even when such advice was clearly limited and context-specific rather than generalizable to the student's future settings. At no point did it seem that the former standard requiring a capacity to demonstrate a 'creatively critical approach', carrying as it does the implicit assumption that advice may be rejected, figure in comments. Nor did it appear that the extent to which such 'acting on advice' either beneficially changed or modified classroom activity was also rarely remarked upon. This may have been because the standard is perceived as paying lip-service to criticality at a time when teaching pedagogies are centrally imposed or perhaps it is the act of

compliance marked by the acceptance of advice which is really on show here. Goffman suggests that organizational teams establish and maintain their identities. Through a range of devices, one such is the knowledge of various forms of *insider secrets* which team's are privy to and which they use to 'sustain the(ir) definition of the situation (or the) context in which they perform (Goffman, 1990). The possession of such secrets allow teams to mark their territorial boundaries by establishing who is inside and, more importantly still, who is outside the team. Thus the *seeking-advice* act may be seen as a performance of role in which, whether the advice is acted upon is less important than that it has been sought. It may also be that the cultural significance of the secret may remain so inside the team's consciousness that its deeper emotional significance is hidden from, or not spoken of, by the team itself. The act of *seeking-advice* act may become an end in itself; the ritual grooming which functions as a sign of compliance with, and an acceptance of a team's hierarchical structure. What is problematic within this is that such teams in seeking organizational stability simply achieve creative stasis. Arbitrary practice is not questioned and formulaic responses predominate. Things which have always been done in this way become the intractable mean. For Kirsty the importance of the visible marker of compliance became a central theme of her first teaching year.

Being an NQT and the power of un-naming

As with Anna, we see in Kirsty's story, the way in which the act of naming, more accurately the withholding of name or the unnaming individuals, can voice deeply held and unspoken attitudes. When I first contacted the school to arrange the interview I had been told that the head teacher was busy because she had only recently been appointed. It was not until I arrived in the school and met Kirsty that the significance of this became clear. The school's head had left a year before, had been replaced but after two terms the replacement also left under circumstances that remained unclear. Kirsty had been told not to ask about it and so it was a question unanswered because it remained unasked. More importantly for Kirsty's story was the fact that the newly appointed head teacher had spent her entire career in the school. Coming first as a Newly Qualified Teacher, she was appointed to various posts of responsibility eventually becoming the school's deputy. This was an unusual career path as deputy head teachers are rarely promoted to headship within the same school. The roles though seemingly complimentary are viewed in most schools to be

fundamentally different. Relationships between school staff at various points within the school hierarchy are territorially marked sometimes in subtle but at other times in quite overt ways. The change of staff and obvious turmoil that this had caused within the school had resulted in the ex-deputy now head teacher's class having had five teachers in the previous year. The changes were however not confined to the ranks of senior managers. A small group of staff remained permanent but around them many others had been recently appointed but had rapidly moved on to other schools or out of teaching all together. For Kirsty the changes and consequent hierarchical reordering was to become brutally apparent.

Before the interview Kirsty had focused her concerns on her age and perceived immaturity. She had spoken about meetings that she had had with parents when a trainee, parents with children of her own age. Other participants had expressed the same concern, the fear of not being taken seriously. In retrospect this had not been the problem which Kirsty thought that it might. Reflecting on a recent meeting with parents she said, '(well) I thought, they are your children at home but I know more about **your** children in school, so I have things to say'. The evening had been an apparent success, but the issue of age and perceived immaturity had found a different focus. What she saw as the *real* issue was the use of the term *Newly* in the designation 'Newly Qualified Teacher'. She said with real passion:

> I am an adult… I know I am not living on my own, paying bills and have children, but... I don't know... I think that you sometimes get treated like you are... … it's the **N** in NQT, it's the name, it just has a connotation…

But the connation and the use of the name was not for her universal, it was specific to her own dealings with the head teacher:

> My head said she was called NQT until… like her fourth year of teaching... to all her friends she is **still** known as NQT because she is friends with older people. That's what they still call her.

Being described as an NQT may be presented as marking nothing other than a common-sense factually accurate description of a specific career point. Yet it appears more than this. The use of the term, with particular emphasis on the 'Newly', appears as an example of what Panofsky noted as 'a spatio-temporal structure, the cosmos culture (1990, p.141) for the designation steps outside of the immediate context and places the individual both within both a category and within a relationship with others. Thus the conceptualization of a *Newly Qualified Teacher* in England in 2013

is a time and space specific designation locating the individual within an historical framework; a framework governed by pre-specified descriptors of individual performance. For this group this *temporal-relationship* of themselves to the educational field (that this is a first stage and a stage through which they needs pass), and a *spatial-relationship* (that they are positioned within an educational hierarchy) was emphasized for them at one of their final university lectures where they were told that they needed to come to terms with the fact that:

//'teaching is a ladder that you have to climb, and you are starting at the bottom rung.'//

In these few words we see operationalized the *misrecognition* and assertion as objective truth, that which is an arbitrary human designation. The metaphor of 'the ladder' that represents the linear nature of career progression ties the individual's worth directly to their position in the school's hierarchical structure and in so doing plays a part in minimizing the new entrant's value through their relation to their organizational position. That the linkage is accepted unquestioningly represents the *symbolic violence* 'which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity'. Such violence encompasses all of those acts (naming and positioning in relation to the hierarchy, being treated as an inferior, the denial of resources, a limiting of voice in decision-making) which are designed both consciously and unconsciously, to maintain systems and are perceived by the recipient not as arbitrary manifestations of the habitus but part of the 'natural order of things', simply the way things are and work (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus the seemingly descriptive term is used to position the individual firmly within a structure inflexibly based on age, a structure where the term NQT was used to pinion the individual constantly at the entry level of the group. We see in the interview the manner in which the position of new entrant was imposed on Kirsty and exposed the structuring which occurs within the school. It is as René Char suggested that we see 'the sprit of the castle in its drawbridge.' (René Char in, Bourdieu, 1990a).

It is clear also that as the interview progressed Kirsty was struggling to reflexively make sense of what was happening to her. She constantly - often within the same sentence – reflected negatively on the inflexible structure of the school then rationalized this in terms of assumed attributes of gender, things she had or hadn't done, or the circumstances of her appointment. Whether she was making the justification to me or to herself remains a matter of conjecture. So, when talking about

the atmosphere in the staff room she began with a positive note but quickly modified what she said:

> Oh it's nice… *but* we are also a school of women, so there *are* going to be pockets of people who have known each other for longer… and clashing personalities.

She reflected on her earlier email and the reason why the interview had been postponed:

> because it [the school) is small, everyone is very.. boxed, everyone has **their** thing that **they** are in charge of… when that person leaves, then that box opens up, that is the box you are filling, there is no kind of cross over, so I know that I will be taking on PE responsibility from September because … that's the box that needs filling, the person left…I don't know whether they knew that I did a lot of PE, so *maybe* that's why.

It is clear re-listening to the recording that she was not convinced she had been asked to take responsibility for a subject that she had capacity for was anything other than chance. Indeed whilst she had personal interest in physical education it was not what Kirsty wanted to do or rather, it was not all that she wanted to do. Her specialism was in ICT and this is where she both wanted to focus her attention on and by observation saw was under-developed in school. Perhaps more importantly for her was the seemingly arbitrary manner in which the decision had been taken; it was this which annoyed her most. To be simply instructed that this was what 'the school' needed she reasoned was not enough. It was the lack of negotiation, the lack of what she saw as individual respect that conflicted with her intended preferred method of operating. When talking about herself and the priorities that she had set for her class these had not been centred on subject specific areas but more widely on the development of individual responsibilities, of treating children as individuals and cherishing their individual talents – these were the attributes to which she constantly referred. Yet here she was, despite her age and living arrangements, a self-proclaimed adult, an NQT who put her own stress on the word *Qualified* rather than the word *Newly*. It was at this point of the interview that the tears began to flow.

That Kristy felt this way is perhaps neither unusual nor unexpected. Trond Hague reminds us that 'Learning to teach is a personal, complex and context-specific task' (Day, 1999). We might add that it is a task which demands the investment of both time, effort and emotional capital, this was not an enterprise that any of the participants had entered into lightly and for each the act of teaching represented a values stance. So it was that Kirsty had introduced the use of audio recording into her class and used this to enable children to record and reflect on their feelings.

Describing this as, 'not radical but it's something they are not used to', she went on to explain that:

> by now my children if they can't get on with each other they are not going to, so we might as well just focus on... to show children that there is not just one answer to everything in the world, so actually if that person tells you to go away because they don't like you or why because it's not a bad thing, is there a reason for that? Rather than, well they told me that. So what? What are you going to do about it? Rather than sit there for an hour afterwards and try and talk about what they have all said about each other, because it just wastes time.

I wondered later whether Kirsty's in involvement the research had in some way influenced her choice of this teaching approach, the choice of audio recording to support reflection? Whether this was the case I do not know, but it was clear that Kirsty and Anna were in electronic contact via their shared Facebook sites and both were incorporating reflective audio diaries with their classes. Frustratingly though for Kirsty was the encouragement which Anna received in her own school which stood in stark contrast to the indifference she felt in her own.

As this interview progressed Kirsty's use of metaphors became plain, more uncompromising and linked often to physical acts. She described the feeling of being 'thrown into the classroom' and variously 'knocked' and 'kicked back'. She contrasted the supportive and encouraging nature of her school mentor during final placement gave her the desire to impress, to take responsibility, to do more than was required. But this school was different.

> You come in as like (the) bottom of the pile and you have to remember that everyone's above you rather then when you are a student and you think that everyone is an equal and you have this nice mentality that everyone is an equal, and I think it does work in schools, but only when you start at the bottom, because I think I started too high and got kicked to the bottom.

By the end of her first term the situation in school became increasingly tense. In a traumatic meeting Kirsty's school mentor suggested that:

> (I) was (seen to be) taking over and that I was really upsetting people, which you don't want to hear as a teacher and kind of completely kicked me right to the bottom of the pile and to the point where I was like oh I don't want to do this anymore, because I think the first term is hard anyway because you have prepared like all these fun lessons and you realise that actually you don't have time to prepare all these snazzy Smart Boards every day but actually having a blank Smart Board and going where the children take you is actually far better than having all these snazzy Smart Boards... I think that I probably came across as overconfident, but I am the kind of person that thinks right I don't know where the paper is for tomorrow's lesson, so I'll get in ten minutes early and have a look, whereas this kind of school, well the school I am in, expects you to ask, and I think that's all I have done my second term is ask, and actually everyone responds much better being asked like you need their help, whereas I was trying to make sure that I didn't look like the NQT who didn't know anything, so I

came in and found out for myself because that's how I learn as well, like try it, if it doesn't work then never mind, whereas like when I was doing paperwork, I might not have done it to the best of my ability because I did what I thought was right rather than asking someone what they did.

And here we have a return to Kirsty's seemingly natural feeling for the game…

Whereas this term, I think after my mentor told me that, I had to completely rethink how I was teaching and how I was coming across, because she said to me it's not your teaching that's our problem, and I was like right, and then when my NQT target was to work as a team and to listen to people, I felt... I don't know, it was a horrible feeling; it was awful, because I'd say that's one of my stronger points, working as a team.

And certainly reading earlier reports of her work in university and schools this had been a particular feature noted by previous mentors. However, the generic capacity to work as a team member is however not the same as the capacity to work in a specific team for, recalling again Wenger, all school teams are indigenous enterprises. The situation came to a head shortly before my visit:

I was trying so hard not to show any tears or anything, and it got to... I had three... two observations in one week and it just turned out that the head wanted to do a surprise one, and I already had one booked in and then like… stuff happened, and at home… I was just tired and it was the end of term, and it got to the point I just thought I am not ready for this observation, I just sat there in the staffroom and just ended up in tears to which the deputy head kind of scooped me up and was like go home.. go to sleep.. its fine, and I think from then I think everyone has been a bit like.. okay, she is human after all.

Kirsty's rationalization of the mentor's comments were externalized and in part focused on the size of the school; she suggested that if the school were larger individuals may have been expected to be more independent. She offered no justification for this view, perhaps she was drawing a direct parallel with the much larger school of her final placement, the school where she had been allowed leeway to 'try things out'. Possible distinctions between being a student during a placement and a member of a teaching team was not one she considered.

Yet as she had demonstrated in her earlier nervous encounters with parents and the setbacks during her second placement she recognised implicitly that:

Teaching is a public practice which can be compared with the practice of acting since it necessarily involves a constant vigilance towards one's audience, efforts to imagine how one is coming across, and evaluation of whether one's attempts at communication are being understood as intended.
(Warin *et al*., 2006, p.234)

So by the time of our interview she had worked out a clear strategy to demonstrate her 'ability to work as a member of the team'. In future she had decided not to 'so

readily volunteer an opinions' but decided rather 'to ask questions and look for advice', even though she may already know the answers to the questions and would not necessarily, she confided, act on the advice given. So by overtly playing the game and acceding to her seemingly prescribed role as a novice teacher, 'was' she said, 'simply a way to go… (and now) I get on much better (with the staff)… I am so much happier now… I have settled much more…'.

A change of views

By the end of her first year of teaching time however her viewed had changed. Indeed during the course of our final meeting we appear to see that change made evident. The final interview was carried out back in university when Kirsty and Caroline had been invited to come to speak with then current final year students. They were joined by a third student, one of their contemporaries but one who had not been a part of the research group, Hannah. The three relaxed together, the cross-currents of their conversation flowed easily as they questioned each other, picked up on conversational threads and prompted for additional replies. In her discussions with students Kirsty returned to the manner of her appointment and the way in which she felt that this had influenced subsequent events. She described her delight to have got a job but now regretted that the lack of a formal interview and observation of her teaching meant that the head teacher had 'never seen the way (she) taught' nor understood her approach. For her this had been a continuing problem.

In private she confided that her concern had deepened when she had found out more of the wider circumstances of her appointment. Unknown to Kirsty she had been recommended to her current head by the head teacher of a neighbouring school, a head teacher who had both interviewed Kirsty earlier and one who had taught Kirsty as a pupil in secondary school. The offer of the job had therefore not been quite the spontaneous event that she first thought. She explained that:

> I kind of fell into the job, came to look around and she said yes, here we are, have a job, and I was like okay, and I think that has definitely actually probably one of the reasons why I had a bit of trouble (at first), because they didn't see me teach, they didn't see how I was and I don't know whether they saw whether I would gel with people so it's kind of been an 'into the frying pan straight into the fire'.

> [It] Wasn't as helpful in the first term because at least the head would have seen how you worked and how you taught so even if I didn't do well in the interview, I mean she has spoken to someone who had interviewed me and said that I... and had spoken fondly of me, so it wasn't completely out of the blue but the other school hadn't seen

me teach either, so nobody saw me teach before I started my job, which is also a lot of pressure on me, which is mainly why I didn't ask …

So it was in a muddle of expectations and language confusions that, what had at first seen as a simple job opportunity, became for Kirsty the focus of her initial distress. By being appointed without formal interview and without being observed, Kirsty felt that she simply had not proved herself to the head teacher and that she may have expectations of her that she could not meet. Looking back on her appointment she thought that it:

> It was handed to me thinking that I was going to be good, and I had got 'outstanding' on my placement, which also I don't think has boded well because there is always something you can learn, and I know that even with my 'outstanding' placement, that you come into school and I think they see you as 'outstanding' and think right we need to show her that actually... not that she's not, but just put me into my place.

The grading of 'outstanding' so sought after as a student now appeared as a burden.

I have noted how Stephen Brookfield has drawn attention to the manner in which language can be both 'reified' and 'evacuated' of meaning; the re-definition of 'outstanding' in an educational context appears another. Whilst used in common speech to represent a quality or performance which stands out from that of others of its kind, it is now used in English educational settings to glibly mark the expected daily performance of all students and all teachers in all places and at all times. Used therefore as both a moving descriptor of student and teacher performance in which 'good' has been replaced by 'outstanding' and 'good' has replaced 'satisfactory' and 'satisfactory' now equates to 'poor and unacceptable', the possibility of confusion is clear. This was the case for Kirsty who had been graded as 'outstanding' at the end of her training. Whilst she had sought to achieve the grade, had been encouraged to do so and was pleased that she had, in her view the grading was problematic. She reasoned, how could she be seen as 'outstanding' when she clearly had so much left to learn? More importantly, how would the grading shape the judgment of her by others? Did the grade signal to other people that she was, or more importantly, that she thought that she was, something that they clearly felt she was not?

Whilst the original assumption on the part of central government was that students meeting the pre-requisite standards of performance would then neatly transfer to schools ready to build upon and develop such standards within a full-time teaching context, this was clearly not the case here. Indeed, what marked each of the participants was an apparent disconnection of their grading in university and their

continued development in school. Rather than a fluid transition from training to teaching there appeared a strict separation between the two.

The carefully collected evidence gathered during training, the reports written and the targets set at the end of their university programme seemed to have no place at the start of her teaching phase, they were never looked at and never formed part of any discussion. In a manner which appears reminiscent of the traditional plateauing effect of pupil progress on transfer from primary to secondary education, we see not consolidation and a building-on but a re-starting. Performance in the training may it seems have given them the right to teach but their pre-appointment experiences appeared to lack other than profession-entry value. For Kirsty her grading might she reasoned, signify to others that she had or felt that had, 'nothing left to learn' and in so doing put her into a vulnerable position where she had therefore to be '… put into (her) place'.

The use of Facebook added to her sense of vulnerability.

In the weeks before our interview one of her friends, a fellow student from her tutor group at university, who had also been graded as 'outstanding' and who Kirsty described as, 'a really.. a really excellent early years teacher', resigned and left teaching. Citing the pressures of working in a school which had been similarly graded as 'outstanding' during a school inspection had she said become unbearable. Her resignation and the reasons she gave for it were rapidly shared between her Facebook Friends. The stories she told across the site seemed familiar to Kirsty and too reminiscent of her second school placement.

She concluded, 'If she is forced to leave, what hope is there for me?'.

Seeking alternative explanations[11]

The pressures in her own school seemed also to be rising as the new head teacher began to impose a number of organizational changes. Kirsty described how a Senior Management Team (SMT) had been formed but that this was disproportionally large. The school now had an SMT of five in a school of eight full-time teachers. Kirsty and her mentor were not members of this newly appointed inner team. Rather, the group consisted of the older teachers, all of whom had been in the school when the head had been first appointed to the school as an NQT. The head had also appointed a new

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[11] The following section is based on the transcript of a final interview, carried out in a group comprising Kirsty and two other research participants, Hannah and Caroline.

deputy, but this appointment was described with particular scorn and derision, 'she appointed her best friend – surprise'.

New programmes of work and new administrative procedures were devised by the SMT and introduced but with neither explanation nor consultation leaving the remaining three teachers who were not part of the inner team she said, feeling excluded from the decision making with actions 'done to them not with them'. What particularly upset her she said was that this ought to have been an opportunity for her to learn the wider work of the school, 'how things get done'. She was now required to hand her plans and sample marking in to a member of the SMT, who checked it and returned but did so with little comment. For Kirsty it was seen as a clearly missed developmental opportunity and stands in contrast to the approach related by Anna in response to a similar school-wide issue.

The exclusion of her mentor from the SMT had a direct impact on Kirsty as the mentor '… resigned and decided to *take a year out* and go travelling'. The resignation was first seen in the terms of a lost future friendship and a growing sense of isolation.

> (the mentor) is the only one of my age (and) of my opinion, (I had begun) to get to know her as a friend, not just a colleague… until now she has been writing reports (about me), judging me. Whereas today I am just coming out of my NQT year so I would have been able to work with her as a friend.

Whether the mentor's resignation was in direct or indirect response to a perceived act of marginalization we do not know, but it clearly brought about a change in their relationship. It moved rapidly from that of judgmental mentor-mentee to one which was more collegial. In school the two shared plans and ideas, they discussed things that they would like to try out in their classes and problems which they had had. The two friends and began to socialize out of school where they met at least once a week. In these discussions the mentor, seemingly freed of her supervisory and accrediting role, became overtly critical of the head teacher, the school's organizational structure and its approach to learning. Of the latter she said that it had one which she had been expected to promote even though she disagreed with it. Kirsty had thought earlier that '(the mentor) is the only one… [sharing] my opinions' which she characterized at another time as, a creative approach to teaching, one without such firm subject boxes.

It appears that Kirsty here makes a binary distinction between friendship and judgmental mentor whose decisions govern a single-state passage from NQT to teacher. It may be that in this she was accepting or simply voicing the school-centric

concept of states and stages, of the roles and boxes to which she referred in an earlier interview. Clearly missing from such a view is any wider notion of the 'learning professional' (Guile and Lucas, 1999) or any 'shared vision' of teacher professionalism (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996) which is so important in the development of a learning community, a view was which reflected in Kirsty's own earlier remark that 'we are all learning all the time'. We could suggest that 'the rigid structuralism which appeared to mark the head teacher's managerial practices may have been a consequence of her own vulnerabilities and personal perceived need to negotiate her legitimacy as a manager' (Møller in Day, 1999, p.210), the development of such an idiosyncratic Senior Management Team speaks to this view as does her unusual career trajectory. However, such musings are outside of the scope of this current research as I did not undertake an ethnographic study and was not embedded within the school.

What is clear though is that Kirsty's focus for her earlier problems in school changed as a result of the mentor's decision. She no longer felt that they were to do with her own perceived inadequacies and inability to work as a team member. Nor were they a response to the circumstances of her appointment and a consequent '… need to put her in her place'. Now the problems were seen as an issue related to school organization. She was put into her place not because of *who* she was but rather *what* she was. She was the NQT and was therefore fitted into a particular role within the school's hierarchy, the role from which the current head teacher had so recently been freed. It may be that this was Kirsty's original insight or alternatively, it may be that she had adopted the mentor's explanation as her own but it was clear that this is how at the time of the interview, how she felt.

However in the final moments of the last interview Kirsty appeared to find a further reason for her problems and one which appeared to strike at a more fundamental sense of her self.

As the three had discussed their schools Kirsty became unusually quiet and began to visibly listen to one of the other participants. They had begun to discuss their experiences of impact of school inspections on the organization of learning in their schools. They were particularly troubled by the manner in which their respective head teachers had responded to the increasing demands of accountability and what they termed 'pupil leveling'. By this they meant the way in which head teachers had set National Curriculum targets for children in their classes.

For both Hannah and Caroline, the two other participants involved in the discussion, these seemed arbitrary and unrealistic. Caroline for example had related the manner in which every child in her class was expected to reach National Curriculum level two by the end of the year even though some pupils with designated Special Educational Needs were working at 'P' levels, that is levels below NC level one.

Hannah took up the theme. She had decided not to go straight into teaching but rather to spend the year working part time to fund her completion of her MA. She related that in one class she had begun to work the ability levels ranged between one child on P scales to others at level 4b. For Hannah whilst this was clearly a challenge it was a challenge which she relished, it was what doing her MA was about. She had found it hard to begin with but after a few weeks she had, she said, managed to develop systems and strategies which allowed her to include all children in class work. For one boy this had been extremely difficult but with support from other colleagues she had been able to differentiate the work and had established appropriate routines. She then went on to recount how the head teacher had visited her class and had been both pleased and amazed at the pupil's progress, remarking that the child was actually sitting at a desk to work.

The conversation began to centre on teacher and school expectations of pupils and the manner in which some children seemed to be dismissed because of their social backgrounds. As Hannah and Caroline told their stories Kirsty who appeared disengaged from the conversation turned to Hannah and asked quietly:

Kirsty:

In your school are all of the teachers of the same kind of background?

Hannah:

[appearing to misunderstand the question and thinking that Kirsty was asking about the age profile of the staff replied]

well the teachers are… *quite* young… non are reaching retirement age.

Kirsty:

No, their *background*.. do they think that the children from the council estate end are less worthy than the children from the other end (of the village) because I know that there is a bit of that at my school… in my school the teachers… (she did not make eye contact with Hannah and then fell silent).

After a short pause Hannah offered:

there was none of that at my school though the staff are very different.

Then Kirsty, speaking almost to herself continued:

> I would say that I am more lower class than a lot of the teachers there…
> … and you don't find that out until you start the job do you?

At this point Kirsty was left to consider an issue more deeply rooted in what Diane Reay has termed 'the zombie stalking educational English schools', that of social class (Reay, 2006, p.288). Drawing on Ulrich Beck (Beck, 2004) Reay argues that social class which, because it is not consciously recognised and rarely discussed, therefore form 'zombie category'. It is a conceptual framework which embodies nineteenth century horizons of experience distilled into *a priori* and analytic classes unconsciously moulding our perceptions and blinding us to the inequalities of social stratification which not only persist but are growing (my paraphrasing).

As we came to the end of the final interview I was left with an unresolved issue. Kirsty appeared at the start of the research to be a seemingly confident student who had entered training through the encouragement of an earlier teacher. During her time in university she had been thought to be 'a natural teacher' and finally to be judged as an 'outstanding' student. Yet her first year in teaching had seemed to be at best problematic and had driven her to the point of resignation. She had at first looked for the root of these difficulties in herself; her school performance, her untested appointment, the consequence of an unwarranted grading that misrepresented her abilities to others. Later she thought that the problems were the consequence of wider school issues, of its organization and hierarchical structure. But at the end she felt that the issues lay in a deeper and critical, but unvoiced judgment made of her by others. The criticism was not of her as a teacher but rather of her as a person. Not of what she was, but rather of who she was. The research may have disclosed or perhaps even constructed an issue. This was not an ethnographic study. I was not embedded in at no time was the head teacher interviewed. I was not embedded in the school, I did not interview the head teacher nor mentor. Any resolution lay beyond the research frame and lay not in infantilizing Kirsty in looking for resolutions to an apparent problem, but rather in recognising that in her individual struggle we see our own daily struggle. Kirsty's story is Kirsty's alone. But in Kirsty's story we see reflected both our individual and our collective search for agency.

BOOKEND TWO

As the participants had taken up their posts in school and the location of their narratives changed, I had become more aware of the debates around the place of Bourdieu's concepts in educational research.

Diane Reay had questioned what she saw as 'the contemporary research fashion of overlaying research analyses with Bourdieu's concepts' but had used this opening gambit as a device to conclude that 'Paradoxically the conceptual looseness of habitus also constitutes a potential strength. It makes possible adaption rather than the more constricting straightforward adoption of the concept within empirical work.' (Reay, 2004, p.442). Her paper needs to be read in light of Tooley and Derby's earlier critique of current educational research (Tooley and Darby, 1998), which had dismissed the usefulness of Bourdieu and, as Roy Nash points out, Lyotard and Foucault for good measure (Nash, 1999, p.175) but reserved their harshest criticism for Reay's (1995) work dubbing it an example of [to paraphrase] research activities which indulged in the questionable 'adulation' of 'great' thinkers' who on the basis of the research examined had little to contribute to the educational enterprise (Tooley and Darby, 1998, p.74). The irony of this would no doubt not have been lost on Bourdieu himself who had previously warned (in an interview with Beate Kraise) that 'one should not be afraid to encourage a systematic prejudice against all fashionable ideas' (Adkins, 2011, Álvarez Benavides, 2012). Whilst a number of generic criticism may be of note, it should equally be remembered that a claim is not a proof and their critique may equally be written in order to advance a pre-standing position. Their work had been commissioned and published by the *Office for Standards in Education,* criticism of this type from such a source may not be too surprising perhaps indeed welcome. For as Ivor Goodson suggests, 'this tendency to support existing power structures is always a potential problem in social science' (Goodson, 2012, p.33).

It is clear that Tooley and Darby have a particular functional view of effective research, a view which they outline in the conclusion of the critique; to be deemed effective educational research should be empirically based, it should be replicable and a have a direct relevance to policy and practice. Or to seek for, as Goodson pithily, terms the 'bloodless universals' which is a common theme of government-funded research. (Goodson, 2012, p.26). It is unsurprising that they seem particularly critical

of 'certain 'reflexive' accounts of educational practice' which, they claim to have tenuous links to (presumably future?) practice (Tooley and Darby, 1998, p.75).

Perhaps their critique can serve as a useful example of the conscious reification of self-referencing practices within a field, an attempt to make normative that which is arbitrary and thereby construct and version the *habitus* of educational research. Or perhaps we see the manner in which a lack of reflexivity can enables misrecognition continue. Or perhaps again it is simply an example of individuals willingness to play by the perceived rules of the game. We should not of course be surprised by the response but rather be reconciled to a truth, that life history methods of whatever version will be unpopular in some quarters as by its nature it asserts and insists that power should listen to the people it claims to serve (Goodson, 2012, p.33).

Whilst some have criticized Bourdieu's concepts as essentially deterministic and circular in which 'structures produce habitus, which determine practices, which produce structures' (Giroux, 1982 in King, 2000), Anthony King suggests that Bourdieu sees 'the habitus as allowing room for slippage so that it mediates between the *opus operatum* of structure and the *modus operandi* of practice, heavily constraining social action but not definitively determining it' (King, 2000, p.426). King is however not convinced by this argument feeling that the habitus as defined by Bourdieu 'prevents it from doing anything other than effacing the virtuosity of the social actors and the intersubjective nature of social reality' (ibid.). Equally, Mouzelis (in Crossley, 1999) has criticized Bourdieu's circularizing conceptualization of the relationship between habitus and reflexivity in which, the habitus represents the sets of conscious and unconscious dispositions developed through various forms of socialization processes, which generate practices which in circular turn re-produce the social structures of the habitus. We have seen a possible counter to such a statically deterministic interpretation of Bourdieu in Reay's earlier refutation in which she draws on Bourdieu to assert that, 'Just as no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p.46 in, Reay, 2004, p.434). Such an approach which represents the habitus as what may be thought of as a genetically sociological concept in which the individual habitus is a construct consequent on the multiplicity of the individual's experiences, preferences and capacities. In this thesis however my concern begins with the participants, rather than a seeking to validate or invalidate a theoretical position. My usage of Bourdieu's notions pragmatically and drawn from Roy Nash's counter to Tooley and Darby's

criticism of Reay's work. Nash (1999, p.432) - writing from outside of the English educational system and deliberately distancing himself from the institutional and political dimensions of the critique - suggests that a critical use of Bourdieu's work should conceptualize the '*habitus* as method' rather than as a single unified theoretical position. He asserts that his concepts do not provide a direct methodological template as this is is clearly not their purposive function. He reminds us that Bourdieu consistently urges us to read his works 'like gymnastic handbooks … intended for exercise, or even better for being put into practice' (Bourdieu *et al.*, 1991, p.74 in , Karakayali, 2004, p.359). It is in this way that the concepts are applied in this research that is as conceptual 'thinking tools' (Nash, 1999) which recognise that their:

> strengths and weaknesses are two sides of the same coin. The lack of definition invites us to think about the myriad ways in which [they] might appear through data. Perhaps [they] will made known through individuals' reflections of their everyday experiences, or maybe in their ways of talking, dressing or moving.
> It is both tantalizing and elusive.

(Nash, 1999, p.176)

As I had engaged with the participants, read their transcripts and listened to the interviews, I considered the unconscious misrecognition and the presentation of common-sense views played out in the field of varying schools. I became aware of how power and hierarchy are marked, of how games are played and of the way in which membership/non-membership of communities is signified. I saw at first hand the manner in which capital is developed and deployed. And through this process, it was these 'tantalizing and elusive' concepts which had at first first informed and challenged my thinking.

There was however one further consideration. For Bourdieu 'one of the most important 'tools' in the sociological toolkit is the ability to objectify one's own position, to defamiliarise one's view of the world, to see and hear *not* what one expects… (for in) so doing (one) can minimise bias and self-blindness' (Webb *et al.*, 2002, p.75). As I moved through the research my gaze turned inward to examine my preconceptions. But even in this turn there came a scratching in my mind, an unease, voiced in the words of a school-learnt poem, 'Only this and nothing more?' (Poe, 1869).

The 'more' I sought: on the boundary of transformation

The more I sought began with a question raised by Holliday and West when examining the experiences of non-traditional learners (Holliday and West, 2010), those 'marginalised learners managing change and disorientating dilemmas' (West, 2014, p.4) who appear to have little in terms of traditionally defined forms of capital when moving to the new habitus of adult education, yet are able to prosper where others fail. Acknowledging Chapman Holut's (2009, 2012) observation that Bourdieu fails to sufficiently engage with the experience of such learners whom he describes as 'les miraculés'. This '… uncharacteristically metaphysical turn…. for a materialist such as him' (Chapman Hoult, 2009, p.9 in West 2014, p.4) and serves to position their experiences within his structuralist analysis of the institution; that such individuals are able to succeed demonstrates that the institution is 'open to all the talents'. Whilst Bourdieu's analysis could speak to the institutional intention it is less likely to disclose the individual experience, for as West suggest, Bourdieu's view of capital may be overly constrained and deterministic and neglects an understanding of psychological or experiential capital (such as lifelong learning) (ibid.)

Unlike the students in West or Chapman Hoult's studies however, the participants in the current research had through a careful process of selection and training (that 'long dialectical process described as 'vocation''), 'to have already constituted dispositions for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.67). Perhaps we should add to this 'apparent dispositions' for whilst it is easy to speak of the commonalities in the field of English primary schools, individual schools and classes act as indigenous enterprises or perhaps to stretch Bourdieu's metaphor too far, form individual tributaries full of unknown hazards for the novice swimmer.

I have always considered, though have not always voiced it in these terms, that education should be in a general sense be transformative. That at its core it is a moral enterprise charged with the duty of transforming opportunities for individuals. As a teacher and adviser this was about supporting the development of individual or institutional capital. It is I believe a *boundary* occupation in the Irish sense that a boundary marks both the limits of the individual but also the co-dependence of individuals one to the other. In work with adult students I had found that this might also be enabled through a process of what could be described as situated *critical disturbance* (Cunningham, 2008b, p.167). As the approach became more nuanced I had begun to move toward a position of examining and critically challenging

established modes of thought and long held assumptions - my own included - the misrecognition of the individual habitus. I did this through what I had come to describe as (borrowing a term from the physical sciences) challenging hysteresis in which an understanding of the state of an object requires both a knowledge of its historical and its current state. I reasoned that to engage with current understanding or at least the articulation of a view, one must critique how that view was formed. So whilst my approach is less well-theorized, more intuitive, I share a common position of scepticism with those that challenge the adequacy of solely process-based approaches to adult learning that are predicated on the assumption that such learning exchanges are purely rational and are achievable through replicable events with endpoints identifiable before the process begins.

As I moved from this general frame of 'education as transformation' to the particularized field of Transformative Learning (TL), I turned to the work of Jack Mezirow. Aware of his work via the practice-based writings of Brookfield together with critiques by West and colleagues (Holliday and West, 2010, West, 2014), I wondered if Mezirow's work would provide the terminus I sought?

Writing in 2000 Mezirow establishes the the core concern of TL in this way:

> A defining condition of being human is our urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience, to integrate it with what we know and to avoid the threat of chaos.

> If we are unable to understand, we often turn to tradition, thoughtlessly seize explanations by authority figures, or resort to tradition, or to various psychological mechanisms such as projection and rationalization, to create imaginary meanings.

(Mezirow, 2000, p.3)

Where I read this is as important as *what* I read in the context of this. The *where* and *what* are co-dependent in my story. I read the text whilst travelling in Bhutan where my guide, an ex-teacher had invited me to visit his family and to particularly meet his wife who was the head teacher of a large secondary school. We spent the afternoon discussing an In-Service Training day that she had organised for her school which had examined the development of the School's Inclusion policy within its Buddhist and monarchistic culture. She used the familiar terms 'INSET' and 'Inclusion' as part of her natural discourse though she had never travelled outside of Bhutan but had been gained largely from her reading of online documents including that of a colleague (Booth *et al.*, 2002).

Reflecting later on this serendipitous event I felt that the concept perhaps more so, Mezirow's articulation of the concept resonated with an element of Buddhist thought and was presented in a manner suggestive of a religious treatise. I compared it to:

> Now, Kalamas, don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, that 'This contemplative is our teacher.'

> When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness' — then you should enter & remain in them.

> (extract from the Buddhist canonical work, the Kesamutti Sutta)

Though drawn from different cultural traditions, the commonalities between TL and the text appeared striking. In each there is a warning and whilst in Mezirow this only implicitly stated, it is a stated warning nonetheless. We are told that, a defining condition of being human is our urgent need to understand and order the meaning of our experience and to integrate it with what we know. A requirement of the mature adult, Mezirow actually entitles the chapter in which the quotation appears, 'Learning to Think Like an Adult' (Mezirow, 2000, pp.3-35), is the requirement to both measure/judge, and to dispassionately/rationally analyse the experience with which we are presented. When we compare the two statements the process in one is to 'understand and order the meaning of experience' and for the other this is a matter of 'knowing for yourself by knowing yourself'. Both are to be accomplished through a process of introspective reflexivity which on the one hand is the key to 'avoiding chaos' and on the other leads to the other side of the individual and social coin, 'welfare and happiness'. Only through introspective rationality can we avoid the threat of chaos. Now for Mezirow the warrant of his claim is the need 'to help learners become more critically reflective of the assumptions they and others hold'. This is based on a general ideological position to which he adds a further and more starkly expressed view that:

> As there are no fixed truths or definitive knowledge, and because circumstances change, the human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings.

> (Mezirow, 2000, p.3)

The statement may be viewed by some as being one of extreme moral relativism but this positioning is of course a self-serving opening gambit as it presents a problem to

which the rest of the book proposes an answer; that is, that impending chaos is overcome by the adoption of a TL approach to adult education.

Mezirow's general argument is implicitly strengthened through the form in which it is presented; a series of reflexive critiques which debate the general theoretical principle. Indeed the key text, 'Learning as Transformation' is subtitled, 'critical perspectives on a theory in progress.'. Since its earliest conceptualization, TL has developed a widening following of advocates. Through; a series of key publications (Mezirow, 2000, pp.3-35), articles published in the pages of its own journal 'Adult Education Quarterly' together with themed conferences, TL appears to have been developed through various iterations to become a nexus of pedagogic approaches loosely tied to a general approach to adult education:

> …that is predicated on the idea that students are seriously challenged to assess their value system and worldview and are subsequently changed by that experience.
>
> (Quinnan, 1997, p.2 in Mezirow and Taylor, 2009)

So the reader is presented through these texts and encounters with a process of theory building occurring within an inclusive community of practitioners; a neat narrative arc in which the theory is presented in the form that it proposes. This appears part of a dialogic process, a means of developing the theoretical understanding through a process of public debate. In this, as Brookfield notes '[Mezirow's] theory and practice are consistent' (2000, p.132). However this communal development of theory, is not without issue. As the number of practitioners making use of ostensibly TL approaches in an increasingly wide range of work contexts so interpretations of what constitutes TL has broadened so that the nexus is one of contending interpretations. Is this theory building through rational debate in itself a consciously inducted process? Perhaps?

What we can be certain of is that one of its core advocates, Edward Taylor, when reflecting on the experiences of co-editing a publication with Jack Mezirow devoted to an examination of the ways in which TL is currently being used (Mezirow and Taylor, 2009) argued that there is an increasing tension in the varying practice of TL across workplace settings. Taylor suggested that for most of the people who actually implement TL techniques in their daily practice its use is *purposeful,* that is, it is used as a technique in order to achieve pre-specified goals and that:

> inherent in the purposefulness of transformative learning is a loosely veiled structure, framework, or even, for some, an explicit heuristic for the educator… offer essential

practices…, core premises, or phases… to assist the transformative educator and learners in their work.

(Mezirow and Taylor, 2009)

He then contrasts this current pragmatic use with the original intent that whilst TL was originally devised as 'a theoretical lens to interpret practice' (NYU, April, 2010, 00:13:22-:27),:

historically transformative learning is thought of as co-constructed, it's sort of learner-centered, so this bubbles up the question of how we practice learner-centered teaching within a highly purposeful heuristic approach to learning.

He then poses the question:

How do you then practice learner-centered teaching when the teacher educator has their own agenda for change?

(ibid., 00:13:20-24)

Interestingly he said that he raised, this 'issue' as a 'tension' in order 'only to be provocative' (ibid., 00:13:06-:09) again this is perhaps part of a consciously strategic approach or a response not to theory building, but theory accretion? We can see this issue/tension presented starkly in one of Stephen Brookfield's contributions to the TL debate.

Firstly, whilst Mezirow has suggested that there is a vital need for the adult to constantly interrogate their cultural, historical and biographical assumptions as a part of the TL process for Brookfield the scope and the centrality and of this is interrogatory process is missing. As noted earlier Brookfield questions the overuse of the term *reflection* (more particularly when attached to the word *critical*) in current educational discourse. For Brookfield:

Critical reflection is not a synonym for transformative learning. In other words Transformative Learning cannot happen without critical thinking but critical thinking can happen without an accompanying transformation in perspective and habit of mind.

(Brookfield, 2000, p.125)

Whilst accepting that it is necessary in contexts which contain a significant practical and functional element of practice – teaching is a clear example of this – where it is impossible to 'get through the day' without making numerous 'technical decisions concerning timing and process' (ibid.) for him this is an inadequate interpretation of the term. For Brookfield the term 'critical' is *sacred* drawing its potency from what he sees as one of the most important intellectual traditions, The Frankfurt School of

Critical Social Theory. Whilst acknowledging the importance of reflection on daily educational practice, he positions himself clearly within this tradition to argue that 'the ideas of critical theory – particularly that of ideology critique – must be central to critical reflection and, by implication, to transformation.' (ibid.). Within this TL must provide a means of interrogating the myths, values, beliefs, justifications that appear self-evidently true and that are in Marcuse's terms 'ideologically sedimented' or in Bourdieu's terms the internalized *common-sense* beliefs of the *habitus*. For Brookfield the term *criticality* can be used in no other way; it should, he argues, encompass the power relationships of the society to its social members at all levels including the unequal power relationships exercised by the adult educator within the teaching context. That he assumes a unidirectionality of the power relationship in this latter context appears a weakness in his argument.

Now, whilst Brookfield draws his inspiration from the early advocates of social critical theory it is not clear to what extent he sees as relevant their ideological stance in the contemporary world. Few would, I suspect, tolerate nor believe the grand narratives which first impassioned Marcuse, Ardono and Horkheimer, nor would they quite so readily disparage as 'one-dimensional' those that failed to play their allotted roles in the historical story; certainly not those that engage in narrative forms of research. Perhaps Brookfield draws on a distilled essence of 'criticality' from Frankfurt; a pedagogically-free stance, but what that stance is remains unclear. It may be that he, like Honneth also feels that the ideological position of the Frankfurt School can no longer be defended except in the narrow sense of its potential for establishing a systematic connection between social rationality and moral validity, (Brookfield, 2000, p.125). Or does he perhaps with Marcuse 'really believe … that social criticism is impossible within the confines of ordinary language,' and that there is 'an irreducible difference… between the universe of everyday thinking and language on the one side, and that of philosophical thinking and language on the other'' (Honneth, 2009, p.53). Walzer for one finds such a position 'unbelievable'.

What is the position that Brookfield seeks for adult educators and their students if, as Walzer asserts, Marcuse makes John Stuart Mill's maxim, "Better Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied' into a critical position that the second dimension of existence is constant philosophical discontent and unhappiness (Walzer, 1988, p.185)? Again it may be that his concern is again with the manner in which linguistic terms are appropriated robbed of their original meaning and through such a process

linguistic dehydration made 'socially unrecognizable' (Walzer, 1988, p.185). Perhaps? What is clear is that Brookfield recognizes the tensions within his own argument concluding that there are limits to the process of 'criticality' when combined with the signifier 'social'. This may be the pedagogic space that Brookfield claims for the adult educator; it may. But does ideological critique presuppose subsequent transformative social action or can it remain forever an intellectual abstraction? Brookfield recognizes that this is the contentious terrain in which he proposes we operate. He acknowledges that the adult educator works within an environment of varyingly uneven power relationships; the seminar room and lecture theater are two examples. But what follows from the adoption of this iteration of criticality? A constant vague philosophical discontent? For Brookfield the resolution lies in the drawing of clear boundaries between *critical reflection* and *transformative social action*. Using Myles Horton's (Walzer, 1988, p.175) insistence on the difference between *organizing* and *educational urging* he asserts that teachers should be 'critically conscious of the limits of education' (Marcuse, p.192 in Walzer, 1988, p.186). Finally concluding that adult educators should know that 'education is not a lever, nor to expect it to make the great social transformation.' (Walzer, 1988, p.53).

The question is particularly important for teacher educators. To what extent are we able to challenge those processes and powers which constrain and shape our actions when the new 'Teacher's Standards' specifically assert that teachers 'must not undermine public trust by… not undermining fundamental British values' without specifying what those values are and assuming that they are agreed, fixed and unchanging? The further irony in an English context is that many of the educational policy changes since the Blair era are predicated on an assumed capacity of school process to enable exactly such 'social leverage' and had invested teachers with a responsibility to do so. Perhaps we have here the core of the Hargreaves and Lo's paradox (Honneth, 2009, p.45). What is clear is that Freire and Shor's understanding of such 'social transformation' (Horton *et al.*, 1998) also referenced by Brookfield, the processes through which change is to be achieved, would not fit easily, would perhaps not fit at all, with the reductive model envisaged by any past or current Secretary of State for Education. As we see throughout this research, the seizure of language and the subversion of its original meaning to fulfill an alternate end is a powerful tool used to constrain or redirect action.

Secondly, whilst Brookfield's initial critique echoes but does not answer Taylor's question, 'How do you then practice learner-centered teaching when the teacher educator has their own agenda for change?', his second focuses on the core activities used by many TL practitioners that of the uses of frameworks for TL engagement. He calls into question the validity of those taxonomies which are claimed by many TL advocates to provide the rigorous frameworks and essential mechanisms for the efficient implementation of the TL process. Accepting that such taxonomies *may* provide a useful starting point, a means of pausing and mapping out the territory so to speak before moving further, they rapidly he argues (and here he cites Mezirow's own taxonomy, 'the Critical Reflection of and on Assumptions' (Kitchenham, 2008)) fall prey to the weakness of all taxonomies. Reminding us that the creation of taxonomies spring from the Aristotelian principle of mutual exclusivity which holds that what is contained in one category cannot be evident in another the development of taxonomies, no matter how useful as a starting point for the development of thinking, run the risk (he clearly believes that it has both run and fallen prey to the risk) of 'separating out the inseparable'; what is in one category cannot by definition be in another (Brookfield, 2000). In this Brookfield succinctly clarifies a key problem that I have been aware of in my recent professional work and have tussled with throughout the research. Whilst our starting positions may differ I think we both share a suspicion of any easy listing of criteria that attempts to constrain the complexity of experience within readily definable structures.

As we have seen, for Mezirow transformational learning is foundationally a rational process that takes place *within awareness*, a process involving critical assessment of epistemic assumptions leading to the possibility 'of radical changes in an acquired frame of reference, a mind set, with potentially radical consequences.' (Mezirow, 2000, p.132). Mezirow describes such changes variously as 'dramatic, profound, deeply moving' as 'epochal', as a 'disorientating dilemma' . By extrapolation such an affective response may be felt when personal identities and value systems are challenged as individuals move from one context to another (Dirkx and Mezirow, 2006, p.25). I have noted in earlier writing how I have seen and experienced such 'epiphanic moments' in my own professional life when for example students are placed in professionally and personally challenging situations in other countries in which, in Gergen's words we make 'the familiar strange and the strange familiar' (Gergen, 1999, Dorman, 2009). We see clear examples of this in the participant's

stories but it is through my personal process of 'transformational becoming' that I recognise at an affective level that any process of change whether termed reflection, or critical reflection, that is based upon purely cognitive transformation remains inadequate. An incident in my own story speaks to this need to go beyond the purely rational to recognize the affective level of learning and it is this - amongst others - that has shaped my response to Mezirow's presentation of TL.

Gatekeepers

As the trainees entered school there had been a series of significant changes in the Faculty's Departmental staffing which had brought with them abrupt alterations in procedures and policies. As with all change it brought frustration and anxiety for some, a sense of opportunity and challenge for others.

There was a change in my work life also as, nearing the end of my working life I had already moved from full-time to sessional work. Perhaps I viewed the changes at something of an increasing distance? I had after all led such changes myself in other work contexts. I had even taught taught a diploma in Change Management for which I have no excuse. Did I think myself immune from the effects of change? As I re-read my notes written at the time this was clearly not the case. In them my frustrations and anxieties are evident. Partly these were in the direction of travel - described in a meeting by a colleague who had also once read Schön as a return to 'a technical rationalist approach to teaching and learning' - but perhaps equally, but less voiced was a frustration that I was no longer involved in shaping the direction or engaged in the changes. Now, with the advantage of time the core feeling was one of desolation and grieving for the ending of a career that had occupied so much of my time for the last four decades and more. So whilst Bourdieu may speak of vocations in grand-eloquent societal and structural terms, for those involved over an extended time in teaching and education, vocations are marked by a constant leakage across the boundaries of work and life. The two become inextricably linked. To borrow from West (Bainbridge and West, 2012) when writing in another context, Bourdieu may write of the syntax but has nothing to say of the semantics of vocation.

As I approached the interview with Kirsty my recognition of her disquiet, of the seeming lack of negotiation that the email so clearly spoke off and her job frustrations may simply have been the externalization of my own feelings. How I felt had become how she felt. Alternatively, the context of my work life and my own feelings may

have served to sensitize me to the disquiet of another as a shared transitional experience marked the beginning and ending of careers.

Our first meeting was delayed and, as I prepared for it, my own sense of vulnerability became clear as I focused on how I presented myself to the school. I had demonstrated my professionalism by writing officially and telephoning but over a long career in which I have visited very many hundreds of schools and colleges and universities I knew that dress code can prove a trap for the unwary. In the past the 'I' that visited was not 'me' but always a representative of an institution or of a Local Authority. At the times of examination or assessment or when representing an authority we were sent 'booted and suited' as we represented the formal face of an external authority. The priestly connotations of reification are obvious here. This had also become an increasingly obvious expectation in schools that had changed their status from Local Authority to Academy. A fabric version of teaching Latin perhaps? Whether the fact that on previous occasions I was acting as a representative of an institution rather than simply an individual actually changed the manner in which I was received or had simply become such a part of constructed setting I remain uncertain. Indeed until these interviews it was not something that I had consciously thought of. Even when acting as as a researcher in schools or universities I was part of a whole, a single member of a group. But on this day I was me. Perhaps it was simply my feelings of uncertainty about the researcher role that made me question whether they would take me seriously. Was I good enough or just a sham? Today, disguised as me, how did I represent to the school my professional status whilst remaining approachable and non-judgmental to the interviewees? In these mental writhings I found it difficult to throw off Alan Bennett's remembrance of Philip Larkin who refused to go around the country pretending to be himself (Bennett, 1997, p.578).

When Kirsty along with Caroline and Hannah came back to university at the end of the year to speak to the next cohort of Year three students, they said that they were really nervous so I confessed this incident to them and they began to laugh. They then told me that before coming 'back to uni.' they had had a long long discussions about what should they wear for the interview. They reasoned that they were not students any more now they were teachers. Though unnecessarily adding that, as they were young teachers and so they ought to dress, not formally but like young teachers and not like students. So together they had agreed their own semi-formal dress code. They then went on to say that in the discussions they had been reflecting about the wider

issue of how they now presented themselves in school to parents to pupils to colleagues. I asked what they meant and one said, well now we sit differently. To this they all agreed. Yes said another, now we sit like teachers, not like students. Whilst the incident speaks to hexis, to support from accepting the norms of a community, to playing the game and perhaps with playing with the rules of the game. The story also highlights the importance of the deeper emotional component in any process of a 'transformational becoming'.

Although in the past I had taken student groups out of their university context to challenge their pre-conceptions and combined this with a rational process of post-hoc critical reflection, I also believed that an approach to adult education based solely on contriving such artificial sites of transformation was as inadequate as it was inappropriate. Like John Dirkx before me, in my daily practice I find that 'for most of the time I am unable to put my finger on what is actually happening' (Dirkx, April, 2010, 00:34:23) . What I am convinced of though is that somewhere in the bounded space between individuals, lies a dynamic process in which 'the emotional, the imaginative and the unaware' (ibid., 00:38:36) resides and it is this aspect lying outside of conscious awareness and rational control which provides salt to the flavor of the adult teaching/learning interchange.

Dirkx challenges in a more articulate manner than I this 'taken for granted' concept of the unitary self, the surface individual in which all is seen and all is obvious. Drawing on Jungian perspectives he describes his work with students as 'soul work or inner work' that focuses on the nature of the self and the ways in which individuals seek to understand their sense of self, of identity and subjectivity (Dirkx and Prenger, 1997). Though, he acknowledges, that this is 'probably not a question that would keep most adult education practitioners and researchers up at night - (for) it is rather like asking a fish if it knows that it is in water… [but he argues] there is a need for practitioners and researchers to realize that they are surrounded by water.' (Dirkx and Mezirow, 2006, p.125). That 'water' though is not only the societal water of Bourdieu's habitus, nor the water of Vygotskyian enculturation, for Dirkx it is that 'water' that speaks to and through the unconscious 'constellation of archetypes (Father, Mother, Child, Hero…)' which reside within us'. (in Wilson and Hayes, 2009, p.103). Drawing on the concept of the 'shadow self', that is brought to life through our interactions with the outer world, it is this (for Dirkx) that 'bring(s) about the strong feelings and emotions that sometimes arise within us as we interact with

others or even with ourselves.' (ibid.). In the context of the beginning teacher it may be that the image we as teacher educators present of the ideal transmitted through the template of standards, may represent just one more unachievable cultural construct to sit alongside those provided by society, religion and the parent; one more source of guilt and troubled conscience (Dirkx and Mezirow, 2006, p.110).

Towards Resolution: reflexivity and the power of negativity

At the heart of the research had been an attempt to understand in some rational sense the experiences of transition. I had felt that my own long experience of observing and more importantly supporting transitional processes in adult learners and institutions would be useful in disclosing some of the same processes through which the participants were passing. Whilst I realised that those processes would operate beyond the cognitive I had not been prepared for the manner in which I would, through immersion become implicated in that self-same process. The toolkit provided by Bourdieu had allowed me to look at the structural context of transition and had allowed also to interrogate my own past experiences. But the more I looked, the 'more' that I looked for, slipped further from view. I looked for more than rationality but did so by looking (I thought) through rationality.

Toward the end I thought, or perhaps hoped, that in Mezirow and Transformative Learning I would find both an ending for the thesis and a way forward. Perhaps it would provide a resolution to the concerns I had had at the start to which I could add just a sprinkle of originality. But each turn of the research appeared to echo Seamus Heaney's words 'Every layer they strip seems camped on before' (Heaney, 1969) as my efforts became a feeble re-treading of others. Yet in this recognition lay perhaps a final resolution, a resolution that lay in the shades of my past.

I have recounted earlier my time at Newcastle and highlighted the manner in which the experience changed quite practically the direction of my career; I returned to my school but left within a year. I have noted how a chance conversation with a tutor had challenged my easily formed perceptions of what it was to be a tutor and opened for me the possibility of following a similar route. My road taken led from schools in the North East to Local Authority work in Kent and eventually to a career in a Faculty of Education in what was to be later named a university. Whilst the conversation served as a parting of ways, there was more to the totality of the experience in Newcastle

than this. Its source however was unexpected and perhaps one which I only identified in retrospect.

Apart from the academic aspects of the programme we were required to take an additional 'non-academic' course. The rationale was never made clear, but for me no rationale was needed. I had drawn and painted from childhood, I later made prints and took photographs, so an afternoon of 'doing' seemed a happy release. I chose a course in ceramics. Rather, nothing so effete as *ceramics*. It was a course in plain, blunt *pottery*. Artisanship not Artistry. The course was taught by a member of the archaeology department, Richard Coleman-Smith. We got on, I remember, rather well and perhaps he saw in me someone eager to learn rather than someone simply filling in time. Whatever his motivation one afternoon he brought in a small brown box in which he had something that he //'thought I might be interested in'//. The object was I discovered, the strap handle of a jug that he had recently excavated but not yet had the time to clean. Handing it to me he declared that I was only the second person (he was the first) to have touched this since it had been made in the fourteenth century. The Northumbrian clay of the present soil still clung to the Northumbrian past clay of the handle. I still feel the shudder of excitement as I touched its cold surface and the deeper excitement as I ran my thumb down the handle's pulled shape, excitement made stronger by the indentation of the potter's own thumb-print still clearly visible in the clay. I determined to copy and match the jug as best I could and over the next weeks I learnt first to prepare the clay, then throw pots on a kick-wheel, and later to mix my own glazes so that I could slowly over a period of days fire them in a traditional clamp kiln. Whilst over the next years I continued my interest in pottery-making but never of course matched the deft work of the original, the core of the experience remains with me still. Through the clay of the earth and the pot was a deeper connection with the clay of the potter and perhaps the clay of us all. And through my fumbling attempts to make I developed a growing understanding of the complexity of learning. I learnt also something of my own past.

In the middle of all these cogitations I find a familiar footprint

In thinking if this experience I remembered an early teacher, Miss Jacques, who took us each week for a walk outside the confines of the school gates. Feeling no need to describe such events as 'learning journeys', nor any compulsion to complete a Health and Safety report prior we simply went and walked. She took us along our

familiar routes to school but as we walked she talked, telling us of what lay beneath the tarmac and concrete of our increasingly urbanised environment. 'Sandygate', the street which wandered down the hill to the river was, it appeared, built on a track first followed by Danes and Romans and before them by the Celtic tribes who had first settled the area as they sought a fording place on the river. In a later walk through our local woods I found that the steep banks we had thought so useful for riding our bicycles were remnants of the early defensive earthworks constructed in the years before the legions arrived. So in our walks the Wath of old, the 'Queen of Villages' as James Montgomery had described it in 1790, resurfaced or was at least re-imagined. The influence on my early career was profound. I too took children out of the school gates from the confines of industrial Tyneside to the Roman Wall, through to Bede's Jarrow and to their past. Like me before I am told by one child from that first class that the experiences were both profound and transformative. Now a Doctor of Music his early compositions referenced that Celtic past and through it the spirit of Miss Jacques remains.

The relationship of learning at a profound emotional level through its connection with place, what Guy Debord termed 'psychogeography', was not one which I had expected but was clearly one that I experienced during the research process. Whilst Debord claimed that the term had been first suggested to him by an illiterate Kabyle (1955) and formally defined as 'the study of the specific effects of the geographical and environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals' (Knabb, 1981, p.5), for Debord it remained a term of 'rather pleasing vagueness' (ibid.). As a consequence of this ambiguity the concept has become a rather loosely tied collection of ideas finding expression in the filmic work of Iain Sinclair, the writings of Will Self and the dystopian novels of J.G. Ballard.

For me and the context of this work my responses were not theorized, but were simply the unconsidered actualization of the theory. I responded to the reading of Mezirow whilst walking in the Pubjika Valley at a an emotional level. It was only later that I considered whether I would have responded in the same way if rather than had I been sitting comfortably at my desk rather than walking in the foothills of the Himalaya. Whether the case or not is of less importance than the insight that my experience had allowed me to step away from the individual circumstance. I had become alert to an overwhelming dissonant sense that an aspect of my thinking was changing. As I read, I remembered not simply the experience of my school walks but

the sense that there was much more to the world than that which we could currently see and that I was walking in the steps that others had taken before.

Remembering an early reading of Robinson Crusoe in primary school days I recollected the scene but needed to seek out and refresh my memory of the text. On the beach Crusoe began to walk and as he did he came across footprints which he began to follow. Was there, he thought, another person on the island? Was he after all not alone?

> In the middle of these cogitations, apprehensions, and reflections, it came into my thought one day that all this might be a chimera of my own, and that this foot might be a print of my own foot.
> (Defoe, 1719, p.158)

Recollecting this experience and the earlier reading my own 'cogitations, agitations and reflections' I began to see my own footprints in the research.

Was the act of unnaming which had become such a significant and painful part of the research, the consequence of synchronicity of events as our names were disappeared by similar acts of indifferent vandalism or was there more at play? Perhaps through the process of research my wanderings in the unfamiliar geographical terrain paralleled my research enterprise and I had become to see myself as a form of academic *flâneur* constantly wandering through the increasingly alien city of education? A city of which I had for so long been been a part but of which I now remained apart. Was this why I felt myself to be present *at* but not present *in* a workshop which began my first reconsideration of the term *reflection*? I found myself a tourist in the land of schools. Occasionally I paused to observe, but from an increasing distance, the strange customs of the school; its dependence on cake and dieting, its catholic atmosphere of bells and smells, its hierarchies and rituals of deference and compliance sought and taught, its endless reductive comfort blanket of charts and forms into which it snuggled down to hide from the night-time terror of complexity. From inside, each facet of performance appearing to be of such importance but now, seen from my position of increasing detachment, simply a bemusing contrivance of perpetual busyness. Or was this my own post-hoc rationalization for as Rebecca Solnit comments, "the only problem with the *flâneur* is that he' - invariably in literature the figure of the *flâneur* is invariably presented as a male - 'did not exist, as a type, an ideal, and a character *for* no one quite fulfilled the ideal of the *flâneur* but everyone engaged in some version of *flâneury*' (Solnit, 2001,

p.200). Perhaps my feigned objectivity as a researcher was an attempt to assuage the pain of the closing days of my career and an attempt to seek solace by ignoring Dylan Thomas and going gently with the dying of the light (Thomas, 1952, p.80)?

Beyond the mirror and the turn toward reflexivity

But this thought belied not reflection in the sense used in the workshop nor the manner in which it is often currently used. We remember the student response to the metaphor of the mirror, a response for some based upon the self-checking of their reflected image to an assumed ideal state. No, I find this goes beyond my original conceptualization. Whilst a critically reflexive approach may turn its attention outward to the organizational constraints, my stance had taken a different turn, a bending back on myself and my own thinking and stance to become increasingly reflexive.

For Michael Lynch (Lynch, 2000, p.25) the terms reflexive and reflexivity is a 'central and yet confusing topic', in which, 'there is a confusing array of reflexivities.' (ibid., p.46) There is no single way to be, or not be, reflexive'. Debord may approve of such pleasing vagueness. In order to clarify the situation for his readers Lynch, drawing on the earlier work of Malcolm Ashmore (Ashmore, 1989) and Steve Woolgar (Woolgar, 1988) constructs an 'inventory of reflexivities' (*op. cit.*, pp. 27-34) in order to demonstrate the diversity of overlapping meanings and usage of the term. Joseph Webster (Webster, 2008, p.66) provides a useful summary of the inventory.

(i) Mechanical Reflexivity.

'A kind of recursive process that involves feedback' (ibid., 27); a habitual, almost automatic response to stimuli, which nonetheless remains inclusive of the monitoring of action by self and other.

(ii) Substantive Reflexivity.

Seen as emblematic of late modernity, substantive reflexivity involves a somewhat calculating monitoring of costs and risks as offset against perceived benefits. Such monitoring is said to be socially constructed and inter‑subjective (ibid., 28).

(iii) Methodological Reflexivity.

Defined as 'philosophical introspection, [and] an inward‑looking, sometimes confessional… examination of one's own beliefs and assumptions' (ibid., 29), methodological reflexivity oscillates between self‑criticism and self-congratulation, and is commonly expressed as both a personal virtue.

(iv) Metatheoretical Reflexivity.

Reflection upon, or interrogation of, all those 'taken for granted assumptions' (ibid., 30) that form the basis of academic practices of knowledge production. Such interrogation is made possible by a kind of intentional 'detachment' or 'stepping back', thereby gaining a critical perspective on the modes of thought through which we come to know the world and accept that knowledge as 'true'.

(v) Interpretative Reflexivity.

As 'a style of interpretation that imagines and identifies non‑obvious alternatives to habitual ways of thinking and acting' (ibid., 32), interpretative reflexivity is a project in hermeneutics. By investigating the limits of textual analysis, such reflexivity closely resembles 'literary exegesis' (ibid.).

(vi) Ethnomethodological Reflexivity.

Described variously as 'ubiquitous', 'unremarkable', 'essential' and 'uninteresting', ethnomethodological reflexivity 'alludes to the embodied practices through which persons singly and together, retrospectively and prospectively, produce accountable states of affairs' (ibid., 33). Where ethnomethodology is the study of all those social practices that create an ordered experience of the 'everyday', ethnomethodological reflexivity attempts a systematic analysis of 'background understandings of the normal, but unstudied, operations of the ordinary society' (ibid., 34).

Having constructed the inventory Lynch concludes that what perhaps each of the categories share in common is some form of turning back on either the self and/or the research process, but what it does, how it turns, and what the implications are for the act of turning, differs from category to category. He then poses a further question, 'What Does Reflexivity Do?', a question premised on the assertion that, 'it is often supposed that reflexivity *does* something, or that being reflexive transforms a prior 'unreflexive' condition' (Lynch, 2000, p.36). In similar fashion he concludes that '… what reflexivity does, what it threatens to expose, what it reveals and who it empowers depends upon who does it and how they go about it (and that any effects which the research may have)… are contingent on its execution and communal reception' (*op. cit.*, p.47). Webster suggests that his arguments are premised on the assertion that *Reflexivity* in one or other of its various forms *is*, or importantly, is presented *as* an inherently virtuous act that gains for its users ''deep' insight that allows inward reflection to transform outward perception' (Webster, 2008, p.3). Clearly I feel invited by the inventory to engage in an immediate act of reflexive self-checking - is my research aligned with category (iii) with a dash of (iv) whilst avoiding the shortcomings of (vi)?

Learning as a complex act of de-centering

As I considered what Lynch had written and began to unpack my own view of reflexivity, I was drawn back to earlier teaching experiences with students. For a time, a colleague and I had taken students from their comfort zones of teaching in the South East of England to the less familiar environment of Southern India. Our intention had been to disrupt, and through such disruption, change their thinking. On one visit a student and I had, after a week of tentative trying, managed unaided to cross a multi-lane highway. On our safe arrival we were met by a small group of local people who had watched our progress and greeted us with smiles and some polite applause. After we had overcome the pleasure of our momentary celebratory, Nicky turned to me and said, //'when I first arrived I thought that things here, especially the roads were really chaotic. Now I realise that they aren't… they're simply complex and you just have to learn a new set of rules.'//. Should I be so bold as to claim that the experience had led to a deep insight leading to a transformation of an outward perception. On reflection, yes.

But what of the slippery terms, reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity? Within the context of my recent work in Teacher Education there had been lots of official forms of reflection in evidence. Students were constantly required to consider and code their performance in classrooms. Even as I write this I am distracted by the ping of an email from a course leader alerting one cohort of students to their need to complete their *Self-efficacy* scale which will measure their understanding of and ability to manage behaviour in school. Lacking any clear rationale for the completion of this they are presented with a catechism of reasons why it must be done: it will they are assured, provide evidence against eight of the Standards, and will aid their professional development in some as yet unspecified way, and is needed and will be later checked by their tutor and school mentor. That its actual purpose is as a means of proving to Ofsted inspectors that the Faculty is doing their own job is of course missing from the list. Perhaps more problematic than such acts of witting though rarely acknowledged compliance, is that such representations are prone to replace that which they are intended to represent in so doing they reflect what Henri Bergson said of time. Writing in 'Time and Free Will' he suggests that the development of the clock superimposed on time a spatial, distorted and mechanistic version of the real thing. Through this time is perceived, or at least described, in relation to a series of discreet units, of seconds and hours and minutes. He continued, that to claim that one

can measure real duration by counting such separate spatial constructs is an illusion. He summarized what he saw as an error in this way:

> We give a mechanical explanation of a fact and then substitute the explanation for the fact itself.
> (Bergson, 1899)

Through this process, complexity is reduced to the simplicity of scales of measure and in turn the scales replace that which they purport to measure. One example of this process in action in schools is that the complexity of learning has, through the uncritical and unquestioned application of National Curriculum levels of pupil performance, been rendered down to a neatly predictable, graphable and therefore trackable linear trail. Hence teachers are trapped into into a teaching system in which pupils are expected to make two sub-levels of learning progression each year. Such an expectation comes not from an understanding of learning but from a need to maintain its graphic measure a need emphasized by an Ofsted inspector who claimed to a group of students that the difference between levels one and two in the National Curriculum was the same as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Faced with such cant it is not surprising that *Reflection* becomes not a process of criticality but an activity of completion, indeed, to maintain this false edifice it is necessary that such subversion occurs. We see at play here Foucauldian panopticonism in which the oppressed become the principle of their subjection (Foucault, 1977, p.202).

Yet from an earlier part of my professional life I knew that *critical reflection* as envisaged by Schön, involved a deeper level of examination of individual performance. Such reflections may it was suggested, be concurrent with the teaching activity or may take place after the event. They may be self-initiated and self-directed or be enabled, for example in the case of novice teachers, through the intervention of another. At a wider level still attention will turn to the contexts in which the individual operates whether these be local or national. Schools I find are often resistant to and critical of trainees who turn their attention from their individual performance to the activities of teachers or schools Think for example of Anna's comments regarding her Year two teacher and Kirsty's experience during an interview. Think also of the mentor reports in which praise was given for those students who were 'willing to accept advice' with no critique of that advice. But when this outward gaze is closed to trainees they are by default mentored into a world of

compliance, a world in which teachers exchange their critical capacity for an acceptance of hierarchical constraint.

For me therefore, whilst reflection in whatever form remains a post hoc activity, an act of considering something after the event no matter how deeply or widely that gaze is constituted, reflexivity turns that gaze inward and more deeply still. It begins with the simple recognition that we are each aware of ourselves as existing, experiencing persons. In this way reflexivity 'involves a more immediate, dynamic and continuing self awareness' (Finlay and Gough, 2008, p.2). Whilst this individual found the constant introspective gaze and self-disclosure to be sometimes painful, I took comfort in that I was following a path taken before me by others. Pierre Bourdieu for example who, writing in the prologue of 'In Other Words', confides:

> The uncertainties and imprecision of this deliberately foolhardy discourse thus have their counterpart in the quavering of the voice which is the mark of risks shared in any honest exchange of ideas which, if it can still be heard, however faintly, through its written transcription, seems to me to justify its publication.
> (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.9)

Latterly I believe that at the core of the work is not uncertainty about my position as a researcher (I resisted using the word *role* here) but rather that the position was conflictual as, as I have noted, it moved me betwixt and between insider and outsider positions. That I found this, despite my view of reflexivity as an individual activity, to be a deeply unsettling experience is perhaps not at all surprising for as Axel Honneth suggests, once we have stripped away much of the dogmatism of Freud's teaching:

> … its central legacy, one still valid today beyond all parts that have in the meantime surely become questionable: the insight that, to begin with, the human is always a divided, inwardly ruptured being, yet one which, thanks to its inherent interest in extending its 'inner' freedom, has the ability to reduce or even overcome rupturedness through its own reflective activity.
> (Honneth, 2009, p.127)

Perhaps the research played to an inner turmoil, a desire to be both a part *of* whilst always separate *from*… and in so doing exposed an unresolved tension rooted in my early non-conformist church background? In this way the research can be viewed in a broad sense as having a psychodynamic sensibility if 'we define 'psychodynamic' broadly as an approach that encourages people to engage more closely with thoughts and feelings that may be hidden from the conscious mind' (Leiper and Maltby, 2004, p.13 in Hunt and West, 2012, p.136)

(Leiper and Maltby, 2004, p.13 in Hunt and West, 2012, p.136). In retrospect, what I can be clear of is that, had I carried out the research ten years ago, my response to the changing educational contexts in schools would have perhaps less self-consciously objective, or at least I may have been less concerned to constantly reflexively monitor and audit my work. I note from Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.191 in Finlay, 2002, p.210)

the assertion that 'transactions and ideas that emerge from [the research process]… should be documented' and that, 'the process of exploration and abduction be documented and retrievable'. Did I at one hand feel this to be the case whilst constructing in Van Maanen's phrase, a seemingly *confessional tale* (1988). Or perhaps again I found myself at times simply overwhelmed by a growing sense of professional impotence both within the Faculty and outside. Reflecting again on Kirsty's unnaming, my response could be viewed in these terms, a frustration with a situation that had I could have engage with in former roles but felt unable to to do so as a researcher? But even as a researcher the methodology I had chosen or at least the manner in which it was operationalized mitigated against a fuller investigation of these acts of seemingly unconscious petty cruelty; to what extent was the head teacher simply transferring to Kirsty her own sense of vulnerability in a new and demanding role? I could have used the incident to theorize that her acts were the consequence of external managerial pressures and whilst I could have selected from across the participants other incidents from Collette and Caroline that would support this position, Anna and Rebecca's stories point to a different interpretation. In the latter cases the manner in which head teachers and mentors operated in relation to them by running interference between them and the external pressures and actively engaging them in the decision making in school, spoke to a different narrative. I thought back to my reading of and a discussion with Étienne Wenger some years ago which stressed the manner in which the Community of Practice negotiates its actions with at all times an 'indigenous enterprise' (Wenger, 1998, p.79). More than this, the community of which Wenger writes may be described as (and may at times act as) a single unit, but it is not in actual fact an indivisible object complete unto itself. At its heart it remains a unit of individuals. Now, whilst Paul of Tarsus explained his personal uncharitable acts to his first century readers in terms of sin that was *in* him but not *of* him (Romans 7:19-20) such an excusatory argument is unconvincing when applied to an educational community of individuals. In communities such as these the whole

enterprise and its consequent inter-human actions, are predicated on being *with*, *by* and *for* humans. This is, as was discussed earlier, why teaching is such a *paradoxical profession* (Hargreaves and Lo, 2000, pp.1-2) and why individual actions cannot be excused by an appeal to the 'thingness' of external pressures robbing us of individual responsibility for our actions.

This recognition is central to my personal use of of reflexivity within this work. It remains at its heart a constant process of introspection and self-examination and it is this constantancy which is why in Dirkx's words, I would characterize the reflexivity of Transformative Learning as 'a way of being rather than a process of becoming' (Dirkx, 1998, p.11). Yet as Honneth notes, in Freud's claims for free will he 'ventured a risky step, for which he lacks reliable justification. He has to impute to every person, whether healthy or ill, an interest in pressing for the production of a will that is as free as possible.' (Honneth, 2009, p.141). Contentious as this claim may be, it is for Honneth a vital first step which all individuals must take if they are to attain a will that is free. Put simply in William James' words (in a letter dated April 30th, 1870), whilst he thought that free will may be an illusion, 'My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will' (James and Perry, 1935, p.147). The key to achieving this for Honneth is through the reflexive gaze which makes evident those aspects of individual life histories which may constrain or construct our present and future actions: 'We turn back to our life history in such moments because we want our willing to be free of elements that are unintelligible to us and not willed' (ibid.). This is the core of the reflexive enterprise, a constant turning back to examine our, and the sources of our, misrecognitions and prejudices.

Learning and the inward gaze

As teacher educators therefore we should turn our primary gaze to ourselves and as a matter of urgency to seek to enable such self-examination in our students. Clearly, this is an easily stated but less easily achieved aim for as Anna Zurolo states, 'that any successful training programme (she writes here from an Italian educational perspective) requires willingness to learn [on the part of students] and change'. (Zurolo, 2012, p.154). This is also true of my own experience, for as notable as my earlier example of Nicky's insight may be, such acts of experiential alchemy are frequent but neither predictable or uniform. Whilst those like Nicky were able to turn negative and sometimes painful experiences to positive effect, there were others for

whom this was clearly not the case. Whether student or tutor, 'smelly drains', 'disgusting food' and 'old-fashioned ways of teaching', simply reinforced their preexisting stereotypes and their sense of distance and 'otherness'. You may wish to re-read the last sentence and read it in conjunction with Anna Zurolo's words for it reminds us that any change we seek must be at an individual not categorical level, that is, the change needs to happen not simply in students but as I started this paragraph, also with those tutors charged with student education.

Such reactions and required changes are not of course simply confined to those individuals from either this particular university or national system; Zurolo has already testified to this. But further, writing of the 'pains and gains' of teacher education mobility programmes (a programme in which Nicky's experience was situated), Götz, Gerit and Oser (2011) suggest that, despite clear strategies and various efforts to internationalize higher education all across Europe, and the acknowledged need to "need to take off their own country's glasses and look at the world from multiple perspectives." (Wilson, 1993, p.1 in Götz *et al.*, 2011). Teacher Education programmes seem to remain at the periphery of this development in many countries. Whilst there are pragmatic issues at play here, not least the national differences between school systems and the consequent forms, content and expectations of teacher education programmes, they also suggest that what we may also be seeing is a fundamental differences in the way in which positive and negative experiences are used to overcome future difficulties. Some, notably purse holders, see such exchanges to be counterproductive; why, they ask, should students learn about systems which are culturally and pedagogically different from the one universities are supposed to prepare them for (Götz *et al.*, 2011, p.95)? Such responses may be driven by perceived practical needs or by a compliance that would have been familiar to Jaroslav Hasek's Good Soldier Svejk, but they may of course also be motivated by a more general and purposive centralizing tendency; allowing individuals to experience alternatives enhances the possibility of their challenging the national and local status quo. This is particularly the case where such challenges are purposefully theorized on frameworks which examine the socio-political edifice on which societies and organizations are built; consider again for example the manner in which educational research utilizing the critical frame of Bourdieu was attacked by Tooley and Darby only to be re-rendered in the language of journalism by the then Secretary of State for

Education. It was by this ceasing the language that *cultural capital* and *outstanding* become neutered and centrally controlled concepts.

These aside, encounters with the strange or unfamiliar may force an examination of *personal prejudices*; I use the term here in the sense used by Gadamer in *Truth and Method* to describe the *fore-meanings* or *pre-understandings* which are brought to aid the interpretation of an new experience, rather than in the more limited sense of making unfounded judgments. In Gadamer's usage, it is neither possible nor desirable to seek to engage with new experiences from a moral or perceptually neutral position, but it is incumbent on us that in such engagements we must actively seek to examine the prejudices through which we interpret any such new experiences. As we engage with the *other* we enter into what Gadamer terms an hermeneutical circle in which:

> Every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the moment of understanding and interpretation.
>
> (Gadamer, 2004, p.269)

For Goodson in our attempts to understand the other, he writes here specifically within the context of the narrative researcher, 'there is often a tension between the listener's existing understanding and the emerging meaning' (Goodson and Gill, 2011, p.75) tensions which become apparent when we are (he draws here on Gadamer's writing regarding the interpretation of text) *brought up short* by the narrative, when what we hear is not compatible with what we expected (ibid.).

In my own work as a teacher educator I have actively sought for myself and have attempted to create contexts for others to be similarly *brought up short* and in so doing have their current Gadamerian prejudices examined. My approach draws on what Richard Wirick (Wirick, 2010) called John Keats 'canon-changing concept of *negative capability'*. Such capability may be thought of as a capacity to live with uncertainty and that a self-evident truth of living is that positions are both challengeable and contestable and that to challenge and contest is at the core of the human enterprise. For Ted Hughes - as he wrote in a letter to Tom Paulin (August 13, 1992) – it was negative capability that lay at the heart of the Russian defeat of the German advance on Stalingrad. An advance stopped when German 'precision engineering (with) clearances of a millionth of an inch in the working parts' had become ineffective in the Russian winter mud (whilst the) Russians had, with their

'crude, approximately filed, hammered and bent into place' guns 'would continue to kill happily spitting the grit out of their gaps.' (Hughes and Reid, 2007, p.613).

Had I in retrospect hoped to see this as a model for the training of future teachers, less engineered to fit a naively pre-determined and replicable precision model of 'outstanding' but more approximately filed? Less polish, more edge. But for Keats, less versed perhaps in the art of winter combat than a Russian patriot, negative capability is found when 'we are capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Keats, 1891). This may be at its heart the center of my growing dissolution with the illusory certainty of the current standards agenda based as it is on the specious concepts of linearity and granularity in learning. That politicians wish to promulgate such fatuity is understandable, as was almost said at an earlier time in a different place, 'well they would wouldn't they'; that those who have responsibility for work with novice teachers play the game of pragmatism is unconscionable.

Learning and the return to principle

It is for this reason that I found myself at times drawing back in my writing on literature as I sought to explicate my understandings for - as I had noted earlier - my quest was as Bruner had suggested, to endow experience with meaning. As I reached the end of the process I returned to what I had asserted at the start to be the validity claim of my research, that it should not be sought in generalizations easily transportable from one context to another but rather in a search for authenticity and human resonance. I recognised that my understanding of transformation now freed from its need for capital status, had been focused through the geographical and human locations in which it had been considered. In so doing, a wider understanding had emerged. It was the experiences of the participants which resonated with, but did not mirror my own. But that these resonances had rekindled an optimistic view that, rather than searching for the false comfort of scientific certainties, any conceptualization of transformation in learning must retain within it a deeper, less definable more transient element which retains the space for uncertainty and ambiguity. Perhaps it was for this unconscious, or unstated reason that I always resisted a perceived move from compliance to complicity in accepting a rhetoric of transformation designed solely to lead the individual or group through a controlled process of reflection toward pre-specified ends. It was also this realization that the

complex process of learning has been reduced to the meeting of standards and through this to a standardization of teacher as product, that had scratched like Poe's raven in my thinking throughout the research with the repeated phrase, 'Only this and nothing more?'.

This was my position in regard to Negative Capability, a recognition of and a capacity to live with uncertainty. Fritz Oser however, writing from the context of the development of moral knowledge, flavours the word 'negative' in his concept of 'Negative Knowledge', differently. He argues that negative experiences, that is, times when we are faced with a rebuttal of a personal action or position taken, may be used to support the development of a positive moral framework. He argues that indeed, more than *may be necessary*, such experiences are *a vital* part of our moral development. Negative Knowledge he suggests, consists in the supposition that knowledge and experience of negative behaviour *protects* right or positive behaviour arguing that, 'because of experienced 'mistakes', 'the subject remembers this experience and thus more strongly resists a new moral trap' (Oser, 1996, p.67). He extends the argument stressing the importance in the development of such knowledge of *indignation about injustice* and *shame* about 'real' unfair or hurtful behaviour (ibid.).

So for Oser, knowing the right thing to do, also requires us to know the wrong thing avoid and it is in this way for Oser that negative knowledge may be made positive. We could think back here to L*'s story of not being awarded good behaviour stars as a child, or more generally of those students who became teachers in order to right the perceived or actual moral wrongs perpetrated on them or siblings as children. For such students, the more general manner in which Oser had used the term earlier (1994) would perhaps resonate, as they positioned themselves as *the type of teacher who* saw a central part of their teaching as the need to give responsibility to their students in order to help them, or as Oser more simply expresses it, helping children *to learn to be*. The capacity to develop moral judgment can he suggests, be developed by the teacher of the student to recognize and justify the moral point of view in any decision they take and any learning behavior they enact.

Whilst the gap between aspiration and individual performance may act as a constant spur to effort, that the higher purposes of teaching are often rendered pale when translated into officially designated standards and competencies, is one to which Oser also turns. Beginning the second chapter of, 'Moral Perspectives on Teaching' (1994),

the 'Demystification of Teachers' Responsibility: an introduction' he records that in the middle of the nineteenth century, the educational theorist Adolf Diesterweg, had summarized what was expected from a competent teacher…:

> The health and strength of a Teuton, Lessing's penetrating mind, Hebbel's emotional depth, Pestalozzi's enthusiasm, Tillich's truthfulness, Salzman's eloquence, Leibniz's knowledge, Socrates's wisdom, and the love and charity of Jesus Christ.
>
> (R Dietrich, E Elbing, I Peagitsch, H Ritscher, 1983, p.71 in Oser, F, 1994, p.54)

…then continues by examining the then recently formulated teacher competencies of the Swiss Teachers' Society (February 11, 1993) to conclude:

> What a difference in claims and expectations! What an ennoblement of teachers' roles and competences in earlier times, and what a technocratic description in modern times.
>
> (ibid.)

With Oser we must remain skeptical of the claims for omnipotence that are often made on behalf of teachers, teachers who may rightly reply that responsibility is connected to agency who can only be judged responsible for that over which they have control. Yet we appear to dwell in a time which raises to a height that which is mediocre, and afraid to tell the Emperor that they are not dressed in new clothes but naked. In so doing the aspirations for excellence couched in the form of emotional fuzzy generalisations are rendered down to the prosaic. And yet the prosaic remains and through the pragmatic meeting of the standards that certification is achieved. As Bainbridge and West (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p.245) warn, 'It could become less attractive to struggle with difficult conceptual knowledge, "with its attendant risk of lower grades on the lower slopes of understanding. Less attractive, too, when student unemployment is increasing, will be the idea that education can be intellectually and culturally transformative, and that it is for the public good".' Yet there remain those in daily struggle to retain this very essence of what it is to be an educator.

I noted earlier that, toward the end of an interview with a head teacher carried out as part of a previous piece of research (Griffiths *et al.*, 2010) following his long description of the difficulties he encountered in his role, that I had paused my schedule of questions and asked why, if things were so difficult, he continued in his job. His response had been to reflect on the importance of his father in his life and the way in which he always somehow remained as a presence 'looking over his shoulder'. In a later interview with another head teacher carried out as part of the same research, the head had similarly spoken of the pressures and frustrations of headship but was

however more forceful in the way he spoke and clear about the sources of the pressure; it came he said jointly from a Local Authority who were only interested in data collection, and Ofsted inspectors who came to inspect only one of the schools in the Federation[12] being both unaware and unconcerned by their changed status. He was particularly angry that they both failed to recognise his and his staff's efforts in trying to raise academic standards in the weaker school but rather criticized him directly for being in the other school during one of the days of inspection. He spoke with growing emotion about the context in which he worked, a socially deprived area of the county with high and persistent generational unemployment and the associated issues of family breakdown. He told of the manner in which he attempted to raise expectations not simply academically but first, emotionally and morally; to raise expectations of the self through art and drama, through music and sport. Words almost failing he particularized Wilde's, '*they* may be in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars' (Wilde, 1893). He then told me angrily that one of his personally most important measures of success. He had he said a few years before, a particularly antagonistic parent whose antagonism lay he found out, in her early negative experiences of school. Over time he had moved her from an original position of open hostility towards all things educational, first simply into the school, then into a class and finally over time as a parent-helper to be employed as a full-time and formally qualified Teaching Assistant. But he said, and this was the source of his anger, 'they (the Ofsted inspectors) simply weren't interested, they had their own agenda and that was that'. Again I moved from my prepared script of rat-a-tatting questions to ask feebly what might I do? He paused and replied that //'whilst I couldn't do anything practical to help, I could at least bear witness to what had happened'//. Perhaps this thesis acts in a similar manner, as an extended witness statement.

What then for teacher educators at this point of time? Assailed as we seem by a centralizing tendency and the re-emergence of a techno-rationalist approach to education do we focus our attention outward on individuals or institutions or political groupings as the source of our ire? Certainly such transient shades must remain the grist to our critical mill. But with Dirkx (Dirkx, 1998) we should also recognise that real transformations in learning come from the relationships we have with learners

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[12] As a so called 'Soft Federation' the schools retained their separate DFE numbers and were still officially regarded as separate schools.

and not in the strategies that we use on them. The rejection of a simplistic *banking* model of learning exposed by Paulo Freire in which knowledge is viewed as a transportable commodity, requires us to go further and to look deeper. In this fundamentally human enterprise if we truly want to learn about transformation, real transformation among learners the way we begin is with ourselves. I noted earlier that the use of dialogic learning has become a part of my teaching pedagogy. In such an approach dialogue is neither seen in the general sense of conversation nor is it used in the Vygotskyian sense in which dialogue is used to move learners in a linear manner toward an *agreed* position. Rather, meaning is made by placing the matters under discussion within a discursive space, a space in the complexity and paradox of alternate views. To Lynch, yes this is an ethical position in which alternate voices interweave and in which we test our current perspectives against those of others and actively seek to honour the other by actively disrupting their given assumptions and our own. It was as I ended the research that I recognised that my personal journey lay in the first training programme I had undertaken as a young teacher, a three month programme devoted to the development and use of educational drama with children, a programme co-tutored by Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote. The approach, more latterly termed 'The Mantle of the Expert (MOE)' (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995) had stressed just such dialogic features in which we stand alongside the learner and pass the M.O.E back and forth. In those early days we quite literally passed the mantle represented by a physical length of material. But through its substance we were alerted to the inequalities of the power relationships which exist between teacher and taught and the lazy tricks of superiority and control we must avoid exercising. Heaney of course expresses this in a more elegant form than I. In the second stanza of his poem 'Terminus' he draws on the word 'march' which he uses in the local Northern Irish sense to indicate the places where farms and fields *march* against each other in borders which mark both the boundary *between* but equally the place of co-dependence *upon*; a word which acknowledges divisions whilst containing within it a definite feeling of solidarity .

Terminus II

When they spoke of the prudent squirrel's hoard
It shone like gifts at a nativity.

When they spoke of the mammon of iniquity
The coins in my pocket reddened like stove-lids.

I was the march drain and the march drain's banks
Suffering the limit of each claim.

(Heaney, 1987, p.4)

Heaney recalls that when he was two or three years old, lifting the boards from the base of his cot-bed and pushing his feet through to rest on the cold cement floor beneath. For the later-Heaney the connection with the physical experience of the act alerted him to the deeper dimension of the experience that, through his physical connection with the cold floor and through it to the earth beneath, he could in retrospect connect to the knowledge-bank of this and other early experiences. This memory and insight he considers reflects Philip Larkin's words - written in a letter to Adeline Yen Mah - that 'the hardest part of writing is having something to write about that succeeds in *drawing words from your inner mind*' (recalled in a diary entry, Larkin, 1993, p.328). The comment is notable both for the connection made by Heaney to Larkin and also Larkin's memory of his meeting with Mah whom he had met whilst a patient in Kingston General hospital whilst Mah was working there as a doctor. In turn Mah recounts in later writings that she considered their meeting and their subsequent extended conversations and letters to be a transformational moment in her own life and to be pivotal in her eventual decision to leave medicine and become a full-time writer. The later literary and financial success of her subsequent autobiography, (Mah, 1997) may have given her the financial stability and literary acceptance to do so but the book's title, "Falling leaves: The Memoir of an unwanted Chinese daughter.", is in this context as tellingly convincing.

My own pivotal moments recounted in this thesis are perhaps less notable or at least less connected to such figures of note. But such moments are as important in my own journey and, through the use of a reflexive gaze as transformational. So, whilst my route to this final point has been slow and faltering, full both of wondering and wandering, it allows me at least to add to Goodson's insight that, 'In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is.' (Goodson, 1992, p.4). As teacher educators second but as citizens first, it is at least as critical that we know both the person we are and seek to support the development of the person that teachers may become. Teacher Education is at its core a human and potentially transformative enterprise but that transformation is not unidirectional, for as Dirkx suggests:

If we want to learn about transformation among learners the most important way to begin the work is with this common and sacred life one has been given. It is a simple and humble yet incredibly powerful place to begin.

(Dirkx, 1998, p.14)

And for the participants who passed through their first transforming year of teaching? Well the office door for is finally closed and perhaps in my ending Anna and the other participants will find, and someday write, their own beginning?

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APPENDIX 1: Coding System used in the text

The thesis makes extensive use of participants' direct and indirect contributions. Such contributions are in the form of transcriptions of interviews, field notes, written reports and electronic communications. To clarify the source of such text where included the following strict protocol of transcription codes was developed and its use adhered to throughout.

Transcription Codes

Where text transcribed from recorded interviews is used in the thesis, this is indicated by a change of font, font size and line spacing with the normal Times Roman, size 12, line and a half text replaced by Arial, Size 10, Single Space

Where transcriptions include more than one participant, individual speakers are identified by name.

Where text has been added to the transcribed text, for example where text is included to clarify the meaning for the reader, this is clearly indicated by the use of round brackets ( ).

Whilst paralinguistic features of speech are not indicated (changes of pitch, tone and so on) words said with particular emphasis are *italicized*.

Time pauses are marked with three dots if less than one second in duration (…), if longer, the time is indicated in brackets.

Where I add my own comments to the transcribed text, these are indicated between square brackets [ ].

Transcription Example One:

Kirsty: (turning to Hannah)

In your school are all of the teachers of the same kind of background?

Hannah: [appearing to misunderstand the question replied]

The teachers are… *quite* young… non are reaching retirement age.

Transcription Example Two:

Kirsty:

Whereas the other person was… like you're not coming back… we don't want you

Self:

So you?...

Kirsty:

Well.. then I had to then go in pretending like I didn't know *anything* and that everything was fine

Electronic Communications

Two forms of electronic communications are represented in the thesis; email and Facebook postings.

Electronic Communication One, Example email message:

Email messages are indicated through the use of formatted and a single left border in this way:

> Hi …
>
> How are you?

Facebook postings are represented using the following conventions:

> **Facebook Names**
>
> Facebook Messages
>
> Facebook Details

Electronic Communication Two, Example Facebook posting:

> **ANNA★**
>
> Exactly!! stapler in hand!! Thanks :D x
>
> August 15 at 8:48pm · Like

Field Notes

Where field notes are used within the general flow of text, they are acknowledged and indicated by the use of double-slash brackets of the form //…// and where this contains reported speech drawn from contemporaneous notes this is presented in the form //' …'//.

Extended sections drawn from field notes are indented and presented in Arial, size 10

Example Field note entry:

One of the s-b tutors announced that:

… students don't need to know anything about …

(Field note entry January 13 2013)

APPENDIX 2: Consent Form (a) Rationale

'Becoming a teacher: aspects of the transitional phase'

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research activity.

As we have previously discussed, I am carrying out research related to the experiences of students as they make the transition from the end of their training into and through their first year of teaching. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of this form of research, high priority will be given at all times to confidentiality. This form outlines the protocols that will be used to ensure this. Please take a few minutes to read this form, which will act as a written record of our recorded conversation and if you are happy to participate in the research activity, tick and sign in the appropriate places.

Protocols (interviews)

All interview recordings and transcripts will be safely stored in a secure space in the University and will only be available, except with prior permission, to the researcher and the research supervisor(s):

Electronic data will be held securely; in the case of electronic data on password-protected hard disk / servers and, in the case of written materials, in a locked cabinet.

All materials will be destroyed / deleted within five years of the completion of the research activity.

As selections from the transcripts will be used in both the final research report and any interim research papers participants will be provided with a transcript of all interviews together with – if required – a copy of the actual interview recording in digital audio format (.mp3 or .wav as required). These will be known as Interim Transcripts.

Participants may then:

Provide their assent to the use of the original transcript or,

Edit the 'interim transcript' in anyway.

The agreed version of the transcript will be the one used in the research activity.

Participants will be expected to have completed this process within two weeks of receipt.

The researcher will take all reasonable further steps to preserve participant's anonymity throughout the research process.

Participants may opt to be referred to by a pseudonym of their own choosing throughout the report.

Whilst the interviewer will remain sensitive to the nature of the questions asked and will endeavour not to take the interview into any areas with which participants feel uncomfortable, participants will retain the right:

Not to answer any questions asked and

Will also retain the right to withdraw retrospectively from the research and to require that any data (including recordings) developed to that point, are either destroyed or given to them for destruction.

Participants will be reminded of these protocols at the start of each interview, verbal assent will be recorded.

Protocols ('reflective diaries')

'Reflective Diaries', if participants choose to keep these and in whatever form they are kept, they will remain the property of the individual participant.

Additional written permissions will be sought to use any part of such products in the research report or related writings.

Protocols (online forum)

An online forum will be established on a secure area of the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard)

Participants will be encouraged to make contributions to the forum.

The facility to make 'anonymous' postings will be enabled.

It will be assumed that participants who contribute to forum are giving their permission for such contributions to be available for use within the research report.

APPENDIX 3: Consent Form (b) Agreement

Please read and, if you are in agreement, sign and print your name at the bottom of the form.

I agree to the material (recording(s), transcript(s)) and other materials produced during the research process, being used for study purposes as part of this research project including their use in interim research paper(s).

I understand that access to the materials will be restricted solely to the researcher and the research supervisor(s).

I understand that the research will be conducted in line with the 'Ethics Guidelines for Social Research' of Canterbury Christ Church University and that I have been supplied with a copy of these guidelines.

I request / do not request (please circle as appropriate) that my anonymity is preserved in the written materials with a pseudonym (see below).

I understand that I will be supplied with a copy of a transcript of each of my interviews and (if requested) a copy of the actual interview recording. This will normally be provided within two weeks of any interview.

I understand that I can check and correct actual errors in transcription and can amend the transcription in whatever way I deem appropriate.

I will endeavour to return this final transcript, or my assent to the use of the original transcript, within two weeks.

I understand that all transcripts and recordings will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed or deleted on completion of the research activity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the research activity at any point and will not be required to give any reason for so doing.

I understand that it will be suggested that I keep a 'reflective diary' during the research process.

I understand that an online discussion forum will be established to which I will be encouraged to contribute either by named or anonymous postings.

Please tick if you are willing for extracts of the 'diary' to be used as part of the research activity: [   ]

Please tick if you are willing for any contributions to such a forum (suitably anonymised) to be used as part of the research activity: [   ]

Please add any further comments that you wish to make.

Name: (please print)   ....

Pseudonym (if required):   ....

Signed: ....

Date: ....

APPENDIX 4: School Contact Letter

<div align="center">
<OFFICAL UNIVERSITY LOGO>

Peter Dorman
<contact address>
</div>

<head teacher name>

<head teacher contact address>

<date>

Dear <head teacher name>

We understand that <student name> has been recently appointed to your teaching staff, it is for this reason that we are writing to you.

As you will no doubt be aware the Primary Education Department in the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University has consistently been graded as 'outstanding' in all Ofsted inspections for the past ten years. In order to support and enhance the quality of its provision, the Faculty constantly engages in a range of development and research activities. Peter Dorman, a Principal Lecturer in Education within the Faculty, is undertaking one such research activity. Peter's research is focused on the experiences of students who are currently starting their teaching career in September of this year. The research, which is underway, is tracking a selected group of NQTs into and through their first year of teaching. The research has been designed to examine trainee's experiences and the factors that support their developing understanding of teacher professionalism. In this way the research will help the Faculty to further inform its induction procedures for our final year students.

<student Christian name> volunteered to be part of this research when she was a final year undergraduate student and as such has been interviewed on one occasion already. As <student Christian name> is now a member of your staff we are writing to request your permission to continue this research with her/him during the coming academic year. Ideally the research requires interviewing <student Christian name> on two further occasions; towards the end of term one and towards the end of the academic year. The times and locations of the interviews would be negotiated directly with <student Christian name>.

The research process has been; designed in line with the ethical research guidelines that are used by the University and has been scruntized by the University's Research and Ethics committee.

Participants in the research will be anonomysied and all information, for example interview transcripts, will be dealt with in the outmost confidence.

Peter will telephone school next week and negotiate a time when he can speak directly with you in order to answer any questions that you have and we hope, gain your permission to continue the valuable research work <student christian name>.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 5: Interview2 - letter to participants

<OFFICAL UNIVERSITY LOGO>

Peter Dorman
<contact address>

<student name>
<student contact address>

<date>

Dear <student name>

RE: NQT Research Project. Becoming a teacher: aspects of the transitional phase

I hope that the new term has started well for you?

I am pleased to say that now continued financing for the research and permissions from the schools are in place, we can move on to the second round of interviews.

I would like to do this if possible sometime in the three weeks from Monday January 30th to Friday February 17th. I think that we will need to allow up to one hour for the interview process. I will of course come to you to carry these out and at whatever time suits you best.

I wonder if you could send me some suitable times please, either by email or by completing the enclosed form and returning it to me in the enclosed SAE? I'll then do an email circular to everyone so that you are all kept in the loop.

Looking forward to meeting you again.

Regards

x

APPENDIX 6: 'All About Me'

At the beginning of the first year of the participant's programme, the students were asked to write a brief paragraph about themselves to be used as a way of introducing themselves to the schools in which they would do their first placements. These are the paragraphs. Even at this early stage, it is interesting to see the manner in which they variously constructed and presented themselves.

ANNA

I have had a varied experience of working with children over the years. When I was 9 my parents started fostering, so I have seen a mix of children come and go from my home, staying between 2 weeks and 2 years.

Every summer, I attend a Christian camp, aged 14 I became a junior leader and I still love helping out, even with the increased responsibility of first aider! In my gap year between college and university I worked as a teaching assistant in year 2 for a term. I was earning money to pay for a 4 month trip to Mexico teaching English to children aged 5-12 and to adults of all ages. As a child I took many dance lessons a week, I didn't have time for TV. I have used this skill choreographing for a primary school productions and concerts.

KIRSTY

Hello my name is Kirsty and I am studying primary education at Canterbury Christchurch University

My favourite subjects are PE, science and ICT. I am a bubbly outgoing and friendly person. I am approachable and have had a lot of experience working with children in the age group of 5-11. This includes working for over two years in an after school club from 3 until 6, five days a week organising activities, making displays and organising outings during the play schemes in the holidays. I have also had over 2 weeks of work experience within a local primary school where I worked with a variety of classes and ages levels and abilities. I have also been involved in many sporting clubs in the local community. I have completed my community sports leaders' qualification and have also trained as a tag rugby coach and helped run a tournament for primary schools. I have also helped out in the schools netball club and also gym and dance display at my secondary school where we worked in partnership under Herts schools and families with 5 primary schools, of which I helped to make up a dance routine. I have also helped out in guiding units and on had a part time job running and organising children's parties at the local leisure centre. I look forward to seeing you all next week and I look forward to working with the school and helping out in any way possible throughout my time there.

APPENDIX 7: Facebook Message String - 'Seeking advice…'

Anna★

Seeking advice before her first day.

Does anyone have any advice for NQTs starting their first week of school??

Friend ONE

wow are you qualified??? good luck. seems like years away before i will be =]

4 hours ago · Like · 1 named person

Friend TWO

What year have you got? Always be confident and act like you know what you're doing, even if you don't!! (in front of the children, I mean) 4 hours ago · Like · 4 people

Friend THREE

Set your expectations early on and stick with it....oh and buy yourself the biggest mug you can find for all the tea you will need to drink! ;-)

Friend FOUR

You taught my class - then you can do anything!

Friend FIVE

Drink Coffee. If you dont like coffee...get used to it.

Friend SIX

Don't beat the kids with sticks...I hear that doesn't go down well...

4 hours ago · Like · 2 people

Friend SEVEN

smile...you've trained hard for this!!!

4 hours ago · Like

Friend EIGHT

Read what's on the cover of the Hitch Hikers guide to the Galaxy (printed in large friendly letters)

4 hours ago · Like

Friend NINE

I was told at the end of uni to not be afraid to take a day right at the beginning to get to know the kids before going into the teaching stuff

Friend TEN

you play ball with me and I'll play ball with you; but remember: it's my ball.

3 hours ago · Like · 1 named person