

**A Phenomenological exploration of  
feelings, thinking and learning:  
A practitioner action research  
investigation**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A phenomenological exploration of feelings, thinking and learning: A practitioner action research investigation.**

In this thesis I researched as a student, teacher, educational mentor, researcher and evaluator investigating the effects and functions of feelings in learning. Feelings were defined as physical and mental sensations. Four data strands contributed to a new learning theory developed over eight years. Using collaborative methods I asked the guiding question; “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” including an appropriate subsidiary question in each strand. My first aim was to find causes for disaffected student behaviour. While home-tutoring I asked the question; “Emotional blocks: what do they tell us about the learning process?” The resulting narratives revealed complex ecological factors of which I was previously unaware (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Inquiry Strand 1: Tutoring 12 school refusers). These were analysed thematically. In the second strand I asked; “How do feelings affect my learning and teaching?” resolving learning problems and developing professional insight. (Inquiry Strand 2: The author's learning process).

The third strand compared other teachers’ experiences asking; “How do feelings affect other teachers’ learning and teaching?” (Inquiry Strand 3: Mentoring 8 teachers as learners). The fourth strand explored the theory’s potential to inform professional practice (Inquiry Strand 4: Evaluating a primary school arts festival: observations of feeling based learning in action). Strands 2, 3 and 4 were also thematically analysed and included a framework of positive ‘emotionally linked’ learning behaviours as additional themes. The latter were derived from Claxton’s Effective Learning Profile (2002). In this Resilience is associated with absorption, managing distractions, noticing, perseverance; Resourcefulness with questioning, making links, imagining, reasoning; Reflectiveness with planning, revising, distilling, meta-learning and Reciprocity with interdependence, collaboration, empathy, listening and imitation. My fifth aim of sharing findings with others was undertaken throughout the research. My theory developed through reading, self reflection, writing and working with those who participated as colleagues and students (Wenger 2002). The findings make a contribution to knowledge, which evidences the claim that in education feelings may usefully be considered as legitimate thoughts.



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## **OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS**

### **Chapter 1**

This is a critical review of theoretical resources relating to human learning development and affective aspects of learning. Starting with the wider social influences of cultural, technological, political and commercial pressures on education, I look at some social effects of psychological theories, educational policies, education and educational researchers' attitudes. The chapter then goes on to examine knowledge about environmental influences, developmental theory, language and cognitive neuroscience research as it may currently influence our views in education about the nature of cognition. I conclude that it may be possible to create a better climate of understanding for students and teachers, which facilitates learning.

### **Chapter 2**

In this chapter I discuss different experts' conceptions of human cognition, searching theoretical resources about feelings and emotions. I reframe learning theory to include feelings in relation to my participatory action research and from my reflexive teacher's perspective. I challenge 'simplistic' assumptions about learning based on inappropriate, one-dimensional and incomplete concepts of learning, which do not consider the role of feeling responses in cognition. I argue for extended models of learning, which allow for idiosyncratic variations affected by environmental histories, genetic tendencies and on-going cognitive development through interactive and transformational learning.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter starts with a discussion and justification of the practitioner research focus with implications for the choice of methodology. This is followed by a list of original aims, giving rise to, and linked to, four inquiry strands. In pursuing the guiding question: "What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?" four related subsidiary questions are posed, as deemed appropriate to four inquiry strands and participant groups. A brief outline description is given of questions and aims, participants, and a rationale for methodological approaches to the data collection in each independent strand. A diagram of the thesis follows giving an overview of the field-related questions, participants, data forms, related theoretical domains and

methods in the four strands of the research (Table 1). This is followed by a general discussion of methods related to and used in the research, which is again referenced back to the four inquiry strands. These consist of sections on: narrative research; Auto-ethnography; symbolic modelling and metaphor; mentoring in developing professional perspectives and practitioner action research. There is a discussion of some of the ethical issues affecting each data strand and the chapter ends with a section on the analysis.

#### **Chapter 4**

In Strand 1 of my research I relate my real experiences of tutoring twelve school refusers in their homes. I ask the subsidiary question: “Emotional blocks: what do they tell us about the learning process?” This chapter refers to the narratives in the Appendix 1 about my experiences in teaching each pupil. The context of the research is analysed through a thematic analysis of the data. I look at the young people’s behaviours, attitudes, possible environmental influences, interests, and academic results, behaviour, spoken and written comments. I consider various environmental issues affecting students, which were identified within the research data. These are: parental psychological and emotional problems; depression and self-esteem; bullying and educationally non-conducive environments; traumatic events and bereavement; health issues; responses of schools; responses of education and social agencies and counselling skills’ approaches in teaching. My research reveals a wider range of factors than would normally be known to me, as a teacher working in school.

#### **Chapter 5**

In Strand 2 I subject myself to a similar, though more in depth scrutiny than I had given to my participants. I speculate how feelings have affected my own learning and teaching. This involves exploring my own life through art and writing with the different types of auto-ethnographic data given in Appendix 2. I undertake a process of phenomenological reduction, questioning and revisiting my perceptions and assumptions, eventually reaching some qualified conclusions. During and since collecting the data, I continue to re-evaluate my learning and teaching experiences reflexively in the light of new knowledge. I focus on emotional, subjective aspects of my learning development from my own idiosyncratic point of view. I give my own evidence of the impact of positive encouragement and negative, unsympathetic

treatment in different educational environments and my personal learning experiences as a student in parallel with my research. I show how my ideas developed during this period. I look retrospectively for evidence of my subjective thinking processes, unvoiced awareness and feelings as they influenced reactions to situations. I track some of these as they eventually developed into the various consciously expressed arguments included in this thesis.

## **Chapter 6**

In Strand 3 in this chapter, eight teachers from very different histories and contexts reveal some of their opinions and reflections about feelings in learning and teaching in the process of being mentored. The data contained in Appendix 3 uncovers a rich source of subjective and practical experience, motivations, opinions and knowledge in participants' lives. The data consists of mentoring notes, symbolic models, mentee and mentor comments producing evidence from teachers reflecting 'emotional' aspects of learning and teaching. This chapter was driven by my own and the participants' idiosyncratic search for meaning and the conclusions, which emerged.

## **Chapter 7**

My research in Strand 4 is based on data produced while educationally evaluating a school creativity festival in a nearby city – a project with Creative Partnerships (CCE, 2008) and a big commercial city theatre. The data resulted from a two-year adult action researcher programme and a festival involving six primary schools. The data presented in Appendix 4 is derived from the work I did in evaluating The Festival. The original analysis was in line with the organisers' project objectives, but the analysis for this thesis is specifically thematic and related to conducive, motivational or 'feeling interactive' learning contexts. I pose the question: "How might feeling-responsive environments facilitate the learning of professionals and pupils alike?" I chose this context in order to evidence the relationships of feelings to thinking and learning in action within dynamic educational settings. This research also deals with the motivational impact of cross-curricular learning methods and the possible role of feelings in professional learning development and evaluation.

## **Chapter 8**

This chapter shows the outcomes of the research in consideration of the guiding question: “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” A summary of the method is given (8: 8.2). Two themes are expounded, which emerged from and across the four strands of enquiry. These were Barriers to learning, both physical and emotional (8: 8.3), and Enabling learning environments, which were feeling responsive (8: 8.4). In the analysis process I have worked through each of the four data strands in relation to each theme, finding repetition of evidence points across strands. This repetition is summarised, being derived from four different contexts, to support the conclusions and resulting arguments, and a discussion follows on the possible implications for learning theory (8: 8.5). ). A section follows on: Implications for educational policy and practice (8:8.6), with sub-sections regarding Learners (8: 8.61); Educational management and social agencies (8: 8.62) and Teachers (8: 8.63) and The final subsection contain my conclusions about the possible implications of the research for me and for other practitioners; Future research possibilities (8: 8.64). The next section gives my final; Reflections on the research process (8: 8.7) considering ethical dilemmas and tensions arising from my work both as a practitioner and as a researcher. The chapter ends with a conclusion (8: 8.8).

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE EDUCATIONAL TERRAIN FROM ONE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In working out how to motivate school refusers while home-tutoring them, I began exploring the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. In the process I look at and make comparisons with my own feelings in learning, both current and retrospectively through childhood. These first two research strands lead on to further explorations through a group of teachers I mentored about their feelings in learning. Finally, I research how feelings were involved in learning within the context of a school creativity festival for pupils and professional educators alike. These four strands provide four sets of data, which gave rise to their own subsidiary questions. The main focus of the research, however, remained the same throughout, in attempting to answer the guiding question: “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” I used ‘appropriate’ participatory action research methods in each strand.

During the eight years of this research I read widely across domains of knowledge searching for relevant advice and practice. The literature review, which follows, helped me to adjust my perspectives at various points in the reiterative action research cycle. It was written, up-dated and re-written over the research period as a work in progress. In general, my literature searches revealed a lack of participatory-based research about feelings in relation to neuro-cognitive research and learning theory. In some respects the very incoherence of the body of knowledge in my study area, gave me the courage to draw conclusions about the function and effects of feelings as they appeared, from my teacher's perspective, to affect my fellow participants and me. This chapter, and the one which follows, are therefore idiosyncratic, albeit literature based, and contain opinions related to my research experience. The completed chapters are very much the product of the whole research period.

I have organised this chapter by looking at ‘schools of thought’ and theory, which I found relevant to my research, putting them under general headings. In doing this, I contribute my own views, observations and comments, which derive from thirty years

of professional practice and eight years of research. Inevitably these have caused in themselves benefits and limitations. The literature under discussion in this chapter involves existing learning theory derived from various psychological and educational perspectives. It touches on ideas from counselling, cognitive neuroscience, medicine, philosophy, business studies and sociology. This chapter contains a discipline and theoretical mapping of relevant areas. Starting with the wider social influences of cultural, technological, political and commercial pressures on education, I have looked at some social effects of psychological theories, educational policies and attitudes on learners. The chapter then goes on to discuss knowledge about environmental influences, developmental theory and language, and cognitive neuroscience research as it may influence our views in education about the nature of cognition. The discussion continues to be developed in more depth in the following chapter (Chapter 2). This discussion provides a basis for the comparison of related themes in the later analysis of the research strands.

## **1.2 An ecological view of individual human development**

Early on in my research I found that Bronfenbrenner (1979) offers an apparently feasible overview of human development with his ‘Russian doll’ model of nested systems, ‘...interconnected ... as a manifestation of overarching patterns of ideology and organisation’ (p. 8), he referred to as macro systems. He claims that by:

*...analysing and comparing the micro-, meso-, and exosystems characterizing different social classes, ethnic and religious groups, or entire societies, it becomes possible to describe systematically and to distinguish the ecological properties of these larger social contexts as environments for human development. (p. 8)*

This model encompasses individual human development as affected by various social systems and helpfully introduces the idea of ecology. The full complexities of society’s interacting social systems as they affect the child are extensively explored by him with reference to comprehensive social research in the U. S. A., in particular from Hetherington *et al.* (1977) and Ogbu (1974), but also others. He refers to:

*...the investigators attention beyond relations in the immediate setting...and what we have called the microsystem... the capacity of the mother-child dyad to perform its developmental functions is seen to depend on the behaviour not only of other members of the household but also of persons from the outside world. (op.cit., p. 8)*

These include the nursery workers (mesosystem), friends in the mother's workplace with no direct contact (exosystem), and the institutions and belief systems in society at large (macrosystem). However, Bronfenbrenner's initial inference that his theoretical model makes a systematic description of human learning development possible is hard to substantiate, since situational and temporal factors and the complex variety of 'human nature', tend to prevent this. For example, in today's multi-cultural environment many individuals are influenced by more than one cultural system. The model does not necessarily make it easier in my research to envisage different aspects of specific learning interactions in real life situations. These are hard to determine, because of the impossibility of understanding all of the influences upon individuals and their varied feelings and responses, which may produce idiosyncratic learning problems.

The collection of descriptive information is a well-established research practice already, but the tendency for theorists to make ambitious claims as Bronfenbrenner did in his original work, as quoted above, may obscure the realities of the researching process and may make the individual researcher feel inappropriately inadequate. Bronfenbrenner (2005), in continuing to investigate through action research data, went on to develop the idea of the 'chronosystem' model, incorporating life experiences and transitions into his bioecological perspective. He bases these conclusions on research into individuals' experiences of 'normative' events, where *'each subject serves as his own control'* (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 84). Though not made explicit, it is hard to envisage how this could be done without some acknowledgement of the participants' viewpoints. His research may be viewed as tending towards the conclusion that in the social sciences, honest, reflexive research reporting (historically and situationally based), whether qualitative or quantitative, although imperfect, is probably the only feasible method available for furthering our understanding of complex situations in context. Examples of other researchers' experiences, observations and conclusions in combination with new information may indicate new solutions to what can never be, in all respects completely identical problems. This approach involves abandoning the pursuit of the over ambitious, unrealistic and perhaps even ultimately undesirable dream or goal of finding overarching explanations of, and solutions to, human issues. In doing social research, it appears necessary to realize that human relations are a

work in progress and human knowledge accumulative and transformative. This implies that analytic frameworks in social research contexts may emerge but should not be rigidly predetermined or imposed.

As a basis for my own idiosyncratic descriptions of individual learning problems, I have divided my discussion into areas which seemed significant to me in the process of doing my research. I start with aspects of the wider picture, with educational research the equivalent of an exo system influenced by and affecting the socio-cultural macro system. I then focus in on some literature about the 'individual', dealing with the micro and meso systems - in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's model. Although this appears a comprehensive approach, it is unrealistic to expect to treat the micro, meso and macro systems as discrete entities, for each impinges on the other, with many possible influences and interacting reference points across the range. Communication and social networks are complex and also confusing because human beings adopt different perspectives, switch frames of reference and adopt different modes of behaviour for a range of reasons, which are liable to rapid fluctuation. Reasons for behaviour are not always evident to individuals themselves, let alone observers and vice versa.

Evolving communities and networks of thought, communication, behaviour and practice in its wider, not necessarily professional sense, exist at all levels in society and help to create meaning and social reality as individuals and groups accept, reject, create and transform them (Wenger, 1998). They exist in various complicated combinations ranging from short-lived, temporary alliances to long-term, sophisticated cultural creations. As an individual it is possible to be involved in and affected by many of them simultaneously. The idea of ecologically developing communities of practice and networks of meaning, adopted at will by individuals, conveys some idea of the complexities existing. It transforms a simplistic view of Bronfenbrenner's 1979 model, which remains nevertheless a useful concept. At a sophisticated level, its complexity can be envisaged to some extent in the imagination, but not necessarily represented in concrete terms by a drawn model. It therefore becomes possible to make the following statement, claim or assumption, which underpins my work: Embedded and evolutionary communities of social communication, teaching and learning practice intersect and encircle individuals

affected by and participating in them within an overall human social ecology model, impossible to imagine in totality.

It is evident that Bronfenbrenner fully appreciated the complexities of human relations represented by his theory. Even though as a practitioner facing everyday interactions in the workplace, I may also appreciate these: difficulties of power relations my having the agency to effect change may be a problem. Bronfenbrenner acknowledges this as he looks at sophisticated and skilful research programmes into child rearing in the USA during the 1970s. He finds that a fundamental change of social attitude is needed to bring about a more conducive climate for ‘successful’ human developments and relations within all of his perceived ‘ecological’ systems.

*Here the emphasis is not on the traditional psychological processes of perception, motivation, thinking, and learning, but on their content-what is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge, and how the nature of this psychological material changes as a function of a person’s exposure to and interaction with the environment. (1979, p. 9)*

The ‘personal’ research, which follows in this thesis, suggests that appreciating the way that feelings and emotions impact upon and function ‘logically’, personally and socially in all areas of life (for good or ill) may intimately affect such an interaction. If this is so, then ‘emotional’ feedback data might be useful in devising, interpreting and testing for continuing relevance those ‘logically’ worded education statements and policies regularly produced by government departments.

### **1.3 Environmental influences upon education.**

There are subversive and often hidden factors and influences in the outside world affecting school children and the education system in the United Kingdom, which may contribute towards a climate for school refusal. Society is changeable and the increasing pace of change has affected education in some ways, which are unavoidable; for example, the proliferation of knowledge and the constant need to adapt to new situations and information. In reference to primary education, Whitaker (1997) talks about the macro pressures upon education caused by ‘advances’ in science and technology and various social phenomenon and political policies. His views can equally well be said to apply to the secondary field. I have summarised, re-ordered and updated his list as follows: commercial changes and fashions such as materialistic competition, encouragement to get into debt, booming third world

economies, workforce exploitation, communication technology, the global economy and fluctuating market forces; ecological changes such as global warming, atmospheric, food and water pollution, natural disaster and depletion of natural resources; social changes such as family life breakdown, drug cultures, epidemics, longer life spans, migration, immigration, ethnic conflict, combining cultures, unemployment and crime; political changes such as the rise and fall of political movements, war, religious extremism, terrorism and national self-interest (p. 4).

At present cohorts of pupils, when they attain adulthood have a diverse range of possible existing and future career prospects and occupations to embark on. These include writing (factual, fictional and creative); art of all kinds from product design to fine art and crafts; music (composing and performing from pop music to classical); and inventing through all the branches of engineering, mathematics, science and medicine. Then there are the service sectors of communications, media, information technology, teaching, nursing, law, commercial and banking services, medicine, and economics, marketing and selling. It could be argued that all of them influence education and all of them use subjective intelligence to some extent, to logical and material effect, in communicating with others within diverse environments. In 2007, Waters, the current director of the British Qualifications and (National) Curriculum Agency stated that he aimed to incorporate subject knowledge within a 'whole world' view. This view would acknowledge learner choice, pupil perspectives and utilise teachers' professional skills in engaging pupils' interest. Similarly Waters stated that the idea, which has been assumed, that there are three main categories of pupil, namely: gifted and talented, ordinary and special needs is incredibly simplistic. He lists amongst others: refugee, asylum seeker, disabled, traveller, carer, pregnant, self-harmer, twin, only child and those with one parent, two or more (step) parents. He points out that pupils can be in several of these categories simultaneously. He recommends building on learning beyond school and his approach includes all learners. This seems a pragmatic and 'real world' approach to education, which may involve teachers in action researching with learners in the process of teaching.

#### **1.4 Discourses surrounding concepts of children and adolescence.**

Ideas of discipline and the repression of original and challenging ideas and behaviour are easily associated with assumptions of adult intellectual superiority.

*For Piaget, the child's mental development consists of the gradual replacement of the unique qualities and characteristics of the child's thought by the more powerful thought of the adult... Higher forms of thought do not arise from the characteristics of the child, but simply take their place. According to Piaget, this is the sole law of the child's mental development. (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 175)*

Here is an example of assumption influencing 'scientific' research having a profound influence on the United Kingdom's education system. It is easy to see why some psychologists, educationalists, parents and authority figures would readily accept the idea of '*...the more powerful thought of the adult*' replacing the child's. Such an argument may be seen as flattering to adults, especially if 'emotional' and idiosyncratic behaviour is seen as unnecessary and irrelevant. These ideas may have tended to exist, anyway, simply because of the power adults generally have over children and difficulties in coping with and answering their physical and intellectual needs. However, an excessively repressive approach to education may hinder developing cognitive processes by suppressing feelings, discouraging the constructive, elaborated or independent thinking which gives rise to sophisticated adult thought. Sylwester finds that:

*...students tend to respond happily to activities that their brains (are) developed to do well, such as exploring concepts, discovering patterns, estimating and predicting, cooperating on group projects, and discussing moral and ethical issues. (2003, p. 97)*

He notes that:

*...forcing students to spend their days in an uncomfortable classroom environment to master information and skills they don't consider relevant can result in a lifelong aversion to... whatever. (ibid., p. 97)*

In professional situations I have witnessed educationalists on occasion failing to supply appropriate answers, responding in a negative, critical, sarcastic or aggressive manner to their students.

Adults may dismiss teenagers' feelings, even when they are understandable and may withhold responsibility just at the time when full emotional development to adulthood requires it. Amongst other reasons, this could be due to change and a perceived loss of status as young people develop autonomy and become independent of them. There has been a popular school of thought in certain western societies, which has spread the idea of adolescence as a period of great turbulence and rebellion against authority.

Some psychological theories have supported this idea. There was an evolutionary, biological theory, which claimed that teenagers went through a tribal warlike, barbarous phase (Hall, 1904). Others have believed that the body changes of sexual development cause emotional instability (Sorenson, 1973). Psychoanalytic theorists also put forward ideas about the problems of sexual adjustment believing that children had to resolve earlier sexual conflicts during the teenage years (Freud, 1968; Blos, 1967). These kinds of assumptions, still prevalent, may provide arguments of justification, which disguise adults' own failures to adjust to the needs and rights of young people. At the least they may lead to misinformed responses to young people's problems and a failure to pay attention to their real concerns.

Bronfenbrenner (1973) researched cultural differences and behaviour in the USA and USSR and found each society's expectation and treatment of teenagers seemed to cause very different behaviour. In the USSR, teenagers were expected to have the same general aims as the rest of the population, which was inclusive of them. They did not conflict with authority, though it is not clear if this was due to political repression. Bronfenbrenner pointed out that in the USA teenagers were culturally generally segregated from adult activity and tended to have their own subculture, which created problems (*ibid.*). This research shows that those not included and given meaningful social roles by a society, even though enjoying considerable freedom and money, may become disaffected with that society. This may lead them into an exclusive peer group culture, perhaps commercially exploited by adults, which may contribute towards emotional conflict and adjustment problems later.

In the West, rapid changes in careers and their prospects have also affected adult and adolescent perceptions of each other, since some parents and teachers may have difficulty in understanding today's changeable work environment. Because of this some adults may be less able to advise teenagers and provide suitable role models than in the past. Lerner's view of adolescents interacting with their environments, as a stimulus themselves to others, as processors of information and as agents in choosing and shaping their own lives appears to be a positive and accurate one (1985). However, this process is obviously dependent upon personality, ability and opportunity. Community leaders might encourage a better social climate by showing they value children, older teenagers and young adults as useful contributors to their

community. In some quarters, there are some current signs of an improving attitude towards young people in the United Kingdom, perhaps partly due to government initiatives such as the 'Every Child Matters' guidelines (Department for Education and Skills ,DfES, 2006a).

Psychology theories and therapies have influenced western society, affecting the way people regard themselves, their behaviour and the behaviour of others (the model of human distress). They may even be seen to cause, influence and justify some types of behaviour and prejudice. Various conceptual frameworks, terms and general ideas are present in the social environment. They may conflict with each other, but are nevertheless pervasive in society and the education system and available as convenient arguments of justification. Many of them can be traced to interpretations of psychological theories. For example: that it is possible to solve people's problems by analysis and explanation; that people cannot control their behaviour due to hidden forces in the subconscious (Freud, 1901, 1906; Jung 1953-1978); that there are discrete mental illnesses (Kallmann, 1946, 1952), which can be diagnosed and treated; that people can sort themselves out if they want to (Kahnemann & Tversky, 1984); that people are permanently scarred and condemned by their life history; that people are fixed in their personality traits and by inference their potential ability (Eysenck, 1947); and that 'abnormal' people should be subjected to, or subject themselves to, a programme of treatment for their own and society's good (Masson, 1997). Although these ideas are linked to real issues, their simplistic adoption tends to detract from respect for individual autonomy. This includes the right of individuals to hold their own idiosyncratic points of view, feelings and possible coping strategies in their different situations. The above psychological theories may also prejudice some professionals' sense of responsibility for attending to the needs of real people and conspire against entitlement to human rights.

Psychotherapy became particularly popular in the USA, a country, in spite of its stated philosophy, where in practice profit can tend to override human rights. An important underlying issue is that the commercial marketing of therapies, literature, training, medicines and professionals can favour the therapist in the balance of power with the client. It is often, therefore, in the professionals' financial and personal interest to exercise power over the service receiver (this could also be said of other

professionals in the social sector, including teachers). The psychology industry has created a power base and argument for its own expertise (Furedi, 2004), which can cause other professionals like teachers to feel inadequate in educational matters relating to children's mental health. Teachers, therefore, may tend to regard 'mental health' difficulties or 'abnormal' behaviour, even at low levels, as outside the scope and remit of teaching. In the past, this lack of perceived need may have resulted in a lack of money and time given for the development of counselling skills, and teacher training in 'emotional' learning difficulties and identification, causes and possible remedies for social deprivation.

In the past psychological research was used to support authoritarian and prejudiced methods of education based on ideas of a eugenic and political nature. For example, educational IQ tests were used as measures of innate ability, even though Binet and Simon (1911), their main originator, made quite clear their limitations from the start. Although now generally used as originally intended, to assess present abilities and requirements for help, children, parents and even some teachers may subconsciously still view them as labelling, judgmental, predictive and condemnatory.

### **1.5 Educational policies in the United Kingdom**

Whitaker refers to micro pressures within the educational community, mentioning structural changes such as Local Management of Schools, the creation of Grant-maintained schools and City technology colleges, continuous revision of subject matter through the National Curriculum, constantly updated accountability codes and evaluation systems through teacher appraisal, assessment, testing and school inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted):

*Not only have these pressures imposed enormous extra demands on an already under-resourced service, they have diminished professional authority and created a culture of suspicion and mistrust. These two types of pressures, in their powerful and different ways, have created a range of significant effects on the schools of the country, creating an altogether changed and changing context for the work of teachers and pupils. (1997, p. 5)*

At times teachers have been made scapegoats by government, educational agencies and the media. This has happened by implication when 'schools' have been found to be failing in league tables and the acknowledgement, qualification and adjustment due to social deprivation in school catchment areas has not been made. Another example

is the over-reaction of the media to annual exam results, where higher results nationally are judged to be due to a lowering of examination standards and lower results due to poor teaching. Whitaker finds that:

*Teachers have absorbed an enormous range of changes to an already complex system, but have also experienced the society they serve appearing to turn on them, blaming them for all the current ills and difficulties of the nation. (1997, p. 1)*

These kinds of pressures may have caused a loss of confidence within the profession and undermined its ability to deal constructively with change in differing social environments. They may have had a negative effect on teachers' feelings about teaching. The abandonment of advisory services and the drift away from Local Authority control may have contributed to this situation. It is undeniable that a growing number of experienced, competent teachers have left the profession and established communities of practice have been broken up. Political initiatives have created separate school units with marketing and business priorities, tending towards a loss of cohesion in social and educational policy. In some cases, there may have been a further loss of expertise where heads were promoted for professional management qualifications on paper, rather than for practical experience. At the same time teachers have been asked to teach children under the pressure of constantly improving 'efficiency', often determined by league table results, which may not be able to be interpreted meaningfully away from school contexts.

In the United Kingdom, policy makers have shown an ongoing concern with unsatisfactory pupil attendance figures and truancy over a number of years, but have failed in attempts to framework a system of remediation. Searle (2001) believes that the United Kingdom's educational system is failing to engage children; for example, 'government' statistics (for the year 1998-9) revealed that there were 10,404 children permanently excluded from schools in that year. A study of twenty-four countries showed England had the sixth worst truancy figures, with Scotland the worst for an industrialised nation (OECD, May 2000, cited in Searle, 2001, p. 3). It is an issue, which appears to have remained to some extent misunderstood. A quote from the Department of Education and Science website Teachernet (2005) appears to 'objectify' truancy as a threatening phenomenon rather than as pupil behaviour to which it is possible to ascribe meaning.

*Truancy impacts self-esteem, achievement and employability. It's one of the single most destructive elements that young people must circumnavigate in their journey through school. Every day in this country over 50,000 pupils miss school without permission and an estimated 7.5 million school days are missed each year through truancy. It's known from research that these students are easily drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour and, equally alarming, are more likely to be unemployed after leaving school.*

This shows that in spite of repeated attempts to address it, truancy remains as key problem behaviour. It could be reasonably argued that most children are likely to have some adjustment problems, on various levels and to various degrees at school and yet this is often not acknowledged as 'normal'. It is probable that these difficulties have only been reported in the past, when they could no longer be ignored.

Traditional attitudes and established models of deprivation may be partly responsible for the condemnatory attitude of some sections of society towards those less fortunate. They can be used to excuse prejudice and justify dismissive behaviour and failure to act, affecting exclusion and inclusion in society at all levels, even by some educationalists ostensibly involved in remedying injustice. Bronfenbrenner states that:

*...established models typically employ a scientific lens that restricts, darkens, and even blinds the researcher's vision of environmental obstacles and opportunities and of the remarkable potential of human beings to respond constructively to an ecologically compatible milieu once it is made available. As a result, human capacities and strengths tend to be underestimated. (1979, p. 7)*

An example is a Department of Education report, which tends to assume that exclusion is a discipline issue, even while acknowledging, sympathising and comprehensively listing many of the 'considerable difficulties' faced by disaffected students (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, 1995/6). This report talks about poverty related to unemployment, sick or disabled parents, loss of a parent, absentee fathers, older siblings (usually male) pressurising them into crime, poor parenting, physical or sexual abuse, racism perceived or actual. These are circumstances, which might make education low on any 'normal' learner's list of priorities at any age as in the manner of Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' theory (1954). While appearing to be sympathetic and factually based, this report contains common assumptions, without explanation, qualification or effective suggestions for remedy. Generalisations about *imagined* racism and criticism of *male* siblings and fathers reveal prejudice. It is admitted that the United Kingdom education service has failed to address these

problems, but there is an underlying defeatist attitude and an implied acceptance. In spite of the well-meaning concern expressed, it is almost as if truancy and the fact that no meaningful action can be taken were inevitable facts of life (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, 1995/6, pp. 10-11).

Political sophistry may hide an underlying fear of lack of control and distrust of other social groups based on a materialistic philosophy embedded within the United Kingdom's privileged political establishment. A lack of empathy for those raised in very different environments can be observed in some political speeches and a belief that what worked for 'them': a white, male, public school oriented, traditionally English upper or middle class, business and professionally based person, should work for all. Only a very small minority of students can hope to start from this base, quite apart from considerations of desirability and suitability that they should do so.

*The government, anxious to maintain a competitive edge in world markets, seems to be experiencing a deep confusion about how best to manage the education of the young in an increasingly fast changing and turbulent world. Its response has been to set up a series of reforms to alter the structure and content of schooling. Sadly, it has not resisted the temptation to look backwards for inspiration... Nostrums from the golden age of governmental boyhoods are offered as an alternative to ideas that confront the increasingly confusing and uncertain future of which we are all part. (Whitaker, 1997, p. 4)*

These restrictive, paternal, authoritarian, distrustful and fearful sentiments are also revealed by the United Kingdom's educational history since the 1988 Education Act. The facts laid out by Searle (2001), a student-centred educationalist, speak for themselves. His own views, experiences, anecdotes and philosophy which are interesting and well argued are incidental to this, since he reflects the conclusions of many within the educational system. He identifies two main points, which have tended to create poor learning environments. The first is that the National Curriculum, though it may contain useful subject matter, has been too prescriptive and restrictive in its interpretation. The second is that the policy of school marketing has turned United Kingdom education into a quick return on investment business system, which does not reflect humanitarian values. For example, schools and students are now judged mainly on league table exam results in spite of a general lack of support from English head teachers and the abolition of this system in Scotland and Wales.

Two government reports on underachieving pupils in Scotland and England state that:

*...pupils' failure to see the relevance of the curriculum on offer was a significant contributing factor in the development of their under-functioning and learning difficulties.* (Scottish Education Department, 1978 and Her Majesty's Inspectorate cited in Montgomery, 2000, p. 5)

I am aware through my professional practice as a teacher that this emotional and motivational problem applies equally to teachers when asked to 'deliver' learning in formats, which are not relevant or accessible to their students. Most learning theories ignore the role of emotions and feelings in cognition with the notable exception of Carl Rogers' work (1951, 1961, Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). Rogers took the view that the student's perspective was a fundamental motivating factor requiring 'positive regard' in order to flourish and that education should take account of this. More recently Goleman (1996, 1998) has come up with the idea of 'emotional intelligence', which has sparked a great deal of interest and some curriculum innovation within the educational community.

Back in 1993, Lovey *et al.* had identified the same two root causes as Searle (2001) for the educational system's increasing inability to cope with and avoid disaffection by pupils. They suggested that schools could help to alleviate problems in society through a more flexible approach. They outlined ways to support, include and reintegrate students through existing, sympathetic teachers and with the help of liaison workers who could be given counselling skills courses, time and flexibility to counsel students with problems. Although some measures were introduced in the form of additionally employed mentors and units for pupils with 'behavioural problems', they do not appear to have made significant improvements to recent figures as yet or benefited any of those in this study. The training of specialist teachers in counselling skills, which is recommended, does not appear to have been implemented.

### **1.6 Special education initiatives**

Pupils with behavioural problems, including truants, are often categorised as having special needs. Wise gives a short history of terms used to differentiate children with emotional and behavioural problems (2000). Terms such as 'handicapped' and 'maladjusted' were used in the 1940s and 1950s in Department of Education and Skills regulations and reports (1945, 1955, cited in Wise, 2000). The words 'disorder'

and 'disturbance' apparently came from medical professionals involved in diagnosis of illness. Wise points out that this treatment approach implies that a consideration of social context is unnecessary (ibid.). In practice it is unlikely that social context has always been ignored. We have no way of knowing what environmental problems at different levels were resolved by wise teachers, parents and children themselves. However, discredited ideas about diagnosis and labelling are still pervasive in society and there may still be people who are intolerant and fearful of 'difference'.

Wise relates how the Warnock Report (Department of Education and Skills, DES, 1978) and the Education Act (Department of Education and Skills, DES, 1981) '*...helped to redefine these stigmatising terms, and a broader concept of Special Educational needs was introduced*' (2000, p. 112). A larger number of pupils with special needs were acknowledged with new broader categories and definitions (mild, moderate, severe and specific). The term maladjusted was replaced by 'EBD' (pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties). She explores the history of the terminology used in special education and notes that this has become broader, more complex and has tended to include an increasingly larger proportion of the school population. She fails to point out that the stigma has survived in spite of the new terms, which would indicate that the fundamental issue of social attitude needs addressing (ibid., p. 112). She does not discuss whether this is due to a change in society or in perceptions or both and to what extent the 'self-fulfilling prophesy' of labelling has been extended. Robinson (2006) makes the point that back in the 1930s a talented and successful choreographer friend of his who had difficulty 'sitting still' at school was sent to a dancing school after being assessed by a psychologist. He believes that nowadays a child with 'similar problems' would be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and given medication. He points out in his talk that in her day this '*...was not an available condition, people did not know they could have that.*' This illustrates the fact that learning difficulties tend to be labelled by discourses of the day.

In 1983, as a direct result of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and the Education Act (DES, 1981), as a newly qualified special needs teacher, I helped set up a sixty place unit for children with moderate learning difficulties attached to a large secondary school. These pupils had statements drawn up by educational psychologists – a

system currently in operation. A major problem when I took early retirement in 1997 was an influx of pupils with Emotional Behavioural Difficulties. This was due to the political decision to be inclusive, even though we did not have the facilities or expertise required. Significantly, the unit I worked in is now dispersed to local schools. In 2004, Warnock admitted that the 1981 Education Act (DES) (though well-intentioned) had failed. She now advocates abandoning statements, citing the Audit Commission of 2002, which found that '*...the present framework was... irretrievably bureaucratic... and might well have outlived its usefulness*' (p. 30). She recommends the abolition of statements and the reinstatement of small committed special schools, telling us that '*...the number of such schools would rise, but their prestige would rise equally*' and '*...many children would return to the mainstream when they were 16*' (p. 30).

Although I agree with much that Warnock says elsewhere, these particular comments seem to me to illustrate the well-meaning 'rose-tinted spectacles' approach to special educational reform, which fails to provide a way of addressing diversity and differentiation in practice. This optimistically dismissive attitude may make one feel better, but appears impractically vague and unlikely to have a beneficial impact on children.

### **1.7 Assumptions underpinning educational practice.**

A recurring tendency in education is to see problems as based within the malfunctioning child. They are not seen as normal reactions to inappropriate situations. It may be, however, that these behaviours are a normal reaction to events in context, which others are unable to appreciate. This ‘normal’ reaction should reasonably incorporate genetic make-up and environmental history, however inexplicable to others. Tobbell and Lawthom find that:

*In support of contextual explanations around behaviour, there is a plethora of evidence which suggests that such difficulties are distributed across a context rather than situated within a child, and identification of difficulty would not require individual treatment but contextual analysis. (2005, p. 90)*

This paper discusses the confusion surrounding educational definitions and practices regarding emotional and behavioural difficulties. It criticises the tendency to take a medical perspective of emotional problems, labelling children as though they have caught an illness, which can be treated and cured without reference to their experience.

A definition of the term ‘emotional and behavioural difficulties’ is given in Department of Education and Skills Circular 23/89 as cited in Cooper *et al.* (1994) as relating to:

*Children who set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive, bizarre or withdrawn behaviour [and]... who have developed a range of strategies for dealing with day-to-day experiences that are inappropriate and impede normal personal and social development, and make it difficult for them to learn. (p. 20)*

The assumption that deviance is wrong and can be ‘corrected’ owes much to a ubiquitous belief in ‘the blank slate’ theory of human development (Pinker, 2002). This idea may say more about the aspirations of authoritarian politicians and academics to wield power and gain status by aspiring to define and re-organise society than it does about real human beings. There is also the problem of academic theorising based on these kinds of implicit social mores. All brains, however professionally trained, make sense of the world in individual terms, are prone to the complex foibles of human nature and are influenced both consciously and unconsciously by physical, environmental and genetic components (Ramachandran, 2003).

### **1.8 Attitudes in educational research.**

In the field of special education, one book is very useful for comparison with my own work, revealing some of the assumptions and confusions inherent within education in this field. Wise (2000) advocates an eclectic approach in trying to understand underachieving pupils, who may have similar emotional difficulties and disengagement problems to school refusers. Her research interviews are useful and revealing. Her reflexive text is helpful to the reader as she records children's points of view in her book *Listen to me!* (ibid.) She records comments by 36 twelve to sixteen-year-olds, which reveal their opinions and feelings about their lives and education. She researches pupils' opinions without recording learning behaviour within the home and class environment. Even though she interviewed pupils regularly for up to a year, she does not claim to have been teaching them. It seems likely, however, that some benefited and may even have improved educationally through talking to her. She observes that, '*...there appears to be limited educational research seeking pupils' perspectives of how social variables impact their behaviour*' (p. 88). My research to some extent addresses this problem, looking at home, school, peer group situations and my own role as teacher and researcher. My data gives information about each student's process of learning, eliciting feedback and speculating on possible unconscious perspectives, even when pupils cannot explain them.

Wise gives three reasons for the need for her research, which though valid for my own research as far as they go, seem to me to have additional implications she has overlooked (ibid.). The first consists of '*Financial Considerations*' in the sense that '*...educating children outside mainstream schools is expensive*' (p. 10). She omits to include the costs within the mainstream educational system of differentiated remedial provision as pupils go through it. The long-term cost to and possible implications for society in terms of behavioural, cultural and financial effects during these children's future lives, is also not mentioned. This could range from arguments about criminal lifestyles to the loss to society of potentially valuable contributors. The second reason given by Wise is '*The Need for Control*' (p. 10). She points out that the smooth running of society depends on eliminating social deviancy and that although this appears logical; the idea poses a possible dangerous threat to individuality. One has only to consider the frequent overthrowing of various totalitarian regimes in history to

realise that conformity is not uniformly desirable, though social responsibility may be. That human beings are far from biddable by nature may be an advantage in certain situations. Pupils who evade school may be demonstrating a rather more intelligent non-compliance than they are often given credit for, since they do not perceive school as a viable option for whatever reasons.

Wise makes the common underlying assumption that ‘control’ is necessary when terms such as social cohesion, motivation, a beneficial environment, integration or equality of opportunity could have been used. Is it really necessary or possible to control pupils and if so what type and degree of control are we talking about? Would it not be better if they learned to control themselves? What is ‘social deviancy’ and who is to decide? It might be better to talk in terms of the need for socially responsible behaviour. Wise’s third reason for research is *‘Improving Provision.’* She believes research should *‘...assist professionals in their consideration of what actually is ‘best for pupils whose behaviour deviates from the norm’* (op. cit., p. 10). Although her sentiments are generally well meant one can detect here the ‘judgmental approach’ creeping in. She discusses whether pupils’ perceptions can be considered ‘accurate’ and states, *‘...we can never get inside another’s mind but interviewing may be the closest we get’* (p. 10). This raises the question of whether getting inside pupils’ minds is necessary, desirable or practical in education. In view of the many cultural and diversely raised groups of students currently facing teachers in different educational environments, it might be seen as vital for professional interpretation and curriculum focus. Interviewing, however, may or may not be the best way of gaining the necessary feedback. Taking note of students’ comments and behaviour while engaged in learning by a variety of means, including student and teacher self-evaluation, might be more authentic.

### **1.9 School refusers as individuals in the ‘system’**

Emotional problems with education happen at all levels of ability. As editor of a book by a European academic group about pupil underachievement, Montgomery recommends an ecosystemic approach, implying curriculum adaptation to group and individual’s needs (Montgomery et al. 2000). She finds underachievement of high ability individuals reveals *‘...significant overlaps with emotional and behavioural difficulties’* (pp. 2-3). She notes that:

*...having been through a period of denial that giftedness exists, we are now in a state of acceptance and promotion of the interests of gifted pupils at the expense of others with needs. (pp. 2-3)*

She believes that ‘...fifty percent or more’ of children ‘...might show untapped gifts and talents or potential for high achievement if we can only provide them with an appropriate curriculum’ (pp. 2-3). Vygotsky's view regarding the need to teach within children's ‘zones of proximal development’ supports her view. His comment below appears obvious, but in practice this point is often overlooked in busy classrooms.

*The incompetent child in a group of competent children will be delayed in his development and in the relative success of his mental activity. So will the competent child in a group of incompetent children. (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 213)*

Montgomery and her co-authors (2000) recommend a more participative and experiential approach, point out subject matter and presentation skills are often inaccessible to the underprivileged and say academically less able pupils may have compensatory abilities and different talents and may need a more differentiated education.

It appears worth considering how pupils can be helped to cope with the ‘emotional roller-coaster’ of learning, ‘normalising’ and validating this process while allowing for individual experiences and feelings. This would involve turning the discussion on its head, abandoning the search for rigid abstract universal concepts and ceasing to subscribe to the idea of the usefulness and viability of detailed analysis of every ‘deviant.’ It could be said that we are all ‘deviant’ in one way or another and by no means static. What is the use and value of deficit analysis for most people when they are continually changing and moving on with their lives in varied contexts? From my teaching perspective it makes more sense to engage in understanding and recording processes of learning experienced by individuals by considering their feedback, negotiating and collaborating with them. This involves drawing on existing knowledge and expertise, adapting and combining positive ideas gained from other similar, but never identical situations and researching reflexively, adapting and adjusting responses to pupils in the process of teaching. Although this may seem an obvious ability of the ‘good’ experienced teacher, appropriate adjustment of practice is an important and often intrinsic aspect of professional expertise, which is often not acknowledged, even by teachers themselves.

*The notion of practice can be understood in terms of the act of doing in context (Wenger, 1998)... Practice is that which is said but also that which is unsaid, it includes tacit conversations, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, perceptions, underlying assumptions and shared world views (Wenger et al., 2002). Practice is that which is represented and that which is assumed. (Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005, p. 93)*

There are teachers, who take an intelligent and pragmatic view: For example, McCormack (2005), who discusses aspects of truancy, its possible causes, effects and remediation. His open-minded comments below are encouraging, but not always supported by educational management:

*If we really are sincere in our desire to help every child succeed then we too must acknowledge the need to change our approach and to innovate. All too often schools offer a standard package to a very non-standard clientele, and those who fail to identify with what is on offer are judged, blamed and rejected. There are, without doubt, pupils with poor attendance records who are difficult to reach... but what of that much larger group of pupils who want to succeed but also want the right to question and to establish their own individuality?... Perhaps in these cases we should acknowledge that some disaffection is in fact healthy and attempt to accommodate rather than stifle it. (p. 103)*

Tobbell and Lawthom's idea of learning as experiential within communities of practice, which from my teacher's point of view would involve sharing experiences, exchange of information, adaptation, creativity and support, appears a practical possibility to me (op. cit., p. 92). It is interesting to me that this approach in some sense also liberates the teacher to make professional decisions based on his or her own context in relation to pupils, for as Stenhouse (1975) accurately observed teachers are also researchers' He shares my opposition to those who impose curriculum developments on teachers and regard them as technicians delivering a fixed curriculum product, since teachers' complex skills and understandings of pupils are crucial. Stenhouse recognises their central role:

*Curriculum development (which, of course, includes teaching a particular curriculum) is a form of research, with teachers researching their own practice so as to come to a better understanding of the values they are relying on to inform and improve that practice. (Cited in Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy, 2004, p. 9)*

Consideration of pupils' points of view in relation to particular learning projects appears to be a useful approach. Less restrictive imposition, more observation and reflection on pupil negotiation and feedback may be a helpful method of teaching and researching if feelings are important to learning. It may be possible to present a

structured curriculum which offers variety, choice and more opportunities for an individual spontaneous response. Learning is after all now perceived, as outlined in community of practice literature, as an essentially participative social activity (Bennett, 1991; Gilbert, 2002; Tobbell & Lawthom, 2005).

### **1.10 Learning and the physical environment**

Bronfenbrenner concludes that it is:

*...the process of accommodation between person and environment which constitutes the core of ecology of human development. (1979, p. 39)*

The various climates in which this takes place are significant in understanding the intimate and interactive nature of social influences upon learning. For example, research shows that rats stimulated by being kept in groups and given a rich and varied environment, developed longer dendrites, remodelled synapses and more neuronal connections in the brain than those in solitary confinement (Greenfield, 2000; Greenfield, 2007). This discovery appears to offer physical proof of the learning effect on animals' brains of social environment. This type of research tends to support the view that teacher, family, educational systems, social and cultural expectations are important factors in stimulating the need to learn. Rogers agrees as follows:

*The brain responds to inputs from the environment, often by changing its biochemistry, and even its structure. When learning occurs, the connections between nerve cells are changed. Experience, particularly during early life when the brain is developing, can bring about changes in the connections between nerve cells, and even alter the structure of certain regions of the brain quite radically, depending on the nature of the experience. We know this mainly from research on animals. (1999, p. 3)*

From a teaching perspective, this information shows that some connections and even structures, in some respects similar, may also differ fundamentally, within a group of students, since each pupil's environmental history may differ. It also tells me that interactive environments likely to stimulate learning development may be created to promote development, for example, verbal discussion opportunities and sensory-based problem solving activities. People may need different and varied environmental stimuli in order to learn and it may be possible to provide these by adapting, developing and varying curriculum presentation. Observing and considering feedback from individuals and groups can offer a means of doing this. Paying attention to

feeling responses, aptitude, likely and actual social interactions in the process could also contribute information for this purpose.

The concept of 'brain building through learning', ties in with language development, and the discovery that brain cells develop connections in areas of the brain, which are sufficiently stimulated. Greenfield states that the human brain '*...is incredibly plastic, able to learn and adapt, to improve and refine whatever skills are most used, purely as a result of stimulation*' (Greenfield, 2000, p. 58). The importance of early social interaction or stimulation for cognitive development is supported by studies of cases of feral children who, deprived of human contact, have had great difficulty in developing full speech and social skills. The fact that it is so difficult for them to be fully integrated into society shows how vital social interaction must be for learning development and skill attainment from an early age (Davis, 1947; Koluschova, 1967a, 1967b; Curtiss, 1977). An underlying and very important factor here is the impact of love and positive regard on children's feelings and self-image (Buchanon *et al.*, 1996). This can equally well be claimed to be true of adults, who also feel the need for affirmation (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). This has generally not been considered 'measurable' by science and yet it is arguably to some extent open to current research, through qualitative and mixed method approaches. However, Greenfield stresses, that it would be unethical to deprive the growing child in various ways simply to prove the 'neglect' argument (*op. cit.*, p. 58).

Bronfenbrenner calls the '*...complex of interrelations within the immediate setting*' (1979, p. 7) surrounding an individual a microsystem expanding outwards to meso, exo and macro systems. This gives a much wider perspective upon individual learning development, when considering an individual's learning difficulties from an educational perspective (*ibid.*). It is feasible to suppose that if an individual is not given positive, loving, social, rewarding and suitably meaningful stimuli, in particular ways at crucial times in their development, then some connections and patterns of thought and behaviour will not become established (Piaget, 1947) and perhaps others may take their place. These may not only be generally and particularly antisocial, but may continue to hinder future learning progress. It may be possible to detect these through various kinds of feeling responses.

From an educationalist's point of view it may help, in order to respond appropriately to disaffected students, to understand something of how our own as well as our students' attitudes are formed, for example, by exploring various schools of thought regarding learning. We know that some responses may be counterproductive to learning and conscious and unconscious connections subjectively influence thought and behaviour. We know that at the same time physical effects may be present in the form of genetic potential, chemical processes such as through neurotransmitters and biological failures through accident or illness. However, even though they have a major subjective effect, there is a shortfall in participatory research, which documents complex past and current situations beyond the individual student and teacher's control. In learning, teaching and researching using reflexive, spontaneous student feedback may be an important safeguard to relevance. In this type of research it should be possible, to perceive deficits and to provide contexts to encourage learning. This kind of research is the basis of this thesis.

### **1.11 Normative developmental theories**

Piaget (1947) contributed many ideas to the United Kingdom's educational system. In observing young children, he discovered developmental stages in their knowledge acquisition and competence. Although it may tend towards complexity, this conclusion is not incompatible with the idea of cognitive development as a dynamic, transformative process. Piaget improved educationalists' understanding of how young children's intellects change and grow in complexity, manifesting (saving illness, disability or atrophy) permanent, cognitive capabilities for life. He developed a theory of organic maturation in accordance with his training as a biologist. This theory concentrated on internal self-development within the child and discounted outside influences. This view appears to conflict paradoxically with his assumptions about the superiority of 'adult' thought, which is patently influenced by individual training as well as personal experiences.

Piaget's created a better understanding of some of the complicated concepts and competency networks, which are mastered by young children. He broke them down into perceptible stages and processes of learning, for example, conservation of water, concepts of number, time, etcetera (Piaget, 1947). These incremental stages, previously generally overlooked or underestimated, have been influential in

education, although it is now generally accepted that they depend on social opportunity and are more idiosyncratic than he led us to believe (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Their demonstration has contributed to awareness that suitable learning opportunities involving materials, experiences, environments and social stimuli, are important. However, Piaget's work did not focus on these factors, concentrating on the idea of 'normal' biological development. He was a breakthrough researcher, who contributed to knowledge, without realising its full implications. From my teacher's point of view, his work is helpful in understanding that some types of learning involve stages of progression. It is likely that those who fall behind developmentally in these areas may become disaffected with, or fail to, become cognitively involved in education through a 'knock on' effect, for example, in literacy acquisition. Subjective thinking, self-images and confidence may be affected, therefore, by ignorance, lack of particular developed abilities and by feelings, opinions and experiences, which may be out of tune with conventional educational requirements.

There are elements of idiographic observation and, even by implication, underlying 'narrative' in Piaget's research. His detailed observations of individuals were productive in furthering understanding of ways to promote learning, through studying individual behaviour. Teachers have found the information useful, producing many and various schemes of work selecting from, experimenting with, adapting and developing his ideas, especially at infant and remedial levels. Provided teachers and researchers are able to do this with reflexivity (notably absent from Piaget's research) and allow for and consider pupil feedback, this method appears a good one. However, I have found little evidence of Piaget's work using the detailed individual observational method being developed by other educational researchers beyond the early years, although it has been a method used in other sciences. There must be yet vast areas of human learning development on many levels and in diverse areas, which could usefully be observed and recorded by educationalists to provide new information rather than to set up rigid normative frameworks. My own research into affective aspects of learning seems to be taking, in some respects, a similar observational stance to Piaget's.

Piaget's theory in its day, though useful in developing parts of the curriculum, could not account for other important factors. Piaget's research was seen as traditionally

scientific in its approach. It was intended to be normative (that is to say tending to create or prescribe standards for learning acquisition). However, he overlooked children's complex and early grasp of social requirements (social cognitive networking systems). His work did not take into account children's moods and feelings, acute awareness of adult expectation, tendency to model adult behaviour, potential for cognitive development at any age, individual genetic potential and physical abilities (Donaldson, 1987). He presented developmental growth as conforming to nomothetic or universal fixed patterns based on his relatively few participants. Piaget was unable to appreciate that external stimuli, combined with genetic potential and existing knowledge, can produce (as has now been proved) physical growth (Greenfield, 2007). The human brain is changeable and dynamic. This may involve deterioration (through sickness, aging, accident, traumatic experiences, environment and etcetera.) as well as growth (development of new and compensatory skills and interests) idiosyncratically and unpredictably throughout life.

Knowledge concerning development has changed. Cognitive development can never be completely predictable, because it is impossible to take full account of environments, families, social groups, idiosyncrasies, talents, motivations and wishes of individuals. Greenfield explains that scientists have found that humans are born with a finite number of about a 100 billion neurons, but that most connections between neurons are 'forged after birth'. This takes place through excitatory or inhibitory synapses within each neuron. Neurologists have now photographed these phenomena at different stages of life and '*...so great is the growth of connections...that the brain has quadrupled in size by the time we reach adulthood*' (Greenfield, 2000, p. 55). These connections (dendrites) created throughout life, together with the action of neurotransmitters (chemicals) appear to enable the vital competences, which constitute intelligence.

Although adults have learned much and built up many memories, these are often so embedded subconsciously that they forget their own learning development process in all its complexity. However, these may tend to underpin their thinking throughout life unless their assumptions are confronted and challenged. They tend to predict and judge children's behaviour according to their subconscious beliefs and to discount and/or be unaware of other influences on children's behaviour. Learning-theorists

themselves provide some examples. Piaget did not consider his participants' perceptions of himself and the way his experiments were set up, the influence of cultural and environmental conditions and children's own personal interpretations of what was required. However, it is likely that these factors affected his results. Children's own independent conclusions affect their learning. Their attitudes and perspectives are important. It is now believed that children develop ideas about other people's points of view through social interactions before they start school. Children have a '*theory of mind*' at a much earlier age than previously thought. Piaget did not allow for this in his conclusions (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Wimmer *et al.*, 1984). Pinker agrees with this, stating that:

*Experiments show that one-and-a-half-year-old babies are not associationists who connect overlapping events indiscriminately. They are intuitive psychologists who psych out other people's intentions before copying what they do.* (2002, p. 62)

This explains why children may copy parental attitudes to education, which differ from those advocated at school. Conflicts between different adults' priorities and ways of thinking can create stresses, which undermine children's educational development through subjective thought. The phenomenon of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' explains how children can fulfil adult expectations of their behaviour, conveyed deliberately and inadvertently. Pinker explains that a capacity for reading other people's goals and learning to copy them '*appropriately*' is important for human development and survival (*ibid.*, p. 63). Children need the approval of adults in order to survive. This ability, in the form of knowledge and skills, lets them engage in cultural practices, which have an eventual direct economic payoff. Normative co-operation is also necessary for productive co-existence with others (*ibid.*, p. 64). It is understandable, therefore, that children, raised in cultural home environments, which are 'alternative' or 'oppositional' to educational establishment values, may not understand their relevance. For this reason educating and supporting parents to support and educate their children may be a useful option for educational policy. This is currently being recognised in England through the *Remodelling and Extended Schools* initiative (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2006-2008) and in the current *Parent Support Advisor* initiative (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2007a).

The idea of a fixed sequential universal process in learning basic concepts tends to persist in some educational environments. It continues in English culture even though it has been disproved in the fraudulent work of Burt (1955, 1959). Grandparents and older teachers were subjected to the eleven-plus, a system based on this work, and attitudes have been passed on down the generations. Developmental theory purports to describe 'normal' processes, yet neglects the effects of Bronfenbrenner's micro, meso, exo and macro systems. Cultural, conscious and unconscious belief in predetermined ability may still be affecting students. Piaget's theory only provided a partial contribution to our understanding. It does seem that organic maturation is an important part of development. However, this evolves through a combination of experience, practice, genetic capability, individual dynamic cognition, and cultural and environmental factors, such as parental example and influence, as well as physical growth.

Again, research into animal cognition from cognitive neuroscience may now improve our understanding of cognitive development, if one allows an animal comparison. According to studies of the rat cortex by Purves, a neurobiologist, '*...hard-working parts of the brain do indeed grow more connections*' in a stimulating environment (cited in Greenfield, 2000, p. 56). This is physical evidence of learning. If connections can be made by use, it seems feasible that if need is sufficient for motivation and effort to be applied, success is possible even where some abilities are originally lacking, so that competencies can be built while learning is in progress. This appears to imply that life-long learning is a viable possibility for many more people than was previously supposed. Many famous, successful and intellectual people can be referred to in support of this argument, for example, Churchill and Einstein, who did not always succeed educationally in their early years at school and can be seen to have developed their learning throughout their lives.

The argument and evidence above negates the traditional view that static predetermined levels of potential ability can be assessed in the early years of child development (Galton, 1869). There is now concrete evidence from cognitive neuroscience that the human brain is always dynamic at varying levels and to various extents and although it may be influenced in certain ways, does not ultimately follow a predetermined path (Ramachandran, 2003). The brain's growth and development

may be so idiosyncratic that it may not fulfil its genetic potential even under apparently outwardly ideal conditions, as some frustrated parents, teachers and students have found. The fact that 'brain building through learning' is possible may be a useful piece of information for teacher and student alike. For example, placing oneself in and experiencing new situations may be stimulating and reveal a potential for success and hidden abilities that were previously not appreciated.

A teacher's attitude may be informed by this relatively new knowledge since it opens up possibilities for stimulating learning connections in those who at present show low potential. It offers the possibility of promoting development, discovering possibilities by researching with learners, to some extent, in joint participation. This has proved the case in early education. In preschool education the emphasis is on readiness for learning, through social interaction and play. These programmes emphasise respecting learners' feelings. They start from what is grasped, looking for pupil (and peer group) specific work involving a variety of ways of teaching the essential curriculum. In this way pupil feedback, responses and feelings are of scientific significance as starting and monitoring points in the learning process. These 'windows of opportunity' are generally acknowledged to offer, in preschool education, a more accurate assessment of potential for development during the process of learning.

Appreciating individual and pupil groups' potential '*zones of proximal development*' is considered by Vygotsky to be of great importance to teachers, although this can never be an exact science. The idea of 'zones of proximal development' can be thought of at different levels in different ways. For example they can be taken to mean (pragmatically from a teaching perspective) the difference between what a learner can do without help and what they can do with assistance, rather than a 'window of opportunity' or a 'sensitive period.' However, in practice in exploring this 'difference', it is likely that there will be a range of subconscious, rationalising recognition processes manifesting themselves as learner and teacher interact during a productive and transformative learning acquisition sequence. Some of these opportunities will be beyond the teacher's complete control and full awareness subconsciously filed in the memory of both for future usefulness; they may be too complex for immediate analysis.

Vygotsky finds that:

*Many modern educators (that is to say, Fortune, Montessori, and others) refer to this as a sensitive period. The eminent biologist, de Vries, used the phrase "sensitive period" to designate a period of ontological development he identified in his studies. During these periods, he found that the organism is particularly sensitive to particular types of influences. At a critical point, the influence may elicit profound changes that have an impact on the whole of development. (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 212)*

Although Vygotsky acknowledges the validity of biological, age-related, developmental, educational research, his own research shows that socially interactive aspects are vital:

*...these sensitive periods are associated with the social processes involved in the development of the higher mental functions. These mental functions are an aspect of the child's cultural development and have their source in collaboration and instruction. (ibid., p. 213)*

It now seems likely that people may have the capacity and potential to utilise these kinds of opportunities at any age (Greenfield, 2000; Ramachandran, 2003). There is no actual proof that it is necessary to rigidly adhere to limited and potentially limiting, age related programmes. Although these may still be useful for basic reference and adaptation; a responsive, user-friendly approach may be far more appropriate in teaching.

Vygotsky criticises the tendency to equate assessment of existing skills, such as is required by educational policy in England through written examination, with actual long-term learning development, ability and potential. Although written exams may show what has been to a limited extent achieved, drilling for exams may take away time for more sophisticated and proactive forms of teaching and learning. However, exams exist, which are not just factual but may indeed stretch the imagination using complex skills of interpretation. Vygotsky makes it clear that in his opinion learning requires '*...that each subject demands more than the child is capable of, leading the child to carry out activities that force him to rise above himself*' (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 213).

*We have seen that instruction and development do not coincide. They are two different processes with very complex interrelationships. Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or wakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the zone of proximal development. This is the major role of instruction in development. This is what distinguishes the instruction of the child from the training of animals. (ibid., p. 212)*

## 1.12 Conclusion

From a teacher's perspective many learning theories and programmes suffer from claims that authors have discovered an all-purpose learning solution, when they have only explored part of a complex field. This attitude causes the 'panacea for all ills' approach to education, which in a turnover of fashionable enthusiasms, teachers are exhorted to follow. This 'fuzzy' field of 'motivational' education includes the 'statementing' system in special education (Warnock, 1978); emotional literacy (Goleman, 1996); citizenship; thinking skills; truancy prevention and mental health systems approaches to the curriculum, for example: literacy schemes; parenting partnerships; gifted and talented fast tracking; league tables based on Specific Attainment Targets and subject specialist schools\*. We also have psychological theories of learning but they do not tell us about complexity. Even those who have benevolent intentions towards underachieving children are plagued by the universal human difficulty of understanding other points of view. There is a problem in interpreting how motivations affect thinking in a way that can be useful with different contexts and students. Descriptions of feeling processes use subjective language with different terms, meanings and emphasis for different people. This is good reason for not attempting to analyse emotions as abstract phenomena. I conclude that it may be possible to create a better climate of understanding for students and teachers, which facilitates learning using a participatory action research approach. I took hold of this subject by looking in depth at my own and my students' experiences of emotional problems in learning (and in my case teaching) during real learning sequences. In doing so, my research and subsequent thematic analysis (Chapter 8) were informed by this literature review.

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\* Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006 *Common Assessment Framework*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007c *Parent Support Advisory Service*; Sure Start, 2007 *Extended schools*; Training and Development Agency for Schools (2006-2008) *Remodelling and extended schools*; *Share 2008 A fun programme that encourages parents/carers, children, teachers, managers, facilitators to all work together*



## CHAPTER 2

### THE FUNCTION OF FEELINGS IN LEARNING: A DISCUSSION OF IDEAS RELATED TO LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter was begun after five years of work, after the data collection of Strands 1, 2 and 3 were completed, but before the data collection of Strand 4 and the final analysis of this thesis. The author's arguments are informed by the emerging understandings gained from these research processes and data, although they are not directly referenced within it. The discussion is a development of Chapter 1 and is intended to inform the reader in preparation for subsequent chapters. It also informs the choice in the analysis of the four inquiry strands. In the present chapter possibilities are explored for re-conceptualising learning to include affective aspects in relation to theory. If, as the previous chapter and particularly recent neuro-cognitive research suggests, cultural and social experience are so influential, it seems feasible to suppose environmentally interactive physical, subconscious and emotional aspects are more involved in learning than previously recognised. This idea appears compatible with a complex ecological view of learning development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

In 2006, Sir Ken Robinson made the following statement:

*We need to radically rethink our view of intelligence. We know three things about intelligence - number one it is diverse (we think visually, through sound, kinaesthetically, in the abstract and through movement); [number two] intelligence is wonderfully interactive; [number three] creativity is a process of having original ideas that have value.*

Robinson claims intelligence is diverse, wonderfully interactive and has the capacity for originality. It is reasonable to suggest that this diversity, interactivity and originality are enabled by all kinds of feelings, which give rise to, and develop along with, thoughts and skills. It may be possible, therefore, to re-conceptualise learning as a multi-tasking, whole body, multi-layered, subjective, fluid, flexible, delayed response, reflexive and reflective process, physically and emotionally developed through feeling sensations. If this is the case, the idea that curriculum outcomes must be completely predictable may not always be helpful in teaching pupils to develop

their cognitive processes. Not only may learning not always be totally predictable, it may not be desirable if pupils are to learn in, and cope with, continually changing, complex environments. In these conditions adaptability is a necessary learning skill. Questions arise as to how this complex learning may be encouraged by intelligently pre-planned learning environments as well as by more traditional methods of information transfer. This type of research in particular is the focus of Strand 4 of this thesis (Chapter 7). As a basis for such action it is necessary, therefore, to consider how feelings may facilitate learning.

## **2.2 Piaget, Vygotsky and subjective thought**

In the following development of the discussion it is useful to reconsider in some depth Vygotsky's (1896-1934) detailed investigation of Piaget's work and his insights into cognition in learning. Piaget's theories and general assumptions about pupils have tended to underpin the education system in the United Kingdom in the following ways: pupils will develop to a common pattern; pupils can contribute nothing of additional importance (other than the requirements of the teacher's lesson objectives); pupils are 'empty vessels to be filled' or 'blank slates' (Pinker, 2002); pupils are malleable; pupils can only achieve through adult approval; work should only be judged by adults; and the educator is necessarily superior in all thought and knowledge. All of these attitudes may tend to disassociate learning from pupils' feelings in educators' minds. If feelings are important, it appears necessary to challenge these ideas in order to prevent their potentially negative effect on motivation to learn.

According to Vygotsky (1896-1934), Piaget made three fundamentally contradictory errors in his work on learning development:

*In Piaget's view, the child's nonspontaneous concepts (concepts formed under the influence of the adults who surround the child) reflect not so much the characteristics of the child's thinking as the level and character of the adult thought that the child has learned. In this assertion, Piaget contradicts his own argument that the child reworks the concept in learning it. (in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 174)*

The second error identified by Vygotsky arises from the first:

*Once it is accepted that the child's nonspontaneous concepts do not reflect the characteristics of the child's thought and that these characteristics are contained only in the child's spontaneous concepts, we are obliged to accept the*

*notion that between spontaneous and nonspontaneous concepts there exists an impassable, solid, eternal barrier which excludes any mutual influence. (ibid., p. 174)*

He argues that the logical development of his conclusions above, led Piaget, presumably influenced by the cultural assumptions of his age to make his third error and:

*...represent the child's mental development as a process in which **the characteristics of the child's thought gradually die out.** For Piaget, the child's mental development consists of the gradual replacement of the unique qualities and characteristics of the child's thought by the more powerful thought of the adult. (ibid., p. 175, author's emphasis)*

Vygotsky believed that in fact:

*...scientific concepts are not simply acquired or memorised by the child and assimilated by his memory but arise and are formed through an extraordinary effort of his thought. This implies that the development of scientific concepts must manifest the characteristics of the child's thought. This assumption is fully supported by our experimental research. (ibid., p. 176, author's emphasis)*

Vygotsky appears to be confirming here that according to his research learning is dynamic, constructive and reconstructive in process. This supports the idea that it is in some way transformational. He finds evidence of the dynamic nature of cognition in his own research:

*These two types of concepts are not encapsulated or isolated in the child's consciousness. They are not separated from one another by an impenetrable wall nor do they flow in two isolated channels. They interact continually. (ibid., p. 177)*

### **2.3 Psychologists' attitudes to emotion**

It can be argued that emotion is an important part of cognition, if only at the very least, because feelings such as enthusiasm, curiosity, determination, disappointment, triumph and satisfaction and the ability to overcome failure are generally considered to play important roles in learning. However, it seems that although emotion has generally been thought by psychologists to be inextricably interwoven with thinking processes, they have been rather baffled as to how to deal with it. The idea that an emotion can be described as an abstract noun and as an idiosyncratic imprecise process, which is part of cognition, does not always seem to have been grasped.

*The relation between emotion and cognition is perhaps the central issue in the study of the emotions. It has (at least) three aspects: a cognition may trigger an emotion, it may be influenced by an emotion, and it may have an emotion as its intentional or propositional object. (Elster, 1999, p. 408)*

There is a review of research and a discussion of the difficulties of researching into implicit perceptions, memories and thoughts by Khilstrom *et al.* (2000) which closes with the puzzle of whether an emotion, which functions ‘to provide information’ can be unconscious (in Eich, 2000). However, the general consensus is that the existence of implicit attitudes, learning, perception and memory are not disproved even though they are considered difficult to demonstrate:

*Most studies of the emotions have a static character, in the sense that they aim at explaining how emotions arise or affect behaviour in a one-shot situation.... Yet studies of this kind do not help us understand how a given emotional event can set in motion an emotional chain. (Elster, 1999, p. 410)*

This failure appears to me to be explicable if one considers the continuous, active connecting nature of thought processes and the way that we human beings constantly respond, internalise, discuss within ourselves and communicate with others at such a rapid level that we have difficulty in breaking down the processes involved. It may sometimes be possible, however, to backtrack and discover the often un-worded implicit logic, which gave rise to a particularly significant thought or feeling, for example, as in psychoanalysis.

#### **2.4 Philosophical concepts of self, mind and consciousness**

Kircher and David (2003), in their introduction to the book *The Self*, edited by them, point out that:

*...the neuroscientific study of the self and self-consciousness is in its infancy. There are no established models, very little data and not even the vocabulary to describe neuroscientific notions on these topics. (p. 3)*

They summarise significant ideas about the ‘self’ made by theoreticians in the field (p. 3, 4, 5). These are, with minor editing, that:

- The self is ‘...a mere construct of western thought that can be traced back to Greek philosophy’.
- The self-model used depends on the level of description or perspective.

- The self can be seen as an *'identity pole'*, *'a narrative, temporal construction'* and an *'experiential dimension'*.
- Self-awareness is manifested in language and generative grammar.
- The self is an aggregate of phenomenal elements/units of experience – a multitrack model of consciousness.
- It can be described by a cognitive multilevel theory, which has a modular architecture with specialised systems to process information involving self-related material created by an emotionally charged interaction of different system levels.
- The self-concept should incorporate ontogenetic (physical development) and phylogenetic (species development) aspects of self-development.
- The memory aspect of our own past is important, as a constituent of a coherent feeling of self in time.
- The self has an emotional aspect, which is implemented on a neural level.

Kircher & David (2003) list five different levels of description and study in relation to the examination of self-consciousness. They are concerned by the 'confusion' which arises when concepts from these different fields are mixed. These are summarised as follows:

1. Philosophical: *'Phenomenology, in its broadest sense, describes the essence, the content and feel of a mental state'*. This philosophical view is *'mainly concerned with the logical connection and systematization of our knowledge of the mind'*.
2. *'Social science, social and personality psychology are concerned with how people regard themselves, the different roles one person can have in society, and how these things interact and change over time.'*
3. *'Cognitive science tries to build models of how the brain works'* based on computer simulations and research into 'healthy', brain damaged and disturbed subjects.
4. *'The neurosciences try to correlate mental phenomena with [physical] brain states and structures, using brain imaging or electrophysiological techniques.'*

5. *'The clinical sciences: descriptive psychopathology describes and classifies pathological mental states.'*

(p. 2)

Pinker (1997) also investigates a range of philosophical concepts of the human mind and points out that the field is full of paradox and controversy and each one is inadequate in some respect. He believes that artificial intelligence, as a means of replicating human intelligence is not possible for reasons of sheer complexity and that computers cannot learn in the same manner. It is interesting to note that, perhaps even more significantly, they also lack emotions and feelings. He finds the idea of interactivity between heredity and environment, nature and nurture, biology and culture, though not wrong, is too sweeping and insufficient to explain cognition. However, from a teaching perspective these seem quite useful ideas, provided an open mind towards variety and complexity is to some extent maintained. He concludes that:

*To understand learning, we need new ways of thinking to replace the prescientific metaphors—the mixtures and forces, the writing on slates and sculpting of blocks of marble. We need ideas that capture the ways a complex device can tune itself to unpredictable aspects of the world and take in the kinds of data it needs to function. (1977, p. 33)*

Pinker comes up with his own descriptive metaphor to describe constituents of 'the mind':

*Complex mental organs, like complex physical organs, surely are built by complex genetic recipes, with many genes cooperating in as yet unfathomable ways ... Since the brain is destined to be an organ of computation, it would be surprising if the genome did not exploit the capacity of neural tissue to process information during brain assembly. (ibid., p. 35)*

If this is true then it seems likely that the brain is to some extent a self-organising idiosyncratic organism, which according to current research has, to a degree, the capacity to regenerate throughout life (Greenfield, 2000). This could explain a great deal of the mystery of the apparently independent activity of subjective thought and feeling, the importance of which in education in the past we have tended to be culturally disposed to ignore. It is worth noting here that this activity may be both 'productive' and 'counter-productive' in relation to learning. The section above then represents some areas under investigation by experts in human cognition. From my

teacher's perspective, it seems reasonably safe to assume that these are all 'valid' fields of enquiry since they exercise the minds of experts. However, as a teacher it is perhaps only necessary and useful in a teaching context to comprehend that the human brain is an extremely complex transformative, evolving human organ if so many and various modes of simultaneous understanding are possible and 'required' for it to be studied. Feelings constitute an important part of this complexity.

## **2.5 Humanism versus science**

Pinker (1997) describes the panoply of human behaviour and reasoning, which can evidence the rich, confusing and complex nature of human thought. He makes some interesting points regarding human perspectives on science, free-will and ethics. These are major socio-intellectual frames of reference. He says that, *'I doubt that our puzzlement will ever be completely assuaged, but we can surely reconcile them in part'* (p. 55). He points out that, *'...science and morality are separate spheres of reasoning. Only by recognising them as separate can we have them both'* (p. 55). He believes that treating the mind as a machine can dehumanise and objectify people if *'...one is so literal minded that one cannot shift among different stances in conceptualising people for different purposes'* (p. 56). As a teacher this information tells me several things. Treating the mind as a machine without acknowledgement and consideration for feelings may dehumanise and objectify people (possibly disempowering and constraining learning). As people think, they shift frames of reference and search for appropriate meanings in different contexts. Children need to learn about human behaviour, cultural issues, mores and ethics as well as literal scientific facts. They need support in developing abilities, strategies and skills to deal with social and intellectual frames of reference and use them in conjunction for their own different purposes. Discriminative, qualitative thinking skills using various processing methods may be more important than learning quantities of facts. Teachers may need to be aware that being able to adjust and relate subjective frames of reference is fundamental to knowledge and learning.

## **2.6 Shifting frames and modes of reference to make meaning**

Pinker (1997) points out some of the different frames of reference with which we perceive others:

*A human being is simultaneously a machine and a sentient free agent depending on the purpose of the discussion, just as he is also a taxpayer, an insurance salesman, a dental patient, and two hundred pounds of ballast on a commuter airplane, depending on the purpose of the discussion. (p. 56)*

He describes a whole range of myths, legends, habits, human preoccupations, stories, types of humour and behaviours and presents them to illustrate the functions, richness, contradiction and unpredictability of human thought. The number of ideas and their complexity are daunting and it seems to be impossible to organise them into an overall meaningful structure.

From a teachers perspective then it seems that for human learning to ‘progress’ and ‘develop’, at the very least people have to interact with, and negotiate through, a complicated variety of concepts and conceptual frameworks. Many of these have social, moral and cultural connotations as well as scientific and factual ones. There exists a vast array of ‘practical’ applications, skills, competences, rules, methods and implications for dealing with a huge variety of different situations and problems. Presenting the world to learners as oversimplified and completely predictable is not only wrong, but it may be irrelevant as well as restricting to the learning process. In order to deal with each of our ‘worlds’, it is probably necessary to use the whole range of our intellectual capacity, including feelings and emotions, and in learning practice their use.

De Bono (1994) with his ‘out of the box’ thinking skills programme of teaching and learning demonstrates how a person may deliberately adopt different frames of reference in order to learn. He explains how to adopt different attitudes to facilitate thinking, discovering, innovative, unpredictable and more productive ideas by breaking out of the ‘linear logic model’. For example, he shows how to do this in his ‘six thinking hats’ approach to brainstorming in business development and education (p. 37). These thinking positions tend to pursue individual types of linear logic. What he advocates, in fact, is focussing on several alternative strands of linear logic in turn in considering problems. When connections are made across strands, these are then developed through further strands of linear logic. It may be that the De Bono method of brainstorming to some extent demonstrates and teaches the way in which creative thinkers already think.

‘Lateral thinking’, therefore, may not necessarily be erratic behaviour, but may be based in subjectivity and feelings, which are logical in retrospect even if not always appropriate on reflection. It appears quite likely that humans think in multiple and parallel strands of linear logic on various levels, connecting and switching, as they consider appropriate – at will. It is possible that all our conscious and subconscious thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviour are founded in internal subjective sequences of linear logic, from simple dual connections to longer chains of any length. These patterns of logic may not always be possible to track explicitly because of their speed, diversity, in-built resistances and conflicts of interest, for example, internal moral conflicts between religious training and self-interest. A teacher’s awareness and action research into these processes in learning may facilitate thinking as De Bono has demonstrated. There may be subject areas in education where pupils’ own research into changing frames of reference is possible and could result in improved learning abilities. For example pupils may imagine themselves in a different historical era or culture through imaginative role-play. This is a form of learning where feelings are acknowledged, expressed and interpreted in the learning process.

## **2.7 Emotions and feelings as instruments of logic**

*If the notion that emotional responses can form the basis of concepts has theoretical and intuitive appeal, why has it received so little empirical attention? The answer to this probably lies in problems with conceptualising emotional response categories in terms of the existing categorization literature. For example, such categories are hard to talk about—they seem to lack linguistic mapping. (Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000, p. 170)*

Although they talk around the subject of emotion forming the basis for concepts, these authors do not deal with emotion as a logical process in itself. Their paper deals with emotional response categories and cognitive organisation according to specific emotions. They fall into the traditional trap of treating emotions as objective phenomena, which can be discovered, categorised, organised and explained. They conclude that, emotions are mental processes that are important in their own right if we are to take a full account of mental functioning. This supports the view of the value of emotional feedback, but does not appear to explain why emotions are important in thinking. It is possible; however, that emotions and feelings express

‘rapid-response’ logically based as yet ‘unworded’ thoughts, which are later rationalised by both internal and external worded commentary.

These authors agree that people do recognise emotional response categories and have some universal linguistically based concepts of emotions proved by the various studies they cite. However, rather obviously, it seems meanings of emotionally descriptive concepts are significantly fuzzier and less definite than concepts of objects and therefore harder to understand as a means of communication. One might question whether this is just because they are much more complex and idiosyncratically diverse in individually significant meanings and schemas. They quote:

*Bruner et al. (1956), for example, suggested that emotional associations to stimuli may have been forged in a prelinguistic developmental stage and that emotional response categories “resist conscious verbal insight by virtue of having been established before the full development of language” (p. 4.). (ibid., p. 171)*

There are several implied assumptions in this statement. Two of these are that emotions *should* be expressed in words and that emotions are not somehow as sophisticated in their expression of thoughts because they are founded in a ‘prelinguistic development stage’. From this perspective language is seen as the preferred means of communication and is deemed to have a privileged status over other modes. Although language has undeniably a major role to play, the importance of nonverbal communication cannot be overstated, such as haptic communication, gestures, facial expression, classical and popular music, photographs, films, cartoons, fine art, graphic art, sculpture, classical and popular dance, sport and all kinds of behaviour from gift giving to war. These are all ways of communicating, which can be very effective and do not necessarily require words. Scientists, artists, researchers, inventors, engineers, architects, designers, illustrators, mathematicians, explorers, scientists and even sportspeople have often been prized for their high intellectual skills and ability to think and communicate by doing and creating as well as talking and writing. A different way of looking at this is to view emotion as a fundamental and sophisticated part of cognition; and words as a useful but often rather inadequate and imprecise expression of this. Niedenthal & Halberstadt wonder if:

*...affective experience may be incompatible with the language used to describe it. For example, Gerlernter (1994) has proposed that emotional response categorization is a hallmark of “low focus” (nonanalytic) cognition, which may*

*not be compatible with the kind of processing required to form a linguistic designation for the concept.* (ibid., p. 171)

If this supposition is believed it may be inferred that human conceptual language frameworks and awareness is not sufficiently developed to express higher order and complex emotional thoughts in words. However, it is evident that there are authors and poets who are adept at this, communicating complicated emotional feelings. Their works are studied as exemplars of higher order intellectual skills, because they are able to put feelings into words. This appears a convincing argument for acknowledging that working with feelings should be an integral part of education.

## **2.8 Attention and motivation**

As long ago as 1976, Neisser found that attention is inextricably connected to motivation. People pay more attention when they have a focus of interest. From a teacher's perspective it may be important to understand some practical implications of this. It is evident that many teachers learn as they teach, paying attention and adjusting appropriately to learners' responses. Teachers and pupils learn more productively when they are interested in what they are doing. For example, in the learning process teachers may model learning in interaction with students and students may demonstrate their learning process in response. Taking this seriously involves action researching interest effects (including feeling responses) in learners and not just paying lip service to the idea. This may be done to some extent at all levels of learning including teachers' own. Management, teachers and society in general may have very different (perhaps outdated and inappropriate) views about what is important, but a process of accommodation is possible by reflecting on and acknowledging student feedback. Taking account of 'significant' unsolicited, unexpected, spontaneous, idiosyncratic feedback in the complex process of teaching and learning may be necessary to learning motivation. For this reason, even if not understood or 'appropriate', at the very least feedback may be acknowledged positively. This may or may not encourage the learner to continue their train of thought, but is less likely to arbitrarily turn attention away from it and cause disaffection.

In researching interest and motivation in pupils and students it may be necessary to guard against setting up ‘false’ conditions based on simplistic views of what excites attention and is significant or important. For example, Neisser (1976) finds that in experiments where subjects were traditionally tested on dual tasks in support of a single central capacity for attention, they tended to produce results based on false and unnatural situations. They did not do justice to the full range of human ability in multi-tasking and coping with complexity (p. 101). He goes on to examine the assumption that:

*...a person can only be **conscious** of one thing at a time. [...] Psychologists at least since Freud have been quite ready to treat consciousness as a piece of the mind or a place in the head... The Interpretation of Dreams even includes flow charts on which the locations on Conscious, Unconscious and Preconscious are clearly marked.* (p. 103, author’s emphasis)

He points out that, traditional ‘simplistic’ theories are inadequate and often biased by culturally and personally based attitudes and assumptions. There may still be a tendency in education to assume and address only one level of awareness in learning.

In teaching, it is important to have awareness that there are many levels of consciousness and that we may not get an immediate understanding response. It may be hours, days, and weeks or even years before a learner fully appreciates the information given them, when they have processed and ‘transformed’ it to a useful conceptual level.

*I think that people report the singleness of consciousness largely because the philosophical assumptions of our culture require it; everyone has learned how to reconcile those assumptions with his [or her] mental life and to overlook what does not fit. What we report about private experience depends very heavily on what Orne (1962) has called the “demand characteristics” of the situation.* (Neisser, 1976, p. 104)

‘Appropriate’ learning skills operating and interacting between differing levels of consciousness may be promoted by teachers in designing contexts and deliberately creating situations in which ‘schema’ are likely to be established and modified in a meaningful and interactive way by pupils. This approach involves developing complex skills of curriculum assessment, adjustment and accommodation requiring subject research and assessment of pupil behavioural and inevitably emotional feedback. For example, ‘appropriate’ role-play in drama, practical problem solving and group discussion towards predetermined learning foci and purposes.

Claxton (2002) clarifies how this may be achieved, developing his ideas from a wide international research base, documenting effective learning behaviours, habits, strategies and components of learning. He believes that motivation to learn may be encouraged through teacher and school awareness of positive learning behaviours and by developing ways of tracking, assessing and nurturing these within educational institutions. These aspects all appear to involve working with and acknowledging feelings, since these are bound up in the development of interactive deductive cognitive networks. Claxton's 'Effective Learning Profile' (2002) consists of 'Resilience' which he associates with absorption, managing distractions, noticing and perseverance; 'Resourcefulness' connected with questioning, making links, imagining and reasoning; 'Reflectiveness' linked to planning, revising, distilling and meta-learning and 'Reciprocity' in relation to interdependence, collaboration, empathy, listening and imitation. He finds that these positive 'emotionally linked' learning behaviours are notable aspects of efficient learning.

In looking into ways in which learners may be motivated, Gilbert (2002) talks about making a '*...complex and brain-friendly world*' more accessible to learners and states that the compartments we call subjects are often '*...fallacious and arbitrary*' (p. 113). It may be that educational creations such as cross-curricular projects help young people to relate learning to the real world in the round with all its complex sensory impacts, including the five senses of seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling and tasting as well as the active kinaesthetic approach recommended by Bandler and Grinder (1979). Feelings as physical and mental sensations might thus be shown to manifest themselves in various ways as a useful means of encouraging learning processes (through exposure, input and expression) across subject areas such as art, physical education, drama, English language and literature, geography, history, natural science, and personal social and health education (PSHE). This type of learning appears to be popular and may encourage and be necessary to the cross disciplinary innovation and invention, which contributes new knowledge. It is difficult to see how feelings might be excluded from motivational behaviour and easy to accept them as necessary components.

## **2.9 Emotional responses and perceptions of others**

Neisser (1976) considers the role of the emotions in cognition and how human beings perceive each other's feelings through 'physiognomic perception'. This is the facility which humans have for 'reading' other people by assessing and interpreting their appearance, gestures and movements in ways which are not always easy to explain in explicit terms. He considers that '*...a perceptual theory is still required*' to explain how we '*...detect our own inner feelings and why we attribute them to another*'.

*The simplest approach to this problem is to suppose that physiognomic perception is no different from any other kind. It requires a preparatory schema, ready to pick up information and to direct explorations that will pick up still more. As in ordinary perceiving, this information specifies something that really exists. In the physiognomic case, that "something" is another person's emotion or feeling. How can such states be perceivable? I believe it is because they are themselves anticipations, at least in part. (ibid., p. 189)*

Neisser believes that human physiognomic perception is a more sophisticated type of anticipatory signalling behaviour than exists in animals. In some sense therefore it may be founded in logic. He considers this subtle form of human communication to be based on existing schemata established through idiosyncratic responses to the social environment. This is an argument, which supports the idea of 'unworded' logical thought as a feature of the subconscious. '*Such schemata could not appear out of nowhere, and it is not easy to imagine how they might develop from non-social experiences*' (ibid., p. 190).

Again from a teaching point of view then it may be possible to create interactive social contexts for learning, which stimulate the interpersonal, empathic communication skills needed for physiognomic perception, contributing to future successful social learning behaviour; for example, as in the case of the kinaesthetic and sensate learning facilitated through creative, group and socially based problem solving activities. Neisser finds:

*Our shared experience does not include only the physical environment. To the extent that we live in a coherent culture, we have encountered a more or less standardized set of social experiences as well...We develop anticipations of common behaviour in the same way that we develop anticipations of other events...These culturally established schemata mediate our perception of other people's behavior, and also underlie that behavior itself. (ibid., p. 188)*

As well as a 'useful' practical and imaginative learning process, emotional empathy (or feeling for others) is also likely to be to some extent a physically and genetically

disposed trait of cognition. Vygotsky (1896-1934) cites Lewin's work: '*where he demonstrated that the complex dynamics of the emotional reactions are part of the general system of mental processes*' (in Rieber & Carton (eds.) 1987, p. 336). This is supported by the existence of autistic conditions, which according to Vygotsky is not a disorder of the '*intellectual or emotional processes themselves, but their relationship*' (ibid., p. 337). It appears therefore, that in teaching, this aspect of effective and affective thinking may be developed through acknowledging and working with feeling states of mind. This may be evidenced in the work of Florance (2004), who already an expert in the field of brain disorder describes how she 'developed' her autistic son's intelligence through non-conventional (as well as traditional) sensory input education.

## **2. 10 Language theories and logical thought**

In trying to understand learning difficulties, there is a problem in comprehending the full complexity of the interactive brain. The role of language, since it interconnects with and expresses subjective thoughts, seems worthy of consideration (Chomsky, 1972). There seems to be a tendency, especially in academia to see one's internal and external language commentary as the only thinking process.

*Now that cognitive scientists know how to think about thinking, there is less of a temptation to equate it with language just because words are more palpable than thoughts.* (Pinker, 1994, p. 59)

Pinker discusses the theory of linguistic determinism, which he believes is false, developed through the work of the '*brilliant linguist*' Sapir and the '*amateur scholar*' Whorf. Although he dismisses Whorf's ideas that peoples' thoughts are determined by their language, he does note Sapir's '*interesting comment*' that '*speakers of different languages have to pay attention to different aspects of reality simply to put words together into grammatical sentences*' (ibid., p. 59). This seems to support the view that although language provides useful tools and stimulates thought, it can constrain as well as facilitate meaning.

Pinker states that human language is instinctive and supports this claim convincingly by quoting anthropological research into groups of people isolated either by geography or disability; for example, sign languages by the deaf and the fact that different languages and dialects have common features. He acknowledges the

limitations of language and the existence of subjective, 'unworded' thought in the following comment:

*Sometimes it is not easy to find any words to convey a thought. When we hear or read we usually remember the gist, not the exact words, so there has to be such a thing as a gist that is not the same as a bunch of words. And if thoughts depended on words, how could a new word ever be coined? How could a child learn a word to begin with? How could translation from one language to another be possible? (ibid., p. 58)*

Even when awake the human brain continues to be active on several levels of which human beings are not consciously aware; for example assessing conditions and remembering a route while driving, talking to a passenger while thinking about a problem. Thinking appears to be an involuntary physical process as well as a deliberate one. This involuntary thinking on various levels, with and without language, is strongly influenced by the basic need of every human being to cope with his or her environment and survive on a day-to-day basis. As Winston puts it:

*We are pushed and pulled in all directions by many different biological, cognitive and cultural forces. Some of these may oppose one another, and some may pull in the same direction. It is entirely possible that two instinctual tendencies may act at odds to each other. But this does not mean these forces cannot coexist; it just means that the track through space is more difficult to understand. (2002, p. 9)*

Humans appear to take in information and draw conclusions about everything of which the senses are aware and make connections with existing knowledge. However, they may not always focus on such information consciously. The mind may react on various time scales and make connections, decisions and adjustments using a mixture of unconscious, partially conscious, 'unworded' or partially worded 'logic'. Feelings are likely to be inextricably involved in these processes.

In education it may be the practice to ask students to explain their behaviour and feelings in the belief that if this cannot be done immediately, problems may be dismissed as unreal or unimportant. This is a traditional method of discipline problem avoidance and pupil control, particularly shaming to the pupil, when done before an individual's peer group. However, the tendency to expect to be able to explain problems in a cut and dried manner may perhaps also cause students to dismiss feelings in general, cutting off their own internal thought processes, discouraging resolution and further development of ideas. In this way problems are not dealt with

and ways of addressing them independently are not learned. Using language to express emotion, as well as to describe factual material may be helpful in the development of thinking skills and is often overlooked. The making of verbal assessments, opinions and comments in group discussions may be just as important for learning as passive listening or reading and writing. The opportunity to express feelings may deserve more emphasis at all stages of learning providing a more active social context even when not considered 'correct' or 'acceptable' by the teacher. It is likely that in condoning disaffected students in staying out of the social learning environment of school instead of answering their needs, their chances are being restricted of developing fully and integrating usefully into society in later life.

### **2.11 'Unworded' and partially worded thought**

Claxton (1998) points out that 'the mind possesses three different processing speeds' which are: the 'almost instantaneous' (See next section); the 'deliberation mode' involving conscious verbal reasoning and an 'implicit' mode, involving 'osmosis', which is less conscious. It is likely that this last mode is evident in thinking through physical activity, e.g. spontaneous behaviour as in drama and dancing. This type of thinking is often accessed through feelings and may or may not be translated into words. He argues that this last type of thinking has been generally overlooked in education in the West in favour of a 'd' or deliberation mode. He points out that it is a mistake to perceive and value all thought as only manifested in 'd' mode. To illustrate he gives examples of 'd' mode reasoning using 'logical' arguments in grammatical language, where meaning is lost (ibid.). This idea connects with my own and others' conclusion that language is sometimes unsuccessful and unhelpful in reasoning out meanings (See previous section).

Claxton cites Lewicki *et al.* (1992) regarding the non-conscious acquisition of information. He states that learning by osmosis:

*...extracts significant patterns, contingencies and relationships that are distributed across a diversity of situations in time and space. It works through a relaxed yet precise non-verbal attention to the details of these situations, and to the actual effect of one's interventions, without any explicit commentary of justification or judgment, and without deliberately hunting for a conscious, articulate mental grasp...It operates in complicated situations which cannot be clearly analysed or defined, and where the goal is to achieve a measure of practical mastery rather than to pursue explanation. (1998, p. 26)*

'Unworded' (for want of a better word) thoughts and feelings are represented in language by such words as 'inkling', 'mood', 'intuition', 'glimmer', 'gut feeling', 'sense', 'revelation', 'flash of inspiration', and 'insight'. Feelings are frequently found to be based in logic; for example, 'suspicion', 'sadness', 'fear' and even 'love' can be understood as logically based in particular instances when opened up to conscious explanation. It is evident that music, dance, art, drama and other kinds of creative problem solving can arouse feelings that directly interact with human emotional intelligence, generating thoughts, feelings and behaviour (with or without the use of words). It may be possible to create feeling-interactive contexts to promote learning where these activities are set in a socially interactive context based in different subjects. They might assist in generating opportunities for engagement with learning, providing ways to elicit, stretch and develop 'subjective thinking abilities'. This type of structured work might provide opportunities for participation within a person's personal '*zone of proximal development*' (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 212). It might also offer the researcher the opportunity to research the relationship of feelings to thinking (See this thesis, Chapter 7).

It seems likely that some aspects and skills of creative intelligence may be developed incrementally in the same way as academic literacy is improved. This type of activity, particularly in its aspects of autonomous research, may also produce outcomes differentiated by each child's own interest, opportunity and ability, which are not necessarily traditionally academic, in the sense of being confined to 'rational' worded justification. It may be that Arts activities generally associated with 'small c creativity' tend to promote an improvement in motivation to learn by working on subjective intelligence at fundamental levels (Craft, 2000b). They may also provide a means of interfacing with, and working out, meanings at a subjective and sensory level in other 'academic' areas promoting engagement; for example, through the current successful government initiative in the United Kingdom using the Arts to facilitate learning through cross-curricular projects (Creativity, Culture & Education, 2008). This work appears to evidence the idea that feelings may operate interactively as conceptual shortcuts to subconscious thought, building and developing the intellect in sophisticated ways. Much of this ties in with the sensory kinaesthetic approach to teaching (Bandler & Grinder, 1979).

*The path from thought to word lies through meaning. There is always a background thought, a hidden subtext in our speech. The direct transition from thought to word is impossible. The construction of a complex path is always required. (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 281)*

Vygotsky illustrates the subtle nature of human thinking processes by describing examples of shades of meaning in drama where different words are used in context to convey ‘*a unified act of thought*’ and where interpretations of characters’ motivation are given in directions to actors to aid them in presenting an impression of a ‘whole’ complex person in context (ibid., p. 281).

*What is contained simultaneously in thought unfolds sequentially in speech. Thought can be compared to a hovering cloud which gushes a shower of words. (ibid., p. 281)*

This matches well with an understanding of human brains having to comprehend the world as a changing phenomenon. They are constantly striving to make sense of it in daily life, even when thoughts are not explained in language. Feelings like sympathy can be expressed through symbolic representation as in art, music and through haptic communication, for example, hugging. The creative Arts give opportunities to represent thought through behaviours such as making, acknowledging sensation, moving and being – ways which cannot be expressed adequately solely through words, but nevertheless represent sophisticated levels of cognition and representation; for example musical appreciation and physical synchronisation.

It seems that the human brain is constantly working and making connections, even when asleep; for example, during dreams and nightmares. Calvin talks about the complex subconscious thinking processes, which clinicians and neuroscientists ignored in the past and which surely involve feeling sensations of all kinds. *He states that the:*

*...activism of your mental life by which you create - and edit and recreate - yourself. Your intelligent mental life is a fluctuating view of your inner and outer worlds. It's partly under your control, partly hidden from your introspection, even capricious.... (1997, p. 2)*

Random thoughts and feelings appear to be part of these subconscious, semi-conscious and conscious processes of neuro-cognition. Winston gives an interesting description of the phenomenon of random thought in subjective thinking.

*Explanation of a great deal of human behaviour is an extraordinarily complex process. It is the product of many different factors - instinctive, physiological, rational and emotional - and prediction becomes impossible. Laboratory experiments have shown that the time it takes for a person to react to a flash of light varies, and it varies according to no discernible pattern. Random output of this kind may be useful if one is being chased by a lion; we may change direction, jumping from the left to the right, in an unpredictable way, and we may be a little more likely to stay intact. Randomness then is an important part of our neural make-up. (2002, p. 10)*

One might question whether this type of thought is truly random or based in logic, which is too fast for the conscious mind to fully apprehend. This apparently, to some extent, ‘uncontrollable’ random thinking together with subjective and affective thought, must surely be an important constituent of cognition. If you accept that everything in nature has had or has a function, then feelings may be a means of connecting with, and consciously apprehending inner processes. It appears likely that self-development, self-management and growth in cognition, is facilitated when feelings are relevantly engaged, during the learning process. This is evidenced in all four strands of research in this thesis.

## **2.12 The speed of human perception**

Vygotsky explains different levels of human thought as worded and ‘unworded’ phenomena:

*external speech involves the embodiment of thought in the word, in inner speech the word dies away and gives birth to thought... Inner speech is a dynamic, unstable, fluid phenomenon that appears momentarily between the more clearly formed and stable poles of verbal thinking, that is, between thought and word. (cited, in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987, p. 280)*

Having considered external and inner speech Vygotsky then ‘establishes some general representations’ (ibid., p. 280) about thought, and points out that the essential function of thought is to make connections:

*Thought... establishes a relationship between one thing and another... It resolves some task... The units of thought and speech do not coincide... They are connected with one another by complex transitions and transformations. They cannot... be superimposed on one another... the relationships between thought and word have been understood as constant, eternal relationships between things, not as internal, dynamic and mobile relationships between processes. (ibid., pp. 280-83)*

These rather wordy explanations by Vygotsky fail to mention some fairly obvious effects of subjective thought such as ‘unpremeditated’ feelings, impulses and behaviours. These may be seen as a product of the ‘*complex transitions and transformations*’ he refers to. Perhaps these have been generally ignored by learning theorists due to some underlying traditionally religious ideas about selfishness and self-indulgence in considering one's feelings as inherently wrong and therefore, insignificant.

‘Unworded’ thoughts and feelings may have been neglected because it is impossible to agree on exact words to describe them or perhaps because they pass by so quickly they are hard to apprehend and understand. It is hard to appreciate a connective process, which operates largely beneath the level of conscious awareness, even though ideas emerging may be appreciated. Greenfield's (2000) review of physical research into the human brain seems to support Vygotsky's ‘*internal, dynamic and mobile relationships between processes*’ analysis above. She points out that experts are only now beginning to understand the sheer complexity of human neurological, cognitive functions. For example, that there are 100 billion or so neurons and 1 trillion glial cells which help to maintain them, involved in the electrical and chemical processes by which the brain functions. Apparently it takes 1-2 milliseconds for a neuron to respond and return to its resting potential (Greenfield, 2000, p. 38). Could this speed and intricacy explain unconscious thought and learned skills, which appear almost instinctive once established? Elster (1999) gives an example of a split-second response as follows: ‘*The perception of what looks like a snake.....triggers a neural response that bypasses the thinking part of the brain entirely and makes me freeze*’ (p. 408). It is interesting to note that Elster, perhaps because the speed of his perception appears ‘instantaneous’ and is unexpressed in language by reasoned and conscious thought processes, does not equate his perception or feeling with his own logical thought. However, such a feeling or response, based on his knowledge, experience and the circumstances he finds himself in, must be based in prior knowledge within his own logical thought processes. For example to an expert on snakes, with a different view, his response may seem inappropriate. Gladwell (2005) discusses and gives examples of the way humans are capable of rapid realisation in a ‘blink’ in highly complex, often dangerous situations. This is the kind of whole body learning or instantaneous, complex realisation, using multiple senses, which humans experience

in soldiering, policing, outdoor pursuits and sport. The process he describes of ‘jumping to conclusions’ and making split-second assessments, which may be correct or misplaced with hindsight, appears likely to be based on internal logic of some sort.

This opens up the question of whether so called ‘emotional thinking processes’ are logical. If emotion and feeling are products of rapid thinking processes, which may be going on but to which we have no direct means of access, this would explain why we frequently have to express our feelings verbally in order to think back and uncover their logical source. Reflecting on feelings and also working with feelings (without necessarily explaining them) may therefore be seen as a useful learning strategy. Elster supports the view that logical thought precedes feeling when he states:

*most emotional reactions have an immediate cognitive antecedent. First, we form a belief that the world is such and such; and then we react emotionally to that belief.* (1999, p. 408)

This statement still implies that it is possible to slow down, apprehend and describe the process in some way, whereas recent research shows that the sheer speed and complexity with which the brain operates may make this impossible.

Speed might explain the tremendous difficulty of making a scientific analysis of the emotions, since they may exist as products of ‘unworded’ or partially worded thought processes expressed through feelings and intuitions. However, it may be that in accepting and considering feelings, some of the unconscious logical processes behind them can be surfaced and worked with. Such work might possibly develop thinking capacities and potential and build up the intellect. Perhaps it might increase and improve the elaboration and expression of thoughts, through actions, internal and external feelings and worded commentaries. These feeling thought processes might themselves represent an underlying driving force of human intelligence, giving rise to ‘emotional intelligence’ as evidenced in intuitive feelings, ideas, competencies, skills, unworded and worded communication (Goleman, 1996). However, because of notions of inherent ‘irrationality’ attached to the word emotional, it may be preferable to call this process ‘subjective intelligence’. This might place such an intelligence process as a fundamental element to all intelligences and potentially a motivator to learning acquisition (Gardner, 1993).

### **2.13 Educational theorist's perceptions of emotional intelligence**

The idea of developing emotional intelligence as a necessary life skill was put forward by Goleman (1996) and has achieved some popularity in schools in the United Kingdom. Teachers have expressed an interest in developing and researching this idea; however, as far as I am aware, to date no fundamental learning theory substantiated by practical research has been put forward in support of Goleman's arguments. It seems likely though, that some basis in truth for his ideas can be argued simply because teachers have taken up his ideas. They appear to resonate with some teachers on a practical level with their experiences at work (Goleman, 1996, 1998). Sharp (2001) recommends that 'emotional literacy' should be 'promoted' as of equal value to 'literacy' and 'numeracy' in our schools. He finds that a key element in this is to raise pupils' 'self-esteem' (ibid., p. 3). However, this idea appears to be tied up with self-awareness in the sense of self-acceptance not only of one's strengths but also of one's limitations and possibilities. This agrees with Rogers' ideas within person centred counselling about 'self-actualisation' (1951, 1961). This is a process which involves acknowledging, valuing and to some extent managing one's emotional life as a dynamic process.

Sharp explores 'emotions' and even lists them: anger, fear, unhappiness, happiness (or enjoyment), shame (or guilt), sadness (or sorrow), disgust (or aversion) and love. He certainly gives teachers food for thought, but again he seems to be struggling to explain in words, some thoughts that can only be expressed with feelings. One has only to look at the shades of idiosyncratic meaning implicit within his list to appreciate the difficulties and sophisticated connotations of emotional thought (Sharp, 2001, pp. 10-11). One practical way to explore these types of feeling experiences is through 'creative learning', which may or may not involve the Arts as subjects; for example, using the drama technique of role-play in other subjects.

Frederickson and Graham (1999) have also produced a practical guide for teachers in this emotional field. They cite Salovey and Sluyter's (1997) cognitive model of emotional intelligence (p. 5). In it there are outlined four main components of 'emotional intelligence', which are:

- Reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

- Understanding and analysing emotions: employing emotional knowledge.
- Emotional facilitation of thinking.
- Perception, appraisal and expression of emotion.

These authors have made a brave start in trying to improve our understanding and to some extent have succeeded. However, I personally find these general terms rather vague and do not find any realistic justification for each to be divided into four rising achievement levels. I also find such statements as '*ability to engage or detach from an emotion depending upon its judged informativeness or utility*' (p. 5) rather a fantastic concept, since I believe emotions arise subjectively. These processes may well be logical in their own terms, but are often by their nature not within our immediate control, for it is patently impossible to switch them on and off at will. As a teacher I prefer the following general list, which I find more meaningful although I am not sure if this is the correct number of appropriate points:

- Reflecting on feelings in self and others.
- Being open to feelings; developing empathy.
- Understanding how to manage and use one's feelings positively.
- Recognising emotions and discriminating in one's emotional life with honesty.
- Exploring and accepting ones strengths and limitations.

The problem lies in the complexity and fluidity of the emotional life of the brain, much of which remains hidden from us. It might be argued that this is in fact a necessary phenomenon, which enhances human cognition.

## **2.14 Cognitive neuroscience research and education**

Greenfield finds that '*just as regular use stimulates the brain to develop more connections, so neglect has the opposite effect*' (2000, p. 57). She describes research into babies with eye disabilities to support this view. In these studies it was found that:

*over the first year of life...key parts of the cortex develop the connections needed to make sense of nerve signals coming from the eyes. As a result, a child affected by a cataract during this sensitive period will suffer long term vision impairment, even if the cataract is successfully cured, because the all-important neuron connections have not formed in their brain. (ibid., p. 57)*

This is presumably because they were not stimulated or required at the optimum stage for their development. This information conveys an idea of the active potential,

dynamism of, and importance to the body and by implication the brain in making and building on established connections in developing itself. It also implies the importance of stimulation during optimum stages of readiness for the establishment of basic abilities and the disabling effects of denying this. The ideas of perceiving ‘windows of opportunity’, Vygotsky's ‘*zone of proximal development*’ (op.cit., p. 212) and Piaget’s ‘*developmental stages*’ (Piaget, 1947) is in accord with this. If subjective intelligence is fundamental, then appropriate development of it over time and throughout life may be vital. The acknowledgement of feelings may be an essential part of this and an equally vital process in cognition.

If connections are formed through feelings (both mental and physical), by need and stimulation, albeit with a diversity and multiplicity of functions, this information may provide a way forward to a new understanding of human learning. This idea does not appear to be at odds with existing learning theories, but might cast a new light on them. Further, it puts the onus upon educationalists to understand where and when mental and physical stimulations are needed and may have been lacking and to supply contexts for learning which allow the student to build on existing understandings and competencies. A practical way to achieve this is by instigating, considering and responding to student feedback both directly and by observation at all levels. Ignoring student feedback in education may be considered, therefore, in some cases as tantamount to neglect and deprivation.

This leads us on into an attempt to comprehend the ways in which brains are able to develop themselves as well as think in the traditional sense. Greenfield states:

*Neuroscientists have long known that there is no such thing as a single centre committed to each specific brain function, the extraordinary degree to which many brain regions work together became apparent only with the advent in recent years of powerful imaging techniques... Complex instructions and subtle responses can now be studied while human beings are conscious. (2000, p. 25)*

This offers a potential for research far beyond animal experiments involving trained responses.

*Whole constellations of brain regions become active at different times and in subtly different configurations, depending on what the person being studied is doing. Indeed, far more brain regions turned out to be involved than had previously been thought possible. (ibid., p. 25)*

This new information may enable educationalists to research ways of thinking and functioning intellectually, with enhanced understanding. For example, Geake and Cooper (2003) believe that cognitive neuroscience research could have important implications for educational policy and practice. Greenfield (2007) has also appealed to educationalists to engage in a debate around new discoveries in her field, including the impact of new technology on learning.

It may be necessary for educationalists to admit that old judgmental, static approaches to teaching based on traditional research are outdated and inappropriate. Vygotsky pointed out that psychological research has been founded on a false assumption that:

*the links or connections among the mental functions are constant and unvarying, that the relationship between perception and attention, memory and perception, and thought and memory are unchanging.* (op.cit., p. 43)

Cognitive neuroscience may enable a much richer more complex picture of brain processes to emerge. It shows that the brain responds with varied patterns of competence depending on the tasks it is required to perform; for example in the types of intelligences explored by Sternberg (1985) and Gardner (1993), which may be seen as competencies, consisting of patterns of specific types of knowledge and useful skills.

Other fields in which the diversity and complexity of human cognition is revealed may support the conclusions of neuro-cognitive scientists above. For example computer technology involves and expresses human systems for communication, education and entertainment needs. It is possible that the invention of computer terms and concepts may throw light on some of the ways in which human beings think. Words such as 'networks', 'systems', 'databanks', 'image manipulation', 'downloading', 'software packages', 'search engines', 'spy-ware', 'websites' and 'virtual reality' could be used as metaphorical representations of the range of practical and imaginative cognitive processes and applications of the human mind. Computer systems are, after all, a concrete manifestation of human thinking in the creation of tools for its use. The fact that they cannot search for meaning and make decisions at such a complex level as a human may also give insight into the complexity of human capabilities by default. Children with social problems affecting their learning have

been found to benefit from using computers to make social and educational progress. It may be that initially they can relate better to the computer to progress rather than the traditional teacher-pupil learning environment. However, they apparently still need the developing and ongoing support of the teachers behind the programmes in order to fully develop (Craft *et al.*, 2007). This supports the view that interactive social contact and support involving feeling is necessary for learning.

## 2.15 Conclusion

There are clear indications in the discussion of issues above, to show that some professionals have been for some while, in various ways, working out the significance of feelings and emotions in learning within a shifting paradigm. Some of these discoveries may be incidental, but there is an emerging field of research and practice in this area. Eich *et al.* (2000) puts this in a historical setting:

*Most cognitive revolutionaries of the 1960s regarded emotions with suspicion, viewing them as nagging sources of “hot” noise in an otherwise coolly rational and computer like system of information processing, cognitive researchers of the 1990s regard emotions with respect, owing to their potent and predictable effects on tasks as diverse as episodic recall, word recognition and risk assessment. These intersecting lines of interest have made cognition and emotion one of the most active and rapidly developing areas within psychological science. (p. 3)*

Educationalists have increasingly shown interest in investigating both theory and practice and this work appears to be gathering momentum (Gilbert, 2002; Claxton, 2002). In setting out to discover how some feelings may be detrimental to learning and in going on to consider how others may facilitate it, I gradually became aware that feelings and emotions may constitute a logical thinking process in their own right. This is not something I had previously consciously acknowledged. They appear to interconnect with other thoughts and may in themselves constitute an important part of the dynamic cognitive process. Even if subconscious, they may sometimes be ‘logical’ in their own terms. In learning, therefore, connecting with, and talking about feelings may help to access, readjust and develop thinking. This literature search and my own educational research explore ways in which emotions and feelings may impact on learning. It is likely that there is still much to discover in practice, but I am at least now fully aware that I have previously lacked sufficient knowledge about these aspects of learning.



## CHAPTER 3

### MAPPING METHODOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a discussion and justification of the practitioner research focus with implications for the choice of methodology. This is followed by a list of original aims giving rise to and linked to four inquiry strands. In pursuing the guiding question, “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” four related subsidiary questions were posed as deemed appropriate to four inquiry strands and participant groups. A brief outline description is given of questions and aims, participants, and a rationale for methodological approaches to the data collection in each independent strand. A diagram of the thesis follows giving an overview of the field-related questions, participants, data forms, related theoretical domains and methods in the four strands of the research (Table 1). This is followed by a general discussion of methods related to and used in the research, which is again referenced back to the four inquiry strands. These consist of sections on Narrative research (3: 3.3), Auto-ethnography (3: 3.4), Symbolic modelling and metaphor (3: 3.5), Mentoring in developing professional perspectives (3: 3.6), and Practitioner action research (3: 3.7). These are followed by a discussion of some of the ethical issues affecting each data strand (3: 3.8) and the chapter ends with a section on the analysis (3: 3.9).

As stated above, the inquiry strands for this research were chosen to enable an exploration into the guiding question: “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” In undertaking research about the emotions, problems of authenticity, plausibility and balance are major ones. Feelings have tended to be discounted by science, perhaps because they seem ephemeral, illogical on occasions to others, hard to pin down and categorize (Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000). However, these difficulties do not justify excluding them as a field for research.

Traditional research has tended to avoid this ‘fuzzy’ area, possibly for some of the following reasons. In traditional quantitative research there is a difficulty in designing a range of agreed and predictable ‘outcomes’ in this field. For example, the problems

encountered by Buchanan *et al.* (1996), who investigated the effects of parental separation through divorce on young people, illustrate the difficulties of translating emotions into statistical data, when researching complex social problems involving the emotions (See 3.3 below). Open-ended outcomes in researching social problems using qualitative and/or mixed methods may uncover points, criticisms, and unsought and unexpected findings not within the research financier or researcher's range of interest. People may have different attitudes to research topics; for example, different concepts of 'self' (Kircher & David, 2003). People are often not disposed to discuss feelings, which may hold private and/or painful associations for some and which they may not be able to deal with (Rogers, 1951, 1961). In Western culture, feelings have tended to be socially suppressed or have been simply ignored; their expression viewed as a weakness. This phenomenon is described by Pinker (2002) in his book *The Blank Slate: the modern denial of human nature*. Some feelings and thoughts are strong, but others are fleeting and hard to apprehend and describe. This type of thinking, with possible retrospective explanations of particular behavioural responses, is described by Gladwell (2005) in his book *Blink: the power of thinking without thinking*. Since feelings arise subjectively, perhaps from the subconscious (Freud, 1901; Jung, 1964), they may not be fully and consciously acknowledged and able to be easily put into words and described (Kelly, 1955; Elster, 1999, p. 408; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.12 & 3.4; Bennett-Goleman, 2001). There is a problem with semantics. Terms, names and words if they exist describe emotions in ranges of meaning, which are not universally agreed (Pinker, 1994; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.10; Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000). Participants' and researchers' interpretations may be viewed as too subjective by others, considered inaccurate and open to inconsistency and question. As in all socially based research, there are many individual ethical and practical implications in collecting and analysing data pertaining to feelings.

As people think and learn they experience all kinds of feelings, which have a profound effect on individual human life and society in general (Eich, 2000; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.14). Looking to extremes, feelings can have beneficial outcomes; for example, great acts of invention and humanitarianism. They can also develop disastrously, devastating people's lives; for example, the holocaust, murder, terrorism, and suicide bombers. Both extremes have far reaching effects upon society and appear to be based in some kind of complex learning and logic (however misplaced or

inspired). Education is fundamental here since through teaching, teachers have access to a range of human emotions and feelings, which they and their students may need to make sense of. In this research it was possible to explore record and make some sense of subjective data, in spite of the difficulties and limitations. This was done by interpreting and adapting some ideas, principles and methods from existing qualitative methods and working collaboratively, even though this produced an abundance of complex data.

This research is open to interpretation in relation to several methods and domains. It might be seen as eclectic and/or combined, but there is a thread of narrative throughout, presented in different forms. Campbell *et al.* supports my stance:

*No one methodology dominates practitioner research and it is possible to be eclectic. However, issues of increasing importance are the justification for one's methodology, the consideration of ethical matters and the social context of research in the workplace.* (2004, p. 81)

Some of the related domains, whose principles have informed the work, are: grounded theory (Charmaz 1995; Bryant & Charmaz (eds), 2007); action/practitioner research (Craft 2000a; Campbell *et al.*, 2004); narrative research and ethnographic research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Whitehead, 2001; Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004); phenomenological reduction (Benner, 1994; Leonard, 1994; Bruzina, 2004); auto-ethnography (Freeman, 1993); counselling (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983) and communities of practice (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Kagan, 2005). There are many crossover points and similar aspects present. All of these domains and methods of qualitative research investigate individuals, looking at idiosyncratic phenomena and situations using descriptive data, a concern with process and a search for meaning (Charmaz, 1995; Mason, 2002; Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003).

In the present research, I adapted data collection methods deemed to be appropriate and expedient, influenced by others but not exactly replicating. My overall action research method has evolved with a participatory theme and bias (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger 1998; Kagan, 2005). Citing Dewey (1963) and Friere (1970c), Park *et al.* find that:

*from the point of view of pedagogic theory, participatory research captures the*

*ideal of goal-orientated, experiential learning, and transformative pedagogy.*  
(1993, p. 3)

In participatory research it is often the case that in any given project the ‘partnership with the researcher’ is about collective political action by oppressed people. My work has elements of this, but is more directly aimed at self-education and the raising of awareness, both for myself and for participants. By using this approach in various ways, it was possible to elicit feedback about some of the transformational effects of feelings in learning; for example, comments about the difficulty and benefits of the curriculum, personal and professional opinions, and observations.

### **3.2 The aims of the research and strands of inquiry**

This participatory action research was driven by an underlying general interest in the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. The aims were adjusted and to some extent, their importance re-ordered during the process. Each strand and phase of research may be seen as leading to the next in following a classic action research model. For example, my interest in understanding my pupils in Strand 1 led to considering my own learning in Strand 2. The resulting interest in the learning of other teachers in Strand 3 led on to an evaluation of a group of participants interacting in context in Strand 4. The aims at PhD transfer were as follows:

1. To discover some reasons why students’ labelled as school refusers are disaffected with education and consider their comments and points of view from data gained through home-tutoring them (Inquiry Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers).
2. To evaluate my own learning and teaching experiences in helping students re-engage in education using a reflexive, ethnographic qualitative research method (Inquiry Strand 2: The author’s learning process).
3. To investigate and compare other teachers’ experiences of learning and teaching through mentoring them (Inquiry Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners).
4. To explore the potential to inform and illustrate significant strategies/interventions regarding professional practice and theory without being prescriptive (Inquiry Strand 4: Evaluating a primary school Arts festival: observations of feeling based learning in action).

5. To disseminate findings, relating material from psychology, education, and counselling literature to teachers and teacher trainers through mentoring, presentation and educational publication (All four inquiry strands, see Appendix Strand 2: Six Courses, conferences and workshops).

In order to engage in a meaningful learning dialogue for this research, it was necessary for the data to be collected on a predominantly voluntary basis. It would have been unethical, but also probably ineffective, to force teachers and pupils to participate. The participatory aspect was not theorised as such as a method because it is implicit within the whole focus and purpose of the research. The extent of involvement is considered by reflections and ethical considerations in the empirical chapters. It appeared that the element of self-determination not only democratised the process, it improved authenticity. For example, the teacher mentees in Strand 3 chose their own issues to communicate and ways to do so. Two teachers chose not to use symbolic modelling, whereas two others chose to express their anger through their 'pictures'. The research depended throughout very much on the willingness and availability of the participants and me. In the case of teachers and pupils in Strands 1, 3 and 4 this was affected by our mutual work commitments and perceived need to communicate. At times teachers seemed keen to complete a sequence of mentoring sessions and pupils to complete a sequence of work; at other times they volunteered – 'obliging' me – with considered and spontaneous information. Hopefully I approached this in such a way that they could make use of the opportunities I offered for their own purposes. For example, I 'helped' one teacher in Strand 3 to indirectly work out her priorities in her relationship with her boyfriend by discussing conflicts between work and relationships in general. This involved respecting the person's autonomy to determine their own issues and process and an attitude of not 'needing to know' or judge.

It was important to be honest about the purpose of the mentoring and researching. In this case the focus was 'emotional aspects of learning and teaching'. This provided a 'safety net', since to some extent it restricted the field of inquiry. I found out for myself that it was possible to mentor and support someone's feelings without knowing or even understanding all the details of their personal problems. At the same time it was possible to learn new information, researching in participation with others

in an open minded way. In different ways this involved us in making meanings jointly as well as for our own separate purposes, helping to ‘...leverage dormant capabilities’ as Wenger *et al.* (2002) have suggested. In exploring, expressing, and considering our feelings insightfully, we engaged in researching our thinking processes on some level. The methods chosen were pragmatic choices influenced by the research aims and the personalities, needs, agendas and circumstances of the participants as well as the researcher. In each strand below I give a rationale for why the methodological approaches were appropriate to my stated aims.

### **3.21 Inquiry Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers**

My employment as a home tutor led to aim one and resulted in the data set of Strand 1. I set out to find reasons why a group of school refusers were disaffected with education and to develop my skills in teaching them. I encouraged their comments and points of view and made observations. Data was collected to investigate the question: “Emotional blocks: what do they tell us about the learning process?” These blocks appeared to me to consist of ‘emotional’ problems with learning which I was unable to understand or explain. I prepared for this research by taking a counselling skills course sanctioned by the British Association for Counselling to improve my skills and inform my work (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983; British Association for Counselling, 2000; Gardner *et al.*, 2004). I home tutored GCSE level school refusers, between 1999 and 2004, keeping records of my experiences. For this research, I analysed data from six boys and six girls aged 15 to 16 \* (This thesis, Chapter 4). At my request, my education authority chose young people for me to tutor, who were school refusers during their final two years of compulsory education. None of the students were excluded for bad behaviour and all of them appeared to have ability. Other avenues of help had failed to get these young people back to full time attendance at school. I worked with them for varied periods over four years and observed their emotional problems, considering the possible reasons for their truancy (This thesis, Chapter 1: 1.7 & 1.9; Teachernet, 2005). Periods of teaching time for each person varied from as much as seventy six hours spread over two years to as little as three hours over half a term. Eight pupils had twenty hours or more and four pupils over forty hours of tuition.

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\* Appendix 1 - Strand 1 - 1.1 Table 1 - Hours of tuition and data collected & Table 2: Graph of tutoring hours per pupil; 1.2 Cases data files - author's narrative summaries, work records and critical points

The data collection arose out of my special needs and mainstream teaching experience, my chosen 'exploratory' research approach, the home tutor role, the situations and the pupils. In each lesson I used a work record to track the pupils' progress: a straightforward record of appropriate work, incorporating an element of choice. Some pupils did GCSEs, but for them to reflect on their learning process. At the end of each lesson we both wrote and exchanged comments stating how we felt about the lesson. In order to be 'effective' this process had to be modelled by me to include both triumphs and difficulties. In so doing I employed my own reflective and reflexive strategies in my written comments; for example: "*Good pupil. I enjoyed this lesson too*"; and "*Pleased to be finished with this bit*" (Appendix, Case study 2 Andrew 2000: Student feedback from work record). The work record was duplicated and one copy kept by the pupils by using carbon paper. This form of research data appeared appropriate because it allowed for an un-prescribed open response and gave ownership of the resulting material to the students to reflect upon and respond to in their own way. It gave the parent the possibility of looking at the process if the students were able to share it and it allowed me as researcher to collect the type of data which might answer my guiding and subsidiary questions. The acknowledgement of feelings created by this 'respectful' approach also set the scene for various potentially 'revealing' discussions and behaviours to be shared with me as a 'non-judgmental expert' which might allow me to make retrospective observations, with the benefit of hindsight.

Other forms of contemporaneous data were collected; for example, teaching notes and observations; letters and forms from, and reports to, the Local Education Authority (See Appendix 1). Analysis was by means of retrospective narratives of the tutoring period (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Whitehead, 2001). Two narratives about a boy and a girl were chosen as typical examples to show the type of reflective and reflexive analysis undertaken in the process of teaching. They were also chosen to illustrate the practitioner experience; for example, eventual elation and satisfaction in the first case and frustration and ultimately disappointment in the second. They show how these stories originally viewed to some extent traditionally as 'cases' became narratives after much reflection and retrospective thought in redrafting. The improvement in my understanding gradually became positively enhanced, involving acknowledging my

own limitations and achievements as well as those of my pupils. Significant themes of environmental significance were identified from all twelve cases (See Chapter 4) and a thematic analysis made of the implications of the findings (See Chapter 8). It is possible that this kind of data analysis could provide a means of extrapolating for similar purposes in a more extensive study over a wider participant group through further practitioner action research (Goodson, 2003; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004).

### **3.22 Inquiry Strand 2: The author's learning processes**

This inquiry strand resulted from the second research aim above. I explored my own feelings in relation to thinking, learning and teaching using a reflexive, ethnographic qualitative narrative research method (Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004). In narrating my learning process I posed the question: "How do feelings affect my learning and teaching?" A considerable amount of different types of written auto-ethnography, combined with self-reflection, was involved over a period of six years (Freeman, 1993; Sparkes, 1994; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This work firstly informed my understanding of some of my interactions with participants and secondly it allowed an in-depth consideration of my own feelings and emotional history around learning. In using auto-ethnography I subjected myself to a similar, though more in-depth scrutiny than I gave my participants (See Chapter 5; Appendix 2 – Strand – 2.1: Table of author's writing – a dated list). This method gave access to exploring feelings in learning from my own intimate insider perspective, one which I could not gain in any other way. However, I had to bear in mind that the resulting data gave an idiosyncratic view. Inevitably I gained insight by comparing and contrasting my own upbringing and professional life with those of my participants. This process helped me to respect them as individuals who might be like me and unlike me in various and complex ways. It taught me that they were likely to have legitimate knowledge, experiences and abilities, however different from my own from which I could learn.

The data consisted of two main narratives: an autobiography of childhood from the perspective of a child and an auto-ethnography of learning processes from the perspective of an adult. These were based on autobiographical notes and memories, biography and psychological analysis of significant others, reviews and observations on literature, lists of significant and critical points, symbolic modelling using pictorial

symbols (Jung, 1964; Dalley, 1984; Lawley & Tompkins, 2000) and my own reflexive, retrospective, summarised diary <sup>1</sup>. This may be seen as a process of phenomenological reduction over a period of six years (Husserl & Fink, 1928-1938, in Bruzina, 2004; Benner, 1994; Leonard, 1994). Significant themes and issues were identified and their implications considered in what was a therapeutic and sometimes painful process; for example:

*I could admit my mistakes and accept that I would be bound to miss and misinterpret some facts. My reflexive approach if I could be sufficiently honest, might add authenticity to the research.* (Appendix 2.2: Author's auto-ethnography of learning influences, 1947-2007)

This reiterative writing and redrafting method involved a considerable amount of self-counselling in reflecting upon my own emotional blocks and enablers to learning and environmental influences (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). Significant issues were identified (See Chapter 5) and this enabled a consideration and comparison of the implications in the final thematic analysis of the findings (See this Chapter, Section 3.9 and Chapter 8).

### **3.23 Inquiry Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners**

This enquiry strand arose from aim three and involved mentoring eight teachers with whom I was acquainted (Appendix 3 – Strand 3 – Table 3.1). These teachers were aged between 25 and 55. The focus of the research continued to be an exploration of the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. The question was posed: “How do feelings affect other teachers’ learning and teaching?” I engaged the mentees’ interest in talking about the role of their own and pupils’ feelings in teaching and learning. This process led us to share experiences and contributed data for discussion. The method used was essentially one of recording mentoring data using a counselling skills approach, (using carbon) with both mentor and mentee retaining a copy for our own use (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). In using this method the participants and I were able to use the sessions for our own purposes: they in receiving a supportive and interested audience and me in gaining research data about the relevance of feelings to their professional learning. This had the advantage of obtaining their interest and co-operation in an open ended exchange, which

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 2 - Strand 2 -2.1 Table of author's writing-a dated list; 2.2 Author's auto-ethnography (2008); 2.3 Autobiography-a childhood view (2002); 2.4 Critical events timeline (2006); 2.5 Emotional landmarks and schemas (2006); 2.6 Courses, conferences and workshops attended (2008)

followed their own choice of relevant issues. The participants and I made an agreement promising anonymity and giving permission for the research, producing the narratives (both their and my own commentary) during mentoring sessions (Clough 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004). The research depended upon the support and participation of the teachers in considering their own feelings in relation to thinking, learning and teaching within their educational communities (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Kagan, 2005).

It was evident in Strand 3 that teachers used the mentoring sessions idiosyncratically to consider their own problems, dilemmas and teaching philosophies. It appeared that each of them was in the process of reflecting on and adjusting their reflections on teaching. Each session was of about an hour's duration with at least a month or longer interval between. This involved a total of nearly forty hours of actual mentoring time during which the teachers analysed their own data through their reflections with support from me (McNiff, 2002; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2007). I then transcribed (Appendix 3) and analysed the findings (See this Chapter, Section 3.9 and Chapter 6). The data was duplicated and shared by using carbon paper and in the case of art work, models and diagrams by photography. It was recorded in the following ways: notes written as I listened; teachers' spontaneous symbolic models using pictorial symbols explained in Section 3.8 below and reproduced in Appendix 3 (Jung, 1964; Dalley, 1984; Lawley & Tompkins, 2000); teachers' observations, auto-ethnographies (Freeman 1993; Sparkes, 1994; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) and narrative summaries (Whitehead, 2001; Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002) and my own observations in response to theirs. In this way it was possible during the process to both present them with and record some of their motivations, feelings and concerns about their work. This produced some interesting ideas, which could be used to initiate their own and other avenues of research. One mentoring narrative was chosen as an example to show the type of reflective and reflexive analysis undertaken. However, significant issues in this strand were identified by the teachers themselves (Appendix 3) and analysed in themes later by the author (See Chapter 6). This initial analysis enabled a consideration and comparison of the implications of the findings in the final thematic analysis in Chapter 8 in the way that is recommended by Craft (2000a).

### **3.24 Inquiry Strand 4: Researching a community of education practice: observations of feeling-based learning in action**

Inquiry Strand 4 was based on an independent educational evaluation I undertook of a city school creativity festival carried out in collaboration with a large commercial city theatre (See Appendix – Strand 4). This work was funded through a government programme to improve children's education within inner city schools situated in 'socially deprived' areas (Story & Brown, 2004; Hawkins, 2006). I made an evaluation of the one-week festival itself including using my experience through previous involvement with two of the projects involved in The Festival, these together gave me a body of research data. For example, I had been employed on the teaching action research programme (2004 to 2006) as a mentor and the final researcher presentations were part of the week. In 2006 I had also got the job of making an educational evaluation of the primary school component of the said festival.

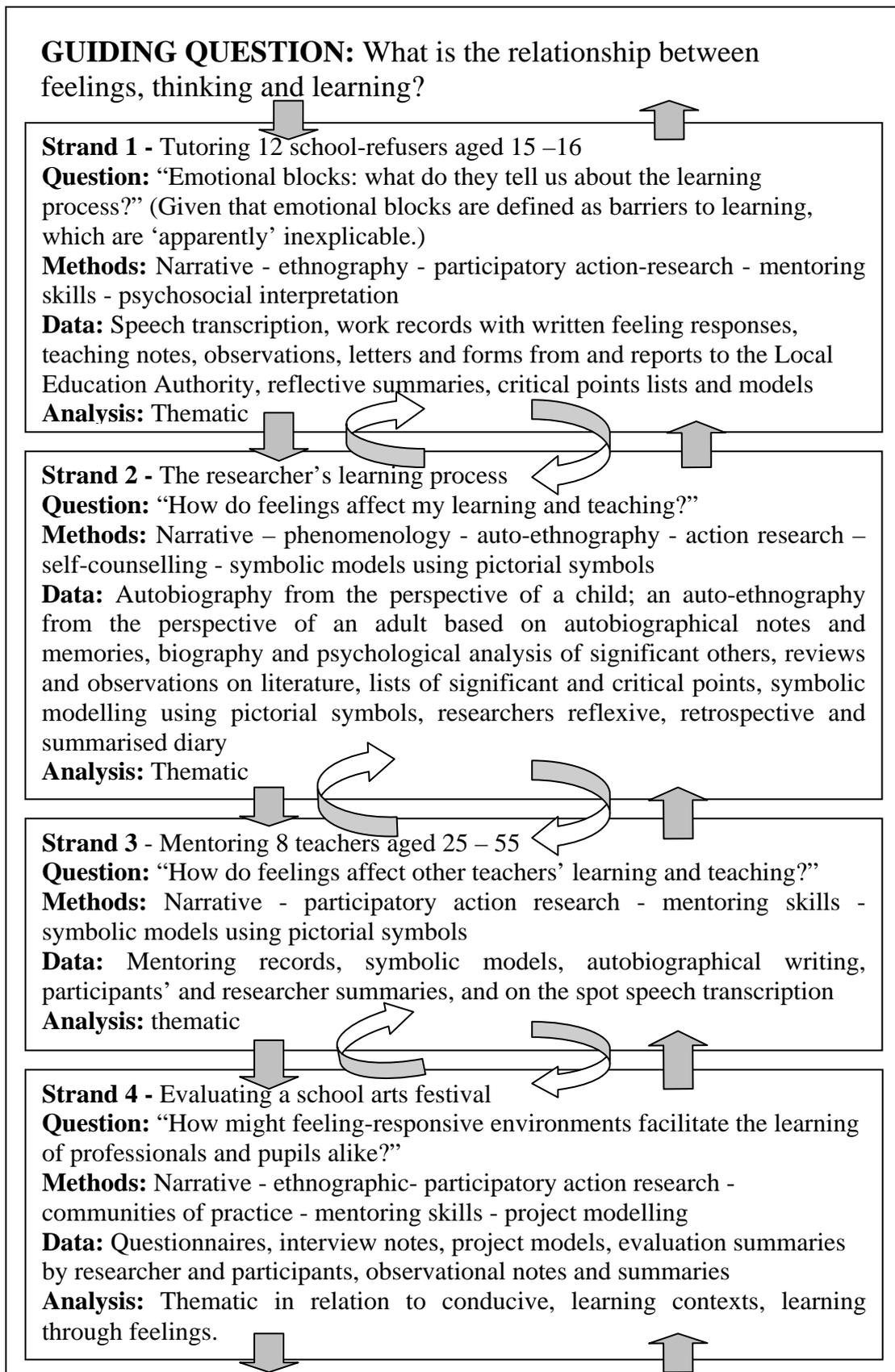
I spent five months evaluating the preparation for the primary school element of The Festival. There were six schools involved over a period of five months. This involved monitoring six primary school Arts projects in progress<sup>1</sup>. Each project involved a class teacher working with a creative practitioner in planning, executing and developing a cross-curricular project with their pupils. The participants were primary school pupils, teachers and creative practitioners. The research methods and analysis in The School Creativity Festival report were essentially narrative (Hollway, & Jefferson, 2000; Clough, 2002), ethnographic (Bronfenbrenner, 1973; Main & George, 1985), participatory action research and communities of practice (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998), using a mentoring interview with a counselling skills approach (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). The methods employed involved enlisting the participants at every level in expressing their opinions and feelings about their learning. The rationale given to them for this (at least in the case of teachers and creatives) was in order to critique and judge the usefulness and value of their own teaching methods. Thus they were generally able to see a benefit to their own professional understanding as well as producing data for me as the researcher in answering my guiding and subsidiary questions. My own notes

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 4 - Strand 4 - 4.1 Table 1 Breakdown of contents of The School Creativity Festival report; 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data - School Creativity Festival 2006; 4.3 Researchers' narrative evaluative summary of a school creativity festival at a commercial theatre

and observations were based on my experience of necessary contemporary national curriculum outcomes as an art, English and Special Needs teacher (Stenhouse, 1975; Waters, 2007). The data was collected in the form of: short summaries, questionnaires, interview notes, project models (Footnote 1), and observational comments by all the participants, including the children and their parents (Craft, 2000a; McNiff, J. 2002; Campbell *et al.*, 2004).

Originally I evaluated the work educationally, particularly in relation to the objectives of the commissioning government agency (See this thesis, Chapter 7 & Appendix Strand 4; Hawkins, 2006). These were complementary although not identical to my own. I was given permission to re-evaluate the data and include it in my research. I posed the question: “How might feeling-responsive environments facilitate the learning of professionals and pupils alike?” This re-analysis showed ways in which the curriculum could be designed to promote learning in feeling responsive contexts through action research performed with different pupil groups (See this thesis, Chapter: 3.9 and Chapter 7). These were cross-curricular Arts projects designed in collaboration with creative practitioners. They demonstrated and evidenced feeling-based group learning in action and ways in which this type of learning can be timetabled into the curriculum. At the same time the continuing professional development of the educators was evidenced through a feeling responsive approach in my evaluation.



**Table 1: Diagram of the thesis with questions, methods, theoretical domains and data**

### 3.3 Narrative research

Mindful of the difficulties experienced by Buchanan, Maccoby and Dornbusch (1996) in their methodology, I chose a qualitative narrative method. Their conclusions bear out the view that in studying the emotions, lists of predetermined, statistically arranged factors without explanations in context are unproductive. These researchers hoped to advise divorced parents on the best living arrangements for their children. They set out to research the effects of: firstly, loss of a parent; secondly, inter parental conflict; and thirdly, diminished parenting. Admitting their failure, they concluded that they were unable to generalise any particular coping strategies for handling visits or transitions between homes. They found that some adolescents and families appeared to be able to adapt equally well to many different forms of family life after divorce and discovered that they could not quantify 'love' (*ibid.*). This work has traditional, 'objective', quantitative underpinnings, with limiting listings of generalised factors and predetermined parameters and percentages. It appears inadequate mainly because it did not allow for idiosyncratic participant viewpoints and meanings. More meaningful participant evidence might have been obtained through engaging participants' interest in the research and collecting their narrative data and points of view (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998).

Many aspects of cognitive phenomenon have been researched and described by psychologists (Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.7). Apart from the qualitative work of introspective memory researchers, interactive idiosyncratic aspects of the human condition do not seem to have been sufficiently taken into account. Fiction writers have often been much more successful in presenting complex, subtle analyses of human character and behaviour. Similarly, narrative research is valuable in allowing for more complexity, describing situations and engaging the audience's interest more effectively than listing factors in the quantitative mode (Whitehead, 2000; Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004). Stories are a major means of human expression. We use them for information and pleasure to judge our fellow human beings, the world and ourselves. Nuances of meaning are often more effectively conveyed to us through narrative. In cognition, narratives and strings of logic interconnect on a subjective level as we pick them up, develop, redraft and drop them (Hollway, 1989; Freeman, 1993). Narrative research can explain human behaviour in complex situations and incorporate significant human

factors better than some other methods; for example, a statistical list without a full explanation of the situation in which it was obtained. It could even be argued that any interpretation of quantitative data within the humanities is basically narrative, involving value judgments and might in any case be termed mixed method.

Stories inform people and illustrate significant points in the round; they provide extra experiences of life (Whitehead, 2001). They can also allow further analysis, observation and thinking development by the audience, of points overlooked by the writer. Teachers are unique individuals, who are required to facilitate society's aims in different ways with differing pupil groups in a variety of cultural contexts. In order to be helpful, my research, therefore, needed to be able to be interpreted and adapted. One may gain from people's experiences without re-enacting exact solutions. In sharing my story I may provide information to teachers, who are not generally in a position to do the in-depth research I have undertaken. Hegarty stated (as director of the National Foundation for Educational Research) that research should '*...enhance teachers' understanding and add to their skills*' (Hegarty, 2003, p. 30). My researcher's narratives are also intended as a possible resource for discussion, comparison and reflection in working out issues in teaching.

I used various types of narrative data in all four strands of the research, both as a means of collecting data and as a means of analysing; for example, through summarising school refuser situations. These narratives were varied in type and content arising from situations (Hollway, & Jefferson, 2000; Whitehead, 2000; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004). For example school refuser narratives involved searching my own personal and professional understandings of participants' direct behavioural, verbal and written feedback (Craft, 2000a; McNiff, 2002; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Tabor, 2007). Since one purpose of the work was to provide general information for other teachers to consider and although it was necessary to strive to report honestly at the time, total authenticity in every detail was not ultimately essential. In any case, school refusers' problems may have been compounded by other problems of which I was not aware. However, the written stories might represent cases sufficiently typical of real situations that teachers commonly deal with. They might encourage the reader to empathise with problems

looking beyond the obvious, perhaps creating a better awareness of the kinds of things which can happen to pupils.

There is a thread of narrative throughout this thesis, since it is written from the author's experience and perspective. However, during the research some specific 'narrative' data and analysis formats were used. In this context it is assumed that any material which 'tells a story' is a narrative, even where perhaps it requires further interpretation. These are as follows:

- *Auto-ethnography* (Appendix – Strand 2: The author's learning processes & Strand 3; Freeman, 1993; Sparkes, 1994; Whitehead, 2006)
- *Author's autobiography from the perspective and memory of herself as a child.* (Appendix – Strand 2: The author's learning processes – 2.3; (Freeman, 1993; Sparkes, 1994; Whitehead, 2006).
- *Professional and personal observational and autobiographical notes and memories* (Appendix – Strands 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers; 2: The author's learning processes; 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners and 4: Researching a community of education practice; Atkinson & Claxton, 2000; McNiff, 2002; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Whitehead, 2006, 2007; Tabor, 2007). *Diagnostic discussion of possible causes of emotional problems of significant others in the author's life* (Appendix – Strand 2: The author's learning processes – 2.1 – Table of author's writing; Laing, 1956, 1961, 1965, 1967; Bowen, 1966; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Donaldson, 1987; Hendrix & Hunt, 1997)
- *Lists of significant and critical points caused by life events and emotional schemas* (Appendix – Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers – 1.2 – Cases data file; Strand 2: The author's learning processes – 2.4 – Critical events timeline, 2.5 – Emotional landmarks and schemas; Kelly, 1955; Elster, 1999, p. 408; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.12; Bennett-Goleman, 2001).
- *Symbolic modelling using pictorial symbols* (Appendix – Strand 2: The author's learning processes – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography; Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners – 3.2 – Teachers' symbolic models; Strand 4: Researching a community of education practice – 4.2 – Primary school report data; Jung, 1964; Dalley, 1984; Lawley & Tompkins, 2000).

- *Work records* (Appendix – Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers – 1.2 – School refusers’ work records; Craft, 2000a; McNiff, 2002; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2007).
- *Mentoring records* (Appendix – Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners – 3.2 – Teachers; Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983; British Association for Counselling, Counselling skills course, 2000; Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004).
- *Transcription of speech* (Appendix – Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners – 3.2 – Teachers; Strand 4: Researching a community of education practice – 4.2 – Report data; Hollway, 1989; Sparkes, 1994; Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004).
- *Analytical narrative summaries by researcher and participants* (Appendix 1 – Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers – 1.1 – Author’s narrative summaries – 1.2 – Cases data file; Strand 2: The author’s learning processes – 2.2 – Author’s auto-ethnography; Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners – 3.2 – Cases data file; Strand 4: Researching a community of education practice – 4.2 – Report data; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2007; Tabor, 2007).
- *Thematic analysis* (See this thesis, Chapter 8; Craft, 2000a; McNiff, 2002; Goodson, 2003; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004)

Meaningful data arose during the process of spontaneous participatory discussion and appropriate action to collect data was taken as events unfolded. This to some extent explains the variety of data types collected and methods used, as the participants and I selected what we deemed appropriate to our ‘needs’ at the time. I also looked at the research data from different perspectives in order to attain a greater degree of authenticity. This was true not only in that I used data from different participants and myself, but in the different ways and formats in which I have collected and written it. In this process I have taken a practical approach, producing work, as and when I was able to, according to events and my own subjective agenda. This approach is supported by Hollway’s (1989) view that: ‘*The boundaries around pieces of discourse used for research purposes are based purely on pragmatic considerations*’ (p. 39). The numbers of words and hours of work of the four strands of research only

indicates a superficial idea of the work involved in searching for meanings (Appendix Strand 1: 1.1 – Tables 1 & 2; Strand 2: 2.1 Table of author's writing; Strand 3: 3.1 – Table of Hours/Words; Strand 4: 4.1 – Breakdown of evaluation report). There was no comparison between meaning and length in the inquiry strands.

The data included material of interest and importance to participants that was only of general or partial interest to me as a researcher and vice versa. I expected this and allowed for it; for example, I followed the participants' lead where possible (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983; British Association for Counselling, Counselling skills course, 2000). Sometimes much was learned and understood over a brief period, though perhaps requiring reflection to be written up. At other times, long tutoring periods yielded little research information. For example, the person I tutored the longest; she and her parents were largely uncommunicative. I had very little of interest with which to do a summary although her thank you card and thoughtful present indicated a positive response (Appendix Strand 1: Tracy – 1.3 – Tables 1 & 2). At other times I learned a complex web of information over a long period and had to wait before I could make sense of situations in retrospect. The production of a balanced analytical narrative required careful reflection (Hollway, 1989; Clough 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004).

The narrative method used appears to have some parallels and connective points with feminist research methods. I have aimed at specifying '*the particular networks of meanings, their heterogeneity and their effects*' (Hollway, 1989, p. 38). As in feminist research, a central theme is the raising of consciousness awareness both within the researcher and the participants. It may be that my research carries on this feminist tradition through raising awareness though in a different field. Hollway points out that such research may uncover hidden assumptions (Hollway, 1989, p. 85). This has been my aim in using a variety of approaches to collecting data, in ways I found appropriate with a range of participants. Hollway explains this by saying that:

*...consciousness raising as a method should not be seen as a discovery of women's true nature, but as a way of changing our subjectivity through positioning ourselves in alternative discourses which we produce together.* (Hollway, 1989, p. 43)

My alternative discourses are both personal and education based and are aimed at changing my subjective attitudes and to some extent (as seems appropriate to them) those of learners and other teachers.

A main intention of my research was to give the participants in each inquiry strand a 'voice' (Freire, 1972). However, the process of personal self-discovery I engaged in through story writing also worked for me and was cathartic. I 'solved' some of my own emotional blocks, learned to appreciate and build on my own positive abilities and accept my limitations. Much of this has involved disjointed note taking at significant moments, practice in summarising, redrafting and developing my writing ability as I have come to terms with my own learning. In redrafting my written work, I have continually criticised and readjusted to it as a 'fresh' reader after time has elapsed. The various narratives I have produced helped me to consider and '*relinquish inappropriate perceptions and to develop new – and more workable – ones*' (Postman & Weingartener, 1971, p. 93). My research and narrative writing may be seen as a process of phenomenological reduction. Husserl (1928-1938) believed this process to be monodal or fundamental to all philosophic thought because it tackled ontology (understanding what it means to be a person), phenomenology (looking at the significance for people of their environment) and to some extent hermeneutics (allowing for a variety of different cognitive viewpoints and interpretations) (cited in Bruzina, 2004).

#### **3.4 Auto-ethnography: facing my own emotional blocks to learning.**

Hollway and Jefferson point out that feminist research, which pioneered the democratic approach of 'giving the participant voice', produces questionable results unless the researcher admits to points of disagreement, modification, selection and interpretation.

*If we wish to do justice to the complexity of our subjects an interpretative approach is unavoidable. It can also be fair, democratic and not patronising, as long as this approach to knowing people, through their accounts is applied to the researcher as well as the researched. (2000, p. 3)*

This issue of reflexivity was one reason for undertaking an author auto-ethnography; another was to investigate some of my own cognitive learning processes in order to answer the research question: "What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and

learning?” There was also an element of auto-ethnography in the other participant strands; for example, teachers, writing about childhood and teaching (Appendix – Strand 3); and artists and teachers evaluating their Arts projects (Appendix – Strand 4). This type of learning process is described in the following quote:

*The history of science is full of global, intuitive understandings that, after laborious verification, proved to be true...People are meaning-finders, even in the most genuinely chaotic data sets. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 246)*

It could be said that all human beings are engaged in the process of finding meaning in the ‘normal’ run of dealing with the ‘*chaotic data sets*’ which constitute their lives. Researchers, such as me, are no different, ‘learning’ and progressively making sense of the world through new knowledge and experience. For example, readjusting my initial ideas, to accept that feelings were part of human reasoning processes in learning, eventually furnished me with a different way of looking at my professional world and role as a teacher.

A study of human biography and autobiography shows that people are capable of enormous, fundamental and unpredictable (to others) changes of direction and orientation. According to Freeman in his book *Rewriting the Self* (1993), all of us, even those who may not be recognised as ‘intellectual’ by others, are *anyway* all engaged in constantly subjectively rewriting our lives, however ‘ordinary’. This human self-actualisation process, ranges through all levels (even arguably within each individual) from superficial conjecture to complex philosophical thought (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). This process is necessary in order to give meaning to behaviour. It provides us with understandings and purpose in coping with events, environmental changes and the passage of time and constitutes an important part of our mental life (This thesis, Chapter 2: 2.7 & 2.14; Eich *et al.*, 2000; Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000; Gerrod Parrott, 2001).

*There exists such great variation in the way reality is constituted, interpreted, and explained, and for some it may even imply that the specific ways we do so are fundamentally arbitrary: different fictions for different folks. But there is nothing arbitrary about this situation at all. All that is being said is that we interpret and explain in ways that are more or less consonant with the particular reality we inhabit. (Freeman 1993, p. 138)*

It could be argued that reflecting on one’s life, with reference and comparison to feelings, contexts, people and events, helps us to adapt to our own ‘reality’. Telling

our stories provides a means to access, work with and adjust the subconscious, discovering and expressing one's own subjective reality. The question then arises, if each person is idiosyncratic and unique, as to how the researcher is able to generalise from small in-depth studies of a few participants or from his or her personal perspective. Undeniably, human beings have many complex processes in common. However, we must be mindful that such small sample approaches require scrupulous and faithful analysis if they are to provide useful data. Freud's own investigations, through his own psychoanalysis, are a classic example of how failure to be reflexive can blind a researcher to acknowledging the limitations of their method (Clark, 1987). Burman and Parker (1993) are correct in their assertion that reflexivity has developed as a research mode not only to enrich the account, but also to acknowledge questions of power relations in research'. This is a necessary and logical progression of research methodology since Freud's day. Although we are all a unique mixture of common and uncommon variables, it is possible to look in depth at one's own and other people's lives, make observations and locate themes across different experiences.

My various auto-ethnographic narratives gave me an opportunity to make some 'sense' of myself in the present, in ways not previously explored (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.1 – Table of author's writing). My researcher's personal development research diary was a catalyst. The auto-ethnography gives evidence of some environmental influences on my research and how my feelings and intuitions appear to me to have affected it (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography). Although it lays me open to audience perceptions, with which I may not agree, I came to accept this (not without difficulty) and found the process therapeutic and cathartic. Apart from the research aims already stated, it can also be viewed as a self-counselling, coming of self-awareness and confidence-building process. I have found this particularly so because I determined my own path in dealing with my own emotional learning problems, without outside direction. In considering one's self, accepting and exploring the concept and basis of various thought patterns and 'emotional' schema, which may have become habitual, seems to be useful (Kelly, 1955; Elster 1999, p. 408; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.12). Bennett-Goleman (2001) explains the notion:

*The vast majority of schemas are efficient shortcuts in the mind. Much of their efficiency lies in the fact that we don't have to pay attention as we execute them. They simply spring into action and help us manage our lives.* (2001, p. 60)

She goes on to describe 'negative' and 'counter-productive' (in effect 'emotional block') schemas as also present as habitual, often hidden, patterns of thinking. Her book is very helpful in supplying a common list of these, with which one may, with idiosyncratic adjustment, 'diagnose' oneself. Some of these maladaptive schemas are: abandonment, deprivation, subjugation, mistrust and 'unlovability'. She explains that these are maladaptive because, caused by traumatic events, negative experiences and environments; they continue to come into play later in inappropriate situations. I found that discussing feelings through auto-ethnography helped me to overcome some of my own 'emotional blocks'. It increased my empathy in teaching, mentoring, writing about and recording research participants, some of whom contributed their own auto-ethnographic material (Hollway, 1989; Clough 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Whitehead, 2006).

### **3.5 Symbolic modelling and metaphor**

The origins and development of my use of symbolic modelling by pictorial representation and metaphor came about for some of the following reasons. They were motivated by my own creative and subconscious thinking preferences; for example, 'double' meanings in humour, writing, poetry and art. I also came to a realisation after attending a course run by the late therapist David Grove on 'symbolic modelling' therapy, that the Arts may reveal, and allow us to access, feeling aspects of subconscious thinking processes (Jung, 1964; Dalley, 1984; Lawley & Tompkins, 2000). Lawley and Tompkins (2000) explain that 'symbolic modelling' is a technique of psychotherapy developed by Grove. They relate his work to: '*...cognitive linguistics, self-organising systems theory and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)*' (p. xiv) and describe it as follows:

*Symbolic modelling [as] a method for facilitating individuals to become familiar with the symbolic domain of their experience so that they discover new ways of perceiving themselves and their world...This model exists as a living, breathing, four-dimensional world within and around them.* (ibid., p. xiv)

Grove elicited information about an individual's metaphorical model of their world by asking them to draw pictures and choose words, which express it. He used a system called 'clean language', which encourages and supports without judging. During this

therapy although people often explain and interpret, they are not asked to do so and so it is largely a self-adjustment, self-counselling process. I used this method in Strand 3 (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.2 – Teachers’ symbolic models) and in Strand 2 (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author’s auto-ethnography). In mentoring teachers I used an adapted version of Groves’ method, giving the ‘feelings in learning’ focus. There was no intention of therapy in the accepted sense. I used it rather as another means of helping thoughts to emerge and of investigating and recording ‘feelings in learning’ data. However, sometimes participants appeared to experience a therapeutic effect. This method of accessing one’s subconscious world appears to rely to a large extent on metaphor. According to Lawley and Tomkins the mind uses:

*...three different types of language with its own vocabulary and internal logic, and each involves different ways of understanding, reasoning, and perceiving...sensory...conceptual...symbolic.* (2000, p. 4)

Further they claim that:

*...much, if not most, everyday language and thinking is neither sensory nor conceptual, but is actually metaphoric. Metaphors allow people to express and give form to complex feelings, behaviours, situations and abstract concepts. Most metaphors make use of the sensory-material world to describe, comprehend and reason about the conceptual and abstract. For us “symbolic” means more than the dictionary definition of “relating to a symbol”. It also involves **connecting with a pattern that has personal significance.*** (ibid., pp. 4-5, authors’ emphasis)

Well-conceived metaphors allow us to communicate conceptual significances to others by inference. They give a more holistic impression of an idea, experience or process than can be communicated by simple language. They can also evidence the subconscious as well as the conscious making of meaning.

### **3.6 Mentoring: developing professional perspectives**

According to current neuro-cognitive research the brain has the capacity to regenerate and develop throughout life. This is true even allowing that perceived need, health, learned and genetic dispositions are also involved (Greenfield, 2000; Ramachandran, 2003). If we accept this view, it appears likely that a person has a similar potential to grow professionally through ongoing professional development. Mentoring might be seen as a means of providing a reflective environment conducive to learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.2). It may also be a way of raising awareness in mentees and mentors of their own skills, knowledge and potential developmental capacities. Mentoring may provide an encouraging interactive context

for learning (Bandura, 1977; Berkowitz, 2000; Gilbert, 2002; Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004). It may sometimes provide conditions for mentees to acquire self knowledge within their own personal 'zones of proximal development' (Vygotsky (1896-1934) in Rieber & Carton (eds.) 1987, p. 212; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.11). In this research it provided a means of soliciting opinions and feelings; in this case with a focus on learning (Lerner, 1985; Goleman, 1996, 1998; Frederickson & Graham, 1999; Sharp, 2001; Weare, 2004). It was evident that a certain amount of learning was enabled through the mentoring approach, which was seen as beneficial by some participants (Appendix 1 – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file; Strand 3 – 3.1 – Cases data file; Strand 4 – 4.2 Evaluation data).

Many teachers and education managers realise on some level that their work requires daily researching in practice, but there may be a lack of full awareness and ownership of this due to conflicting priorities. Fixed, judgmental attitudes still exist in parallel with the idea of lifelong learning, even though the value of updating, double checking assumptions and reflecting has long been known (Schon, 1987; McNiff, 2002; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004). In our current world the tendency to think that there is no need for further learning after initial training is counter productive and inefficient (Whitaker, 1997; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.3). Individual histories, experiences, environments and personalities affect teachers' learning as much as pupils' learning. Environmentally based learning problems can be said to be universal at any stage in life and acceptance of this has given rise to a more explicit commitment to continuing professional development in the teaching profession (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Whitehead 2007; Tabor, 2007). In 1976 Neisser pointed out that:

*Human communication offers unparalleled opportunities for understanding, but also for error, misunderstanding and deceit. Our dependence on it means that our understanding of one another and ourselves...is never complete and often simply mistaken. (p. 193)*

As professional adults, we are capable of continuing to learn by experience, if we choose to do so. In order to do this more effectively, it is reasonable to claim that reflecting on one's own idiosyncratic path is necessary and not merely an indulgence. Engaging in a mentoring process can be seen as a form of research in itself for mentor and mentee alike. It could be said that mentoring helps to create a participatory

'research cycle', aiding recognition of events, issues, feelings and facts about life, encouraging reflection and readjustment (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004). Mentoring provides a means of enabling professional reflection and can be undertaken in various ways; for example, peer, apprenticeship, specific task and joint mentoring. The mentor may take multiple and alternative roles; for example, being: 'A Teacher to a Teacher'; 'A Role Model'; 'A Counsellor'; 'A Facilitator'; 'A Supportive Protector'; and 'A Guide' (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004; this thesis, Chapter 6: 6.2). This study involved mentoring with colleagues through participative research as we explored the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. It is evident from their spontaneous comments that teachers contributing data to this research found being mentored helped them to think about, value and adjust some of their professional intuitions and thoughts (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004; this thesis, Chapter 6 & 7).

The data obtained across the four inquiry strands showed a depth and quality of participant feedback, enabled by 'an open-ended' mentoring method. This appeared better than could have been obtained only by, for example, questionnaire or interview. We evaluated and researched together and I frequently received advice and instruction from participants in giving their opinions and feelings about issues in learning. In Strands 3 and 4 the mentoring aspect contributed to research participation. In Strand 3, I researched with teachers around their feelings in learning and teaching. In evaluating with teachers and Arts educators at The Primary Arts Festival (Strand 4) my brief was not to instruct and guide or explain methods of work as might be part of that role in school; for example, with a trainee. My own intentions and attitudes were an important factor in this, but so were those of all the participants, who undertook the research with and for me. For example the education officer at the Arts Festival theatre who made walls available, upon which children freely drew and wrote their comments; the Arts programmer who devised and collated 'open' parental questionnaires and the parents who filled them in with individual, extended comments.

I found the following principles to some extent helpful in mentoring and evaluating: Maintaining an open mind; being willing to learn from participants' contributions whatever they were (sometimes meaning was not immediately obvious); giving space to express their thoughts; not feeling I had to understand everything; suppressing my

own urge to share at too great a length (a danger when mentees were sympathetic listeners themselves); relinquishing ‘control’ of the discussion; only introducing a topic appropriately; sharing notes and checking out conclusions with the mentee; and backing off when an avenue of thought was not relevant to the mentee. Reflexivity, consideration and constructive criticism of one’s own position might to some extent be taught through mentoring by awareness and consciousness-raising. It can be argued that the process of teachers reflecting on their own learning experience might improve their learning. It might also increase their empathy and understanding of pupils through acknowledging their own emotional problems and fallibility in understanding the world. This might help prevent hasty, often stereotyped and judgmental, second-guessing of pupils’ behaviour, likely to hurt feelings and discourage self-confidence. Thus traditional teaching approaches may set poor examples for questioning; checking out assumptions and suspending judgment in the learning process, restricting possibilities for progress.

*Much of our knowledge is immediate, and seems to have some sort of privileged status...But our automatic and immediate access to our own mental states leads to a natural presumption that our beliefs about ourselves are correct. It is tempting to regard this special access as superior to any other sort of knowledge we could have about mind. This tantalizing problem has so far been widely neglected by scientific studies. (Kircher & David, 2003, p. 1)*

Mentoring provides a stimulus to developing subjective thought into conscious language; for example, writing skills. It uncovers and provides information giving more ‘food’ for thought. For example participants were often able and willing to write down their considered opinions when assured of an interested and sympathetic audience. Hollway, in carrying out feminist narrative research found that ‘*in contesting the objectification of research subjects*’ – that is in giving them a voice – ‘*feminist theory has reinforced a different tenet of orthodox psychological method: that the meaning of accounts is unproblematic*’ (1989, p. 42). The mentoring approach to researching may assist in exploring the subtlety and complexity of the mentor and participants respective worlds. Thus the understandings engendered from my research put me in closer contact with other realities than my own and facilitated my learning as well as aiming at helping those I mentored.

Research through mentoring in generating, eliciting and releasing the professional and ‘personal’ thoughts of others in discussion appears to me to some extent to offset the tendency referred to as follows:

*The widespread assumptions in the tradition, by ethnographers, participant observers and interviewers alike, that their participants are “telling it like it is”, that participants know who they are and what makes them tick. (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 2)*

In mentoring, the researcher and participant searching together for meaning, engaging in a dynamic to some extent interactive process tends to offset a simplistic view. For example, looking back on my research, it became evident that teachers needed to vent their anger about various injustices in the educational system, but in most cases having done so they were still keen to teach, though perhaps under changed conditions. In my research this process was, as far as I could make it, skewed in favour of the participant. I adopted, so far as I was able to, a person centred ‘counselling skills’ approach (Rogers, 1951, 1961 Rogers & Freiberg, 1983; British Association for Counselling, 2000).

**3.7 Practitioner action research** This section starts by considering some literature related to reflective and reflexive action research; it then discusses the author’s own professional perspective in researching. Although my research may appear as simple sequential story telling, it represents a growth in teaching skills, attitudes and depth of knowledge, which is hard to quantify, but more useful to narrate. It is a method, which is in keeping with a long tradition of social research (Mead, 1934; Bronfenbrenner, 1973; Hollway, 1989; Sparkes, 1994; Clough, 2002; Goodley *et al.*, 2004). I have chosen this method in combination with action research as a means of continuing professional development (Craft, 2000a; McNiff, 2002; Goodson, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Tabor, 2007). The research may also be termed participatory because, to some extent, I engaged my participants as fellow researchers, soliciting their opinions and feelings in learning.

*There is much evidence that exploring and researching one’s professional identity results in a type of professional development that goes beyond the acquisition of new tricks or techniques, however valuable they may be, to a more deep, “therapeutic” type of professional development. Sikes *et al.* (2001) discuss how writing about “critical incidents” in teaching can help teachers investigate and construct their professional identities, and as a result affect changes and developments in teaching. (Campbell *et al.*, 2004, p. 45)*

The action research process might be viewed as a process of phenomenological reduction (Benner, 1994; Leonard, 1994; Bruzina, 2004). Husserl (1928 – 1938) (cited in Bruzina, 2004) propounded this method and school of philosophy. His assistant, Fink, noted down the following point: ‘...*phenomenological method as a circle, as the constant overhauling of itself, this ontic bearing back upon itself ...in the phenomenological situation*’ (Bruzina 2004, p.76). These phrases may be seen as describing the reflective action research cycle. Husserl suggested that the process of phenomenological reduction could be done by various means: by deliberately bracketing, turning off or disconnecting and presumably adopting various stances, attitudes and perspectives (ibid.). Husserl’s transcendental philosophical system involves logical reasoning independent of human experience of observable, physical phenomena but within the range of human knowledge (ibid.). This suggests that ‘emotional’ data may be important in ‘scientific’ social research. However, there are potential problems of conflicting interpretation and over interpretation.

In this research each inquiry strand was inevitably influenced by my interpretations and personality and also my particular objectives at the time. The various objectives of each strand are listed at the beginning of this chapter (Section 3.1). In carrying out participatory action research, various methods by various theorists and researchers were subsumed into my own idiosyncratically developing method under a qualitative umbrella. This research emerged from a combination of teaching, mentoring, evaluating and reflecting in practice. In Strand 1 it involved professional interactions with students, parents and colleagues as I went about my job at the time. I did not use data directly taken from my employment as a teachers’ mentor in Strand 3, apart from quoting the researchers’ posters, but my research was to some extent informed by this work. Data in Strand 3 was taken from offering professional mentoring to teachers of my acquaintance who agreed to help me in the research. In Strand 4, I was employed to give a professional evaluation of a primary schools’ Arts festival. This involved interactions with pupils, teachers, creative practitioners and management colleagues in the process of working. All of these strands may be seen as participatory because I engaged participants’ interest in reflecting on their feelings in learning and in finding out what worked for them (Park *et al.*, 1993).

The research and the data collection had to be feasible as I worked. The feedback records I developed incorporated the notion of ‘positive regard’ into the teaching, mentoring and evaluation processes (Rogers 1951; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). It was intended to share ownership of the process and allow time for reflection. The resulting records then made up the research data. In Strand 1, I supported and praised achievement, intuiting and trying different teaching material based on my experience using a feedback work record kept by the pupils and me (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file). In Strand 2, I kept a reflective diary of my own learning and teaching, which was used as the basis for the data on my own learning process (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author’s auto-ethnography). In Strand 3, the teachers and I made notes, verbal transcriptions, symbolic models and summaries shared by carbon copy and photography (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.2 – Cases data file). This same method was used in Strand 4 (Appendix – Strand 4 – 4.2 – Evaluation context and completed data).

In the process of working (teaching, mentoring, evaluating) and researching, I developed my knowledge and professional expertise. The research was affected by practical implications arising from it as it proceeded. There were various accidental and incidental aspects, restrictions and opportunities; for example: the availability of particular participants and myself; the way in which they responded; resources available; my current knowledge; support from my employers; cooperation of others and job requirements. Sometimes work with participants was quite challenging, such as when they knew more than I did. I admitted my lack of knowledge and acknowledged theirs. For example, in Strand 1, pupils participated in working things out as we referred to ‘expert’ teachers at school and GCSE revision books (Park *et al.*, 1993). I modelled learning and researching, showing my own affective responses, overcoming problems, looking from different perspectives, experimenting with ideas, persisting in inquiring and seeking understanding as we proceeded. In this way participants, (also in Strands 3 and 4) who were more knowledgeable than me, might built up self-esteem, in ways, which I found not at all detrimental to my own. We acknowledged each other’s learning styles and different thinking abilities. I gained by this process, since I was relieved of the responsibility of appearing to be ‘the font of all knowledge’ and was in some cases ‘respected’ for my honesty, existing knowledge and skills.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

Although I am a teacher and not a professional psychologist, in researching across the domains of education and psychology I have adhered to the *Code of Ethics and Conduct* of the British Psychological Society (2006). Within this, personal judgments in consideration of participant data are allowed for. I have also taken heed of the British Association for Counselling *Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors* (2000) due to my counselling skills training for education, albeit I am not a fully qualified counsellor. In doing this research it was my aim to increase understanding of the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning without causing further difficulties for individuals. My own former perspectives, as a young person and adult with emotional learning difficulties, undoubtedly facilitated my respect for my participants. However, I have been mindful that many of their problems are different to mine for a whole range of individual and complex reasons. Reporting verbatim what participants wrote and said helped to counteract misinterpretation and informed my conclusions (Appendix 1: Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file; Appendix 3: Strand 3 – 3.2 – Cases data file, Strand 4 – 4.2 – Evaluation context and completed data). Placing me in context in the research may also aid the reader in considering the work (Appendix 2: Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author’s auto-ethnography). However, it should be noted that for personal and ethical reasons not all of the data listed in the tables is included in the Appendices; for example, to avoid embarrassment to my own family and my participants and their families.

There are problems of accountability, in setting up, doing and interpreting research. It is easy to be carried away by an argument, to be confused by various interpretations and beliefs and to make unrealistic subjective judgments. These factors are often beyond the level of conscious awareness, but can influence the stream of ‘rational’ conscious thought on different levels. Modern methods of hermeneutic research have been developed with reflexivity as a tool for making assumptions explicit. Reflexivity is now considered to be an integral part of educational and social research (Campbell *et al.*, 2004). It is used to assist the researcher and reader in avoiding potential errors. However, it is intrinsic to social research that the work reflects the general current cultural climate. It is a fundamental feature of reflexivity that it also reveals to some extent the ‘personal reality’ the researcher inhabits, rendering findings potentially more ‘practical’ to others ‘use’ by sharing ‘realities’. In choosing the mentoring

approach, therefore, I considered issues of researcher and participant identity and control (British Association for Counselling, 2000). In my reporting I have avoided, by reflecting and redrafting, being too formal in writing about participants (Goodley *et al.*, 2004). I admit that there is much that I do not know. I have aimed at achieving the ‘...*subtlety and complexity that we use, often as a matter of course, in everyday knowing*’ (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 3).

Throughout the research I was aware of the problem at times of being unaware of my own impact on the situation. This could be partially overcome by imagining my self in the participants’ place and behaving with sensitivity, but it was never completely resolved. In Strand 1, the research depended very much on information given as a result of the participants’, and in the case of the school refusers, their families’ estimation of my personality, ability and trustworthiness (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data files). It also depended on their need to share and find a way forward for themselves. A good relationship had to be maintained with students and parents, since they could cancel lessons at any time. The same situation applied to the teachers in Strand 3, where the research depended very much on their willingness to be mentored (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.1 – Cases data file). In Strand 4, the process of eliciting participants’ opinions and feelings about learning in the evaluation process was similar and being trusted placed a responsibility upon me to use information wisely (Appendix – Strand 4 – 4.2 – Evaluation context and completed data). My own interest, attitudes, willingness to respond and availability to the participants were important factors. The research was, therefore, ‘*characterized as a dialogue or interplay between*’ the participants and the researcher and as such was not predictable (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003, p. 7).

There were hidden tensions within the researching process and issues of power relations. In Strand 1, I recorded the data in conjunction with teaching and learning (Chapter 4); in Strand 3 while mentoring (Chapter 6) and in Strand 4 while evaluating (Chapter 7). Since analysis was largely retrospective this tended not to impinge on the needs of the participants. However, in the case of the school refusers and The Festival teachers, there was an element of coercion present in the situation created by the system we operated within. This would have been present anyway, whether I had been undertaking research or not. Interestingly, although I experienced some hostility

to my work from one teacher and one creative practitioner in Strand 4, there was none directly from pupils. I tried not to be intimidating, but it is difficult to determine if this was always avoided. 'Compelled' participants in Strands 1 and 4 showed some 'passive resistance' in cancelling lessons and not carrying out tasks, but depression, confusion about relevance, misunderstanding, general stress and pressures of home and work were possible causes for this.

In Strand 1, the threat of prosecution sometimes initiated lessons and there might have been a subtle element of coercion present, depending on individual views of teachers and the 'system'. In Strand 3 the research was voluntary and appeared mutually advantageous, the teachers generally benefited from expressing professional frustrations and also helped me collect data. However, I felt obliged to follow where they took me and this restrained me in pursuing certain avenues of thought. In Strand 4 there was also an element of coercion, in that schools and teachers signed up for the evaluation as a necessary part of the process of receiving the funding for the creative practitioner. The effect of these issues was difficult to determine, and a delicate and variable balance had to be achieved between these different considerations. They caused me to feel cautious and constrained at times in drawing conclusions. Hollway refers to this type of problem:

*Once an account is given, it assumes the status of the expression of the person's experience in relation to a particular topic. What is not considered is the status of the account in relation to the infinite number of things that are not said.* (1989, p. 40).

In all four strands of research the participants' honesty and willingness to give unsolicited information and contribute opinions surprised me. Ethical problems arose in each strand of research. All of the strands involved issues of confidentiality (British Psychological Society, 2006). As part of the mentoring process I found it helpful to individuals to sometimes refer to other participants' experiences in vague terms. A balance in selecting material to share had to be maintained so that it was likely to be supportive and appropriate rather than gratuitous. Where participants were experiencing and overcoming similar problems these disclosures sometimes appeared to help reduce feelings of isolation and to illustrate possible resolution (British Association for Counselling, 2000). However, I had to be careful not to reveal names or information about specific participants, who might be likely to be known. The

participants and I were engaged in some tasks, which they could generally all perceive as being ‘useful’; for example, doing schoolwork in Strand 1; the author’s self adjustment in Strand 2; sharing professional concerns in Strand 3 and evidencing and justifying the work in Strand 4. Inevitably, however, each participant was principally involved in pursuing his or her own agenda. I found the first and second strands the most problematic.

### **3.81 Inquiry Strand 1: Tutoring twelve school refusers**

All of the families knew I was researching students’ psychological learning problems for a masters’ degree (also as part of my job as a tutor) since I referred to my inquiries and insights in passing as I deemed appropriate at the time. However, I did not seek written permission from them since I was unsure how such formal permission might inhibit pupils’ learning processes and influence the authenticity and usefulness of the data. Also I did not want to impose any extra burden of stress on pupils. I had a sense that the ‘natural’ learning and ‘normal’ teaching processes must not be adversely affected by the research, both for the participants’ sake and for the authenticity of the research, as an investigation into teaching. I showed support and respect for participants by duplicating the data and giving a copy to them in acknowledgement of their own ownership of the material (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). During the research I did not anticipate how much I would learn from families about their personal history and environmental conditions or how relevant this would be as it turned out in retrospect to the research. The information I gained then presented me with a major ethical dilemma when I looked back at my data. I followed British Psychological Society (2006) guidelines in anonymising the material. I realised, however, that this was not sufficient. After much thought and redrafting I resolved this by disguising and fictionalising the participants’ final narratives; for example, by altering names, ethnic origins, places, sports activities, numbers of and sexes of siblings and family members. However, I maintained the essential authenticity of the stories and dilemmas I construed had affected each student’s feelings about education in each case at the time (2000-2004). These made up the professional analysis of the mix of problems each narrative revealed (Appendix 1: Strand 1 – 1.2 – Case data files).

There were problems connected with requesting signed permissions from students and/or families. Such permissions might inevitably lead to identification of individuals making long term anonymity uncertain. I considered the participants' right to withdraw their information (Gardner *et al.*, 2004: *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Researchers*). It had to be balanced against the fact that time would have passed by before publication, so that the data was unlikely to be as sensitive or detrimental as when current. Requesting permission at this point would not only be impractical, but inappropriate since it would be unethical to remind people of past problems after they had moved on with their lives. Also in this research the participants were in some sense given a 'voice', justification and vindication for some of their behaviour, which had been generally misunderstood. Some of them made clear to me that they would have wanted this explained in order to make the educational system more understanding for others' benefit. I felt a duty of care to do this on pupils' behalf in my teacher researcher role. I made the stories unrecognisable except perhaps to the participants themselves through their 'real' comments and the knowledge that I taught them. This meant that they might be able to identify themselves (British Psychological Society, 2006). In some sense, therefore, I put my own professional work into the arena for criticism, which entailed an element of risk to me. This in itself was to some extent a safeguard to participants. Practical problems in protecting my own safety and reputation had to be addressed. For example I had to ensure that my integrity was not compromised, by insisting on an adult presence nearby, whenever tutoring in pupils' homes. In the end I decided to destroy all data which might link my stories to the participants in Strand 1, for example, letters of employment. In this case prior validation and authorisation by an independent academic would be necessary before this was done.

An open-minded approach was one which I had to consciously work at (often failing), based upon my 'positive regard' training on my counselling skills course. It was helpful in tempering my responses in cases of potential misunderstanding. For example there was a short period when I jumped to the conclusion that one pupil was suffering abuse at home. From my teachers' perspective, this is always a possibility with any pupil. However, I realised, when I thought about it that her mother's caring attitude and the lack of any evidence negated this idea. The assumption on my part may have been due to the fact that it was at this time that my mother revealed that she

has been abused as a child. This is evidence of a likely subconscious influence on my judgment, which if I had responded rashly, could have had a detrimental effect on my pupil. When I was informed of another pupil's experience of a past incident of abuse, I had to resolve whether or not and how to report. I also had to deal carefully with accusations by one pupil of another of drug dealing while in my care on an educational visit. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

### **3.82 Inquiry Strand 2: The author's learning processes**

This strand involved negotiating my own emotional problems with learning (Freeman, 1993). The writing of my auto-ethnography was a long and tortuous process, which involved detailed heart searching and at times some emotional upset (British Association for Counselling, 2000). This produced material, which was ultimately, although a necessary process for the author, of pertinence to the research only in summary. The selection of relevant material and omission of potentially embarrassing data required careful thought in order to protect my family, colleagues and my self. Considering personal data involved questioning my own subjective agendas and feelings both regarding my own learning processes and in responding to participants in ways difficult to 'unpick' accurately. Although such an exercise should make any reflexivity explicit to readers, it is a process fraught with ethical difficulties involving authenticity. A justification might be made here, however, that the process of making meanings by implication is common in most human communication and that teachers anyway use some 'similar' intuitive skills (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000). In narrative analysis, in my anxiety to be thorough, I fell into the trap of being overly descriptive at times. I eventually realised that I was prone to making value judgments by getting carried away with rhetoric, using incidental adjectives, which sounded well but obscured meaning and relevance. I became aware that some of my polemic statements and generalisations were based in my personal anger and sense of grievance at injustice and were not appropriately objective. The work had to be redrafted to eliminate as far as possible this type of subjective bias with consideration of the types of those ethical dilemmas given above (British Psychological Society, 2006; McNiff, 2002; Goodson, 2003; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

### **3.83 Inquiry Strand 3: Mentoring eight teachers as learners**

It was possible to ask for written permission from the teachers involved in Strand 3 and many of them chose their own pseudonyms (British Psychological Society, 2006). However, some of the teachers did not wish to be anonymous and so the author acknowledged those who wished it, in the general acknowledgements at the beginning of the thesis. All of the participants were fully aware of the purpose and focus of the research when they agreed to take part and none of them withdrew their consent subsequently. Although it was offered, none of them were particularly interested in my conclusions. It seemed that it was the process which was of value to them and their own internal development. They accepted implicitly as I did that judgments and concrete analysis were not appropriate within the complex contexts of their busy lives. The question of embarrassment in revealing personal concerns and issues was resolved by treating all contributions in the body of the work anonymously (British Psychological Society, 2006). The use of symbolic modelling was very much influenced by the therapy method of 'clean language' used by Grove (cited in Lawley & Tompkins, 2000). This method does not require the participant to explain everything, but allows him or her to carry away his or her own private meanings and processes, without being pushed into revealing all (in this case to me as an 'outside' researcher). I recorded only what teachers wished to tell me and so the research was less observational of behaviour than Strands 1 and 4.

### **3.84 Inquiry Strand 4: Researching a community of education practice**

In Strand 4 permission was given to the government agency by participants to be evaluated in the research. Permission to use the report data was in turn given to me, by the person who commissioned the report. However, I had to still consider ethical difficulties where participants (and schools) might be embarrassed if not sufficiently anonymous (British Psychological Society, 2006). I also had to be careful in taking photographs that child participants were not included in shots of artwork. In Strand 4, informed consent was obtained from adult participants by default, since schools agreed to an external evaluation. However, I was aware of a duty of care to individuals. Even if others might not recognise them, their problems could be tactlessly or inaccurately reported, which would be unethical on the part of the author and undermine authenticity. Another problem in reporting comments of colleagues such as teachers and creative practitioners was one of assigning credit for their considered professional contributions. Many of those involved in the Arts festival

would have wanted to be credited with their own educational evaluations and contributions. The latter was prevented coincidentally, however, by a request for anonymity for schools and teachers from the report commissioner. I would have preferred to acknowledge all of the creative professional participants and teachers, who wished it, in the general acknowledgements at the beginning of the thesis, but was thus constrained from doing so.

Teachers had signed up to the evaluation by agreeing to The Festival conditions, which included an evaluation. However, it took time to establish that I wished to evaluate the work with them and not simply judge as an external examiner. When this was understood, they were, except for one or two isolated incidents, very cooperative, helpful and even enthusiastic. I turned up at one school and inadvertently upset the artist on her first workday, because the person arranging the visit had not warned her. She was very annoyed and it took several emails to retrieve the situation. A teacher who had just been through a rigorous and stressful school inspection told me she could see no point in evaluating as previous data was never acknowledged or referred to. This was difficult to justify and seemed a valid point as, although we had a final group evaluation, I was not able to feedback the educational evaluation findings of the final report to those involved (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Kagan, 2005).

Wenger (2008) believes there is a tension between the individual and the communities in which he or she participates and a balance has to be achieved. He perceives a need to also balance theory and practice, otherwise people may be placed subordinate to technology, instead of in charge of it. In education this appears to be equally true of evaluation. He says that people have to be able to express who they are for active participation to take place. This is a dynamic trajectory model of learning, which involves individuals as part of a larger group of collective learners. Ethical considerations are bound up with this process. Wenger *et al.* have outlined seven principles to promote '*...organic growth and aliveness*' in communities of practice (2002, p. 54). If they open up a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives they suggest that, '*...a more developed community could improve upon their current personal networks or help them leverage dormant capabilities*' (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 54).

### 3.9 The Analysis

The process of analysis of each of the strands was performed as deemed appropriate by me for the following reasons. This research might be said to be an example of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which follows its own personal rationale, being dependent upon the researcher's own conceptions and standpoint. The overriding analytical approach throughout the thesis might be said to represent its own internal method of IPA, because it is recording and theorising aspects of personal reflexivity around learning, which is the subject and object of the research. In producing the data in Strand 1, I found that the complex situations affecting school refusers could be best expressed through narratives allowing description, illustration and possible consideration of different environmental effects in the round (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In pursuing my own research path, I have produced a hybrid methodology and analysis exhibiting some ideas found in IPA and others from Grounded Theory. The result has not been a discrete copy of either method.

*Although IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) research does not claim privileged, or direct, access to participant's meanings and experiences, the terminology used in the presentation of its findings invokes a sense of discovery rather than construction: Themes are said to **emerge** and categories are **identified** in a way that invokes Grounded Theory methodology rather than social constructionism. (Willig, 2001, p. 67, author's emphasis)*

Willig explains that Grounded Theory has been interpreted in two different ways, citing Charmaz who finds that '*Grounded Theory shares some features with phenomenological research*', taking a more 'objectivist' approach (coded behaviour) or a 'subjectivist' approach (participants' perspectives) (Charmaz 1995, pp. 30-31, cited by Willig, 2001, p. 44). My work tends more towards the subjective version and it is to this I am referring when I state that my research may be related to Grounded Theory. Although Grounded Theory has been accused of being positivist (perhaps based in sociological categorisation), both the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' versions of Grounded Theory recommend an open minded approach and re-iterative analysis.

The themes which arose in Strands 1, 2, 3 and 4 lent themselves to thematic analysis with regard to ecological factors, since these appeared to have had a powerful, albeit individual influence on participants. However, there were other important emotional factors which manifested themselves and which, as an educator, drew my attention in

reflecting upon the various participants learning sequences recorded. There were negative emotional forces, which might be detected, but also evidence of positive 'emotionally linked' learning behaviours and ways in which these might be encouraged through education. This led me to choose as suited to my purpose, Claxton's observed learning behaviour categories (2002) in the form of an already established potential coding framework. These were derived from Claxton's Effective Learning Profile (2002). The behaviours he identifies as conducive to and present in effective learning processes appear to me to involve a great deal of 'feelings' thinking. It is probable that the emotional feelings and behaviours (in brackets) with which Claxton illustrates each of his headings below actually overlap or intermingle to some extent in the rapid, dynamic and interwoven process of cognition. It is impossible to separate them out completely within actual learning processes, but such a breakdown model appears very helpful to teachers in planning the curriculum to ensure such skills are encouraged.

The positive behaviours and skills which Claxton identifies consist of Resilience associated with absorption (interest, curiosity and fascination), managing distractions (self-knowledge and emotional self-management), noticing (awareness and sensitivity) and perseverance (patience and persistence); Resourcefulness connected with questioning (guessing and sensitivity), making links (open mindedness), imagining (creative construction and awareness) and reasoning (self-confidence, deconstructive and constructive thinking); Reflectiveness linked to planning (self-confidence and awareness of cause and effect), revising (thoughtfulness, patience and determination), distilling (dreaminess, contemplation and meditation) and meta-learning (confidence, communication skills, decision making and analysing); and Reciprocity in relation to interdependence (caring for others and co-operating), collaboration (friendliness, leading and complying), empathy (personal identity, supporting, loving and caring) and listening (including physiognomic perception) and imitation (enthusiasm, admiration and copying). The main categories were used in the analysis Chapters 5, 6 and 7, appearing particularly appropriate since these data Strands consist of reflections based on considerable adult experience of learning through teaching and readily showed evidence of them.

The first Strand in Chapter 4 was analysed differently because it was the initial exploratory inquiry Strand and the analysis founded in the process had already been performed from my education practitioner's viewpoint after considerable reflection and redrafting. When I considered re-analysis several points arose, which led me to keep the original format; not least that the environmental conditions and resulting emotional effects on school refusers' learning appeared richly informative in themselves. The data did not lend itself to Claxton's learning behaviour interpretation for the following reasons: I had not looked in enough depth for positive behaviours or recorded these aspects in sufficient detail at the time. It had been harder to acquire this information with my 'limited' skill base and knowledge at this point in the research. The in-depth nature of the tutoring dialogue data was more limited in comparison to the reflective information gained from the 'educated' adults who followed. It is also possible that at the time of data collection, pupils were still so involved with detrimental and non-conducive contexts that they were not in a position to manifest the categorised behaviours to a sufficient degree. The reflection feedback may have been limited by the immediate learning needs of the participants and requesting it might have been inappropriate in any case, possibly even unethical in that it might have introduced an unacceptable level of pressure and confusion to question too closely. The other analytic chapters used data from professional educationalists or were collected from children by them, in ways which tended to exclude these types of possible negative effects. However, with hindsight and my newfound knowledge, the first Strand might have been approached and recorded differently and perhaps analysed in a similar manner to the other Strands. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 were aimed at developing a discourse around ways of engaging teachers in questioning their practice in terms of their own and their pupils' feelings and how such feelings influence the learning process. As well as Claxton's four positive behavioural learning categories and subcategories, other themes arose from the data and were discussed under appropriate headings; for example: in Chapters 5 and 6, Ecological environments: Childhood, Professional training and Teaching and in Chapter 7, Whole body learning through physical and mental sensations (7.9), Learning through inter-professional engagement (7.10) and Feelings engendered within positively responsive environments (7.11). The analysis was therefore complex and arose from my perceptions of the information yielded by the various data sets in relation to my guiding question: "What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?"

## CHAPTER 4 STRAND 1:

### HOME TUTORING – TWELVE SCHOOL REFUSERS

This chapter should be read with reference to:

**Appendix 1, Inquiry Strand 1 – Home tutoring twelve school refusers** – this contains the following:

1.1 Table 1 – Hours of tuition and data collected & Table 2: Graph of tutoring hours per pupil.

1.2 Cases data files – author’s narrative summaries, work records and critical points: Wayne (1999), Andrew (2000), Russell (2000), Cheryl (2000-2002), Maeve (2001-2002), George (2001), Maria (2001), Anne (2001), Neal (2001), Tracy (2001-2003), Rachel (2002), Tom (2004) \*

#### 4.1 Introduction

In looking for possible answers to the question “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?”, I set out to discover some reasons why school refusers were disaffected with education, and consider their comments and points of view from data gained through home-tutoring them. This aim (This thesis, 3, Section 3.2, Aim 1) gave rise to the collection of data in Inquiry Strand 1 (Appendix – Strand 1). In the process of addressing this question, an appropriate subsidiary question was posed: “Emotional blocks: what do they tell us about the learning process?” I defined these blocks as being barriers to learning, which are ‘apparently’ inexplicable. I had prepared for this research by taking a counselling skills course to improve my skills and inform my work (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). In this chapter I explain the general context of my work with school refusers and the making of an individual pupil narrative in each case. I have used the narratives of two particular individuals to illustrate the process as examples of stories within the group. The chapter then goes on to look into students’ disaffection with and absence from school across the whole group of twelve. It looks at the processes involved and makes an

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\* All names are pseudonyms and personal details fictionalised while maintaining essential stories and dilemmas as revealed to the author.

initial thematic analysis, looking at how students' negative feelings in learning may have arisen and their possible contributory causes. The author's reflections on the analysis follow, in a discussion about how positive feelings and re-engagement with education may be encouraged and a consideration of the findings in relation to feelings in learning. This discussion contributes in turn to a thematic analysis of the four Strands of research in Chapter 8. A general explanation of my ethical approach to this Strand is given at the end of Chapter 3: 3.81 Ethical considerations.

In 1999 I started to explore the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. Over the following five years I home tutored GCSE level school refusers on a weekly basis during school time keeping records of my experiences. This was to some extent a participatory, emancipatory action research project (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Lawthom, 2004 in Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Hawkins, 2006). I have chosen twelve from this group of young people: six boys and six girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. I chose them because they illustrated a variety of apparently representative problems for such a group. I had explained to the education authority placement officer that as part of a research project I was interested in tutoring young people who had refused school. He allocated these students to me under this understanding, rather than those excluded for bad behaviour. Apart from their voluntary non-attendance and some matching of subjects to my own specialisms, the choice was entirely coincidental.

The twelve students in this study came from six different Secondary High Schools in the North West of England and at the time of tutoring were between the ages of 15 and 16 years old. I taught GCSE level art to six of the pupils and GCSE level English to nine of them. I also taught some history, mathematics and science on occasion. Home tutoring gave me a fuller picture of student situations than I might have gained working in school. This practitioner action research gave me some insights into how school culture, policies and attitudes, their own and their families' situations and points of view affect students. (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000; McNiff, 2002; Goodson, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004). For ethical reasons it was necessary to fictionalise their identities, but the relevant educational substance to the research of their various situations has been retained (British Psychological Society, 2006). Individual life experiences and transitions and their possible relevance to learning development are

explored in the process of narrative construction, construed through observations on behaviour and student voice (The Chronosystem model, Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The research was to some degree and on different levels participatory. This is discussed in more detail in the analysis below (Goodley *et al.*, 2004).

#### **4.2 The research context**

The young people in this study had all refused, being either too depressed or unwell to attend school. They lived in ‘underprivileged’ industrial towns in England (This thesis, Chapter 1: 1.9; Lovey, Docking & Evans, 1993; Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools, 1995/6; Searle, 2001; McCormack, 2005; Teachernet, 2005). I taught them in their own homes between 1999 and 2004, for between one and five hours per week. The length of tuition varied from one month to two years. I had already started my research when I began my university course. I was, therefore, able to develop my participative observational action research with pupils by writing and re-drafting in the light of events, through contemporaneous as well as retrospective summarising of cases. The research involved using my existing teaching experience to find ways to teach them, helping them to re-engage with education. At the same time my research involved developing my own skills and knowledge, reading appropriately and developing my descriptive and critical writing skills. As the work proceeded my own learning development, past and current learning difficulties and curiosity about how feelings related to learning gradually became necessary additional factors in my research (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2– Author’s auto-ethnography).

The research context can be seen in some respects to represent a meso and micro system, around and within my own tutoring practice, but within a larger macro system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.2). At times my pupils’ complex situations were confusing. I recorded, albeit with much reflection, what appeared meaningful to me as significant to each pupil’s educational process. In this chapter, two are presented and the others are referred to in the analysis (Appendix – Strand 1). All of the stories themselves should be read in order to gain an understanding of these young people’s various unique situations and difficulties. It became evident in the research that it was the idiosyncratic making of meaning on all kinds of levels, which was important. My participants and I could only do this, by making connections through our past and current experiences, abilities and situations. The process of

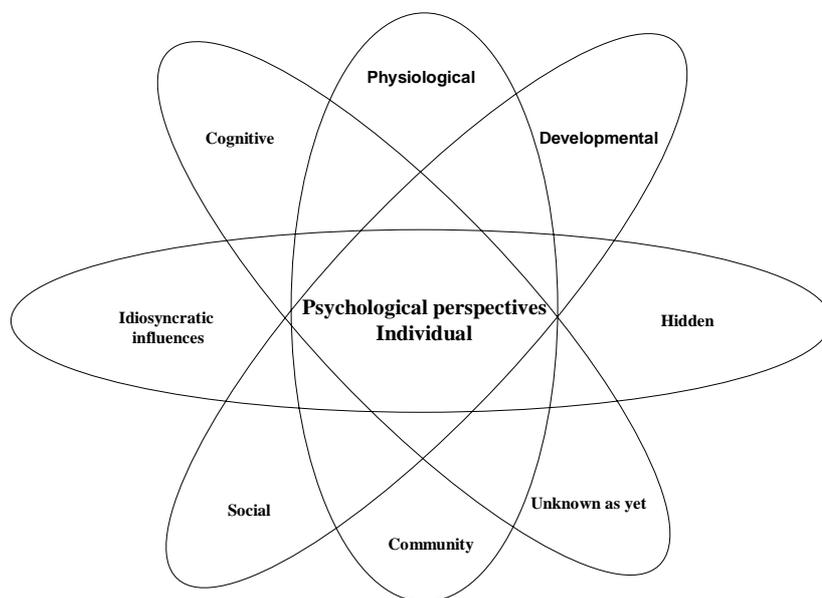
learning was dynamic and it transformed our learning on various levels (Hanko, 1999; Berkowitz, 2000; Claxton, 2002; Wenger *et al.*, 2002). 'Results' could to some extent be evidenced through our achievements, behaviour, judgments and feelings, through retrospective rationalisation in the research. However, the unpredictable interactive complexity of our lives prevented a complete description of every influence.

### **4.3 The research process**

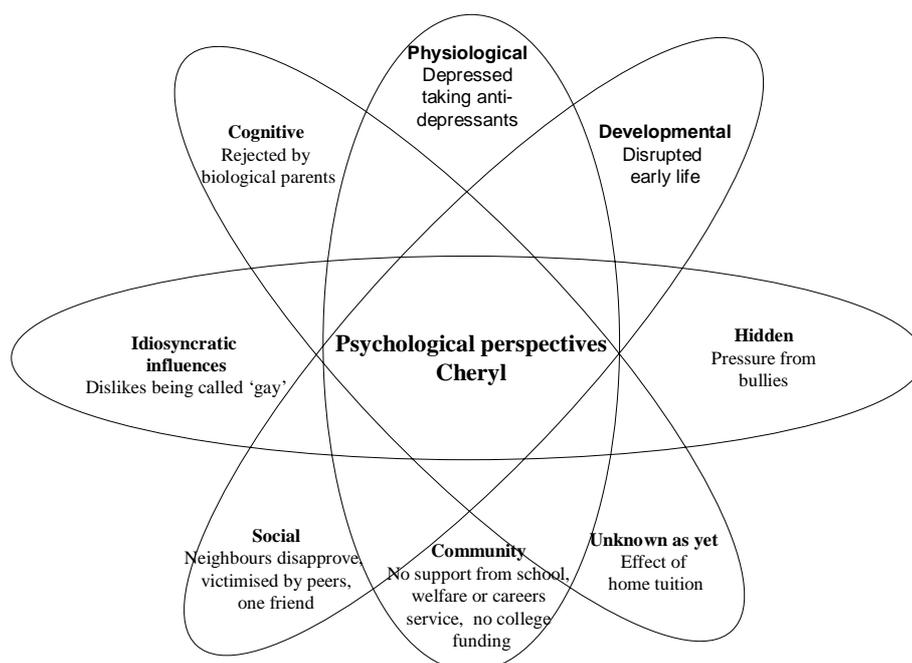
There was an experimental aspect to my teaching and researching approach, because of its deliberately responsive, participatory and interactive nature (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Moore 2004 in Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Hawkins, 2006). I collected different types of contemporaneous narrative data, which contributed to each narrative analysis. These included: teaching notes and observations; pupil work records with teacher and pupil written comments on each lesson; letters and forms from, and reports to, the Local Education Authority; critical points' lists and interactive models (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.3). This data facilitated describing and reflecting upon individuals in narrative analysis (Hollway, & Jefferson, 2000; Whitehead, 2001; Goodson, 2001; Clough, 2002). The student work sheets with teacher and student comments were useful. The participants and I used them, both together and independently, to establish our own goals. There was evidence that this work encouraged reflection by the participants between lessons; for example, when pupils suggested follow up work, or referred to a previous discussion. This mentoring approach to teaching appeared to facilitate subjective thought and independent decision-making (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). To some extent it also gave me access to some of the participants' personal thoughts, opening them up as research data. I recorded and reflected on this data during the teaching period (Craft, 2000a; McNiff, 2002; Goodson, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004).

I examined my assumptions and changing viewpoints, focussing on participants' learning needs with reference to the curriculum. Much of this reflection was implicit within the teaching process, accessible at the time and later in memory, by reference to the work records. The written feeling responses on the work records after each lesson contributed information about each pupil's learning acquisition and meaning making during, between and throughout the whole series of lessons. These were also meant to facilitate and support the participants' learning. They were given copies to

keep. In this way the participatory search for meanings by both pupil and teacher might be facilitated. Sometimes it was possible to evidence this in detail; for example, through the detailed pupil and teacher comments on the work records. On other occasions a general behavioural response over time was meaningful; for example, a student's desire to get back into education. Less concrete conclusions relied on intuitive understanding, which contributed to some extent to the narrative analyses (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, pp. 3-4). These thoughts above gave rise to the 'muddle' models I produced, which showed the environmental influences upon each student of which I was aware using various psychological perspectives. I eventually decided that, as discussed in Chapter 1, these models though useful in developing my thoughts were inadequate for purpose (Section 1.2). The second model below (Table 3) shows my first attempt at filling in such a model, which I initially used to analyse Cheryl's situation. There is a more complex version at the end of her story (Table 5), which follows my first pupil Wayne's narrative (Section 4.2). I include it here to illustrate the problems and inadequacies of such an exercise (though it may be useful as an interim assessment) and to show how my thinking developed.



**Table 2: The 'muddle' model**



**Table 3: The ‘muddle’ model – Cheryl**

#### 4.4 Two examples of the researcher’s analytical narratives

The following two cases are representative examples of the overall context and process of this strand of the research. The first story (Wayne) was chosen as the initial exploratory narrative (having a successful outcome) and provided the necessary motivation to continue the action research process. The second story (Cheryl) was chosen because the attempt was one of my least successful, most personally challenging and frustrating.

##### 4.41 Wayne’s story (taken verbatim from the appendix of data)

Wayne was a pupil who had officially left school and was attending a college of further education\*. I taught him as a volunteer basic skills helper at the college in a two-hour class every week. I was asked to teach him to read. He had joined the college the previous autumn and been to other classes, but his attendance was erratic. The head of department showed me his poor, hardly attempted English and mathematics entry test papers. Wayne was a smartly dressed, sixteen year-old with a quiet and serious manner. When I approached him initially he was frustrated and angry. He said he had just been re-issued with work he had already done twice and

\* Appendix - Strand 1 - 1.1- Tables 1&2 - 1-Hours/Words, 2 - Graph of hours; 1.2 - Cases data file, Wayne

which had not been marked. By adopting a quiet friendly, humorous, calm and matter of fact approach, I gradually overcame his angry and defensive attitude towards me. I sometimes found this quite an effort. I thought his anger might indicate poor treatment by teachers in the past. On the other hand, was this due to his attitude and behaviour? It is hard to meet surliness and resentment and not to take it amiss. In a full class-teaching situation, I would probably have misunderstood him and labelled him as a troublemaker.

Outwardly sophisticated, confident and a little defiant, Wayne turned out to be very nervous and unsure at reading. However, when he relaxed, he read some difficult words well. He had no physical disabilities, was articulate and intelligent, yet his reading was extremely variable and inconsistent with a steady build up of competence. He chose a very suitable level of reading material when not under pressure and could recognise work done previously. These clues indicated to me that he could read at some level. He seemed to have some kind of emotional block to learning. I chose a reading book about a lonely teenage boy, which he engaged with and worked on for several weeks. About the middle of the next term, Wayne started to stop attending his other classes. I considered whether my own approach might be at fault, but it seems likely in retrospect that the college environment was not meeting his needs. We found the classroom printer did not work, since it was old and un-serviced and we could not print off his summary of his reading book. In an effort to overcome this, I arranged to meet him in the library to continue one to one language tuition on the computer. When we arrived in the busy library a computer was unavailable, even though I had pre-booked and explained the situation. The librarian was not discreet and when we eventually got a computer, Wayne was self-conscious and embarrassed in the large room full of students and staff. Later he rang to ask if I would consider giving him lessons at home.

It is difficult to imagine how he saw me at this point. Looking back I guess that he was desperate to placate his parents, who it transpired had been paying him to go to college. I agreed to teach him at home guessing that he was likely to leave anyway. I hoped that if he gained confidence, he might return. This eventually turned out to be the case. Over the next term I worked with him on an unpaid basis on his own computer for about an hour a week, with the stipulation that a parent was in the house. The house was large, detached and in an affluent area, but being newly established was lacking in cultural and social networks. My cheerful, accepting approach and methods for teaching reading seemed to work and he started to enjoy reading. A significant moment occurred when he turned to me and said, "I can't believe I just read that!" He started a weekend job in a shop and we studied the words for items for sale so that he could read them. After working with him for about six months, he rang me out of the blue. He was very upset. He begged me to come to the college to explain his problems. He felt sick and faint at the thought of sitting the basic tests again, which were required to get on a vocational course and he just 'couldn't do it'. This surprise phone call meant that I had to do some mental readjustment of my own. I had not known he was interested in the vocational course, but I took his cry for help seriously. I went to the college with him and met the admissions tutor. The tutor seemed unable to understand that Wayne had a genuine emotional difficulty. He was smiling and dismissive, saying if Wayne would just take the test, he was sure he would be fine.

I explained that Wayne had a long-standing reading problem. He could not face the test and had developed a fear of scholastic environments and exams due to his previous bad experiences in school. All of this was very much guess work. At this point I had no knowledge of his school career. I explained that Wayne knew he would fail the tests, because this had happened the previous year. Eventually after using a lot of persuasion, I was able to get him on the vocational course on a trial basis without having to take the tests again. This act of support on my part then led on to Wayne's revelations in the counselling session which followed and showed my guesswork about school to be generally correct. I had started a counselling skills course the previous term. As part of this course we were asked to transcribe ten minutes of a 'counselling' session. I asked Wayne's father if I could counsel Wayne for an hour before he started back to college. I explained about my course and the need for taped data for my work. He readily agreed saying that he thought it might help Wayne. He gave me a sheaf of Wayne's old school reports when he brought him to see me. Wayne was bursting to talk and over the space of an hour and a half he told me many of the reasons for his learning problems. He had suffered a serious illness (whooping cough) as a toddler, spending a long time in hospital and missing the first stages of reading. (His father confirmed this saying he had been ill for over a year and they had not wanted to bother him with reading.) Coincidentally, I could appreciate the seriousness of this illness because I had suffered with it myself at the age of four.

Assessed as dyslexic at the age of nine and stated by a psychologist, this history of illness had been overlooked and at secondary school he was given no extra help. Later when I read Wayne's reports with pupil feedback sections, I saw that all through secondary school he had requested help, often asking friends to fill in the forms for him. In his early teens he began to refuse to go, locking himself in the bathroom, truanting repeatedly (unknown to his parents) and shoplifting in a nearby city, when they thought he was in school. At fourteen his parents had appealed to social services for help, threatening him with going into care because they did not know what to do. He admitted he had shown off to the other pupils and sworn at the 'poor teachers.' It must have been difficult for them, he now realised. Wayne was profoundly sorry for his behaviour and appeared to be apologising to me. I felt that he saw me as a representative for those teachers and I realised he was very close to tears. He understood why the headmaster allowed him to leave before the due date because he was so disruptive. He had hardly attended the final year.

I pointed out his attitude at the time, though I did not condone it, was understandable given his probable point of view, because his need for help was being ignored. He had probably felt angry, embarrassed, ashamed, humiliated and bored because of his inability to read and write. For a variety of reasons his parents and most of his teachers had not helped him. He readily agreed with this assessment, though unable to explain it in those terms himself:

*I just got frustrated at school...and I couldn't go in 'cos I just used to sit there and have all these books thrown at me... I used to have a special needs class I went to. I used to do loads of art and sit in there for an hour, but when I went to the other school I got held up...Dad noticed it and said like to my teacher, "He's not learning properly!" And my teacher said, "Yes, he can do it! He's just not trying!"*

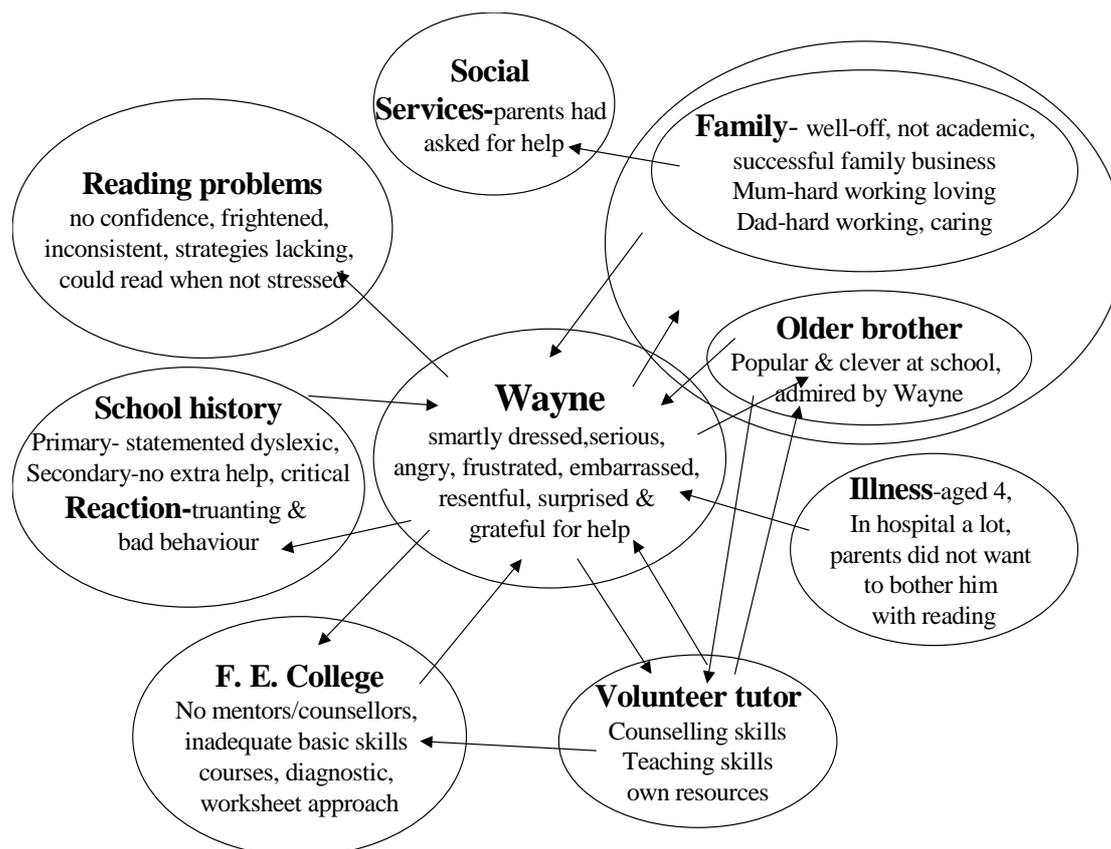
Wayne

It seems likely that he had needed to express his feelings of shame, offloading his story and receiving some understanding and forgiveness before he could put his bad experiences behind him.

Wayne had been upset that he could not read and probably bored in some lessons. He felt marginalized and excluded within school and responded logically by behaving badly and then refusing to go. Looking back on Wayne's story, it seems to me that my assessment of the subconscious logic behind his angry feelings was, as far as it goes, generally correct. This story provides evidence of some kind of learning and thinking process within him being resolved on an emotional level, enabling further learning. He no longer felt condemned as an unworthy, inherently bad person because another person (significantly a teacher) had supported him. The fact that I believed his behaviour was logical and valid for him, even when I didn't understand it in the early stages of our relationship, appears to have helped raise his self-esteem and enabled him to move on. Although I was eventually able to explain and to some extent excuse his behaviour, it appeared to be the positive regard and practical help I had given, which counted most. His history, environment and perceptions had influenced his behaviour at school. He was not *entirely* responsible for everything that had happened to him. It is evident that his original problems had been caused by ill health, but these were exacerbated by inappropriate educational provision throughout his school career.

I would have had great difficulty as an ordinary teacher in responding to Wayne's needs within the routine curriculum of my state school. He would probably have been embarrassed and unhappy to be placed in a special unit. He was of 'normal' or even 'high' intelligence and appeared to have been behind due to developmental and emotional problems. It is evident to me that he needed a more rounded, engaging and practically based curriculum, which allowed for 'non-academic' learning and skill acquisition and the building of self worth and confidence as part of a 'normal' curriculum (Claxton, 2002; Gilbert, 2002). This might involve multi-modal learning such as imaginative expression and creative learning in academic subjects (See this thesis, chapter 7), developing interpersonal skills e.g. role-play through drama, community involvement projects and a practical and/or career skills based technical education. He also needed the enjoyable and patient one-to-one reading he had missed as a toddler. This last point would have been better addressed earlier at foundation and primary level, with some practical advice to his parents.

Postscript: A few weeks later he rang me in a state of excitement. Everything was working out brilliantly and he wanted to thank me for my help. He was enjoying the vocational course and working part-time in his parents' business. He had written a homework assignment for college about himself with his parents' help and had written about how I had helped him. I was sorry in some ways to see him go, just as we were progressing so well with his reading, but I made a conscious decision to accept that this was his choice. I understood that after all his bad experiences he did not want to develop his academic education further in the conventional sense. I was pleased that he had the confidence to get on with his life. I have not seen him again.



**Table 4: Model of influences in Wayne's learning environment**

#### 4.42 Cheryl's story (taken verbatim from the appendix of data)

When I started working with Cheryl, she had been at her second secondary school for one term before being off with 'depression.'<sup>\*</sup> She had missed nearly a full term before getting home tuition. I spoke to her Head of Faculty and Deputy Head. Some girls had bullied her and accused her of being a 'lesbian', saying she had behaved 'inappropriately' towards another girl in the town's swimming club. The other girls had said they were upset by her behaviour. This charge was not investigated. She was moved from her previous school, because she was being bullied. Cheryl had had 'no problems' at her new school until another girl found out the story. The two teachers did not understand why being called 'lesbian' should upset her so much. She could have shrugged her shoulders and ignored it. They did not believe she had been seriously bullied. They seemed offended that she had rejected their school. The deputy had visited Cheryl at home and told her she had punished the bully by making her write a letter of apology. She could do no more for Cheryl if she refused to be reasonable and return to school. They were sorry the welfare officer had not delivered the letter to Cheryl, but it was not their fault. They had done their very best for her and she was being unreasonable. The head of year believed Cheryl's father should send her to a school outside the town where she was unknown. However, no effort appeared to be being made to find her an alternative state school elsewhere. Work had been set and Cheryl had not done all of it, which proved her unwillingness to cooperate.

<sup>\*</sup> Appendix - Strand 1 - 1.1-Tables 1&2 - 1-Hours/Words, 2-Graph of hours; 1.2-Cases data file, Cheryl

Cheryl aged 15 and her younger brother Mark lived with their adoptive parents in an immaculately kept semi-detached house. Their parents had been together over twenty-five years and had grown up children who had left home. The two children had been left with them, by a male relative for brief periods as babies and toddlers, because he could not cope, until eventually they adopted them officially. Cheryl's adoptive mother thought it likely that her real parents' past rejection was causing Cheryl's depression. Her adoptive mother also admitted to spoiling Cheryl (possibly because she had lost a young daughter through illness in her youth). She and her husband had had poverty stricken, deprived childhoods with low school attendance themselves. They wanted to give the children a better start than they had had themselves, but they had little experience of education. Hence they had bought and continued to pay for computer equipment, an Internet connection and a laptop they could not use themselves. Cheryl had her own bedroom, computer and designer brand clothes.

Her birth father had applied for custody of Cheryl and her brother when Cheryl was 11, but it was not given because of his poor parenting record and the fact that he had other children to care for. Her adoptive mother thought Cheryl had not known she was adopted until this custody battle occurred. It seems probable to me, however, that Cheryl was aware of her change of circumstances on some level as a toddler. Cheryl's mother volunteered family information to me before and after lessons. Cheryl had had a normal school career before her depressive illness. She was now on antidepressants, but often cancelled her counselling sessions through the doctor. Most of her time was spent in bed. She was a serious, quiet girl, who responded with minimum communication to my questions. Her demeanour was inoffensive and pleasant. Cheryl proved to be polite, co-operative and intelligent in lessons, she thought carefully about her work. She rarely made any written comment other than "*O.K. Cheryl*" on her work record. The most positive comments were "*Enjoyed the lesson*" and "*Thank you.*"

I did a lot of work with her over eighteen months, though she would cancel when depressed. Sometimes she found it difficult to concentrate, but she tried hard. She hoped to do some GCSEs. She appeared to have the ability to do well. During the home tutor period I often called at school to ask for work and asked to talk to teachers, twice talking to the Head of Year. I gave him a note to display in the staff room explaining Cheryl's case and thanking staff for any help. He said this was a good idea, as most of them did not know her. After this I tried regularly to communicate with him through a secretary. I handed in a considerable amount of Maths, English and History never commented on, marked or returned, though I kept calling for it. Fortunately I had photocopied it. The secretary explained that the school had many staff off ill. By the end of year 10 Cheryl had progressed in her work, grasping meaning, expressing important points and bettering my suggestions. She had a good grasp of historical issues and basic maths. However, she finished the term in a low mood.

I wrote to school asking them to refer Cheryl to the new learning mentor, giving her a flexible timetable for the next school year. I recommended counselling during the holiday. I copied this letter to all the agencies involved. I asked the careers' officer to call and show her possible future options, including a special course for fifteen year olds at a college next door to her home. Disappointingly no response was made to either request even though I sent a report to the education office. The welfare officer

never got in touch with Cheryl or me although I repeatedly rang him. I informed my placement officer by phone and report. No action was taken by any of the people I contacted. I found all of this affected me emotionally, making me feel frustrated and depressed myself. I struggled and hopefully succeeded to some extent to keep a cheerful, supportive attitude. However, having to explain and to some extent justify my colleagues' lack of response to my pupil and her parents was difficult for me. Over that summer her parents became worried when a policeman brought her home in the early hours. A neighbour said she had stood on the sidelines of a group who were misbehaving in the street and he blamed her parents for letting her out. Her parents threatened her with going into care if she did not behave.

My contact with Cheryl over the following autumn term was minimal. She had two serious accidents while mixing with a group of girls and boys outside her house: one when a stone permanently damaged one eye and another when her arm was broken playing a game. She denied that either accident involved bullying. Cheryl was getting to know her peer group and making friends, but her father was worried about the crowd she was mixing with. Her eye was damaged when she was out with a group who were throwing stones at passing cars. I contacted the local youth service about help or activities, but no action was taken. I visited a local youth counselling scheme and gave her father contact information. I took her to the college next door and spoke to the tutor who ran a course for excluded fifteen year olds. Just before Christmas, Cheryl was feeling better and wanted to go with a friend to college on the special course. She went on her own initiative to see the tutor and was told there was a place for her if funding was available. She did not want any more home tutoring as lack of support from school meant she could not now enter any exams.

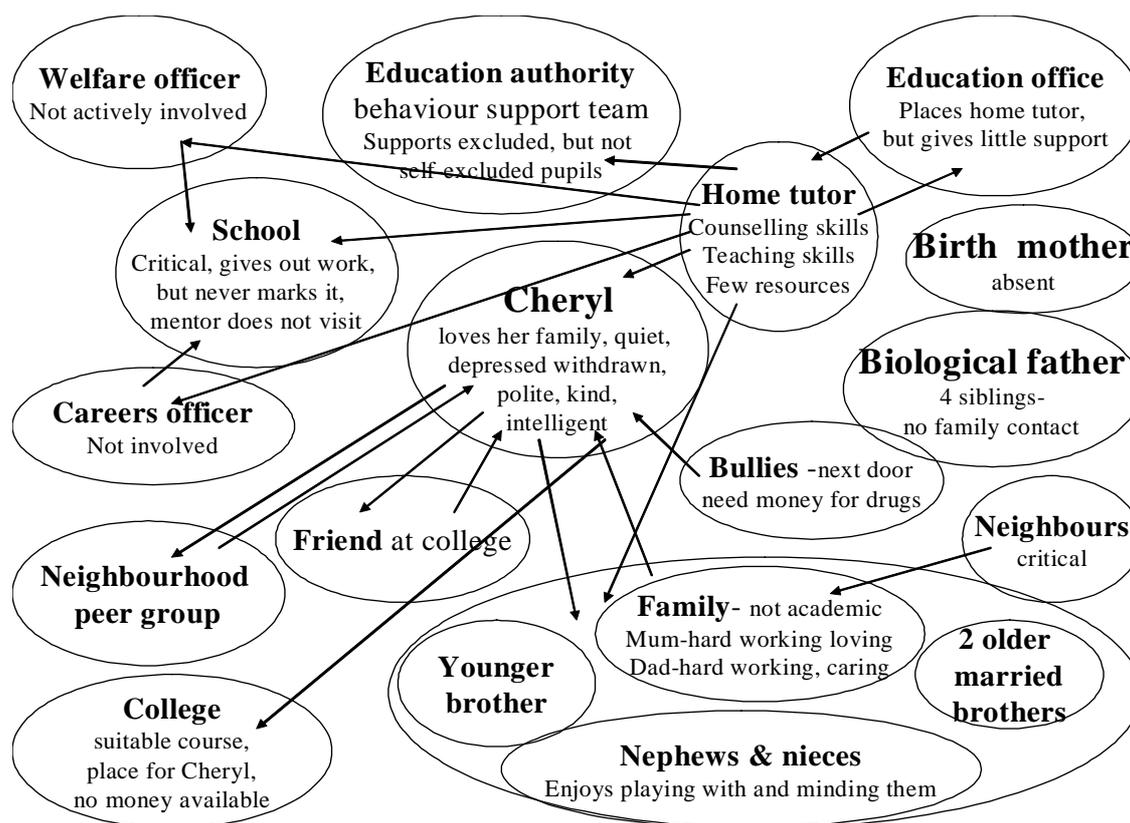
I was delighted that Cheryl had decided to go to college. Her father and I both rang the Behaviour Support Team officer, who places students, but were told that because school had received her money allocation, it could not be reallocated half way through the academic year to college and she would be unable to go. Cheryl had not been disruptive at school so did not qualify! This person apparently also told Cheryl's father that bullying in the college was much worse than at school implying that she would be unhappy there. This seems to me unprofessional as well as uncaring. I wrote a report explaining that although Cheryl appreciated my help, she had decided to go to college and no longer wanted my services. I copied it to all those official bodies involved in her case. I hoped by this to force someone, who might be in a position to do something for her, to take action but again there was absolutely no response! At this point, I am sorry to say, I stopped teaching her.

I found myself running out of the practical and emotional resources to continue helping Cheryl. I no longer had any schoolwork that would be helpful or relevant to her, especially as the appropriate subject teachers at school had not marked her work. During the previous eighteen months I had received no teaching support other than very minimal work handed out. The two subjects she liked were Maths and History, which I was unable to teach at GCSE level without guidance. I doubted very much if she would be willing to continue and, therefore I did not persevere. I felt angry, upset and frustrated by the lack of support for Cheryl and me when I felt we had achieved so much. It seemed unfair that the school had benefited from money for Cheryl's education, but provided so little support.

Although Cheryl appeared to be in a caring, stable and comfortable home where she was well provided for, it could not protect her from her neighbourhood, which was experiencing the effects of drug taking and vandalism and where she was probably experiencing intimidation, jealousy, blackmail and physical violence. Evidence for this is that her drug taking 'friend' of nineteen who lived next-door kept asking for money. At one point this person's mother returned Cheryl's laptop, which she found under her younger daughter's bed. The older girl next door was hardly mentioned except as someone who had asked Cheryl for money and who she had been told to avoid. Her parents did not appear to realise what was happening. It seems likely that she was in fact the architect of Cheryl's problems.

Cheryl kept incurring physical injury through 'accidents' while out with her 'friends'. It seems to me now that Cheryl simply had nowhere to turn. Her behaviour of giving up and staying at home in bed seems to me entirely logical for a person in her situation. She had a comfortable home with a well meaning, loving but uneducated immediate family, but she faced a hostile world outside. Cheryl's lack of confidence was also not surprising in view of her history of being given away by her original parents. She may have wondered at a young age what was wrong with her and why she had a different background to her classmates. Cheryl's main problem seems to have been that she was being straightforwardly and brutally intimidated and she was too frightened to talk about it. I saw no sign of the defiance, laziness and oddness implied by the school's treatment of her. Even when depressed, Cheryl was not aggressive or moody. She went with and supported her father who had to be persuaded to go to hospital and babysat her younger brother and small cousins. To me she still appeared a gentle and likeable person when I stopped teaching her.

Postscript: Cheryl's mother continued to ring me to chat for six months after I stopped teaching her. Cheryl eventually secured a place at the college on a post sixteen course for the following September. Meanwhile she got into trouble with the police, being prosecuted by another girl for assault. It seems that she decided to take her father's advice and 'fight back.' She did this by going with several friends round to her neighbour's house to confront the girl who had 'borrowed' her laptop. This person was the younger sister of her original persecutor who was, apparently now in prison for drug dealing. I met Cheryl's mother in 2006 and she told me that Cheryl was still at home and unemployed.



**Table 5 – Model of influences in Cheryl’s learning environment**

#### 4.5 Introduction to the analysis

The two stories above are representative of the equally complex narratives in the Appendix to this study. They form the preliminary analysis to this research and are strongly recommended to the reader for a full appreciation of the situations these young people faced. The data within these narratives suggests it is impossible, pointless and inappropriate to attempt to analyse the causes of physical and emotional blocks to learning without some reference to a person’s possible point of view, history and the context at the time of the study (Niedenthal & Halberstadt, 2000; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.7). Emotions appear to be, in effect, expressions of thought within a particular person within a particular set of conditions. Without some understanding of the person’s point of view and of the situation from which they arise, they are incomprehensible. Emotions and their resulting behaviours exist in unique and often very complicated ways, within contexts. They appear to be a dynamic part of the thinking process. The impact of a person’s personal history, with resulting subconscious constructs and perceptions is huge. The quote below appears to support

this idea that emotional blocks to learning are present in learners and are indeed barriers to learning. Vygotsky cites Lewin's work:

*Lewin demonstrated how one emotional state is transformed into another, how one emotional experience is substituted for another, and how an unresolved and uncompleted emotion may continue to exist in covert form.* (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in Rieber & Carton (eds.) 1987, p. 336)

Although 'emotional blocks' are 'apparently' inexplicable, they can be accessed by various means through feedback and may be overcome (Kelly, 1955; Elster, 1999, p. 408; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.12; Bennett-Goleman, 2001). It seems probable that this might sometimes be done by experiencing new challenges in 'moving on' and may not necessarily require conscious analysis of past problems by the learner. In general teachers may need to understand, even without knowing everything, that these phenomena may be present and offer the learner support in their resolution if appropriate. Providing contexts for new 'affective' learning also offers a way to do this as shown later in Strand 4; for example, those pupils with behaviour problems, who responded to the new experiences given to them in dance and drama workshops in Strand 4 (See this thesis, Chapter 7). There were complex combinations of individual factors affecting the students' possible subconscious and conscious points of view in refusing to attend school. I found these viewpoints were, in every case, to some degree understandable, even from my 'teacher's' perspective.

It seems likely that students' feelings or responses to some learning situations, though they seem inappropriate to others, are produced by thinking processes, which are logical in their own terms, though they may or may not be able to be expressed in words. Further it is evident that some feelings may be as much a puzzle to the student as to the teacher and, as a result, false explanations are often accepted from outside and within. This places responsibility on teachers and parents not to label children and not to give them misplaced concepts about themselves. This can be done, by respecting children's feelings, individuality and their right to grow change and evolve as personalities. It is simply not true that because a person behaves in particular ways on several occasions, they are condemned to a lifetime of similar behaviour, though many adults judge children in this way. Accepting and acknowledging a child's feelings and arguments, though we may not agree with them, may actually help to develop their intelligence, as well as lead to a happier and better-integrated

personality (Hendrix & Hunt, 1997). My research found that each pupil had a unique individual personality, history and experience and responded differently to their situations. It was possible to identify some similar themes across these school refuser stories. Environmental issues seemed particularly relevant affecting their feelings about academic and statutory learning. These issues are discussed below and reveal a range of educationally non-conducive environments both at home and at school (Orne, 1962; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968; Wimmer *et al.*, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). They illustrate the importance of feelings in learning as discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

#### **4.51 Embarrassment, depression and low self-esteem**

Most of the students suffered low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Some tended to blame themselves; their demeanour was subdued and embarrassed. They did not know why they could not go to school, something was wrong and they just could not bear to go. None of them excused their behaviour, and most gave the impression that they regretted not being at school. Those who gave explanations of being bullied tended to feel that they were at fault in not being able to ignore this as they presumed other people did. George was a notable exception, being quite confident in his assertion that he was being bullied and that this made going to school impossible. Those who were ill tended to feel that they were in some way to blame for their conditions and should be able to ignore them. During the time of my observations of them none of the students criticised or hated school in an overt way or appeared pleased to have escaped school by their actions, although I did not ask them directly. Maria and Tracy were different in that they said they definitely felt uncomfortable and unhappy in school, but they could not explain why and appeared genuinely puzzled and worried by these feelings (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: George, Maria, Tracy).

The facility to comment after lessons built self-esteem by showing that I respected pupils' feelings and opinions whether expressed grammatically or not. This is demonstrated by the following comments: Andrew expressed some of his feelings as follows: *"I am surprised at how much I have learnt in class. I am pleased with the lesson"*; *"Very tired and finding the book difficult to grasp"*; *"Can't wait to begin work really looking forward to it"*; *"I'm very tired and not really in the mood for concentrating really hard"*; *"Revision is on its way and it's very pleasing to know it"*

and finally *“Everything is going OK! – Confident about exams”*. Maria was another very expressive pupil: *“Enjoyed it Mathematics again. I have gotten up to page 18 but I want to try something else next time”*; *“Worked really hard today and I started my actual essay and have earned a rest”*; *“I have gotten to know myself better and started Macbeth”* and *“Well chuffed. Finished my story”* (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Andrew, Maria).

My specialist subjects of visual art and English provided me with contexts and creative approaches, which appeared to me to be therapeutic for pupils. For example I persuaded Russell to take an art exam he had been avoiding and he drew a watch given him by his absent father. Passing the art exam helped him to get on a hairdressing course, which turned his life around. Anne’s love of drawing and cartoons was the only way I could make any headway with her educationally. She was living a very ‘alternative’ life style in a run down inner city pub. Anne was not forthcoming: *“Had a talk. It was all right”*; *“Done Art enjoyed it”* and *“Quite hard at first but it turned out OK”*. In looking at English literature, I explored a range of human emotions with pupils; for example, Maria became very involved in the emotions at play in *Macbeth* and Andrew in *The Crucible*. Tom wrote a long piece of creative writing, which dealt with his issues about having had a terminally ill parent, without referring directly to himself. This open, ‘creative’ questioning approach could be taken into other subjects such as history, mathematics and science. For example, I had a discussion with Cheryl (who was suffering from bullying) about the bullying of ethnic minorities in history. Finally Rachel’s (who suffered from Myalgic Encephalopathy – M.E.) touching thank you illustrates the value of this type of work and how wrong her school had been to have viewed her as a deviant and unmotivated pupil: *“Got to know Jenny well over the past few weeks and am sad to see her go. I am going to keep in touch and send her the complete version of my autobiography for her study”* (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Russell, Anne, Maria, Tom, Cheryl, Rachel).

#### **4.52 Young people’s confusion and parenting problems**

It was evident that all of the students had one or more caring parents at the time of teaching. Five students had a parent or parents who told me voluntarily that they

suffered serious deprivation themselves in childhood (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Russell, Cheryl, Maeve, George and Maria). Russell and Maria lived mainly with a parent, who had been raised by grandparents. Maeve’s father had had the same experience. These great grandparents were now unable to help as they had either died or were too old to continue helping the family. It seems reasonable to suppose that the parents’ lack of direct parental support and close parent role models might have affected some of their own parenting skills. It is possible that they were still suffering with their own emotional problems especially as they seemed relieved and keen to talk about them. None of these parents said they had had counselling (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 –Cases data file: Russell, Maeve, George, Maria).

Some of these parents may have associated parenting with inadequacy, conflict and emotional neglect and, although they evidently loved their children, may not always have been able to provide consistent positive regard, differentiation of feelings between themselves and their children and a stable emotional environment (Laing, 1956, 1961, 1965, 1967; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Donaldson, 1987; Hendrix & Hunt, 1997). Some un-intrusive, sensitive family therapy might have raised awareness and helped some of them to resolve their emotional problems to the benefit of themselves and their children. Some kind of non-judgmental, enjoyable family educational activity programme might have helped to improve the families’ mental health and wellbeing such as the Sure Start programme for younger children now operating. This kind of provision for older pupils was certainly not impacting on these teenagers at the time of the research\*. This type of programme is now starting to be implemented by the government through various agencies including ‘extended schools’:

*Building on the experiences of those schools already delivering extended services, the Government have set out a core offer of extended services that they*

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\* Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006 *Common Assessment Framework*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007a *Parent Support Advisory Service*; Sure Start, 2007 *Extended schools*; Training and Development Agency for Schools (2006-2008) *Remodelling and extended schools*; *Share 2008 A fun programme that encourages parents/carers, children, teachers, managers, facilitators to all work together*

*want all children to be able to access through schools by 2010. (Every child matters – Department for Education and Skills, 2006a)*

In looking at parental deprivation in parents' own childhoods, one should not jump to simplistic conclusions. For example, the most seriously abused parent in childhood, who told me he was raped by a relative as a thirteen-year-old, appeared well balanced, sympathetic and caring towards his children. He was a hard working, loving father, who had coped amazingly with all the problems, illnesses and disasters of his large extended family. His house and garden were beautifully kept; he helped everybody and was a neighbourhood resource. Although his abused childhood and deprivation had resulted in his educational knowledge being minimal, he was keen for his children to succeed academically. (This indicates the level of information and disclosure shared with me in domestic settings).

I did not find any evidence of current abuse by parents at the time of teaching apart from occasional emotional neglect due to a preoccupation with their own problems. In some cases absent parents, who I hardly or never met, may have had emotional and/or psychological problems. In one or two cases, from information from other family members, this seemed to me quite likely. Four parents I got to know through regular contact appeared to have emotional problems, but without serious mental health difficulties. Unfortunately, if these problems became active during a period or moment when the student needed support or guidance, they were likely to have a lasting and detrimental effect. For Russell, his stepmother was too taken up with her new marriage, husband and pregnancy to give him time to take his exams before moving house. This, apart from the damage done to his feeling of self-worth could have had long term effects on his future education and job prospects. In the case of Maria, her mother gave conflicting and emotional responses to her involvement with a boyfriend. For Maeve, her father's resentment and her mother, who unpredictably spoiled, disparaged and ignored her, would have doubtless had a damaging effect on her (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Russell's father, Maria's father, Maeve's father and mother).

My advice was sometimes sought by parents as they got to know me. In this informal 'work' during incidental domestic contact I used a counselling skills approach,

encouraging parents to work out their own solutions. This seemed to work to some extent, when parents opened up to me about their difficulties. I listened and responded in a non-judgemental way as they talked about some of the family problems. For example, Maeve's mother and Cheryl's father both admitted to spoiling their daughters in some respects (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.1 – Cases data file: Maeve, Cheryl). In Maeve's case her mother acknowledged, through some prompting from me, that she had sometimes imposed her own ambitions and feelings upon her daughter. It seemed to me, though I did not explain it to her in these terms, that this might have reduced Maeve's sense of autonomy and feeling of self-worth. Her mother's compulsion to spoil her may have been alienating to Maeve's father and brothers, causing family problems. Together with being esteemed, disapproved of and spoiled excessively, this possibly placed Maeve in a 'double bind' situation (Laing, 1965). It was even possible that this had caused some kind of ontological crisis in identity, confidence and self-esteem causing her psychological and behavioural problems, displayed through refusing to go out, violent temper tantrums and disengagement with school. Even if not the cause her mother's negative treatment of her may not have been helping Maeve. Some kind of non-judgmental, low-key family therapy or professional counselling might have been beneficial to support the family in breaking out of the apparent 'impasse' in their relationships (Laing, 1956, 1961; Laing & Esterson, 1968). However, I was not qualified either to diagnose or intervene in this situation, which was beyond my professional brief.

Cheryl's father told me he spoiled her, but was able to change his behaviour to some extent and gain more respect from her by voicing his concerns, working things out himself and seeking my verbal support for his actions. Again I gave no specific advice, but he stopped trying to tempt her with 'fast' food from local take-away outlets, when she refused to eat, was tougher with her about doing her lessons and less indulgent in giving her money and buying her designer label clothes. He could not, however, resist buying her a laptop, even though she already had a computer. Although this sort of parental support showed he cared for her, it made her more of a target to her bullies. Apparently Cheryl's confusion, fear and desperation made her unable to communicate the full extent of the victimisation she was facing. Her parents seemed not to realise the seriousness of her problems and were in any case not easily

able to help her. All of this seems likely to have had a detrimental effect on her readiness to engage in learning.

At the time of the research two parents were being treated for mental health difficulties. Anne's father told me he had been diagnosed with a bi-polar disorder. He was also a single parent running a pub, a difficult occupation in any case to combine with parenting. In George's case, his parents' inability to provide a comfortable, stable home prevented their son from leading a normal social life. His unemployed father's obsessive preoccupation with talking about himself and George's unemployed mother's alcohol problem meant that George would probably not have wanted friends to visit his home. George's father explained that his own father had been diagnosed as having schizophrenia and that he himself was under treatment for mental health difficulties. He continually failed to acknowledge that George was a young adult and persisted in treating him as a young child. In the cases of Anne and George, parental mental health difficulties had caused and to some extent, in George's case were still causing, a total breakdown of normal life, when their fathers were seriously disturbed. However, due to his own experiences in recovery, Anne's father was able to be understanding and be supportive of her mental health difficulties (Appendix 1 – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: George, Anne).

#### **4.53 Fear and bullying**

All of the students lived in neighbourhoods, some in 'respectable' ones where vandalism, drugs and petty crime existed amongst their peer group. This affected four of them in particular (Appendix 1 – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Wayne, Cheryl, George, Anne). The cultural aspects of some neighbourhoods were probably influential in setting non-educational priorities by custom, practice and default. It is worth noting that this applied to affluent housing areas as well as traditionally, historically working class council housing. These could be equally isolated from cultural and social institutions, shops and schools (in the cases of Maeve, George, Rachel, Wayne and Russell). Most of the students had one or both parents in employment and although several were short of money, none appeared to be living in very severe poverty apart from George. The action of refusing school seemed to exacerbate a bullying attitude from some peers and cause hostility and condemnation from some neighbours. Resentment, frustration and inadequacy were evident in the

responses of some schools and agencies. There was a sense of hopelessness amongst some professionals and the feeling that if pupils had removed themselves from the system, they had no entitlement to help. This meant that those professionals who did care were themselves given little support, which contributed to the apparent general atmosphere of punishment and indifference, which perhaps understandably tended to increase refusers' depression.

#### **4.54 Shock, trauma, sadness, hurt and bereavement**

After the end of one boy's tutoring period, when I called in to ask after him, he revealed to me another more serious reason for his problems. A man in his extended family had sexually assaulted him at the age of seven. This had caused him depression, problems with relationships with the opposite sex and had caused him to 'drown his sorrows' with alcohol on occasions. He had been to a psychologist earlier in his teens, because of his depression and absence from school, and had been helped when he revealed the abuse. The psychologist had recommended he told his parents, but he had been afraid to tell his father in case he should attack and kill the culprit, which he was sure he would. He had, therefore, decided to try to cope with his problems on his own. Although he found it hard when he met his attacker at family events, he no longer felt threatened by him. I pointed out that this left him at liberty to strike again, but he was too scared of the consequences for his father and family to do anything about it. He was a very intelligent boy of sixteen. He said he had recently told his mother, who seemed to me a concerned person (and presumably knew the man in question). His mother agreed that his father should not be told.

The ethical problems and conflicts were difficult to resolve. My reporting his experience to the authorities even so late after the event would undoubtedly have caused him distress, increasing his suffering. I had not been told until the period of tuition had finished and it might have been unethical to do so without his consent. I realised that he and his mother were unlikely to give the man's name and might deny what he had told me. There was no guarantee of his willingness to be a witness and the fact that I could not substantiate his story forced me, in any case, to respect his confidence. It seemed to me that the psychologist should have reported it, but perhaps his experience had made him decide it was not appropriate. Somehow I felt this did not exonerate my own decision. In the end I decided all I could do was tell him, with

the hope that he will eventually find enough courage to be a witness that it would be understandable if he has to go for counselling in the future. It is shocking to realise how long he carried this burden on his own. He bravely gave permission to use this information anonymously in my research in order that teachers should understand that such things might have happened to their pupils.

Cheryl had gone through a trauma in early childhood when her mother and father could not look after her properly due to substance abuse and changing partners. She did not mention her biological mother or father to me (they were apparently hardly talked of). However, due to her adoptive parents love and care, she seemed to me quite well adjusted and did not show any rebellious behaviour or visible personality problems. She did seem to lack confidence in some respects, but this was easily explained by her situation as the victim of violent and emotionally abusive bullies. Rachel had also experienced trauma through the severe pains and fatigue of her illness and the fact that she was not generally believed, except by her family. Russell and Andrew had experienced the loneliness and depression of surviving a suicide attempt and the difficulties of embarrassment, recrimination and explanation, which followed. At the young age of thirteen, Anne had witnessed her mother's heart attack and death. Tom had lost his father to cancer (Appendix – Strand 1– 1.2 – Cases data file: Cheryl, Rachel, Russell, Andrew, Anne, Tom).

#### **4.55 Weakness due to illness**

Health issues had affected two thirds of the pupils. Three of the students were affected by different debilitating, chronic illnesses, which were not immediately evident to others (namely Anne, Neal and Rachel). One student's reading development had been badly affected by illness in early childhood with serious long-term consequences (Wayne). Two students were recovering after attempting suicide and experiencing depression (Andrew and Russell) and two students were taking prescribed antidepressants for depression (Russell and Cheryl). Tracy had had a collarbone broken in primary school in some kind of physical encounter with another pupil, which had affected her attitude to school. Cheryl suffered an eye injury, which would become a permanent disability and a broken arm during the period in which I taught her (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Cases data file: Anne, Neal, Rachel, Wayne, Andrew, Russell, Cheryl, Tracy).

#### 4.6 Reflections on analysis

In my dual role as teacher and researcher, I reflected between lessons, looking back on the data produced over the tutoring period. My conclusions were made indirectly by observation and directly from verbal or written feedback. Professional observation was necessary. There were several reasons why direct questioning might be inappropriate for participants. Direct questions might become leading ones, which might negate the research. Inappropriate probing might subvert the effects of 'positive regard' teaching (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). Participants were, in any case, frequently unable to understand and express their problems perhaps due to emotional confusion (understandable considering their situations), immaturity and poor communication skills. These reasons can be seen as justification for the mentoring approach in helping young people to overcome their problems, but it also appears an effective approach in teaching. This may raise questions about how and if authenticity can be guaranteed in the research. Fortunately there were many spontaneous direct responses in pupil behaviour, written and verbal comment, which I was able to document. There were moments when pupils were surprisingly aware and articulate, as in Wayne's revelations and apology to 'teachers' in the counselling session. Perhaps because I provided an audience to whom he could express his feelings, giving him the opportunity to surface and resolve his thoughts.

The analysis was developed through simultaneous and retrospective reflection and involved bringing to bear, as Hollway (1989) puts it, my '*...considerable knowledge of participants*' (p. 39). This was gained in most cases during many hours of tutoring. Hollway points out that this type of research '*...raises the point that the researcher's knowledge is not exhaustive*' and agrees that neither '*...is that of the participants themselves*' (ibid., p.39). Although I learned more than I might have done in school, my knowledge was nowhere near sufficient to claim complete accuracy. In this inquiry strand, as in subsequent ones, it was the attainment of a greater awareness and increased sensitivity, which was the most useful feature of my experience, rather than certain knowledge of concrete facts. Some students made long articulate responses, but even when students were consistently uncommunicative and inarticulate, these gave me some indication of their state of mind, especially when a positive response was suddenly given; for example, when Cheryl, who usually only signed "O.K.

*Cheryl*” suddenly wrote “*Helpful*” or “*Enjoyed lesson*”. Interestingly, in her case, this was always when I tried tentatively to ‘counsel’ her, referring to my estimation of her problems indirectly. This encouraged me to think I was sometimes reasonably correct in my approach, even though I sensed I would never fully understand her situation.

#### **4.61 The complexity of individual situations**

In looking at the data I produced in teaching these students, I can see I could only partially grasp the complexities and difficulties of their situations. For most of the time I was teaching Wayne, I could not have guessed at the details of his school history. I gained information, but only realised the implications in retrospect. The students with the most difficulty in communicating were often the ones who faced the most complex and devastating issues and were therefore the hardest to help; for example, Cheryl, whose reputation was known to her peers in different schools in the town so that she could not escape her bullies. Another example might be Russell, who was suddenly separated from siblings by divorce and distance, coping with a new neighbourhood and pregnant stepmother, his final exam year in a new school and the malign influence of his ‘best friend’, a known bully. It was often the case that it was a unique and unfortunate mix of circumstances and pressures, which created a ‘tipping point’ causing withdrawal and failure to attend school. Students’ problems were sometimes compounded by the inappropriate and inadequate responses of professionals, poor resources and inflexible organisation of schools, education authorities and social services. Fortunately this poorly co-ordinated response by social agencies is changing due to a group of recent government initiatives. \*

#### **4.62 Attitude in teaching**

The teaching approach I used generally appeared to help the young people re-engage with education on some level. This was based on a deliberately preconceived attitude,

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\* Department for Education and Skills, 2006a *Every child matters*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006 *Common Assessment Framework*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007a *Parent Support Advisory Service*; Sure Start, 2007 *Extended schools*; Training and Development Agency for Schools (2006-2008) *Remodelling and extended schools*; Share 2008 *A fun programme that encourages parents/carers, children, teachers, managers, facilitators to work together*

which was not always easy to maintain. My predetermined reasoning that there were likely to be logical reasons for each student's absence from school was born out by my data. At the start of each individual encounter, I had no idea what these might be. Retrospective reflection showed that their behaviour largely appeared to be based on feelings and issues arising from environments and situations they faced. My research was observational and ethnographic in that I observed and participated in behaviour in the natural home setting. This could be deemed covert observation of a sort. However, it seems impossible that my presence was overlooked (Main & George, 1985). Families and young people allowed me to see what they wished and were generally as interested in finding solutions as I was; for example, when Wayne's father talked about how he had agonised over sending him into care or when Cheryl's father suggested ways to be less indulgent of Cheryl. This work enabled me to gain insights into student's home situations not normally possible when class teaching and into how school culture, policies and staff attitudes affect students and those trying to help them, including myself (Cohen, 1987).

This research sought to find out how to overcome learning problems in action. All of the young people were ready to research with me on this, while we were actually working. They suggested solutions; we solved problems together and recorded a diary of the work, recording our feelings at the end of each lesson. In this sense the research might be termed participatory ethnography (Moore, 2004, in Goodley *et al.*, 2004, p. 63). The adoption of this method in itself appeared to offer a potential method of remedy when combined with opportunities for counselling. For example, Wayne began to understand his own behaviour and was subsequently able to cope with college when he:

*...admitted he had shown off to the other pupils and sworn at the "poor teachers". It must have been difficult for them, he now realised. Wayne was profoundly sorry for his behaviour and appeared to be apologising to me. I felt that he saw me as a representative for those teachers and I realised he was very close to tears. He understood why the headmaster allowed him to leave before the due date because he was so disruptive. He had hardly attended the final year. (1.2 Cases data files – Author's narrative summaries Pupil 1: Wayne)*

#### **4.63 Making links**

I became aware that when I taught, subjective, intuitive and subconscious thought processes were utilised, as I assessed, collected evidence, considered feedback and

reflected on many levels. Much of this was rapid, appearing to be almost instantaneous. Gladwell discusses this type of rapid human comprehension within a 'blink', which can be amazingly accurate or devastatingly wrong (2005). This was an important reason to investigate my own emotional learning difficulties, my own possible subconscious history, interest and bias, in order to develop my awareness and aid authenticity. For example did participants remind me of someone else in my past, who I had had cause to like or dislike? Did I jump to conclusions, which were unrealistic? I came to terms with limitations as well as successes. Looking at pupils' situations, I could see my empathy arose to some extent from having been a confused young person in my own childhood. I had felt alienated, misunderstood by parents, teachers and peers, and lonely, for different and similar reasons. I had overcome these problems to an extent, though interestingly I found some were lurking in the background catching me out in new learning situations at university even as a mature student (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.1 – Author's auto-ethnography). As a learner with emotional problems, I felt very much a fellow sufferer with my pupils. It would be interesting to know if they realised this on some level. At the time I worried about whether I might be taking a 'vicarious' interest in their problems because of my own. Now I realise my professionalism probably prevented a negative impact of this on them. My motivation seems irrelevant now anyway since I was able to some extent to help for whatever reason and we have all moved on with our lives.

#### **4.64 Using counselling and teaching skills**

I found my teaching experience and counselling skills training helped me in working out a consistent method of teaching, observing and collecting data across cases. For example, I encouraged pupils to make qualitative and affective comments about their work at the same time as factually recording it. I found no current research in similar terms, though Piaget's observational work with individual young children referred to by Vygotsky (1896-1934, cited in Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987) and Rogers' work with individuals, teachers and pupils in America provided helpful models (Rogers 1951, Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). As an experienced teacher, I had '*...a set of epistemological assumptions about the world*' and '*...disciplinary perspectives*' (Charmaz, 1995, p. 49). However, it took time to gain '*an intimate familiarity with the research topic*' and to connect theory with 'events' in the field (ibid., p. 49). I found this aspect of the inductive grounded approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007) appropriate

to my research. Charmaz recommends that a grounded theory researcher remains as ‘...open as possible in the early stages of research’ (Charmaz 1995, p. 49). I consciously suspended judgment as far as possible. This was important if I found myself responding negatively to pupils; for example, in Cheryl’s case, being irritated by cancelled lessons or disliking her attitude. I felt my time had been ‘wasted’, unaware at the time of the full extent of the bullying and malice Cheryl was being subjected to. My initial and in-service training had not included a consideration of pupils’ or my own feelings. This meant I had to follow my own idiosyncratic learning path to knowledge in this area and develop skills to cope with my negative and positive feelings in the process. I became much more aware of my own irrationality and rationality and I learned to be more patient and to some extent less ‘emotional’ in jumping to conclusions.

My own ideas about what might be going on occasionally temporarily clouded my judgment at the time of teaching; for example, when I considered whether Cheryl might be suffering parental abuse at the time I was teaching her. This is where the skills of suspending judgment and giving respect, autonomy and positive regard were particularly useful. This approach also relieved me of the responsibility of ‘solving’ emotional problems, which was in any case not possible. This seemed to make my help more realistic and effective, since it involved supporting students in dealing with their problems in their own ways. The giving of emotional space and an attentive non-judgmental attitude empowered and motivated all of the students to different degrees, as evidenced by positive comments about work, thanks for my help and even presents. One of the most touching, though perhaps a little excessive, was a poem by Rachel, aged fifteen, in her thank you card.

*Thank you for coming round,  
Thank you for understanding,  
Thank you for taking time to understand my illness,  
Thank you for the intellectual talk,  
Thank you for helping me with my Math, English and I.T.  
THANK YOU JENNY!*

I feel I should thank my students in return for what was on the whole a rewarding experience. However, I am distressed that young people should find themselves, as I was myself, feeling unsupported and condemned by social networks, which might

themselves benefit in the long term by offering more understanding. The systems for this to happen are becoming established in the United Kingdom, but there is a long way to go in changing attitudes about the importance of learners' feelings in learning.

\* Fine words and good intentions are often spoken, but feelings of professionals also have to be engaged and attitudes changed in order for provision to be effective on the ground.

#### **4.65 Variable school and college response**

In this research, schools and one college varied in their responses to students. Generally they were too busy with their own concerns to pay much attention. Some gave the impression that they felt the act of refusal excused them in abdicating responsibility. They appeared to feel offended and criticised by the students' rejection of their facility. One school was particularly unhelpful towards one of the students, Cheryl, all through Year 10 and 11. They did not mark any of her work, losing all of it and made no attempt to reintegrate her into school. They discouraged her from taking the subjects she wanted to take because teachers in those subjects were apparently not available for support and guidance. They then blamed her for non-completion of course work as a reason for her not taking exams. The same school gave a reasonable amount of help to Neal and his sister Tracy. They were able to take their exams, but had been in the school since Year 7 and were known to teachers. They had middle class, vocal and persistent parents, who however, still experienced problems and delays in getting tutors through the local education authority. They paid me privately. Cheryl, on the other hand had only been at the school for three months when she stopped going, because her bullies had tracked her down and her reputation had caught up with her (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Author's narrative summaries: Cheryl, Neal, Tracy).

The only college involved did not have any provision for supporting students with emotional learning problems; for example, counselling or mentoring services. One Catholic high school stood out as having a particularly supportive attitude although

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\*National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2005; Department for Education and Skills, 2006a *Every child matters*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006 *Common Assessment Framework*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007 *Parent Support Advisory Service*; Surestart, 2007 *Extended schools*; Training and Development Agency for Schools (2006-2008) *Remodelling and extended schools*; Share 2008 *A fun programme that encourages parents/carers, children, teachers, managers, facilitators to all work together*

they had limited time and resources. Their attitude was non-judgmental and there was a willingness to be flexible and allow reduced attendance and adaptable timetables. At this school, teachers were generous in giving their time between lessons to cover exam courses and work was promptly marked and returned. As a result students attained some exam successes (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Author’s narrative summaries: Andrew, Russell). Those students who were personable, well spoken and had formed good relationships with teachers tended to receive more help and encouragement. However, when the caring head of year at the above school made an assumption that because both Andrew and Russell had made suicide attempts they would be good company for each other, unforeseen consequences ensued since Andrew’s bully was Russell’s friend. Anne at the same school received little help because the teachers did not know her, whereas Maria received a glowing letter of praise for her English assignment from her teacher, even though she did not take the exam (Appendix – Strand 1 – 1.2 – Author’s narrative summaries: Anne, Maria). This school also generally had good follow up and liaison with the careers service.

#### **4.66 Provision of services**

There was a similar lack of consistency evident in the responses of education and related back up services. There was much talk of inclusion within the United Kingdom education system during the period of my research. However, I found that in spite of this, even non-disruptive students, the majority of my participants, could virtually terminate their education by their own choice. They were too young to realise the full consequences of this action in denying themselves the privilege of education and limiting their future job prospects. To do this, they were only required to produce a doctor’s note stating that they were suffering from depression and they could remain off school for an extended period. When these students rejected school, they did not respond to behaviour support team services. The last stop service provided for them in the form of home tutoring for up to five hours a week, although inadequate, could easily be further rejected. This could be done by simply cancelling the tutor, being out or refusing to open the door, with the excuse of illness or inconvenience to the family. As long as a lesson took place every few weeks, legal action could be avoided. These pupils could avoid the legal requirements for education, particularly if they were not disruptive to anyone else. Cheryl’s problems were compounded by lack of response by her welfare office, careers-office,

educational special needs department and youth service. If she had been badly behaved, she could have joined a special course for disaffected, excluded students at a further education college next door to her home. It was not surprising that, in the meantime, in an attempt to confront her main bully, she got in trouble with the police. In a sense she was encouraged by the system to misbehave. I wondered if I had also let her down, since I could have continued tutoring her for several more weeks.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In analysing the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning in this research Strand and in fulfilling my research aim (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2, Aim 1), I found that feelings both negative and positive were intimately involved in the learning process (This thesis, Chapter 2). These school refusers' feelings were very much involved with their ability or lack of ability to learn. The data revealed that these youngsters all had had, or were currently facing, serious environmental issues, which affected their emotional readiness to learn. In my opinion all the students had understandable reasons for refusing to go to school, if one took into consideration their history and possible points of view. However, this did not mean I condoned it. Expressing their feelings about their work appeared to help students engage with learning on some level. It was possible to take account of their emotional feedback and perspectives without abandoning the curriculum, by giving them choice. Choosing their way forward as they felt appropriate at each step re-engaged their interest in education at various levels. Expressing and working with their feelings through and alongside lessons appeared to aid the resolution of some inner confusions at some levels. The creative work both in visual art and English I did with them engaged their interest and gave them a positive context in which to express their feelings, 'kick-start' and progress their self-esteem through learning. This enabled the giving of support through the process of 'one-to-one positive regard' (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). However, I felt they would also have benefited from social peer group learning in appropriately designed, feeling-based curriculum contexts (See this thesis, Chapter 7). Once pupils started to feel confident in their ability to learn, they showed academic potential and intelligent understanding and some went on to college, university and skilled employment.

The research showed that there are ways in which disaffected pupils can be helped by an open-minded, reflective and reflexive approach, especially in the current dynamic and ever more complex curriculum context (Whitaker, 1997; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.3; Waters, 2007). An awareness of differentiation due to pupils' varying abilities and individual social backgrounds is required. Knowledge, insight and understanding can be gained through practitioner research (Craft, 2000a; Goodson, 2003; Hegarty, 2003; Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Tabor, 2007). For example, I am now able to understand school refusers' behaviour as being rational within their own terms. It is not possible to give every child an ideal environment in which to grow up. Although there are no guarantees, the research shows that it is possible to promote motivation and interest in learning in disaffected, disadvantaged students and to help them re-engage in learning. It is also possible to jump to entirely erroneous conclusions, for example when one teacher suggested that Andrew and Russell, who had separately attempted suicide, should work together. It turned out that Andrew's bully was Russell's best friend and was probably behind an attempt to get him accused of drug trafficking. The method of giving choice and being non-judgmental worked well and the creative work we did gave us an enjoyable context to which pupils related. It was not necessary to know about all the students' problems in detail in order to help them. However, reading biographical stories and considering my own life and learning was helpful. A policy of trying to understand pupils' emotional feedback was conducive to remedy in this in-depth, but relatively small scale research. The indications are that similar types of idiosyncratic practitioner research in the field (provided democratic and humanistic principles are upheld) might have potential to improve the efficacy of educational systems.

The school refusers, who took part in this research, were profoundly affected by their feelings. It was evident that there were some important relationships between their feelings, thinking and learning. Firstly, feelings engendered in childhood through environmental contexts, both incidental and structured, had an effect on their motivation to learn. All of them were experiencing negative environmental influences at the time of tutoring, including general and specific condemnation of their behaviour, but were unable to explain. Secondly, these feelings (including 'emotional blocks') continued to be influential until they were transformed by further emotionally linked learning experiences; for example, satisfaction in achievement.

These were generally triggered and/or influenced through a change in environment, such as a new challenge, a 'positive regard' teaching approach (Rogers, 1951, 1961 Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). Thirdly, strong feelings arose, informing and affecting their thinking on a day to day basis as they learned. Fourthly, sharing these with another person (in this case the teacher) was appreciated by them and appeared to facilitate their learning. Consideration of emotional states (feedback on feelings) may therefore be seen, not only as both an indicator of and stimulus to learning, but also as a source of information. It appeared that on occasions feelings represented logical subjective thoughts, which could inform and facilitate the learning process. An awareness of feelings, therefore, may contribute to the networking of new cognitive connections, correcting erroneous thoughts, appreciating correct ones, updating and adapting as we learn. Their acknowledgement, therefore, rather than suppression, may be more desirable than previously appreciated in educational circles.



## CHAPTER 5

### STRAND 2: THE AUTHOR'S LEARNING PROCESS

This chapter should be read with reference to:

**Appendix 2, Inquiry Strand 2 – The author's learning process** – this contains the following:

- 2.1 Table of author's writing – a dated list of private personal development outpourings contributing to this chapter
- 2.2 Author's auto-ethnography of learning influences 1947-2008 (2007)
- 2.3 Autobiography – a childhood view from memory (2002)
- 2.4 Critical events timeline – list of personal emotional events 1947-1967 (2006)
- 2.5 Emotional landmarks and schemas – some personal feelings and possible conclusions 1947-2008 (2006)
- 2.6 Courses, conferences and workshops attended (2008)

#### 5.1 Introduction

In looking for possible answers to the guiding question, “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” I aimed to evaluate my own learning and teaching experiences in helping students re-engage in education using a reflexive, ethnographic qualitative research method (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2, Aim 2). In this second inquiry strand, I subjected myself to an in-depth scrutiny through auto-ethnography. In working with school refusers, I had started to wonder about and research into the influence of my own upbringing on my experience of, and attitudes to, learning. Individual life experiences and transitions and their possible relevance to learning development were explored in the process of narrative construction, construed through observations on my behaviour and thought processes considered in retrospect. Bronfenbrenner points out that:

*...the fact that life transitions occur throughout the life course provides opportunities for studying development during the stage that is both the longest and about which we have the least knowledge – adulthood between the ages of 25 and 60. (The Chronosystem model, Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.84)*

I produced a number of autobiographical texts based on my childhood experiences and went on to record my learning during the process of the research. In doing this to some extent I located my position in relation to the research. I also considered the subsidiary question, “How do feelings affect my learning and teaching?” and in doing so explored their possible relationship to my own cognitive processes. I considered some of those experiences I recognised as influencing my thought processes both subconsciously and consciously. My own likely and possible feelings are pointed out, where I could determine them in brackets in some places in the auto-ethnography in the appendix. This is done to surface my possible subconscious thoughts and feelings and to illustrate the process of analysis. There is an example of this in the final paragraph of this section, where I explore my current feelings about my work by way of introduction to the subsequent sections. For clarity these feelings are within a different bracket style to those used for referencing.\*

In this strand of data I use myself as an example of human learning, looking for some ways in which feelings have affected my own learning. I have broken down my analysis into sections. In the section following, I start by looking at some aspects of my ecological environment, first in childhood (Freud, 1909; Rogers, 1961; Bandura, 1977; Section 5.2). The next two sections deal with later adult learning situations (Wenger, 1998, 2008), in training (Section 5.3) and in teaching (Section 5.4), looking at physical resources and general social ambience, possibly affecting my feelings in learning. The subsequent sections (5.5 to 5.8) are based on ideas about ‘learning-to-learn’, researched by Claxton (2002). Claxton, in collaboration with other educationalists through the Lifelong Learning Foundation, produced an Effective Learning Profile, which assesses learners against key dimensions that indicate ways their learning capabilities can be fostered. He considers that there are four main aspects of students’ learning with subsidiary skills, which are necessary to learning achievement. I have taken these broad areas (Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity), their identifiable associated feelings and behaviours and their opposites. In this way I have looked at both negative and positive influences on my learning and analysed some ways feelings have affected my learning capability

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\* {Feeling} - denotes possible feelings

and progress at various points in my life. The next section (5.9) gives some general reflections about the research process and the chapter closes (Section 5.10) with a discussion of my conclusions developed from my experiences in researching over eight years. In Chapter 8, I then use the data to discuss themes across all four strands, cross-referencing with the experiences recorded in the data by, and with, other participants.

The writing of my own narrative is an exercise which I found difficult to undertake for several reasons. There are some factors I am likely to be unaware of, which if perceived by others may lay me open to criticism {Fear}. My own emotional blocks still tend to restrict self-expression {Reluctance and Embarrassment}; for example, self-acknowledgement and awareness is sometimes a problem for me. It is hard to talk about, and even refer in passing, to events, which have had and still have a painful effect on my emotions {Stress and Sadness}. I am aware that parts of my life are mundane and even if significant to me may simply be uninteresting to other people {Awkwardness}. My talking about my 'self', presents some difficulties. Within my self, there is variation and paradox as I adapt to various frames of reference, required and perceived roles and experience impulses to action {Confusion and Resolution}. Like most people I seem to have many 'selves' and have had many roles over my lifetime; for example, schoolchild, parent, student, teacher, wife, widow, artist, research mentor and friend, to name but a few. I am constantly moving on, changing and developing in variable ways.

The writing I have undertaken to produce my own data, to which I am making reference for this research, has shifted and changed in its significances for me {Learning satisfaction, Solving, Realising and Uncertainty}. It has sometimes not only been difficult to sort out and express my feelings, but also to understand their relevance to my research questions {Confusion}. In my professional career I started out as a primary and middle school teacher specialising in art. My qualifications and standard of training, gained in the fifties and sixties were not particularly good {Regret}. There have been cul-de-sacs, sidetracks, incidental influences, accidental events and environments outside my control. Inevitably, I acknowledge there must be a great deal I have not been aware of or able to recall. I intend, therefore, so far as I

am able, to focus on emotional, subjective aspects of my learning from my own idiosyncratic point of view {Reflection and Curiosity}.

## 5.2 Ecological environments: Childhood

In looking at my life with the benefit of hindsight, I can see how some of my feelings have arisen out of experiences in various environments and contributed to my learning. In common with most other people my family background had a profound effect on that learning, interacting with my upbringing, genetic propensities, conscious and subconscious reactions and conclusions\*. Wenger (2008) pointed out during a seminar that one's environment is a 'landscape' in which one "*transforms oneself into a being, who is knowing.*" "In this," he said, "*knowledge is not separate from being.*" I was the youngest child of my family. My father was forty-two, my mother thirty-nine and my sister and brother thirteen and twelve at the time of my birth in 1947. As a child I quite often remember sitting on the sidelines, looking at my family, and wondering why my world was as it was, and why they behaved as they did. I perceived and absorbed a lot of what was going on and found I had an empathy and ability to gauge other people's feelings, though I was often puzzled by their motives. People watching became a habitual interest, perhaps because my 'survival' instincts were aroused in coping with first, my unpredictable mother, and secondly, my critical peer group. However, it was not until later in life, after fifty, when I decided to try to make an attempt at solving some of the puzzles of my pupils' emotional difficulties with learning that I considered my own emotional learning journey. From the position of an experienced teacher, looking back in retrospect, I have used my natural observational interest, memory of my own struggles and empathy for others in my research.

Possible subconscious motivations for this work were based on a mixture of factors, which arose from my life experiences in teaching, personal history, abilities and interests. However, it seems likely that a major underlying subconscious factor was my own childhood, for most of which I felt I was labelled, misjudged and misunderstood by many people I came into contact with; for example, my peer group

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\* Appendix - Strand 2 -2.1 Table of author's writing-a dated list; 2.2 Author's auto-ethnography (2008); 2.3 Autobiography-a childhood view (2002); 2.4 Critical events timeline (2006); 2.5 Emotional landmarks and schemas (2006)

and teachers. As a result I suffered emotional learning difficulties of which I was largely unaware when I started this research. In fact I assumed that I just had a natural empathy for children with these sorts of problems. It had never occurred to me previously to examine my own upbringing. Now in analysing my childhood, I find it is indeed not easy to separate out the micro, meso and exo-systems of Bronfenbrenner's model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; this thesis, Chapter 1: 1.2). My family were English 'incomers' in a Welsh town and were socially isolated. My father was works manager at a chemical factory, which was a main employer in the area and my mother was not happy about moving there. They were both avid readers, keen churchgoers and very much preoccupied with their own concerns. Their marriage was not a conventionally happy one. My mother shouted, criticised and nagged at my father a great deal. My father was a cheerful, independent character, did not understand my mother and liked to lead a quiet life. He hid behind his newspaper, buried himself in his work and seemed embarrassed in showing affection. My grown-up older brother and sister left home to pursue careers in England, when I was five. In the fifties I went to Welsh primary and grammar schools, where English was mainly spoken. My elderly parents were not pro-active in parenting or encouraging educational achievement, notwithstanding their own love of literature. I was a victim of bullying at school, perhaps due to my 'difference': having red hair, 'better off' parents, a 'posh' way of talking and my quiet and shy demeanour.

My personal difficulties with learning, though affected by my own inherent abilities and limitations, the time and social context I have lived in, the education I received and my individual responses to these, were also affected by my parents emotional problems. Like everyone else I could do nothing about the conditions of the home in which I was raised. This helplessness and vulnerability, an inevitable and ordinary part of childhood, is not often acknowledged unless serious deprivation comes to light. It is evident that in my childhood I was generally not in a welcoming or happy, socially interactive environment either within or outside my home. My family had been uprooted and were trying to adjust to a different way of life, for which they were not equipped, having had no previous knowledge of Wales or Welsh people. It was a bad time for my brother aged fifteen and my sister aged sixteen to join a new community and they rapidly left to undertake training elsewhere, only returning in the holidays. I had little contact with children of my own age and suffered from feelings

of alienation and loneliness. My family were rather serious and religious, had no interest in sport of any kind and for hobbies they read and watched television. My feelings of difference were caused by the fact that I had little in common with my peers. My mother was older than most mothers, did not mix and there were no nursery schools. She criticised my appearance in public causing me further shame and embarrassment. It is not really surprising that I grew up feeling isolated and with little confidence in social situations. This lack of social skills, confidence and self-esteem was reinforced later, when I was bullied at school and was told by my parents that I had to endure it, 'turning the other cheek' as the Christian faith demanded. My insecurity, fear and sadness were logical reactions to my situation.

The schools I went to were very old fashioned in style and enforced a rigid discipline; for example, talking was not allowed in lessons. I could already read and write fairly fluently for my age, when I started full-time primary school at the age of 4 years and 3 months. The teachers showed little understanding of my insecurities, and actively prevented me from building relationships with my peers. As I could read and write, in their wisdom, they did not allow me to play with the toys in the reception class or interact with other children in lessons. My parents never spoke to my teachers. There were no parents' evenings in those days. I had to learn Welsh for the 'Eleven-plus' exam and absorb the Welsh culture, but my father seemed surprised and annoyed by this. I was caught between two cultures, class differences and several sets of expectations and found this confusing. My teachers were rather surprised and puzzled by my knowledge and vocabulary, coming as I did from a home where we all read avidly and used 'big' words when we did communicate. Some of them perhaps felt threatened by this and seeing it as arrogance 'put me down' in class. Other teachers would praise me and this would bring down the anger of jealous peers, who would 'get' me in the playground later. Although I was frightened in school, I was also privileged. I was isolated for much of my childhood and spent a lot of time reading books, which gave me pleasure and made me self-sufficient in some respects.

I had some status in the small market town as a boss's daughter of the chief employer at the local chemical factory owned by an English company. My parents were wealthy compared to others in the town and my mother revelled in spending money on clothes and goods for the house after the austerity of the war. There was an underlying

jealousy and dislike from some quarters and a false respect for my social status from others, which I did not understand and found confusing. I was expected to say 'grace' at the annual children's party and was made a fuss of by various dignitaries of the town. However, I was a perceptive child and could see through this undeserved favouritism, disliking the attention. I felt keenly that my own personality and needs were not acknowledged and I learnt that it was best to keep a low profile and keep my thoughts to myself (Rogers, 1961). At secondary (grammar) school I became withdrawn and reluctant to communicate. My efforts in the fields of English and art did not meet with a great deal of encouragement and for a long time I was quite apologetic about them feeling that they were failings rather than assets.

### **5.3 Ecological environments: Professional training**

My childhood ecological environment had consisted mainly of a micro-system – my immediate family; meso-system – my neighbourhood peer group and an exo-system – people in school and the local community. It was not until I went on to further education in various environments that my learning prospered. Even in these, to me novel exo and macro systems, my learning was still affected by both positive and negative schema habits, derived in childhood (Bennett-Goleman, 2001). The predominant one of these was an inability to value myself. It is evident that although these various environments of overlapping systems did promote some learning, they were not always particularly conducive to it and were sometimes positively discouraging (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). After grammar school, I went to the local further education college for a pre-diploma foundation art course and found a new friendlier peer group. This course gave me a comprehensive, quite rigorous grounding in art, but lacking confidence or any final assessment (apart from a pass), advice about my work and encouragement to go to an art school, I opted to do teacher training. The fact that my sister (thirteen years older) was a primary school teacher probably influenced my career choice. My mother tried to prevent my going away, but my father insisted I should have the opportunity.

For my state assisted teacher training, I first went in 1967 on a two-year course to a 'student-centred' Arts college connected with Dartington Hall School in Devon. This was followed by one year at a teacher training college in Exmouth. My impression of Dartington Hall is that, although I gained confidence away from the pressures at home

and enjoyed my time there with new friends, I did not achieve a great deal. In my case the whole process of learning was too unsupported and haphazard to yield efficient results. This was undoubtedly also due to my own immaturity and inability to take advantage of the opportunity. However, over half the students on my art course at Dartington Hall failed, since they were given a beautiful environment and facilities, but no assessment structure. There was a final exhibition of work in which I displayed my poems and paintings. The painting tutor who had never spoken to me previously or assessed my work told me that he thought that one day I might become a painter. The principle's wife told me she liked my poems. I filed these two tiny bits of encouragement at the back of my mind. I worked in the English educational system from 1971 to 1977 starting out as an art specialist, completing my probationary year and working part-time in three secondary schools and a primary school while bringing up my own two children.

In 1980 to 1982 I worked as a teacher to male young offenders aged fourteen to twenty-one in a large prison remand centre in North West England. While teaching basic mathematics and English there, I developed an interest in special needs teaching. In my thirties, during 1980 to 1983, I took an honours degree in 'special education' subjects (reading development, psychology and audio-visual studies). Looking back, I would have benefited from career mentoring both at school and at college at art foundation level, teacher training level and degree level. In 1985 to 1987, while working as a special needs teacher, I took a post-graduate certificate in English. I researched with a small group of special needs pupils proving some of them were very intelligent. The findings showed they had excellent aural/oral comprehension skills compared with poor read/written ones. Many of them showed complex skills in practical tasks and had a large oral vocabulary, which demonstrated their intelligence in discussion and argument. My tutor was impressed with my research, recommending that I take a master's degree, but my full-time job and family commitments made this difficult. I was to follow it up ten years later.

At the start of this research I was able, after experiencing some modest success at graduate and post-graduate level, I had to overcome distrustful, discouraging environments encountered on a learning support vocational course and a counselling skills course at the start of this research (Appendix – Strand 2– 2.2–Author's auto-

ethnography). In September, 1998, I volunteered to help in an adult literacy class, one morning a week, at a further education college. The college bureaucracy could not be changed to accommodate my 'peculiar situation' as a qualified special needs teacher with a degree and I had to take a generic training course for volunteers. This lack of acknowledgement of my professional skills, amongst other things, affected my commitment to the college and within a year led me elsewhere. In the meantime I learned a lot through incidental observation, including a blatant case of prejudice in treatment and assessment by a teacher against one mature student. The lack of an effective student arbitration system, with a right of appeal to an impartial tutor struck me as significant. Eventually my experiences at the college contributed to my choice of research subject and direction.

In 1999 to 2000 after applying to my present university department to do a master's degree in psychology by research, I was advised to take a British Association of Counselling course in person-centred counselling skills first. I did this under the auspices of a different university (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography). Although I learned a lot and found the course helpful and interesting, I approached it with some trepidation. I had to overcome emotional fears, traumatic experiences and problems in doing it and the apparent prejudice and/or dislike of one of the tutors and some of the other students. The lack of an effective student arbitration system for assessment, with a right of appeal to an impartial tutor was again significant to me on a personal level, illustrating uncaring and inefficient practices, inefficient because they militate against learning.

#### **5.4 Ecological environments: teaching**

In 1983, following the Warnock report on Special Education, I became a teacher helping to set up a new 60-place specialist unit for minor learning difficulties (MLD) attached to a large comprehensive school (Warnock, 2004). I specialised in English, art and basic skills subjects as a special needs teacher, supporting and liaising with colleagues in main school (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography). Some special needs pupils had specific types of learning problems. Briefly these included different types of perceptual problems, such as dyslexia, difficulties with long and short-term memory, poor understanding and minor physical disability. Sequenced courses for teaching reading, diagnosing and remedying problems would

be used with varied and surprisingly limited success. These included work and behaviour programmes with built in 'rewards' and 'punishments'. Environmental problems were acknowledged to have affected some of the pupils; for example, children who had suffered time out of education through illness, had been abused or came from disadvantaged homes. The department catered for many emotionally and behaviourally disturbed pupils (EBD). Within this special needs department, the demands of the school timetable and the in-service training of staff made no allowance for planned reflexive research, student therapy or counselling for pupils and staff. As a full time teacher I needed to share my concerns about EBD pupils in more depth, but time and organisational restraints prevented this.

The work in the special unit involved adapting and teaching home economics, gardening, life skills, community service, outdoor pursuits, art and English leavers' courses for special needs pupils, often with support from main school colleagues, instructors and the education advisory service. I found, since I had very low physical, sports skills, the 'outdoor pursuits' benefited my confidence and self-esteem as much as it did my pupils. I created a combined City & Guilds course with GCSE English language. I devised course programmes and certificates since pupils could not take state exams. These programmes were accredited by the county scheme board, which I attended. All the courses had an active 'hands-on' element to them; for example, each English unit involved a trip out to a relevant location. However, my experience was that my action research and course development as a special needs teacher was not sufficiently supported and networked with others. For example I had to abandon a promising line of research for the development of oral exams due to pressure of work and an inflexible system. I dealt with special needs work experience, finding and monitoring suitable placements with employers. I taught my subjects to ordinary lower school classes and was a form teacher in mainstream. All of this was very much a practical, hands on learning experience for me, which I enjoyed. However, sadly for me, my courses for children with minor learning difficulties, instead of continuing to be developed and networked with other schools (as two local education advisors had suggested), were abandoned when the National Curriculum came into effect.

During twenty-seven years of teaching in secondary schools I found such schools assumed that form teachers and heads of year could give pastoral care (with

implications of emotional support) to pupils. Many teachers felt this beyond them due to lack of training and resources. Most teachers were not trained in counselling or life skills and even if they had them, little time was given for such activity. Students problems, when known, were noted, inadequacies accepted and expectations reduced for academic progress. The emphasis was on description of behaviours and acceptance of lower performance after examination as regrettable, but in “no way the school’s or teachers’ responsibility”. The problems were seen as pupil failure to perform to ‘normal’ expectations. These findings were reinforced by educational psychologists’ reports and statements, which concentrated upon performance and deficit (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2– Author’s auto-ethnography). My dissatisfaction with the efficacy of this approach eventually resulted in my starting a Masters degree by research at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2001, to explore the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning.

Since I intended to base my research upon my own and other people’s interpretations, I realised gradually that this could not be a value free study. My own education, culture and personal history inevitably affected my perceptions. For this reason I intended to be open-minded and to investigate my own background, feelings, possible prejudices and opinions. I also set out to find out about and acknowledge ideas, theories, perspectives and methods, which I might not have considered previously. I found there were many interpretations of and viewpoints on education. In doing the research I gradually resolved to shed some light on these by attempting to understand my participants’ own individual perspectives from my teacher’s and fellow learner’s perspective.

In taking up this research I was to some extent giving a formal purpose to subconscious, partially conscious subjective conjecture I had been in a sense doing all my life. In 2002 I had a weekend in the Lake District of symbolic modelling therapy through pictorial metaphor with David Grove, which I found very helpful. (Lawley & Tomkins, 2000) This type of therapy offers the client the opportunity to access the ‘unworded’, implicit schema of their unconscious and work with the therapist in their own way towards resolution of personal problems (Appendix– Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author’s auto-ethnography). This work opens up the possibility of consideration of the subconscious by the conscious mind, but only at the client’s behest. The therapist

acts as a facilitator. I produced pictures spontaneously and reflected afterwards on their possible meaning for my subjective, personal life. The experiences described above all contributed to my learning development and this research thesis. Much of my subsequent learning is contained within it.

### **5.5 Resilience**

Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with resilience in students' learning. These are Absorption (flow: the pleasure of being rapt in learning), Managing distractions (recognising and reducing interruptions), Noticing (really sensing what is out there), and Perseverance ('stickability': tolerating the feelings of learning). In developing resilience it is necessary to feel optimistic and to be persistent in learning with a constant interplay of levels and kinds of feelings. It is evident in looking at my learning processes that any resilience I demonstrated in my learning process derived from experiences of success through my own satisfactions in tasks where I experienced absorption and flow; for example, through my art work, reading and English essays. Resilience was also encouraged by any acknowledgement from other people. My confidence was improved by teacher approval; for example, through the teacher who liked my poem, the tutors at college who approved my painting and poetry and the tutor who appreciated my English language research and the thanks of Wayne my first school refuser. Their comments had a disproportionately positive effect on my willingness to persevere, perhaps significant to me because of the indifference and discouragement I had generally encountered.

In my childhood I had suffered major distractions, which were beyond my management due to my mother's unpredictable and erratic behaviour; such as when I had to stay off school to nurse her psychosomatic illnesses. In spite of this I did learn to 'manage' her in subtle ways; for instance, never asking for anything directly, keeping a low profile and pursuing my interests quietly. Looking back, however, I think (apart from a 'normal' teenage tendency at times to laziness) I was too insecure and apprehensive in what felt to me like a very unstable environment, due to my mother's unpredictable tempers and hysteria to also manage my school learning adequately. To illustrate this point, I remember being worried about how she would be when I returned home from school and having to do my homework in an angry

atmosphere<sup>\*</sup>. Management of my learning improved when I experienced stable, unvarying, supportive tuition and a steady, relatively un-stressful private life; for example, while at university in my thirties (stickability).

My learning resilience and confidence was undermined by unwarranted criticism and rejection and lack of encouragement such as the aforementioned teacher's disapproval of my next poem and my art teacher's dislike of my choice of the subjects I portrayed at school. I think this resulted in my learning resilience and judgment being distorted by subconscious confusions about criticism contributing to my withdrawal, inhibition and poor self-esteem. This subverted my engagement in learning, breaking the absorption and flow causing me to be less aware and less capable of managing distractions. This led to feelings of resignation and acceptance of the inevitability of failure. I have tended until recently to regard my self as a completely worthless person when I make a mistake, thus exacerbating my insecurities, instead of seeing failure as a normal learning process and not an indictment of my uselessness. This may be partly due to a lack of sufficient exposure to interactive group learning early in my life within my peer group. Another consequence of the experience of a lack of positive regard by adults is to confuse my own sense of worth with the need to be successful in pleasing others (Rogers, 1961). For most of my life there was also a very real fear of rejection and scorn, which I acknowledged and overcame in sharing my experience of being bullied with colleagues during this study. All of this has to some extent restricted the development of what I now acknowledge as my natural talents and innate worth as a human being.

As a child I assumed and accepted that the adults and peers in my life were correct in their labelling of me. This led to disappointment and to some extent a distortion of reality; for example, I did not discover I had any ability in sport until I co-taught an outdoor pursuits course for special needs pupils in my thirties. When I first 'escaped' to college I found that I could make friends normally, socialise and be liked. I made progress, but found academic challenges lacking in the courses I took, which caused me to feel dissatisfied. In undertaking my education degree in my thirties, I fulfilled the course requirements, in order to get a better teaching job, but learning interest and

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<sup>\*</sup> Appendix - Strand 2 - 2.1-Author's auto-ethnography, 2.2-Author's autobiography-a childhood view, 2.3-Critical events timeline, 2.4-Emotional landmarks and schemas,

motivation were lacking to some extent. Financial incentive in itself was not sufficient.

I experienced a deeper sense of challenge, engagement and interest through my postgraduate English teaching certificate in undertaking educational research, which was connected with my special needs teaching and connected to my own interest and ideas. This was more directly meaningful to me and resulted in gaining a distinction and the recommendation from my tutor that I take a masters course. This encouraged me to aspire to further study and gave me the incentive to persevere many years later. This was further reinforced when I had my first 'successful' school refuser (Wayne), who was able to re-engage in further education. This success enabled me to weather my internal emotional problems and the external prejudice I encountered on a counselling skills course (See Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography). People are often inclined towards forgetfulness, confusion and avoidance, when facing feelings arising from painful unresolved feelings and emotional dilemmas. They often cannot be explained in words even when they have been to some extent resolved. I realised this for myself when I thought about why I felt reluctance at times to think and write about myself. Over the years my resilience has improved as I have learned to balance the pleasure of learning with the inevitable setbacks and confusion gradually gaining confidence in my right to be myself (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2– Author's auto-ethnography– poem *I am human*, p. 343).

## **5.6 Resourcefulness**

Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with resourcefulness in students' learning. These are Questioning (getting below the surface and playing with situations), Making links (seeking coherence, relevance and meaning), Imagining (using the mind's eye as a learning theatre), Reasoning (thinking rigorously and methodically) and Capitalising (making good use of resources). In developing resourcefulness it is necessary to use a creative approach to learning, connecting and combining resources and ideas in different ways. Creativity involves many higher order combinations of skills, abilities and implicit understandings with a constant interplay of levels and kinds of feelings. At first resourcefulness in my learning came about due to the pleasure I experienced through artistic appreciation and through acquiring artistic skills. Genetic disposition possibly played a part in this, but

opportunity in being surrounded by beautiful countryside and some slight encouragement from my mother (I suppose it was a way of keeping me occupied as a toddler) probably helped. I experienced satisfaction also through reading and writing stories and poetry.

I learned a great deal through actively doing and interacting with pupils in my teaching career. For example, I had failed at mathematics throughout my own school career, but learned a great deal by having to teach it at special needs level. I had to find creative ways to understand and teach it using a range of resources, for instance measuring in cooking and gardening and budgeting in life skills classes. Later when teaching school refusers, I found I could understand the GCSE mathematics revision books quite well after all. Apart from not having any natural ability in this subject, I trace my failure back to my fear of being jumped on for answers in 'mental' arithmetic and being called upon to stand alone and recite 'times tables' at primary school. For many years I could not grasp number manipulation, but I am now reasonably adept. Without active engagement in questioning and 'playing around' with numbers and concepts, the work was meaningless to me. I was so frightened of arithmetic that at first as a new teacher I had trouble adding up my class register and for years I would scramble up phone numbers in my mind. A feeling of helpless panic would come over me, which I have now largely overcome. Proof that I was not incapable occurred at grammar school when the mathematics master demanded to know how I had achieved 75% in algebra but only 14% in arithmetic after an exam. Like my school refusers, I could not explain myself. With hindsight I conclude now that numbers frightened me but letters did not and so I was able to work with the underlying concepts more easily. I suspect that a creative approach to mathematics would have captured my interest.

In designing courses for special needs teenagers, I was able to employ my creativity, questioning the relevance for them of the way they were being taught. My creativity and resourcefulness were inspired through having a practical purpose in mind and I felt motivated and pleased with the process. I sought to bring relevance to the pupils' curriculum by imagining their points of view. These courses, created in collaboration with other teachers, had to be evidenced by tables of outcomes towards county certificates. They involved trips out in the school mini-bus and a lot of physical

organisation of resources; for example, the school gardening course, the outdoor pursuits course, English language, community service and cookery courses. I used my visual art and English skills in designing learning materials, drawing illustrations to enhance them and shared them with other teachers. I managed and co-ordinated visual displays. The English examiner who came to check on our progress said she was amazed by the complexity of recording every positive achievement of each pupil in each unit of work, even though the exam process demanded it (City and Guilds, County Vocational Certificates). Unfortunately there was little time to learn from our research by networking our achievements with other schools. In any case, these courses were swept away by the introduction of the National Curriculum.

In undertaking my research, I had to be creative in working out how to collect relevant data. In Strand 1, I developed the idea of asking school refusers for their affective comments via a work record. These had been used as a means of recording work with limited choice, sometimes with rewards built in (but without comments) within the special needs unit where I had taught. A certain amount of creativity was also required in working out how to fictionalise students' identities and narrate their stories effectively, without losing authenticity. I also used my creative skills interacting with my subjective thoughts, through symbolic modelling therapy with David Grove in exploring my own psyche. This experience demonstrated to me the power of my subconscious to think beneath my conscious level of rational commentary (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2– Author's auto-ethnography). I drew pictures spontaneously and found them helpful when I considered their possible meaning (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000; this thesis, Chapter 3: 3.5). I developed this further in expressing feelings in learning in a series of paintings (Appendix – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography, Emotional Blocks to Learning, p. 352).

Using 'art' for the research appealed to my 'creative learning style'; I appreciate and enjoy humour and drama, which have multiple meanings and use the 'play on words', 'levels of meanings', 'metaphorical contexts' and 'metaphorical character' techniques. I have a natural inclination to play with 'double' and multiple meanings in my own general use of language through humour, poetry and art. For example, some of my poems are called 'word pictures' and many of my paintings have metaphorical meanings and ambiguous titles. I explored metaphorical ideas in poetry and art and

found them often stimulating and sometimes emotionally moving, enlightening and enjoyable. I became aware that much of my subconscious ‘unaware’ thinking, uncovered through creativity, engendered feelings based on ‘logical’ conclusions, which could be traced in retrospect. The acknowledgement that these feelings were a valid and useful part of my thinking informed my learning and aided further rationalisation and adjustment even when I found them to be sometimes mistaken. I adapted the symbolic modelling method in collecting data from some other teachers in Strand 3, encouraging them to draw as we talked (Chapter 6).

### **5.7 Reflectiveness**

Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with reflectiveness in students’ learning. These are Planning (working learning out in advance), Revising (monitoring and adapting along the way), Distilling (drawing out the lessons from experience) and Meta-learning (understanding learning and yourself as a learner). In developing reflectiveness it is necessary to develop awareness, and intuitive feelings and responses are very much a part of this process. The opposite of awareness might be seen as ignorance; for example, it is evident in considering my learning process that for much of my life I had no real conception of myself as a learner. My meta-learning was hampered by my poor self-image and fear of negative responses from others. As I progressed my rational mind was aware that my abilities might have some value, but my subconscious ‘conditioning’ as a child gave me an underlying fear of rejection (Bennett-Goleman, 2001). This was compounded by a less obvious reason: simply that at certain times, I did not experience sufficient positive regard (a deficit) to build and sustain my confidence in learning (Rogers, 1961).

For much of my life I did not understand that confusion and failure were part of the learning process and did not necessarily imply that I was a worthless human being. I came to realise that if I was not rapid and positive in supplying answers at school, some of the time at least I was showing an intelligent questioning attitude, which was not generally allowed for in many lessons and exams. Claxton affirms this when he says that the “*slow ways of knowing*”... *see ignorance and confusion as the ground from which understanding may spring*’ (1998, p. 12). I have discovered through my research that reflection is one of my favoured modes of thought. It is necessarily a continuous process, because there are always new things to consider. During my

research I learned to use the slow method of thinking through reflection, acknowledging thoughts and feelings arising from my subconscious thought processes. I learned to 'use' my subconscious mind more effectively by being more aware of it; for example, feeding information into my mind and waiting to see what emerged. By consciously noting my feelings I became better at rationalising and working with ideas which appeared to be generated subconsciously as well as consciously.

In working on Strand 2 I found that feelings offered a way of connecting with, adjusting and developing my subconscious and conscious thinking. There were implications for the learning process I wished to explore further in my research. I wanted to find out if my own and participants' learning might be understood and could benefit through this approach. In my own case, I gained understanding and some measure of 'control' over my own learning processes, both personal and professional by 'unloading' my thoughts onto paper. These writings often appeared chaotic, rambling and disorganised, but performed a useful function in raising my awareness in several ways; for instance when some of my subjective thoughts became concrete and visible to be dealt with. I realised that my mind could operate on several levels and had a subconscious 'life of its own'. For example, I often went to bed puzzling over my work and woke to write about it clearly and with fresh ideas early in the morning. I discovered learning by osmosis, before I knew it by that name (Claxton, 1998; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.11). It could produce 'logical' feelings and thoughts without my conscious knowledge and I could sometimes trace the 'logic' retrospectively. An example of this was my later enlightenment regarding the emotional problems behind my inability, through reluctance, to complete a counselling skills course due to an unconsciously reasoned fairly complex emotional block:

*I was able to work out an important reason why I had reluctance and inner conflict in doing the course. Apart from being afraid of reliving the past, the emotional block I pinpointed was based in an unconscious piece of logic involving feelings of guilt. The gist of this was that if I completed the course, it might prove that I could, after all, have helped my husband solve his mental health difficulties. As soon as I could put this thought into words, I realised how unrealistic it was. I realised my subconscious mind had put together a 'logical' argument, giving me feelings not understood consciously until 'released' by crying. This experience caused me to think and aroused my interest further in*

*the possible subconscious 'logic' and function of feelings in thinking. I wondered about accessing thoughts through feelings. It occurred to me that subjective connective reasoning processes evoke or trigger feelings and vice versa. My awareness of this process within myself was raised. (Appendix 2 – Strand 2 – 2.2 – Author's auto-ethnography, p. 348)*

This suggests that 'implicit' thinking may involve complicated unconscious reasoning processes of which we are unaware until strong feelings emerge and force us to acknowledge them and 'work them out'.

My understanding and learning capabilities developed through reflection. An example of this development was when I started to discriminate between what was important to the research and what was not. In reflecting I started to see my work from a reader's perspective. My criticism developed more constructively. I developed my language knowledge and skills. I compared my experiences with those of other people. I compared my writing with other writers. I developed my own 'voice' in writing and speaking. In exploring and reflecting as the research progressed, I stopped expecting to be totally in control of, and responsible for, my subjective mental life, though I admitted responsibility for dealing with its conscious thoughts. I expressed my feelings. I acknowledged myself in a holistic sense and stopped feeling guilty for having basic needs and flaws. I accepted myself in the round, including my own unpredictability in new situations. I acknowledged my lack of control over many events and circumstances. I started to use my subjective mind to better effect. I came to understand that empathy for my pupils was not enough. I needed to appreciate and allow for these thought processes in learners. My perception of the aim of teaching changed from transferring units of information and skills to learners towards facilitating a process of on-going learning transformation within individuals.

### **5.8 Reciprocity**

Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with reciprocity in students' learning. These are Interdependence (balancing self-reliance and sociability), Collaboration (the skills of learning with others), Empathy and listening (getting inside others' minds) and Imitation (picking up others' habits and values). In developing reciprocity it is necessary to feel empathy and to be sympathetic in acknowledging other perceptions of learning. Feelings on all kinds of levels and of all types are intrinsic to the process of reciprocity and their expression a developmental

process of language acquisition (This thesis, Chapter 1: 1.10; Davis, 1947; Koluschova 1967a, 1967b; Curtiss, 1977). Physiognomic perception, an inherent skill, can be refined and developed only through interactions with other human beings (Neisser, 1976; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.9). In my own childhood case, I was evidently able to develop a reasonable level of intelligence in spite of my difficulties, but was perhaps inhibited from faster and more effective progress. My habitual schema, of ignoring my intellectual and emotional needs by avoiding communication was founded in childhood. The indifference, discouragement and condemnation I experienced as a child has taught me to encourage pupils and students, valuing whatever I see of value in their work, not simply from empathy but also as a practical aid to their learning. I have sometimes encouraged my students' unexpectedly arising skills, even when incidental to what is being taught.

Over the period of my research I have learned to reciprocate to a greater extent, balancing self-reliance and sociability. For example, I have engaged in a lot of activities with other people in a wide range of situations and formats, sharing knowledge and expertise (Appendix – Strand 2– 2.6 – Courses – Conferences – Workshops attended). I have learned to be part of the research community, learning from writers, colleagues and participants. I have found other people's stories about researching inspiring and informative, especially those of Carl Rogers. In the book *Freedom to learn* (Rogers & Freiberg, 1983), he describes how he mentored teachers to research the use of a 'positive regard' approach in school, based on his counselling principles and educational philosophy.

I have gained further inspiration from Searle, who describes his efforts, as head of a secondary school, to make British education relevant and accessible to ethnic minority pupils in order to get them into school (Searle, 2001). Learning by imitation, particularly the value of perseverance, trial and error, I have realised the effectiveness of modelling. I opened up my own experimental learning processes to my students' view, with flaws, frustrations, enthusiasms, successes and failures. At the time of doing my research, I thought about numerous other people's childhood and adult stories gleaned from conversations, biographies and psychology books. I connected and compared experiences to my own. For example, Freud's biography enabled me to think about how his theories may have been influenced by his childhood family

environment (Clark, 1987). These narratives allowed me to question and take a multi-dimensional view of complex situations, allowing subtle nuances, comparisons and connections to be considered. Although, these connections are, true to the nature of subjective thought, sometimes too complicated to trace in their entirety, they contributed, giving me evidence of possible subconscious thinking processes at work.

My explorations into my own upbringing and some of my own learning processes helped me to empathise with learners and to focus my support in more effective ways. In any case it seemed only fair to undergo a similar analysis to the one I attempted with others. This process involved exploring my own emotional blocks and possible solutions and turned out to be personally beneficial. I provided my own most 'accessible' source of data regarding how feelings affected learning and through this process I learned how to facilitate others. Listening and 'getting inside' others' minds was an integral process in the research as participants' feedback data was recorded and reflected upon. In this way I was able to facilitate pupils' learning in Strand 1. I compared and considered my own experiences with other teachers' experiences in Strands 2 and 3 and in Strand 4 in evaluating interactive teaching environments in action. During this research I participated and shared the process with others as we researched our feelings in human cognitive processes in learning and teaching together. Answers were found regarding a range of issues through collaboration in learning with others. Aspects covered were complex, sometimes interlinked and sometimes perceived as existing in parallel, not necessarily sequential. In searching for meanings I found the use of bullet points as used in presenting was very helpful in refining my thoughts. The research evidenced the view that learning is a dynamic, interactive and emotional process, which takes place using parallel strings of logic, connecting with the subconscious where meanings are made, perceived and are then often assessed and readjusted.

At times I found I reverted to a tendency to seek the security of an either/or type of logic, which being too simplistic was unhelpful. For example: either I was helping others or I was helping myself. On the whole I would always prefer not to face up to myself. I found these tendencies prevalent in many of my participants. I discovered that we also, without exception (including school refusers) had an important motivation in common, though we might have different interpretations of it. We all

wanted to find out how to develop our learning and overcome our problems. I found my participants were at various levels my co-researchers. We had to learn to develop an open-minded approach and 'accepting' attitude towards our differences and common human frailties in order to proceed. Many of these difficulties were my own, where participants made allowances for me. Sometimes we succeeded in understanding each other and sometimes we did not. The sense of mutual endeavour, benefit and achievement when 'connecting' with others was a huge motivation for me in my work.

### **5.9 Personal reflections on the research process**

Over the period of the research I continued to read and learn across domains, making intuitive choices guided by gut feelings. Sometimes this was hard to justify to myself and other people. It is only looking back on the process that I can appreciate the benefits of this cross-pollination of ideas, seeing that some subconscious and conscious logical processes which were operating were interlinked. For example, I found that the process of learning by interactions between all my areas of interest combined with experiences in the field, including those described in this chapter, were productive. My initial research was about causes for 'emotional blocks to learning', but the research took on an increasingly positive aspect as I looked for and found possible teaching 'solutions'. I investigated some ways human beings acquire emotional learning difficulties and found out some ways to help them to overcome them. I explored how motivation and interest in learning might be encouraged. I developed my own learning and overcame some of my own problems.

At the time of researching, I was frequently not able to grasp the issues fully or explain my intuitive logic in taking my research path. I worked things out as I went along sometimes following my instincts and half understood inclinations. My own idiosyncratic perceptions were often based in faulty logic, which had to be adjusted. There were periods when I had to shelve my studies feeling that my mind needed time to distance itself from the research I had completed. I was then able to come back to it with a fresh approach. There were fortuitous incidents I was able to turn to advantage and other possibilities, rightly or wrongly, I rejected. I was generally unable to fully appreciate why until afterwards. I often had to reflect retrospectively to give my own evidence of the impact of my feelings on my learning. Some of these were based in

my history (for example, childhood and career) and inclinations (for example, artistic interests) and others arose from both positive encouragement and negative, unsympathetic treatment in different educational environments. The combination of connections made, were hard to unravel, but a growing awareness of my feelings seemed to aid cognition and resolution. These have been my personal feeling and learning experiences as a student in parallel with my research.

As my ideas have developed in the analysis of the research strands, I have become more aware of my subjective thinking processes and feelings as they influenced and arose from situations. I tracked some of these, inevitably omitting others; for example, my experiences of social rejection at school. Some of these feelings eventually developed into the various consciously expressed logical arguments included in this thesis. This appears to me to be my subjective mind adjusting itself in some sense independently, allowing me to move on. This is a subconscious process, which can (apart from by neuro-cognitive science through electro scanning) as far as I know to date perhaps only be evidenced by feelings, intuitions and guesswork. My feeling at the end of my action research is that this process of phenomenological reduction has been cathartic (Bruzina, 2004). In retrospect, I was eventually able to produce a diagram of my thesis (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2) and redraft my questions and answer them with greater clarity for myself. This learning process is now of more importance to me than pleasing others. After constant redrafting I have finally settled on a suitable title for my thesis! I am in some sense transformed through my learning, while still being me.

We generally all acknowledge the 'subconscious', but conceptualising or even accepting it applies to ourselves is hard. I find in this research it is not necessarily so much a question of developing a theory as of developing a better 'working' metaphor for approaching and understanding the problem of subconscious cognition. At present I have not found a better practical one for myself from a teaching perspective than that 'feelings are logical' (in their owners' own terms). Understanding this allows me to respect my students thinking processes even if we are in complete opposition. It gives me some chance of finding out 'where they are coming from', and provided I listen to them carefully, a context for negotiating meanings. It also offers me the possibility of forming strategies for developing their thoughts interacting with them,

providing them with additional ideas, but also whole complex experiences and situations, which may provoke change. It enables me to develop myself, giving consideration to my teacher's own subjective intuitions and skills in teaching. My research confirms that for me teaching is not an exact science, but a creative one. Working constructively and adaptively with environments and feelings is an important part of my teaching.

### 5.10 Conclusions

In analysing the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning in this research Strand and in fulfilling my research aim (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2, Aim 2), I found that feelings both negative and positive were intimately involved in the learning process (This thesis, Chapter 2). This research strand gives evidence of the sorts of situations which can affect a teacher as a learner and ways in which feeling responses can have a profound effect on learning. It demonstrates the value of taking an open-minded teaching approach, whenever possible, to benefit one's own learning; uncover, accept and check out judgments with pupils and students (if appropriate); admit and learn from mistakes; and acknowledge existing skills and tendencies in developing one's professional expertise. Researching through practice has a long history in educational research (Campbell *et al.*, 2004, p. 24). Sachs (1999, p. 41) argues that:

*Teacher research has the potential to act as a significant source of teacher and academic professional renewal and development because learning stands at the core of this renewal through the production and circulation of new knowledge about practice. (Cited in Campbell et al., 2004, p. 25)*

As an action researcher I have had several advantages. I have been able to observe and consider personal situations, which I would previously have been unaware of as a conventionally trained class teacher. In Strand 1, working one-to-one, I could note responses to learning in detail, without the distraction of other pupils (though school refusers' home conditions were sometimes distracting). I had a 'privileged' view of students' possible perspectives, given their environment and history. These students were unique, but the relevance of my research lies in that the experiences we shared may inform and raise the awareness of other teachers about these types of problems. Not many teachers can access this type of information directly in such a concentrated

way. In Strand 2, I was able to pursue and uncover some of my own learning difficulties due to being in a situation to do so. I was fortunate in being without the distractions of full-time employment, being financially independent and free from time-consuming full-time family commitments. In Strand 3, I was fortunate that teacher acquaintances were willing to assist and share with me in my research and we were able to find time for the process (This thesis, Chapter 6). In Strand 4, I was able to develop my ideas through my job as an action research mentor and educational evaluator observing, working with and recording teachers, artists and children in curriculum contexts, exploring, expressing and researching feelings in learning (This thesis, Chapter 7).

Across all four Strands of inquiry my new understandings have made me much less judgmental. There has been a discovery that my willingness to accept that there was no easy explanation and no straightforward solution was enabling to participants and me. This ‘seeking solutions, but not expecting to know everything’, open approach appeared to support us in our own long and short-term learning processes. It is an approach, which can be complimentary to the goals expressed in the ‘Every Child Matters’ government guidelines (Department for Education and Skills, 2006a). I (and my participants with my encouragement) had to consciously adopt this ‘open to feelings’ approach, originally based to some extent upon my ‘positive regard’ training on my counselling skills course (Rogers, 1951). It was useful in avoiding unproductive learning approaches, allowing exploration, adjustment and shifts of emphasis. It provided a method to find ways to understand, through participant (and pupil) feedback what promised to be most productive. This approach offered the possibility of making teaching and learning colleagues in the business of solving learning difficulties and fellow adventurers in the business of learning. Some of these adventures were successful, some temporarily shelved and some abandoned. We found out together what worked or did not work for the pupils and for ourselves and moved forward. Using the open minded mentoring approach, participants’ responses produced data, which was unexpected and not circumscribed by me. This data was often fresh, new and surprising to me. This feedback information became part of the teaching and participatory action research cycle (Park *et al.*, 1993). It gave us fresh insights, even though reporting and discussion were inevitably affected by our subjectivity.

In looking at my own learning process, with newfound awareness, it is obvious to me that it has been profoundly affected by my feelings. Over the years the relationships between my feelings, thinking and learning have been complex and important. Firstly, feelings engendered in childhood through environmental contexts, both incidental and structured, had had a profound effect on my subsequent learning and teaching behaviour. Secondly, these feelings continued to be influential until they were transformed by further emotionally linked learning experiences. These were generally triggered and/or influenced through a change in environment; for example, through opportunity and encouragement. Thirdly, strong feelings arose, affected and informed my thinking as I learned and taught. Fourthly, I found the counselling skills course, which encouraged reflection and self-counselling was a useful aid to my teaching and learning. I found that supporting my students and colleagues in expressing their feelings and sharing my own, informed and 'leveraged' the learning process through social interaction (Wenger, *et al.*, 2002, p. 54). Consideration of emotional states (feedback on feelings) might again therefore be seen as informing, as well as indicating and stimulating learning. I proved to myself that on occasions, feelings represented logical subjective thoughts, which could be adjusted to some extent when accessed, allowing me to move on. It is possible, therefore, that my newfound awareness of feelings may have contributed to the networking of new cognitive connections, correcting erroneous thoughts, appreciating correct ones, updating and adapting as I learned. Again the acknowledgement of feelings, rather than their suppression, may be more desirable than previously appreciated in educational circles.

## CHAPTER 6

### STRAND 3: MENTORING EIGHT TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

This chapter should be read with reference to:

**Appendix 3 - Inquiry Strand 3 - Mentoring eight teachers as learners** – this contains the following:

3.1 Table 1 – Hours of mentoring and data collected & Table 2: Graph of mentoring hours per teacher

3.2 Cases data file – Author’s narrative summaries, mentoring records and summaries: Anna (2004 - 2006), Diana (2005 - 2006), Iben (2005 - 2006), Philip (2005), Teresa (2005 - 2007), Sean (2005 - 2006), Lily (2004 - 2005), Jon (2004-2005)\*

#### 6.1 Introduction

In looking for possible answers to the question, “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” I set out to investigate and compare other teachers’ experiences of learning and teaching through mentoring them (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2, Aim 3). This aim gave rise to the collection of data in Inquiry Strand 3 (Appendix – Strand 3). In the process of fulfilling it a subsidiary question was posed: “How do feelings affect other teachers’ learning and teaching?” I mentored eight individual teachers, who agreed to be mentored for this research for different periods of time over three years (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.1 – tables 1&2 – 1 – Hours of mentoring and data collected, 2 – Graph of mentoring hours per teacher). The mentoring sessions took place in my home, their homes, and in various locations around college outside their normal work context. These teachers were three men and five women of various ages spread between their late twenties and late fifties. Two of them were trainee teachers. They were all talking about their learning in different educational circumstances; that is to say none of the data referred to the same work environments. Although two teachers had worked in the same school for a time, the

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\* All names are pseudonyms

conversation was about different schools. The research was based on the following data: teachers' observations and summaries of their own learning; my own observations in response; some teachers' spontaneous symbolic models not necessarily fully explained; some teachers' autobiographical material and my notes taken as I listened. The data revealed some of teachers' motivations, feelings and concerns about their work environment and ethos (See Appendix – Strand 3). In some ways this research cross-referenced with and informed my concurrent employment as a mentor to teacher action researchers from 2004 to 2006 (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.23 & 3.6, Chapter 7).

After this introduction, this chapter starts with a description of decision making involved in researching while mentoring (Section 6.2). This is followed and illustrated by a detailed record of a series of six sessions by one person (Section 6.3). This is an example of the kind of dialogue undertaken between the author, as a mentor, with a mentee – in this case Anna. The participatory nature of the research and the contribution to learning of being able to express feelings to a sympathetic listener are demonstrated by Anna's idiosyncratic learning development and her own conclusions. In this Strand of data I have sampled, as it were, snapshots of seven other teachers' learning processes in addition to Anna's, using the teachers' data as examples of human learning, looking for the individual ways feelings have affected their learning as teachers. I have again broken down my analysis into sections, using whole group data. The data is analysed under the same headings as in my own case in the previous chapter. These refer to ecological environments first in childhood (Freud, 1909; Rogers, 1961; Bandura, 1977), professional training, and later in some professional teaching situations (Wenger 1998, 2008) as talked about by mentees (Section 6.4 - 6.6).

The subsequent sections are again based on ideas about 'learning-to-learn', a framework for encouraging effective learning, researched and summarised into broad areas by Claxton (2002). Again these are resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity and their identifiable associated feelings and behaviours and their opposites in a similar way as in the previous chapter, Chapter 5 (This thesis, Chapter 6: 6.7 - 6.10). I look at some aspects of teachers' ecological environments as reported by them, physical resources and the general social ambience, which seem likely to

have affected their feelings in learning and teaching. In this way I have looked at both negative and positive influences on teachers' perceptions of some of their learning and analysed some ways feelings have affected their learning, teaching capability and progress at various points. The penultimate section gives my reflections on the analysis (Section 6.11). The chapter finishes with a summary and conclusions. In Chapter 8, I then use the data to discuss themes across all four Strands, cross-referencing with the experiences recorded in the data by and with other participants.

## **6.2 The research process**

The research in this strand was undertaken on a voluntary basis both by myself and participants and was unconnected with my paid work with a different group of teachers for Creative Partnerships (CCE, 2008). In a sense I set the general area of interest at the start of mentoring each participant teacher (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.23, 3.6). I explained my research focus as an interest in how feelings relate to learning. The way in which my 'teacher participants' interpreted this was individual. All of the participants signed an agreement. This stated: "We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement" and was signed by myself and each of them. It was understood that I would respect any areas, which might be sensitive by reporting only with relevance to the research focus and in doing so maintaining their anonymity (British Psychological Society, 2006). Many of them chose their own pseudonyms. I gave the participants the opportunity to read what I had written at each mentor session. None of the participants asked for their data to be withdrawn from the research and all of them are still currently able to contact me if they wish.

If talking was not immediately spontaneous, I sometimes started by asking what had led to the person becoming a teacher. In most cases this started a ready stream of subjective thought. I sometimes had problems in writing everything down and had to concentrate hard to catch and record all the information. I did not direct the conversation and would only interject to make sure I understood (if it seemed important), or to ask for a point to be repeated so that I could write it down more easily. My affirmation, empathy or agreement was mostly by gesture, attitude and facial response to show that I appreciated what was being said. At the end of the session I gave the mentee a carbon copy of our notes. I also gave them their symbolic

models by copying or photography, keeping my own copy (Appendix – Strand 3; Lawley & Tompkins, 2000; this thesis, Chapter 3: 3.5).

The notes I wrote gave the mentee information about what I had taken in. I sometimes felt rather inadequate in this when mentees were particularly articulate and presented me with a stream of complicated language and thought, which it was hard to comprehend quickly and record. This happened with all the mentees, but was particularly difficult with those who spoke rapidly. I sometimes had to paraphrase to write the gist and undoubtedly missed some important points. The decision to write down the essence of our conversations was governed not only by the need to produce data, but also by a desire on my part to develop the ‘record of learning approach’ so that to some extent the process of bringing some subjective thoughts to consciousness might possibly be tracked. Although there was some evidence of this, the complex connective thinking (creative synthesis), which appeared to go on, made this process difficult to analyse. It was evident that this process took place for the mentee and also for me as the mentor on different levels as we made meanings for ourselves and with each other. Even so, the fact that we exchanged notes may have aided authenticity. The period of reflection, of generally a month or more, between sessions appeared to be important to some mentees. There was no formal reference made to anyone else as far as I am aware. However, sometimes they deliberately brought up a topic they wanted to explore. Many of the teachers clearly came prepared with topics they wanted to focus on in each session.

I gradually became better at recording meanings, by picking out significant phrases. These might be significant for me because they related to my areas of interest or because of their apparent significance to the mentee. Thus mentoring was quite a difficult balancing act, which apart from ‘off days’ or lapses in concentration, appeared to generally improve with practice. The information thus revealed might be understood by me as the conversation proceeded, later on reflection or never fully understood by me at all. Of course it is likely that I wrote mostly what I understood in terms of words, but there were levels of meaning, which definitely were hidden from me and which I felt there was no need to investigate; for example Anna’s problems with her relationship. I considered using a tape recorder, but when I experimented with this in the first pilot mentoring sequence with Anna, it seemed to make us feel

uncomfortable, less relaxed and to inhibit the free flow of thought and conversation. Of course my own interpretation may have influenced and created this effect. I chose Anna as an example because she provided me with a wide range of complex subjective reflection, which clearly illustrated her emotional development in the process.

Although Anna seems to have ascribed some resolution of her problems to my comments, I did not offer direct solutions, but always spoke generally sometimes sharing connections with my own life experiences, both positive and negative, and other people I had heard or read of, when this seemed appropriate. In the final symbolic modelling session (session 6) with Anna below, she speaks of my 'directions' helping her. This was where I used David Grove's technique of 'Clean language' asking the following types of open questions: "Is there anything else? What goes on this side? What goes above/below?" After the first six pilot sessions with Anna, since she was a psychology student, I asked her to give me some reflective feedback on the process. Anna's retrospective reflections, produced separately, were much lengthier after time had passed than those produced in the sessions, indicating that her subjective thinking processes took time to surface and adjust into a final verbal commentary form (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000). I did not ask for retrospective reflections from the other participants, as it did not seem appropriate to their needs. I did ask Jon to write about his upbringing since I was unable to note all he said at the time. He subsequently produced a mini-auto-biography of his life in his own time.

### **6.3 An example of the mentoring process: Anna**

#### **Session 1.**

**MENTOR RECORD (12.07.04):** Jenny's notes/record of Anna's words/points while chatting – and end summary

Anna seemed to blossom somehow as she was producing her picture and seemed to me to realise how all the complicated strands of her life fitted together. I find Anna a very clever, practical and helpful person with a warm heart. She seems to be able to see through complicated issues and express them well. Jenny

**MENTEE RECORD (12.07.04):** Anna's own written end summary

*"Factors mentioned: me, family, boyfriend and career.  
PLAN=D*

- 1) Article posted off to journal.
- 2) Chapter 1 structure in detail
- 3) Start writing next section.
- 4) Data?

*Good reinforcement, very caring, empathetic, and open = felt very uninhibited and you provided the right amount of support needed for me to do that!"*



### **Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 1**

*“This session was spent talking about my PhD. Artwork was carried out, and during the session I reflected on all the elements contained within my work, and conceptualised this as a large ‘whirlwind’. The session was useful for me to establish the nature of my work, and to reflect on the complexities involved in carrying out a PhD. Jenny was very useful in probing me, and her comments enabled me to carry my train of thought into different directions, which I wouldn’t have considered. By the end of the session I realised that my PhD was not the only topic of discussion, but that I had talked about family and relationships in general. Each of these aspects I felt were significant and indicated that other factors in my life were important and not just the PhD.”*

### **Session 2.**

**MENTOR RECORD (28.07.04):** Jenny’s notes/record of Anna’s words/points while chatting – and end summary

Anna talked about her perceptions when helping others and how people in psychology get their subjects. Anna talked about professional ethics and keeping work/personal life separate and helping a friend cope with work problems. Anna discussed her lecturing / career ambitions, the possibilities of perhaps one day becoming the first woman of Asian ancestry to be dean of a British university. She said that having a

family and children was also important to her. She hopes to take a student centred approach to being a psychology lecturer. She has just finished an article and is getting it checked.

**Comment:** Anna seems to be working things out in her life. She is a highly intelligent, ethical person who balances herself. She gets understandably confused by complicated issues, but this is part of working them out and she resolves them before getting stuck into them again. She is excited by the challenge of sorting things out. She seems like she'll make a great teacher because she questions herself and cares about students.



**MENTEE RECORD (28.07.04):** Anna's own written end summary

*“Conclusions: This session made me feel a lot more positive about myself, and my future aspirations. It has enabled me to bring to the surface and make certain issues concrete! I feel a lot happier now and a lot more determined about myself career wise! I am feeling quite passionate about my ambitions right now!! The drawing was very much cathartic. I do wish however my words were more.... (?) However, at the time I expressed my emotions more using colours than words.”*

**Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 2**

*“This session was different, because I focussed on the use of words within the artwork. I started off with some words in the centre, and then the artwork developed around the key words. During this session I was overly concerned with my career prospects, and the words written included ‘relationships, stress, money, family, life, work, and ambition’. The words stress and money were inter-linked as I was at the time applying for jobs without success. As a result I was feeling very pessimistic about reasons for doing the whole PhD and as the session progressed I talked about*

*the unfairness of people getting higher positions merely through connections rather than hard work. Throughout this pessimism, I discussed some of the darker sides of my chosen career path and mentioned examples of lecturers who take advantage of their students. As I talked about topics, which were personally upsetting, the artwork became darker and more morose. Towards the end however, with guidance from Jenny, I was able to see that although there were these immoral aspects within higher education, the fact that I was so upset by these and wanted to achieve some form of change, was a highly positive aspect. Jenny helped me realise that my personal values and beliefs were very commendable, and that although the situation I described was bleak, I possessed the ability to address and resolve them. As a consequence, I tried to make the artwork lighter and more colourful (representing my state of mind), however the nature of black pastel made it impossible to achieve this. By the end of the session I felt much more content and motivated towards carrying out my work and realised my own ambitions were far greater than I had originally perceived.”*

### **Session 3.**

**MENTOR RECORD (24.08.04):** Jenny’s notes/record of Anna’s words/points while chatting – and end summary

Session 1 – seemed to be about mixed up themes, which were emerging and combining.

Session 2 – seemed to be about pinpointing central themes/areas.

Session 3 – was about Anna’s own nature and needs – finding out that her inner self was passionate and ambitious. Some anxieties were voiced about people’s perceptions of herself and being misjudged out of context and usual environment. Intention – to discuss dissertation.

**MENTEE RECORD (24.08.04):** Anna’s own written end summary

*“Talked about ‘options’ – discussed my future plans/career – race and personality. My picture was a heart with a flame inside it – very colourful, but a little child-like. This session was more of a discussion. Jenny and I talked more together and this was fine. I felt the session went well.”*



**Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 3**

*“During this session I talked less about my PhD. I was full of optimism as I had been called for a job interview, and had also discussed with my supervisor the possibility of additional funding to complete my PhD. I felt a lot more at ease about my PhD and instead I focussed on relationships and a little bit more about family. At the end of the session I wasn't happy with my artwork (because I felt it appeared too childish); but I was pleased with the overall outcome of the session.”*

**Session 4.**

**MENTOR RECORD (07.09.04):** Jenny's notes/record of Anna's words/points while chatting – and end summary

Session 4 – We reviewed sessions to date. Talked about Anna's dissertation and decided that in some ways the process was more important than the subject matter and that one's own satisfaction with work was more important than anything else.

**MENTEE RECORD (07.09.04):** Anna's own written end summary

*“The tree was a picture of the tree outside, however, at the start we talked about relationships and the writing of my work. I asked Jenny about her artwork. Many distractions today! Jenny was very organised today and very relaxed. This session was very thought provoking and it was nice to hear about Jenny's work for once!”*



**Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 4**

*“During this session I mainly talked about my fears for going to Berlin to present a paper. I wasn't concerned with the presentation itself, but more the fact that I would*

*be travelling alone, and I was concerned about my ethnicity and how it would be perceived in a different country. I was excited about presenting, but during the session I focussed more on my worries associated with travel. Jenny was very helpful during this session and her concern was much appreciated. The artwork I carried out during this session was a picture of the tree outside the window. It didn't symbolise anything at the time, and I decided to take this approach, as I wanted to experiment drawing something, which was real rather than imagined (or concrete rather than abstract). By the end of the session I felt relieved that someone was agreeing with my safety concerns, and I was determined to ensure that I had everything organised for my trip. (I then spent the next few hours that day searching for the bus timetable in Berlin – which I successfully found and was a lifesaver when I landed in Berlin!!).”*

### **Session 5.**

**MENTOR RECORD (29.09.04):** Jenny's notes/record of Anna's words/points while chatting – and end summary

Anna has made great progress in confidence since our last session. She enjoyed her experience of working abroad in Berlin and being independent from home. She is progressing steadily in her work and has resolved her short-term financial problems.

**MENTEE RECORD (29.09.04):** Anna's own written end summary

*“Today I talked more about Berlin. I feel like I didn't talk about my feelings and this was because of the content of my drawing (=Berlin). My drawing was more conceptual images rather than actual things, I feel this helps channel my emotions and is more rewarding than trying to draw actual objects / scenarios. We talked a little about world affairs, which was interesting. Jenny was supportive as usual and I think the session went well.”*



### Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 5

*“During this session I talked more about the Berlin trip. This session was a little tricky as I had just ended a long-term relationship, and although I wanted to talk about the issues, at the same time I didn't want to talk about them. I ended up drawing some of the symbols of Berlin, which I had seen throughout my visit, and generally talked about the whole Berlin experience. Towards the end I finally talked a little about my break-up, but felt that I only scratched the surface. I felt that because I had tried to draw concrete objects from my memory of Berlin (rather than abstract concepts) this had restricted my artistic talent and also my whole experience of the session. I left feeling a little dissatisfied with my artwork (I felt it didn't accurately portray the beauty of Berlin in terms of artistic accuracy), and slightly upset about some of the topics I had talked about regarding my relationship (because I had not talked about the most important aspects of this and not talked openly – but maybe this was because it was too soon to talk so openly?).”*

#### Session 5

*Jenny... Was there a session where I didn't do any artwork? I can vaguely remember there was a session where I didn't do anything and we just talked. I remember talking a bit more about the relationship, and generally feeling a lot better. I think we talked about possessive men, and I remember your words of advice were very helpful... (I can't remember whether this was a separate session in itself, or part of session 5!!!)”*

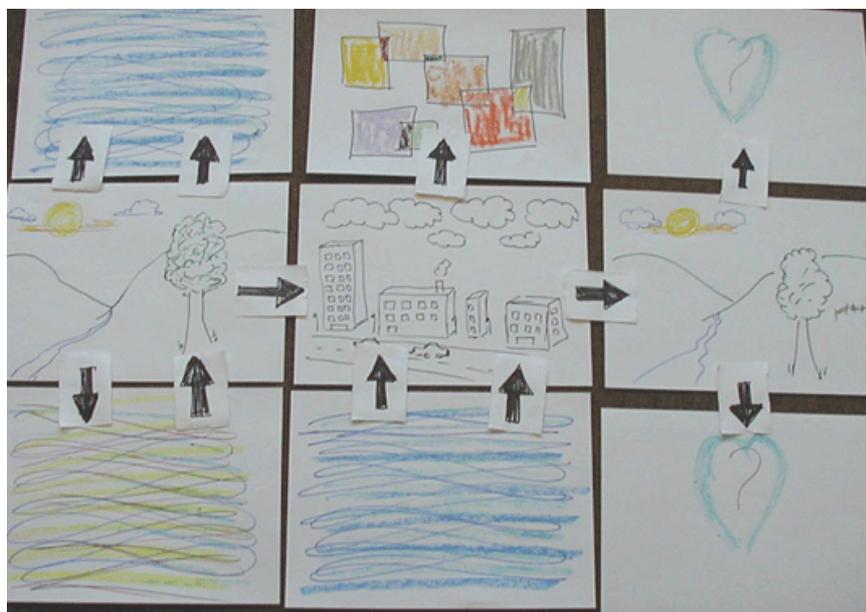
#### Session 6.

**MENTOR RECORD (03.11.04):** Jenny's notes/record of Anna's words/points while chatting – and end summary

(In this session I encouraged Anna to attach extra sheets of A4 paper to the initial drawing so that it could expand in any direction. Anna seems very organised in her thinking and there is coherence and balance in her cognitive map. I am grateful for the insights I am gaining into thinking processes.)

**MENTEE RECORD (03.11.04):** Anna's own written end summary

*“I found this session really interesting – the ability to move around the initial pictures was very enlightening. The arrows too illustrate a great deal and helped me to realise my own goals / ambitions. Jenny really helped throughout this session. Her ability to 'prompt' me was much needed, and added to the success of the whole session.”*



**Anna's retrospective summary after 7 sessions: Session 6 (cognitive mind map)**

*“This session was very stimulating and interesting, one of my most favourite sessions!! The first part (with the yoga techniques) I think wasn't too useful in my case, mainly due to my scepticism. However, it did enable me to tune into the notion of 'clear mind', which was then used as the starting point of my mind map. The first picture that I drew was my conception of my clear mind. This to me was an idyllic state with calm and picturesque qualities. The ability to move around the picture (either left, right, up, or down) was a breath of fresh air, and the option to do so really opened up my mind and was very exciting. I moved to the right of the 'calm mind' picture and contrasted it with my state of mind at the time – I was very stressed as I was teaching later in the evening – normally this isn't too stressful for me, but as it was with Masters students I was concerned. Also, because it was the month of fasting, I was worried about time factors because I had to go home, open the fast, and then return to university). The resultant image of my mind was a city scene, with traffic and tall high-rise buildings or a 'chaotic mind'. Originally in my mind, I had pictured a scene from New York late at night, with taxi drivers, smog, traffic and angry people (due to my limited drawing ability, I only drew buildings and some cars on the road with dark clouds of smog above). For me, this picture represented what the PhD had turned my calm mind into, though on reflection may have been over-dramatised due to my stressful state at the time. Jenny then prompted me if there was anything above or below the pictures. At this time, I began conceptualising the above as the result/output of the pictures, and the below as the elements of my personality which I brought to each scenario.”*

*“Starting with the first picture, I drew what was above the image, which was clear blue; i.e. the output/result from a clear mind is clear actions (which I represented as blue). I then thought about the picture below the clear mind, which again was blue. This blue represented my calm clear sensible manner, which enhances the clear mind. I then decided that this calm clear manner was also always present even during the 'chaotic mind' and remembered times when I had dealt with highly stressful events (such as a heavy workload, the whole Berlin situation) in a very calm and efficient manner. This aspect pleased me, and as a result, when I did the image above the 'chaotic mind' (i.e. the output from the chaotic mind) this was very structured. At the time I considered drawing books (to represent the actual bound thesis) but instead drew square blocks, all inter-connected and very colourful.”*

*“On reflection, these may have represented the outputs I expect from my PhD, which includes my actual thesis itself, and a number of journal articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Once this had been complete, I was then able to see a chronological sequence of my 'mind-set' and when asked by Jenny if there was anything to the right of the 'chaotic-mind'. I thought of what I hoped to achieve once my PhD was complete. At this point I was really surprised, because I was compelled to draw the exact same image that had represented the 'calm mind'. The reason it was surprising was because I realised that what I hoped to achieve by completing the PhD, was the same state of calm I had before I started the PhD. This was very surprising because it indicated that what I was chasing after was what I had had all along (!). I found this very amusing, 'eye opening', though slightly worrying too. The*

worrying aspect (though very minute) was that therefore I had wasted my time doing my PhD, because in the end I was chasing something, which I already possessed.”

“I then revisited the picture below my ‘calm mind’ and added a few more colours to represent that although I was calm at the time, I was searching for something more, something to occupy me, and the colours represented my thirst for knowledge and achievement. Once this had been done I felt a lot happier about the whole mind map, as it read more like a narrative. I then thought about the images above and below the final ‘calm mind’ and decided to put a question mark for these aspects. I chose my favourite colour purple, and drew a large question mark on the sheet. I originally wanted to keep them blank, but felt that an objective observer would not understand that the blank papers were meant to be that way (representing the unknown). The question marks above and below the final ‘calm mind’ represented my lack of knowledge about how I would be feeling after the PhD, and what the outcome would be. However the simple question marks failed to convey my feelings, so I took the blue pastels (which had represented my inner-self/personality) and drew hearts round the question mark. This symbolised my faith in my abilities, and acknowledgement that although I didn’t know exactly where I was going to ‘end up’, the qualities and skills I had gained and already possessed, would ensure that the outcome was positive.”

“The next task was to place arrows showing the direction of the mind map. Again, these were very useful in illustrating the sequencing of the images and after this task I felt a great sense of satisfaction. Jenny’s comments throughout this session were very helpful in guiding my pictures, and at the end of the session I remember feeling very at ease with myself. I felt that although the preparation for the teaching I would be doing would be tough, I had the skills and abilities to MAKE the class work, and that no matter what my future would be good as I had the right/good foundations needed to be successful, wherever life took me.”

### **Researcher’s interpretational comment**

It is evident that Anna found the experience of being mentored a useful one. The process of adjustment in producing her own conclusions at the time seems to have been helpful to her. This was also a method of research, with mentees’ prior agreement, which proved useful in order to ‘sample’ the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning in relation to teachers. In the next three sections I look at some aspects of teachers’ ecological environments (derived from the data set of eight participants) as they may have influenced their feelings about learning, choice of profession and attitudes in teaching. Firstly I look at evidence presented by them about their childhood environments (Freud, 1909; Rogers, 1961; Bandura, 1977); secondly, environments affecting some of them in their professional learning and thirdly, their feelings about teaching in various situations (Wenger 1998, 2008).

#### 6.4 Ecological environments: Childhood

The amount of information given by this group of teachers regarding the effect of their childhood background and experiences upon their feelings about learning and teaching varied considerably. For example Jon related his family background and influences towards teaching, writing some autobiographical notes at my request, whereas Philip did not mention his at all. In Philip's case it cannot be assumed that childhood experiences were not relevant, but perhaps that some mentees had other things in mind, while being mentored. Of those who talked about it, Anna, Sean and Jon revealed that their upbringing had a profound effect on their feelings about learning and teaching. They were particularly grateful for the education, support and encouragement they had received in childhood from parents who had been deprived of a similar opportunity. In these cases encouragement to succeed and aspirations of parents had evidently been an important factor in success. Although they had freely chosen their life's course, they were proud to have been able, in some sense, to fulfil their parents' ambitions in becoming teachers (Appendix – Strand 3 – Anna, Jon, Sean).

Jon's upbringing had been culturally rich, but poor materially. He was brought-up by very supportive parents:

*Dad was into Science, Mum more into Arts - poetry and literature. At school she had loved to be in plays. My family were poor. Money was often short, but there was always money for books. Mum and Dad were avid readers and passed this on to all three of their children. They were also determined that their children would have an education. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon)*

In this, he is an example of those children, whose background does not conform to the stereotype of the 'deprived child'. Jon's understanding of pupils was, to some extent, based on his experiences of school, which were both positive and negative in ways, which affected his future fundamentally in relation to his teaching. He recalled: "*I was head boy at my state grammar school but messed up on 'A' levels. I wanted to be a mechanic and had developed an interest in drama*". This interest, which led on to becoming a drama teacher, was started by being encouraged and chosen by a favourite primary teacher for a main part in a religious play. However, he encountered prejudice against himself by some teachers he says, because he was poorly dressed. This made him particularly sympathetic to disadvantaged pupils. He explained:

*I never really liked school. I felt poor and less valued by some teachers. In juniors, the head, wouldn't let me attempt the scholarship exams for the top two high schools even though I was an A student and came second in the class. I felt the same at Grammar School. I didn't enjoy the academic, but I was in all the plays. I was good with words and could lead others. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon)*

It is easy to see how these life experiences have helped him to communicate well with disaffected teenagers. He has proved his early labelling by his primary head teacher to be completely wrong, as he has gone on to become a playwright and published educational author. He obviously does value the 'academic' when he is able to express himself in his own way. It is possible that his learning progress would have been speedier without such early discouragement.

Teresa's bad experience at school of failing to get her expected grades in five 'A' levels affected her feelings and confidence even as a mature student over twenty years later. It seems likely that she would have benefited from mentoring, when she did not fulfil her promise in her exams. She was under achieving even though she got 'acceptable' results and she evidently needed sympathy, support and help in adjusting to her situation (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa). Although environment, incidental history and parental influence were important, the individual combinations of these were complex. For example Sean's childhood story, set against a backdrop of 'the troubles' in Belfast in Northern Ireland, was one, which he was still coming to terms with (Appendix – Strand 3 – Sean). It was evident that only the mentee could resolve and explain these kinds of on-going effects on their feelings, as a part of his or her intimate interest and thought. There was always information I, as the mentor, could not be aware of and often there was information the mentee was not yet 'fully' aware of either. There appeared to be issues experienced by all of the teachers (both emotionally positive and negative) based in childhood, of which some awareness might inform their reflections on teaching. It might be argued that all teachers', in learning about and interpreting the world for their pupils, might benefit from training in counselling skills in order to confront '*...the particular reality we inhabit*' (Freeman, 1993, p.138). Some of these may derive from upbringing and may affect teaching approaches, feelings and confidence in various ways. Positive regard and opportunities for 'open' support were appreciated by most of the teachers as useful in

raising awareness, encouraging reflection and possible resolution of problems (Rogers, 1951, 1961).

### **6.5 Ecological environments: professional training**

Emotional problems affecting learning development were experienced by both trainee teachers and experienced teachers undertaking continuing professional development within the group. Mentoring appeared to offer a useful way for some students and teachers to come to terms with these kinds of difficulties. Diana found that mentoring trainee teachers was a process that supported her own work, giving insights into her own teaching and benefiting both parties. She observed that: *“Trainee teachers are full of energy and enthusiasm and I think it's important to support them to work in their own way”* (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana).

Some emotional blocks to learning continue into adulthood, making them hard for others (and even learners themselves) to understand since they appear to be illogical from the outside. For example, although by everyone else's estimation she was succeeding, Teresa wondered if *“...everyone's confidence in her abilities is undeserved”*. It may be that Teresa's failure to live up to high expectations for her 'A' level results made her feel unworthy in spite of her concurrent high grades at teacher training college (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa). Teresa was experiencing 'old' emotional feelings and depression about failing at learning, which were triggered inappropriately by receiving a B instead of an A for an assignment and by the daunting programme of work she was asked to undertake. Both Teresa and Lily were experiencing conflict between the demands of their degree subject and their teacher education programme. This appeared to be due to the inability of the two different teacher-training colleges' departments to coordinate and plan from the students' likely perspective. This was causing work overload, conflict and stress for the trainees; for example Teresa's problems of being asked to attend two different classes at the same time, when the timetables clashed on her combined teacher training and degree course; Lily's even more hectic degree and teaching course, which in combination with full time teaching and one day a week release to college, gave little time for reflection, assignments and every day lesson preparation. In spite of this, Lily was undertaking 'research' informally into how to motivate boys in Year 10 using drama to consider issues like bullying (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa, Lily).

Teachers had been, or were currently interested in, designing lessons, adapting the curriculum to pupils' needs. Diana commented about problems of dismissive parental attitudes affecting pupils' feelings and motivation to learn. This area is one, which could open up avenues for research by teachers with various male and female participants within their different school communities. Diana found that,

*Some parents are negative and refuse to accept their children's success. This has a drastic effect on pupil confidence. One pupil has really gone down hill since his mother rejected my praise. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

The work undertaken by current government initiatives, in remodelling and extending schools in the United Kingdom, supports the need for further work to help families experience positive feelings about education. Research by teachers on the ground is likely to be necessary for this to succeed (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2006-2008).

### **6.6 Ecological environments: Teaching**

Unrealistic and inappropriate expectations for preparation and evidencing by 'ticking boxes' using general performance criteria were a problem for some teachers and trainee teachers. These did not allow for different situations. Their imposition ignored more complicated issues about trusting professional judgment, developing teacher skills and motivating pupils to lasting effect. For example, Teresa experienced problems of overload in filling in lesson plans on her teacher training course; Diana was frustrated with requirements for constant assessment and an 'inappropriate' syllabus; Philip was dissatisfied with the lowering of exam marking standards and Sean disliked target setting by senior management, which ignored pupil and teacher needs. The current tendency to work overload of assessment, preparation and marking creates immense pressures on conscientious teachers, such as in the cases of Teresa at primary level and Diana and Lily at secondary level, who were encountering problems in coping (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa, Diana, Philip, Sean, Lily).

Teaching motivation involved teachers' feelings, self-esteem and ethical principles, as well as financial gain. The highlight of Sean's career from his own point of view was when he met an ex-pupil, who told him Sean's lessons had inspired him to take a degree in history. In talking about her motivation to teach efficiently, Diana found:

*Feeling empowered – like you can and want to do something – is far better than feeling pressured –like you have to do something – even when that ‘something’ is the same in each case. Whereas school’s demands can make me feel pressured, the University makes me feel empowered [in using her experience to mentor others]. As a result, I happily do more than is expected of me without feeling stressed about it. This is also the key with pupils / the learning experience. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Politicians and educational system managers were not seen as necessarily sharing teachers’ vocations, motivations and values. Jon felt that,

*Teachers are abused by the system. I went into teaching to ‘get a steady job’ and carried on for the pleasure of seeing kids develop and enjoy drama for example, skills, ideas and issues. I enjoyed it, but people do not value it in the outside world. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon)*

A lack of professional respect, between management and staff sometimes led to negativity; for example, Diana left her job because

*It was annoying when my judgment of the learning process was not trusted, when I know I was doing a good job. In my present job I am trusted because I get results my way. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Philip left his job because he was being asked to pass students he felt had not attained a high enough standard. Iben’s ethical dilemmas in her film producer and trainer role were important enough to make her leave. Sean and Jon also left highly paid jobs because of conflicts of principle with management (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana, Philip, Iben, Sean, Jon). There were sometimes conflicts of interest and perspective; for example, Diana’s former head had stated that “...the perception from above was all-important”, but Diana felt her own judgment of particular individual and group pupil needs was of more importance for effective learning (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana). Lily was suffering some emotional stress over how to support children, who faced difficult emotional issues. She had reported that a child was self-harming and instead of the help she expected, witnessed his distress at being named and shamed in class by another teacher. She found she missed having someone trustworthy and discrete (such as a trained mentor) to discuss her pupils with at school. For example she said,

*I found it really useful to talk like this because I rarely get the opportunity. I think that this is because I find it difficult to speak like this to people in the profession and I feel that people outside teaching don't understand some of the issues raised. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Lily)*

Several teachers mentioned the need for a positive, flexible, empathic and realistic approach from managers and head teachers. This implies the acknowledgement of feelings at all levels within a school and voices their frustration:

*A negative head teacher has an undermining effect on staff and a negative teacher undermines pupils. The solution is psychological not practical - attitudes to education have got to change. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Diana and Sean had had this problem in different schools. In Sean's case, he had achieved a position as a deputy head and was on the way to achieving a long time ambition of becoming a head teacher himself. However, he was so appalled by his head teacher's inconsiderate behaviour towards the school staff that he resigned after only a year with considerable loss of income and career status (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana, Sean).

Some teachers complained that unsympathetic (and ultimately inefficient) marketing policies had conspired to lower academic standards and demotivate them. These sometimes had a profound effect on teachers' feelings about their jobs. For example, Philip was not happy to see a fall in academic standards and this caused him to quit his job before retirement age. Diana found:

*The exam boards have started producing uninspiring texts because of a commercial agenda. Schools are reliant on resources exam boards provide. We have no time to make extra resources because syllabus texts are constantly changing. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Some teachers felt in need of an appropriate level of choice, control and autonomy. For example Teresa was disappointed at how little choice she might be allowed to make in preparing her lessons as a teacher in the current climate, and was causing her to question if she wanted to teach after qualifying. She had thought she would be allowed to follow the National Curriculum guidelines but deliver her lessons using her own presentation methods and ideas. Diana was frustrated in the choices available for teaching English literature. Jon had seen his drama department budget cut drastically and had been removed from teaching exam courses, being occupied as a senior teacher elsewhere. He was then asked to rescue the final part of an 'A' level drama course, which he would have preferred to teach originally. Then the course he had developed over several years with a colleague to engage disaffected, non-academic, teenagers was also cut. He became so disaffected himself that he had eventually left

the school after over twenty years there, well before retirement age (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa, Diana, Jon).

### **6.7 Resilience**

In analysing the data from some teachers in relation to their childhood experiences, it seemed that these ‘highly intelligent’ and ‘sensitively aware’ children had formed perceptions and make reasoned subjective assumptions about their environment, which affected their subsequent feelings and attitudes to learning. Sometimes these were positive and sometimes negative. For example, Sean, who was supported by his father towards education and away from violence, had overcome the bad influences of his childhood neighbourhood in Belfast in Northern Ireland. He had used his experiences to give himself a positive role in life as a history and politics teacher, with authentic stories and views to draw upon in his teaching. On the other hand Teresa had assumed quite logically that she would succeed without effort, because she found school easy. Her teachers did not convey to her the level of work she needed to do for her five ‘A’ level examinations and her parents did not know how to help her. Unfortunately her previous success prevented her getting the extra help needed, disguising the fact that she was under achieving until she took her exams. This experience affected her resilience in learning then and in later life (Appendix – Strand 3 – Sean, Teresa).

All of the teachers displayed resilience in overcoming various obstacles at various points in their careers in order to continue teaching. For example Philip had persevered for over twenty years before retiring early and Teresa eventually returned to her teacher-training course after six months off with stress. To reiterate, Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with resilience in students’ learning. These are Absorption (flow: the pleasure of being rapt in learning), Managing distractions (recognising and reducing interruptions), Noticing (really sensing what is out there), and Perseverance (‘stickability’: tolerating the feelings of learning). These teachers were resilient, optimistic and persistent in continuing to teach and were subject to a constant interplay of levels and kinds of feelings in relation to their individual situations at work. A key motivation was personal satisfaction and pleasure in their pupils’ achievements, which was not quantifiable, but very much present. There was also often a moral agenda, inspiration or vocation

behind the desire to teach, which was very much tied up with personal feelings. For example, Diana said, *“You’ve got your own integrity (motivation in teaching?). I wanted to be a teacher because my teachers’ were not very caring and I wanted to be more supportive”* (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana). In a sense she illustrates her own feelings of resilience in the following comment: *“Teachers are trying to do their job in spite of the system rather than with the support of the system”* (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana).

### **6.8 Resourcefulness**

Teachers’ own talents, personality, skills, interests, enthusiasm and experience affected their feelings in teaching pupils. Their feelings related to teachers’ own creative learning processes and shows that Claxton’s (2002) four behaviours or skills associated with resourcefulness in students’ learning also apply to teachers. These are: Questioning (getting below the surface and playing with situations); Making links (seeking coherence, relevance and meaning); Imagining (using the mind’s eye as a learning theatre); Reasoning (thinking rigorously and methodically) and Capitalising (making good use of resources). In developing resourcefulness it is necessary to use a creative approach to learning, connecting and combining resources and ideas in different ways. Teachers in this group were able to transfer knowledge about aspects of learning on a deeper level than the simple transferring of facts. Identifying areas of human interest to pupils, appealing to their interest and current feelings about their world and challenging and extending their knowledge was very much a part of this. Sean used stories of his own childhood experiences of living in a war zone in Northern Ireland to add interest to his lessons in history and politics. He had also, as a Catholic, trained in a Protestant teacher training college and worked for years in a Church of England school. He had special insights about ethnic conflict, which informed his work. Lily was working on a drama unit to help Year 10 boys express their emotions and relate to others.

Diana expressed the feelings of frustration she felt in not having sufficient time to design appropriate worksheets for her pupils and the problem of motivating them in the long term:

*There’s a conflict between ticking boxes and doing everything I would want to do for example, staying after school and designing worksheets I know would*

*work. Adapting work works well and pupils are more successful, but it requires a lot of work. You have to do what the government, Head of Department asks you because that's what you're paid to do, but it is a balancing act with what my own judgment says is needed for the pupils. I am judged by the results regardless of pupils' problems over which I have no control. Just because pupils can jump through a hoop doesn't mean they will continue to be academic afterwards. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Teachers appeared aware of issues regarding failing pupils. They appeared well able to carry out practitioner research to help children not immediately able to conform to conventional targets and give them a 'proper' education within the system. They implied that a change of attitude was needed at management level in order to allow them to modify the curriculum, whether for gifted children or the less able.

### **6.9 Reflectiveness**

Teachers' professional skills, intuitions, opinions and experience may be developed further through reflection. Reflection has always been necessary in teaching, but has only recently been recognised as a necessary part of the job. In this reflexive research and professional development are key. Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with reflectiveness in students' learning. These equally apply to teachers' learning at work. These are: Planning (working learning out in advance); Revising (monitoring and adapting along the way); Distilling (drawing out the lessons from experience) and Meta-learning (understanding learning and yourself as a learner). In developing reflectiveness it is necessary to develop awareness and intuitive feelings and responses are very much a part of this process. The opposite of awareness might be seen as ignorance and lack of awareness.

Sean identified reflection as a key element in teaching effectively:

***Respecting** others – but we can only do this if we respect ourselves. Respect has to be earned; and we have to learn to respect ourselves also by an appropriate and cognisant (self-reflecting) code of conduct. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Sean, author's emphasis)*

Peer mentoring was found by Diana to be helpful both to herself and her mentees in their professional work. It helped her recognise the current realities of her teaching, aiding communication and professional development:

*One person I have mentored has achieved a lot personally and has also helped me. The mentoring has been mutually beneficial. It has not been a problem*

*marking them and they have not taken advantage of the relationship. It takes the pressure off to be able to admit one's difficulties and to experience professional trust of other teachers. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Experienced teachers and trainee teachers both appeared to appreciate sharing their feelings and concerns through 'open' mentoring. Diana noted:

*I'm not sure if it's the mentoring sessions, but I feel more relaxed, more time for my own thoughts, less stressed. I think it has helped doing these sessions with you. I am prioritising more – nobody helps you prioritise in teaching. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana)*

Many of the teachers reflected and summarised on their mentoring sessions in retrospect, helping them get things in perspective, explaining points which had arisen in previous sessions. This was particularly true of those who drew pictures, which could often not be explained at the time of doing. Mentees chose their own path and issues to communicate. They managed their own emotional responses to mentoring. Jon and Philip chose not to use symbolic modelling. Sean and Diana were able to express their anger through their 'pictures' (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon, Philip, Sean, Diana). People are often inclined towards forgetfulness, confusion and avoidance, when facing feelings arising from painful unresolved feelings and emotional dilemmas and teachers were no exception. For example, Teresa's and Sean's distancing themselves from me while resolving their career dilemmas, but being happy to talk again when they felt they were ready (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa, Sean). Teachers could not always immediately explain their feelings adequately in words, needing time for reflection. Anna's retrospective reflective summaries illustrate this (Appendix 3 – Strand 3 – Anna).

Cognitive processes were disturbed by emotional dilemmas, causing disruption to memory, confidence and learning, which were difficult to articulate. For example, Anna and Teresa found it difficult to understand and explain their problems (Appendix – Strand 3 – Anna, Teresa). The forgetful aspect, avoidance and confusion evidenced in one of Anna's summaries seem to me to illustrate a normal human response to painful unresolved feelings and emotions. For example she wrote:

*Was there a session where I didn't do any artwork? I can vaguely remember there was a session where I didn't do anything and we just talked. I remember talking a bit more about the relationship, and generally feeling a lot better. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Anna)*

It seems that sometimes simply referring to, voicing or facing a problem, which has painful connections helps towards some kind of inner resolution. I still know virtually nothing about her relationship. What was important was that she was happy with her own solution at the time.

Giving 'space' and exercises such as the yoga technique of clearing the mind in symbolic modelling, may allow thoughts to surface and/or promote resolution (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.2 Cases data file – Anna). In looking at the pictures produced by teachers, it was possible to see some cognitive processing of thoughts through subjective feelings and their expression. Expressing and exploring feelings under their own direction and control tended towards eventual resolution of some of the mentees problems. Sean expressed his anger and Diana her frustrations with her workload. Lily drew her personal context in relation to work and family, while Anna expressed her personal dilemmas in learning. Metaphors and symbols in words and pictures represented some complicated feelings and thoughts. Different levels or types of thinking processes operated simultaneously. For example, mentees often drew their pictures and talked at the same time (Appendix – Strand 3 – Anna, Diana, Iben, Teresa, Lily, Sean). Trainee teachers, being mentored to acknowledge their feelings in coping with their own learning might make them more sympathetic to pupils' learning difficulties. This reflective process might possibly also help them develop understanding and management skills in dealing with students' emotional responses. For example Teresa was having emotional and motivational difficulties, but possibly because she was producing excellent results, they failed to be noticed by her tutors at college, who were shocked to discover that she was thinking of giving up her course. It was only when several other excellent students were set to leave that they acknowledged the organisational problems and amended the course (Appendix – Strand 3 – Teresa). Personal emotional dilemmas impacted on work, causing difficulties and preoccupations, such as Anna's relationship dilemma; Iben's problems with her job and Sean's conflict of principles with his head teacher (Appendix – Strand 3 – Anna, Iben, Sean).

### **6.10 Reciprocity**

Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with reciprocity in

students' learning. These are: Interdependence (balancing self-reliance and sociability); Collaboration (the skills of learning with others); Empathy and listening (getting inside others' minds) and Imitation (picking up others' habits and values). In developing reciprocity it is necessary to feel empathy and to be sympathetic in acknowledging other perceptions of learning.

Jon felt that his subject, drama, helped pupils to reciprocate (presumably using feeling interactive learning on various levels), facilitating learning:

*I believe children should enjoy their experiences of school. Drama helps to facilitate all other subjects – group work, problem solving, negotiating solutions and social interactions, but in my school it was not valued by management. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon)*

Diana showed her understanding of her pupils in her criticisms of literature choices for GCSE English:

*Children should be able to choose from one of the top ten contemporary books as well as the classics. The exam is the final nail in the coffin of creating 'readers for life', which is what we're supposed to be doing. I used to like the exam – it covered a broad spectrum – it is only recently it has changed and I think it is because of money. I feel sorry for the pupils, because if I were allowed to teach them, as I want to teach them they'd have a much better experience. A lot of the enjoyment has gone out of it. (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.2 Cases data file – Diana)*

Some of the experienced teachers had special skills and insights, which they felt were not sufficiently shared, developed or appreciated by the larger educational community. For example, Diana saw her job as educating pupils' for their own long-term benefit rather than to satisfy Ofsted, parents and head teachers (Appendix – Strand 3 – Diana) and Jon shared his feelings as follows:

*Education should be about enriching people's lives. We don't give enough choices. Life is not a formula. I don't believe government genuinely cares about education. I have become convinced that most politicians are ego driven and pragmatic – driven by their careers. Politicians are the chief stakeholders and want people to do their will. Education is (currently) not true education it is training. (Appendix – Strand 3 – Jon)*

Several teachers showed that they had strong views about their pupils' rights and perspectives, suitable aims for the educational system and their vocation in teaching.

*Empathy is very important in teaching: the ability to be sensitive and to be aware of the fact that there is always something we can learn – especially from the people whom we teach!* (Appendix – Strand 3 – Sean)

### **6.11 Reflections on analysis**

My dual role in this research strand was as mentor and researcher, rather than teacher and researcher as in Strand 1 or as self-counsellor and researcher in Strand 2. The focus was still, however, upon exploring the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. There were therefore some underlying tensions around my need to make sense of the data in those terms and the participants need to follow their own agenda. These were to some extent resolved (from my point of view) by explaining my research focus at the start. However, their interpretation and implicit understandings of it were probably and perhaps inevitably different to mine, since we brought different experiences and knowledge to bear. It was evident that all of the mentees understood the focus and accepted feelings as an important part of their learning, although they might not have explored their significance previously in the same way.

Gabel Dunk (2004) found that for her in her role as teacher mentee/researcher, *'the mentee/mentor relationship is an old idea that works'* (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004, p. 280). Her paper harks back to Homer's *Odyssey* (1900) using ideas from ancient Greek philosophy. She cites Hayes (1998) and his colleagues who found:

*...that mentoring is about the development of unique relationships in which the personal characteristics, philosophies, needs and priorities of the individuals involved determine the nature, direction and duration of the relationship.* (ibid., p. 279)

These last points were very much in evidence in Strand 3 of my research, particularly as the participants were not obliged to take part and had agreed to be mentored outside work (3.2 – Tables 1&2 – 1 – Hours of mentoring and data collected, 2 – Graph of mentoring hours per teacher). The individual dynamic relationships in each case had fluid and contextual phases involving interpersonal skills, perception and empathy as described by the authors above. The cycle re-iterated by Gabel Dunk (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004, p. 279) from Hayes work as of

*...mutual attraction, the initiation, the development of the relationship, termination and redefinition, and the professional practice phase (where the graduate mentee gathers experience before beginning to mentor others)*

was a little different for me in Strand 3. There was no intention to improve the mentees professional practice or to teach them to be mentors on my part, although they may have developed these aims for themselves.

Teachers certainly gave the impression that they welcomed the chance to exchange views with a colleague, outside their work context, but who appreciated their concerns. They had, and were currently receiving little of this type of support at work and our professionally focussed conversations appeared to relieve a certain amount of loneliness and isolation in dealing with issues of concern to them. I found this an equally beneficial and interesting experience, which helped me in turn, both as a researcher and as a colleague. We reflected, checked perceptions and opinions and shared frustrations, successes and confusions. In their examination of the experience of the mentoring process, as it was interpreted and implemented by Genie Gabel-Dunk and Anna Craft (2004), significant elements emerged as tools for professional development: Being a Teacher to a Teacher; Being a Role Model; Being a Counsellor; Being a Facilitator; Being a Supportive Protector; and Being a Guide. I can now add to this list those of Being a Joint Researcher; and Being a Joint Evaluator; for example, in Strand 3, in researching with teachers around their feelings in learning and teaching. We evaluated and researched together as mentor and mentee and I frequently received advice and instruction from participants in giving their opinions and feelings about issues in learning (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.6). The Joint Evaluator role in mentoring was evident in Strand 3 and is further explored in the next chapter, Chapter 7. My research supports the views of Gabel Dunk that the process of mentoring in the field of education is essentially collaborative, and Craft that supporting mentees' intellectual processes in understanding their own personal practice and philosophy is important (op.cit., p. 289)

## **6.12 Conclusion**

This group of individual teachers' feelings had had and were having a profound effect on their learning and teaching. They had no difficulty in sharing and reflecting and appeared to enjoy the experience. I was impressed by the wisdom of many of their comments. When I re-considered and analysed my notes I realised that they had professional knowledge, expertise and ideas, which could form a basis for further educational research and development. Sharing professional knowledge and opinions was rewarding for me personally and appeared to be mutually beneficial. Almost all

the teachers made a comment that they valued the opportunity to be professionally mentored, taking part in the research voluntarily for several sessions each. Teachers' own lives show that unsympathetic responses to their feelings, being misjudged and/or labelled tends to close down the learner's receptivity and development at any age; for example, Jon's experiences at school as a son of 'hard up' parents and later as a senior teacher developing innovative courses. Diana showed that she understood the impact of feelings on pupils in the following comment, which could equally apply to teachers:

*It's not the day-to-day work – it's the magic that happens through an amalgamation of little things – the things that happen in between, which add up to a pupil's achievement. It's more than the sum of the parts. A child who's confident, does their own research, brings a load of stuff to you because they've flown with an idea. (Appendix – Strand 3 – 3.2 Cases data file – Diana)*

The teachers I mentored appeared to have a strong vocation to teach. They found the job intrinsically rewarding, but were sometimes restricted by a lack of support and respect for their dedication and expertise. This appears to have been to some extent accepted as part of the United Kingdom's educational, political and social system. A change of attitude towards learning theory to incorporate affective aspects might facilitate a sea change in this regard, since it would require the recognition of this aspect of often existing teaching expertise. It is possible that a mentoring approach to education, which respects feelings could engender greater learning efficiency at all levels in the education system. Choices can be offered to pupils, within a structured curriculum and teachers' feelings and feedback about their work, can be acknowledged by management. Positive regard at all levels in teaching might be helpful in the learning process. However, it is a challenging, rather than a 'soft' option. It involves helping students and teachers to work out and justify their choices for themselves, as well as in relation to the greater scheme of things.

The teachers who took part in this research, were profoundly affected by their feelings. It was evident that there were some important relationships between their feelings, thinking and learning. Firstly, feelings engendered in childhood, through environmental contexts, both incidental and structured, had had a profound effect on subsequent learning and teaching behaviour. Secondly, these feelings continued to be influential until they were transformed by further emotionally linked learning

experiences. These were generally triggered and/or influenced through a change in environment, for example, in work conditions. Thirdly, strong feelings arose and affected their thinking on a day-to-day basis as they taught. Fourthly, they considered sharing 'feelings' with others, in this case through mentoring, as a stimulus to reflection was a useful aid to their learning. Consideration of emotional states (feedback on feelings) may therefore be seen as a source of information as well as an indicator of, and stimulus to, learning. It seems that on occasions feelings represent and promote logical subjective thoughts, which emerge as a rationale; for example, teachers' personal philosophies. An awareness of feelings may, therefore, contribute to and inform the networking of new cognitive connections, correcting erroneous thoughts, appreciating correct ones, updating and adapting as we learn. This strand also supports the idea that acknowledgement rather than traditional suppression may be more desirable than previously appreciated in educational circles.



## CHAPTER 7

### STRAND 4: RESEARCHING A COMMUNITY OF EDUCATION PRACTICE: OBSERVATIONS OF FEELING-BASED LEARNING IN ACTION

This chapter should be read with reference to:

**Appendix – Inquiry Strand 4 – The School Creativity Festival educational evaluation** – this contains the following:

- 4.1 Table 1 Breakdown of contents of The School Creativity Festival report.
- 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data – School Creativity Festival, 2006
- 4.3 Researchers’ narrative evaluative summary of a school creativity festival at a commercial theatre: involving a teacher and creative practitioners’ action research presentation day; a secondary schools’ career day and three days celebrating six cross-curricular projects with six different primary schools.\*

#### 7.1 Introduction

In this data strand, in looking for possible answers to the guiding question, “What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?” I sought areas with the potential to inform and illustrate significant strategies/interventions regarding professional practice and theory without being prescriptive (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2, Aim 4). I looked for opportunities to evaluate teaching and learning approaches and situations, which might demonstrate feelings in learning in action within a suitable community of education practice. Two opportunities arose through the government-funded agency Creative Partnerships in 2004 and 2006 (CCE, 2008). I gained employment on a teaching action research programme as a mentor (2004 to 2006). I undertook two years of action research mentoring, which ended with a presentation day at a school creativity festival. In 2006 I also got the job of making an educational evaluation of the primary school component of this same festival at a commercial theatre. I spent five months evaluating the preparation for this primary school element of The Festival. I also made an evaluation of the one-week festival

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\* Pseudonyms have been applied throughout

itself. This gave me a body of research data, supported by my previous experience of these two Creative Partnerships programmes. After I had completed the original report, I asked and was given permission to re-evaluate the data and include it in this thesis. This chapter contains this new evaluation with the focus on the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning. In making my analysis I pose the subsidiary question: “How might feeling responsive environments facilitate the learning of professionals and pupils alike?”

Originally I evaluated the work, particularly in relation to Creative partnerships’ educational objectives as the commissioning government agency (CCE, 2008; Appendix – Strand 4). These were complementary although with a different focus to those in this thesis. The way in which I conducted the evaluation was also intended to be to some extent a way to develop and pilot an open-minded learning approach to the professional development of a group of educators including myself. This involved a consideration of our own ‘feelings’ in the process of evaluating the pupils’ educational achievements. After producing the report I undertook a second detailed analysis of the primary component of The Festival. This to some extent evidenced the motivational and educational impact of ‘creative’ cross-curricular learning methods. In this I looked for specific conducive learning aspects suggested by education theorists, which might be evident in the ‘well managed’ creative learning environment. This has informed the third and final analysis, which concentrates on the subsidiary question above dealt with in this chapter.

In the following analysis I have looked at some effects of positive feelings on thinking in learning development affecting professionals and pupils alike as they learn. An interesting argument arises here about whether all evaluation involves learning but for the purposes of this thesis I assume that on some level it does. After this introduction, this chapter goes on to explain the research context and data collection process of this strand (Section 7.2). This is followed by a discussion of issues around creativity, the research focus and analysis (Section 7.3). The next section gives a summary of one of the cross-curricular projects undertaken by one primary school, The Festival and one of The Festival workshops by way of introduction and example (Section 7.4). In the subsequent sections I go on to re-analyse across the full range of festival data, drawing representative examples from the data (Section 7.5 - 7.8). Again these

sections are based on ideas about ‘learning-to-learn’, researched and summarised by Claxton (2002) (resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity) and their identifiable associated positive feelings and behaviours. The next section discusses the issue of whole body learning through physical and mental sensations (7.9). This is followed by a discussion around continuing professional learning development through inter-professional engagement (7.10). The final section contains a description of feelings I found were likely to be engendered by feeling-responsive environments, which appear to be conducive and perhaps even sometimes necessary to learning (7.11) followed by a conclusion (7.12). In this way I have selected representative examples of the effects of positive feelings on learning I observed and recorded during The Festival period. This analysis contributes to a consideration of the implications of the findings of the four inquiry strands in the final thematic analysis in Chapter 8.

## **7.2 The research context and process**

The Arts Festival provided an opportunity to observe pre-planned, feeling-based learning by studying projects undertaken within a relatively small scale, community of practice. These included some evaluations by pupils and parents as well as the professionals involved (Freire, 1972; Park *et al.*, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Kagan, 2005). It provided data for a logical progression of the research from the previous data strands. The first day of The Festival showcased the work of twelve education action researchers, who had used creative cross-curricular projects to research their own questions about learning in practice. I had been involved as a mentor on this programme from 2004 to 2006. The second day was a career day for secondary schools, where I observed and took notes. This day, which included workshops and presentations aimed to show pupils the potential of careers within the creative industry sector. The remaining three days involved the showcasing of work specifically created with six inner city primary schools over the previous five months. This event, and the planning, implementation and the educational processes preceding it, were the main focus of my evaluation report and make up the main part of the data in the Appendix (Strand 4 – The School Creativity Festival educational evaluation).

The action research programme for which I have been a mentor (with others) is one which set out to initiate and facilitate ‘open-minded’ teacher action research. Creative

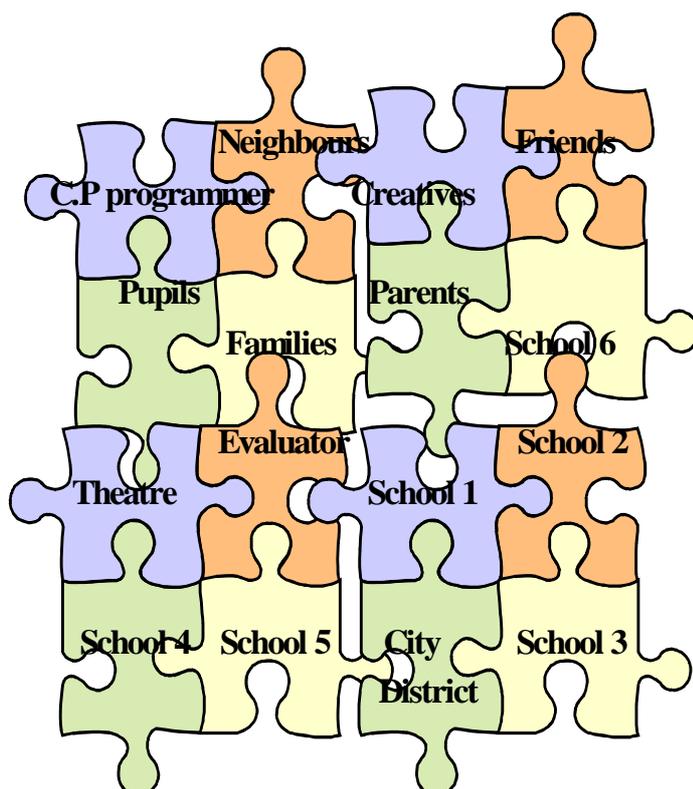
Partnerships city district (funded by the Arts Council) provided the financial support and practical framework for this (CCE, 2008). That the programme's effect was beneficial for pupils and teachers is evidenced by each action researchers' project area and title mentioned in the data of Strand 4 (4.2 Evaluation context, brief and completed data – School Creativity Festival, 2006) and my own general observations in my report. Further general points, which contribute to my festival analysis, are based upon my own personal knowledge of the research programme with reference to the researchers' final project posters. These are not included in full in the Appendix, since they all bear the individual names of those involved. I only have permission to use The Festival data anonymously. These twelve action research projects ranged widely. For example, there was an infant teacher working with other staff and a drama specialist (asking: "Do innovative teaching methods in science improve children's attitudes and attainment in science?"). There was also a project with teachers in a teenage pupil referral unit with a drama specialist (asking: "Can creativity impact on levels of engagement amongst pupils attending a pupil referral unit?"). A primary school teacher worked with a city art gallery and a visual artist (asking: "Can we encourage children's writing through creative teaching and cross curricular planning?"). A special needs teacher researched with a music specialist: "Can singing help young people who have communication difficulties use, understand, develop and enjoy the power of their own voices?" \* All of this research showed the value of exploring, recording feedback, relating teachers' and pupils' feelings in the process of action researching for efficient learning on different levels. Significantly in response to the organisers' request for a key comment to headline the poster, each researcher chose one, which in each case encapsulated an emotional response. In this research, therefore, it was noted that various feelings were recorded on researchers' posters showing the impact of positive learning experiences. (4.2 Evaluation context and completed data – School Creativity Festival, 2006)

The primary schools' evaluation was another independent project set up by Creative Partnerships (CCE, 2008) in partnership with a big commercial city theatre and involved six primary schools within culturally 'deprived' city areas. It involved cross-curricular Arts projects designed in a joint collaboration between creative

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\* Hearing Impairment, Selective Mutism, Profound and Multiple Learning difficulties

practitioners and teachers. This produced pre-planned creative learning environments with each dyad contributing their professional expertise. These projects demonstrated ways in which this type of learning might be specifically timetabled into the curriculum at appropriate points. I used an ethnographic qualitative evaluation and research method. Some of the research methods and domains associated with my Creativity Festival report were narrative, ethnographic and participatory action research, communities of practice, mentoring skills and project modelling (This thesis, Chapter 3). The data was collected in the form of short narrative reports, questionnaires, interview notes, project models and observational notes. It was collected with the aim of recording some of the feelings in relation to learning of all of the different types of participants engaged in the work. In order to do this, I used a \*narrative network evaluation model to elicit personal idiosyncratic expressions of feeling from participants. Below (Table 6) is the model I used to introduce this joint participation evaluation model to participants.



**Table 6: Interchangeable, interactive participative narrative network evaluation model.**

This evaluation requested critical, professional, spontaneous comments from all levels of participants as appropriate to individuals (Appendix – Strand 4 – 4.3 Researchers’ narrative evaluative summary of a school creativity festival at a commercial theatre). I asked the professionals involved to devise ways to record pupil responses and report back their own conclusions about the data they collected. In recording first hand data from young people I have included spelling mistakes, using their own original and ‘fresh’ comments to aid authenticity. I also produced my own notes based on my observations of the learning I observed in progress both in schools and at The Festival. The original analysis and re-analysis show ways in which the curriculum can be designed to promote learning motivation and in the process action research performed with different pupil groups. Pupils, teachers, creative practitioners, parents and colleagues replied, observed, wrote summaries, devised data records and evaluated The Festival at different levels. For example, the theatre’s education officer set up ‘response walls’ for pupil comments and professionals devised questionnaires. Children decided on the particular meaningful content of their own artistic activities and productions and gave their opinions in answer to their teachers’ questions. At the end of the evaluation there was a workshop with the evaluator where each teacher and creative practitioner dyad discussed and evaluated joint projects. The ‘narrative network model’ showed potential as a useful method of educational evaluation (Hawkins, 2006). However, take-up of opportunities for comment were limited to some extent by the unfamiliarity and novelty of such a process within the current educational climate.

### **7.3 Discussion of issues regarding creativity and the research focus**

In carrying out this re-analysis of The Festival data I am assuming that transformational learning can be seen as essentially some kind of creative ‘research’ process in itself, which is not necessarily artistic. This fits in with neuro-cognitive research findings that the brain transforms itself throughout life, evolving in various ways which may be degenerative and/or regenerative according to environmental conditions (Greenfield, 2000; Ramachandran, 2003). It may be argued that positive learning outcomes require individuals to be creative; for example, human responses to illness, disability, social requirements and self-fulfilment of inner interests and abilities. It is important to draw a distinction here between the type of ‘creative’ thinking which can take place in any area of knowledge and Creative learning, which

is principally about ways of working involving the Arts (Craft 2000b). The concept of creativity also has other dimensions; according to Craft creativity:

*...can be understood ...along a spectrum, at one end of which may be originality to the learner, and at the other end of which may be a leap of originality so great that it shifts the ways in which a whole field understands a concept or process. The kind of creativity we are most likely to meet in the classroom is the former, that is to say where the outcomes have originality to the learner, rather than shifting paradigms. (ibid., p. 10)*

Large 'C' Creative learning through the Arts was of value to my research because it can demonstrate 'small c' creative learning in which feelings are generally accepted to be involved. It can demonstrate 'feeling' ways of learning, which could be relevant and useful in other subject areas. The Arts generally involve, model and teach the type of thinking (creative), in the sense of constructive, innovative and challenging, which is necessary for 'higher order' thinking in all subjects. They involve acknowledging and working with feelings and intuitions both in a direct physical manner and in a highly abstract intellectual way. It is generally accepted that Arts' appreciation in itself is educational and has long-term social and cultural benefits (Department for Education and Skills, 2001). At its best creative learning is very enjoyable, interactive and motivational. The Arts have a well-documented therapeutic value (Dalley, 1984; Story & Brown, 2004). They work at the interface between conscious and subconscious thought. The Arts may express extremely complex and abstract consciously constructed ideas and language, as do other subject areas, but they can do this on simultaneous, parallel, subconscious, idiosyncratic and different levels. They can offer an accessible way of learning the language and thinking skills needed for higher-order cognition. This is the case whatever level the individual is at. The Arts model 'possibility' thinking, critical reflection and risk taking and can be used to enliven other subjects.

I acknowledge that there are many school subjects where 'small c' creative learning and some of the phenomena described above are likely to happen; for example, physical education, craft, design and technology and all other 'creatively' taught or 'creatively' learned subjects. There is an argument to be made for renaming 'small c' creative learning across subjects as 'reconstructive' learning in the sense that Piaget and Vygotsky observed of knowledge being transformed as it is absorbed by the learner through the making of idiosyncratic meanings (Vygotsky, 1896-1934, in

Rieber & Carton (eds.), 1987). This does not imply that there are no constant truths, but rather that, in order to learn, each individual constructs and discovers their own reality in a transformational way. I suggest that this type of learning embeds itself in the memory with greater long-term effect than other 'superficial' methods. It is true that some individuals can remember large numbers of facts but it is their active adaptation and reconstruction, which represents in-depth learning and increases intellectual ability. This is a process, which is frequently (though not universally) evident in the Arts as skills and ideas develop.

Art can encourage us to make connections and confront established schemas. It provides high challenge through presenting novel ideas in a 'playful' setting, but low stress in that it takes place, if well managed, in a context, which allows individuals to develop their thoughts in their own way. Pupils of all abilities can be taught together successfully through the Arts, with differentiation by outcome. Pupils can also be assessed in the Arts, by differentiation of individual outcome. Their achievements can be individually appreciated and reported at different levels, through the observations and qualifying comments of the experienced teacher. In this way even 'low' and 'middling' achievement goals can be credited which might traditionally have been overlooked. There is no direct danger to learners' self-esteem provided the work is sensitively managed with their wellbeing in mind. Of course the reverse is also true. When badly managed or used prescriptively in a judgmental and overly competitive way, poor creative teaching can devastate and block learning. However, the Arts can and often do create a 'safe' place in which to learn and do so at fundamental levels where mind, sensory perceptions and feelings interact. Connections are made at points where worded thought intermingles with feelings and arise through the subconscious subjective mind into conscious expression through behaviour and 'performance.' This may be precisely what sometimes makes the Arts hard to evaluate in concrete terms, since products are also appreciated at a subjective and partially subconscious level.

The process of integration between the subconscious and conscious mind may also be precisely what constitutes the Arts' greatest 'therapeutic' effect. It appears likely that 'Creative' work does us good because it provides an interface for this process to take place irrespective of external notions of excellence. However, humans do evaluate it

by their use and enthusiasm. For example, in his introduction to the Pathways Arts and mental health pilot scheme evaluation report, Brown (2004) states that:

*It is gratifying to see arts and health being adopted across the world...this revolution seems to be happening with blithe disregard to the persistent call for “evidence based” practice...it seems that artists are no longer alone in recognising the self-evident benefits of the arts in generating a healthy society of healthy citizens, for there appears to be growing recognition in the cultural and health circles that we neglect our creativity at the expense of our emotional well-being. (Story & Brown 2004, p. 9)*

The problem of evidencing the Arts is a contentious one. In the original festival report, I also found it problematic. I expended a great deal of effort in collecting the data and was able to describe and evaluate events from a conventional educational perspective\*. However, I was disappointed to find that my report conclusions had the same general, though positive tone, which I have observed in similar, reports by others. I was aware that it lacked a method of specific analysis, detailing the motivational benefits of the work. Much of value was perceived and recorded in detail, not least the pupils and staff’s evident enjoyment, enthusiasm, sense of achievement and excellent artistic productions. At first sight, as is often the case with these kinds of projects, this appeared to be universal. However, it should be remembered that there will inevitably have been some difficulties; for example, one teacher who felt the work should be more directed and some pupils who, although they were pleased with their work, found waiting around at rehearsals tedious. There was criticism of evaluation in general, by one teacher, who felt that in the past it was not ‘owned’ by teachers and pupils, used or followed up constructively for their benefit. She felt that much of the paperwork produced was a waste of time. Even these participants, however, expressed general enthusiasm for the project, showing that beneficial feelings generally outweighed negative ones. Cross-curriculum project content was assessed according to the National Curriculum in appropriate key stages and found to be covered in several subjects simultaneously. Group and individual achievements were noted, but the whole event was difficult to analyse educationally in systematic terms.

In my original report I felt that much of value remained embedded in the data,

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\* Appendix - Strand 4 - 4.3 School Creativity Festival, 2006 - full anon. report-J. A. Hawkins (CD)

because outcomes were idiosyncratic and complex, due in part to the diverse range of art forms (drama, dance, painting, collage, clay-work and poetry) and skills (discussing, planning, negotiating, motivating, communicating and time/self management) at play. This problem led to my second analysis of the data. I looked at core themes, motivational contexts, methods and experiential learning strategies for teaching and learning recommended in educational literature to be evident in the 'well-managed' learning environment. These included strategies and competences or intelligences described in educational literature as important constituents of 'interactive' human learning. These all involve feelings at some level (Gardner, 1993; Berkowitz, 2000; Gilbert, 2002; Claxton, 2002). I explored The Festival data in relation to them and found that the creative learning, which took place, demonstrated many of these educational phenomena. For example, practicing creativity through the Arts engages the subconscious mind through 'feeling activities', which involve a number of phenomena arising from sensory inputs, both past and current. It encourages the mind to adjust and re-invent itself in the kind of high challenge, low stress contexts Gilbert (2002) recommends for motivational learning across the curriculum. I found that all of these involve consideration of, implementation through and development of feelings on some level, as perceived physical and/or mental sensations. I concluded that creative learning projects might, indeed, show how to engage learners' feelings in transformational learning. This second analysis has, therefore, informed the third and final analysis, which follows the next section.

#### **7.4 A primary school project, The Creativity Festival and one workshop**

In this section I give a summary of one of the cross-curricular projects undertaken, followed by a description of The Festival itself and one of the workshops\*. The first summary is an example of one of six projects developed separately by six primary schools with six different artists. These projects culminated in performances, exhibitions and workshops during the final three days of The School Creativity Festival at a big commercial theatre. Each school had a project model created by me from the original project applications agreed by each school with the Creative Partnerships programmer beforehand. These changed and developed over the five-month period prior to The Festival.

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\* Appendix - Strand 4 - 4.1- Evaluation context and completed data - School Creativity Festival, 2006; Researchers' narrative evaluative summary-School Creativity Festival, 2006

### 7.41 Primary School 3

This school was in a district earmarked for council regeneration. The school wanted to help the pupils adjust to the changes already underway, involving the school's closure and many of them and their families being moved to other parts of the city. A drama was developed, which focussed on The Festival theme of 'Children Dreaming' and depicted their neighbourhood now and in the future. Ideas were improvised and developed into a complex five-scene play. The piece was created by the children themselves under the direction of the creative drama practitioner with the teacher's support. The project engaged the ten and eleven-year-old pupils (Year 6) on an affective level. As evaluator over several school visits I observed that the work engaged the pupils' attention in whole body, active learning in which feelings were expressed and purposeful thinking developed. Concentration and effort were evident as pupils improvised and rehearsed. Pupils were learning to control themselves within a flexibly managed environment, which encouraged motivation through self-expression. For instance, when I asked a boy who had refused to join in at the start of the first session what he thought once he had opted to become involved, he beamed at me and said he found the work "*Exciting!*" (Appendix, Inquiry Strand 4; 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data: Primary school 3).

The teacher, Carol, identified the following National Curriculum subject areas covered through the project: Literacy (writing, reading, speaking and listening and performance), history, PSHE, dance and music. As an English language specialist myself I noted that:

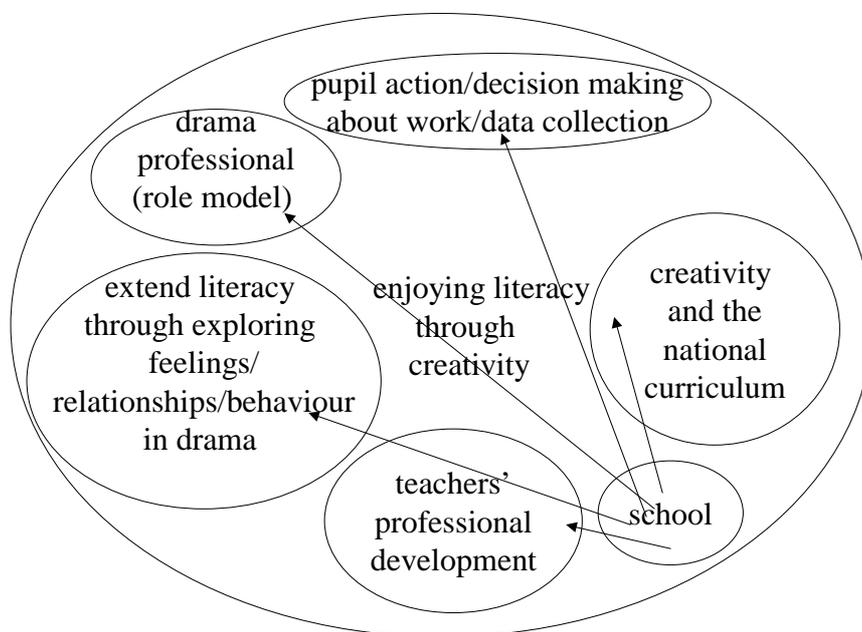
*Language skills in evidence were sequencing a story, composing narrative dialogue, memorising a script and projecting the voice, involving intonation and expression (pre-writing thinking skills and listening and speaking). Physical skills involved body control, movement and spatial awareness. (Appendix, Inquiry Strand 4; 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data: Primary school 3)*

Carol and the 'artist' Chloe worked hard together to use their expertise to benefit not only the project group, but also the rest of the school, through in-service training sessions and example. It was significant that pupils with special needs engaged particularly successfully with this project. Carol pointed out that this was a lesson in which the 'special needs' pupils were indistinguishable from the rest of the class. They were able to develop and learn without embarrassment.

Performing to their parents was a great incentive for pupils. The children in their questionnaires volunteered a large number of enthusiastic, spontaneous comments. Even though several found waiting around between theatre technical rehearsals boring, they persevered politely and found the work very enjoyable and worth the sacrifice. It was hard to choose from all the enthusiastic comments, but here is an example:

*Being proud of myself at the end of the performance to parents, VIPS and other schools. Doing something fun on stage in the Theatre instead of a school hall. Looking amazing, so did the others who took part. (Appendix, Inquiry Strand 4; 4.2: Primary school 3, Faye)*

I personally found the final piece very moving especially when pupils ‘acted’ as council relocation officers coming and knocking on doors to give orders to move. The final message was uplifting and critical of the materialistic and wealthy in society. It appealed to adults to sort out problems. Although they accepted that relocation was inevitable at this stage, the children themselves expressed their opinions about what was being done in their neighbourhood and the project evidently meant a lot to them.



**Table 7: Cross-curricular project model: Primary School 3 (Appendix Strand 4 – 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data – The School Creativity Festival 2006)**

#### **7.42 The Festival week**

The School Creativity Festival took place during a week in July 2006. The first day was a presentation day for action researchers exploring educational issues and creativity in educating children. This Creative Partnerships City District project had involved twelve education action researchers. These were nine classroom teachers and three creative practitioners (2004 to 2006) during the period I was a mentor. Considerable development of all of the participants had taken place over the two-year period. For example on this day it was evident that all of the presenting researchers had achieved a high level of competence in the content, conceptual understanding and presentation of their work. Day two of The Festival was a Creativity Careers and Enterprise Day for 180 fourteen and fifteen-year-olds (Years 9-10) from five local high schools. Groups from each school attended workshop sessions given by creative professionals working in Events Promotion; Filmmaking; Photography; Fashion; Theatrical and Film Set Design and Book Making. I sat in on several sessions. The presenters were successful in their careers, explaining how they felt about their jobs and were obviously well prepared. Their explanations of their work had direct appeal to young people and their interests. They had interesting life stories to tell about their own varied career paths (both conventional and unconventional), gave insights into their day-to-day working lives and led a practical activity related to their work. The work illustrated the potential for engaging young people on an emotional level relating education to their interests and helping them set goals. I thought this programme had potential as a model for other types of careers and their presentation in schools.

Day three was a preview for the art displays and a 'taster' for The Festival. The whole event was informal with music performed by local high school pupils, work read out by Primary School 1 and a drama presentation by Primary School 3. A good number of parents came. Days five and six of The Festival were Schools Showcase days. Uninvolved classes and teachers came in over the period and took part in workshops. The workshops, rehearsals and performances of The Festival provided rich educational evidence for the evaluation. All of the work involved working with physical and mental feeling sensations. I was able to give evidence of a wide range of educational skills as I observed them being taught to and learned by the young people involved. I also recorded some interesting observations made by visiting class

teachers. It was evident that the workshops gave these teachers food for thought about how to improve learning through creative exercises, improvisation and expression. Several (without prompting from me) pointed out those pupils who were not usually easy to engage, having special needs and/or behaviour problems and appeared to find the work motivating and interesting. One teacher felt he was learning new skills by watching the work. I felt that in evidencing the work I was also gaining an improved understanding of learning and teaching processes.

In all the work being done at The Festival, *differentiation by outcome* (each child working at their own ability level), was very much in evidence. The final drama performances took place – backed up by the expertise of the theatre staff. They were impressive, professional and most enjoyable. They each received an enthusiastic response and wrapt attention both from peer groups and parents. There was a great deal of evidence of pupil engagement and enjoyment, supported by the comments on the pupils' comment wall, such as the seventy smiley faces. The value to the young people is also recorded in the CP programmer's parent questionnaire. She said that:

*The majority of the parents thought that their child had learnt to be more confident and expressive as well as being able to work with others as part of a team.* (Appendix, Strand 4, Results of parent questionnaire – created and collated by the CP programmer)

Parents wrote that the experience had enhanced their child's learning; for example, *"Has learnt how to use her mind in a creative and exciting way"* (Appendix, Strand 4, Results of parent questionnaire – created and collated by the CP programmer). Staff collaborated effectively, professionally and unobtrusively and the organisation of The Festival was excellent. Creative practitioners and teachers made appreciative comments in their evaluations. If concerns were expressed by them, they were, for the most part, regarding ways to fine tune activities, expand and advertise The Festival, now that a successful model had been developed (Appendix Strand 4 – 4.2 Evaluation context and completed data – School Creativity Festival, 2006).

### **7.43 A workshop with Amanda**

The young people in Amanda's workshop were given the opportunity to make themselves a pair of collage wings. This took place on the floor in the middle of Studio 3 and appealed to both boys and girls. Amanda had brought and laid out a wide and rich

quantity of varied collage materials and prepared coloured cut out wing shapes in a suitably robust material. The children quickly understood what to do and rapidly got ‘stuck in’ to the work. It appeared to be an absorbing, relaxing and engaging activity, which could not ‘fail’ because of the decorative quality of the materials on offer. There was support, and appreciation for each other’s work, communication and cooperation in sharing the space and materials. It was an activity, which elicited differentiation by outcome. In doing this work pupils used a range of art and design skills; for example, looking at colour, shape, style and suitability for purpose. The children enjoyed making their wings, coming to collect them at the end of the day – many of them wearing them home. Their approval and imaginative understanding of the metaphorical and symbolic ‘function’ of the wings was evinced by the many comments on the students’ comment wall, which said they enjoyed ‘flying’. In my opinion this evidences the importance of obtaining children’s feedback comments, for although I am an experienced art teacher and observed their absorption in the task, I would not have understood how much this idea had ‘fired’ the participants’ imaginations without this extra information. The workshop illustrated the potential of a creative project to motivate, enhance and support work in other areas of the curriculum; for example, English using poetry and role-play and natural science (through the work on butterflies, insects and environment) (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Evaluator’s educational evidencing of the workshops and performances, School Creativity Festival, 2006). **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

### 7.5 Resilience

In the following analysis of The School Creativity Festival, which starts with resilience, I have described areas of learning where positive feelings were evident. However, they overlapped and were combined in complex ways. This supports the view of neuro-cognitive scientists that human cognition operates as a biological ‘computer’, in ways which we are only starting to understand (Ramachandran, 2003; Geake & Cooper, 2003; Greenfield, 2004, 2007). To find possible answers to the guiding question, “How might feeling responsive environments facilitate the learning of professionals and pupils alike?” the analysis focuses on the ways in which the learning process was successful when pupils and teachers were emotionally engaged, by looking at their positive feedback through their comments and behaviour.

In developing resilience it is necessary to feel optimistic and to be persistent in learning with a constant interplay of levels and kinds of feelings. Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills, given below, associated with resilience in students' learning. Number one is '**Absorption**' (flow: the pleasure of being rapt in learning). The Creative Partnerships action research scheme (2004 to 2006) provided a means of furthering the continuing professional development of teachers and creative educators and also of improving the learning environments of inner city pupils. Each of the action research projects yielded a significant feelings-based comment from one of the participants, which were chosen by each researcher as epitomising its value on their final poster. That all of them chose 'feeling' comments is an interesting research finding in itself. There were three comments taken from the research posters, which may illustrate the depth of feeling, which may arise from absorption in a learning project. Action Researcher 7, a primary school teacher, who explored story-telling skills through puppets and animation with a city art gallery and a visual artist, chose the following comment: "*Brandon loved it... He has spoken about nothing else and has loved coming to school*" (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 - (3 July) – Action Researcher Day). Reception parent, recorded by Action Researcher 5, another primary teacher, investigating learning from encountering unfamiliar spaces using dance and poetry, chose a pupil comment about the reaction of other pupils: "*The best thing was when we turned the robot on in assembly when Rachel was talking and all the nursery thought it was real...Can we do it again?*" (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day) Action Researcher 6, a drama specialist working with teachers in a pupil referral unit and employing actors to engage young people in a 'soap story' about teenagers, used the following comment to show their interest: "*We got to chill on the set and talk to the actors, it was well cool*" Pupil (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day).

The second skill, according to Claxton (2002), associated with resilience is '**Managing distractions**' (recognising and reducing interruptions). In learning to manage distractions it could be argued that distractible pupils first need to experience the joys of extended concentration by being interested in learning. In the case of the creative practitioner Tommy's evaluation of Primary School 1, he states that pupils, who were less academically able, responded very positively when feelings were engaged. In this context they concentrated and were less distracted. He enthuses:

*I think I'm most pleased by the way the lowest ability pupils in the class were the most enthusiastic, asked the most questions and excelled in the written work beyond expectation...especially (a pupil) who has quite severe learning and coordination difficulties and with very little one to one help produced some fantastic art and written work. (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 1)*

The teacher, Ken, who collaborated with Tommy, also mentions that a “‘*statemented*’ child – produced huge volumes of work and became more talkative during the project” (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 1).

Number three skill or behaviour associated with resilience is ‘**Noticing**’ (really sensing what is out there). In The Festival poetry and language workshop, observation was much in evidence. I noted children focussing on shapes and parts such as arches, cylinders, rectangles and blocks, colours such as water and sky blues, matching colour combinations and textures, such as shiny buildings, water reflections and ripples. They used collage materials, art and language skills to describe what they observed in looking at the view outside the theatre (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Evaluator’s educational evidencing of the workshops and performances). Art workshops also used these observation language and visual comparison skills needed for development of the logical/mathematical intelligence talked about by Gardner (1993), involving analysing, concluding, predicting, making patterns and experimenting. Pupils used mental, visual and auditory feeling sensations to engage in the work and the comment wall showed their enjoyment of the process (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, The Theatre education officer’s ‘comment’ walls).

Number four is ‘**Perseverance**’ (‘stickability’: tolerating the feelings of learning). Perseverance was necessary during The Festival particularly on the part of the staff. In undertaking the work they demonstrated to pupils the value of persevering in order to reach satisfactory goals. Even so, the outcomes, though managed, were not totally predictable. Gilbert (2002) refers to this as ‘managed confusion’ or ‘orchestrated disequilibrium’. He finds that ‘*an element of confusion makes for a far more effective learning transaction*’ (Gilbert 2002, pp. 130-132). He recommends that set tasks should sometimes be ‘*specific in terms of focus, but can be vague in terms of process*’ (ibid., pp. 130-132). This ‘artistic’ skill of open experimentation towards a pre-determined general goal was one which was modelled to teachers by creative

practitioners. In this confusion may be one of the ‘necessary’ feelings of learning to be overcome. Improvisation through challenge caused pupils at all ability levels to respond positively and with extended concentration. With Primary School 1, even artist Tommy was surprised by the pupils’ level of engagement and perseverance:

*The class made the choice to do a piece of music and to perform their stories and would have done more such was their enthusiasm for the topic. As stated earlier, the lower ability pupils stood out for me the most but other pupils I shall remember from the project particularly are Adam for his enthusiastic approach, questions, musical prowess and humour and great artwork, Aisha and Afua who work so quietly and beautifully that they often miss out on praise because they just get on (and who were really chuffed to be picked to story-read and who’s voices suddenly rose fifty decibels at the Theatre!) Alice and Amy again for their bubbly enthusiasm (Alice made her own Ghana shirt at home), other Jane for the high standard of all her work, David and Henry for the same reason...I could go on and on.... (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 1: Creative practitioner Tommy)*

## **7.6 Resourcefulness**

In developing resourcefulness it is necessary to use a creative approach to learning, connecting and combining resources and ideas in different ways. Creativity involves many higher order combinations of skills, abilities and implicit understandings with a constant interplay of levels and kinds of feelings. Again there are four behaviours or skills associated with resourcefulness in students’ learning (Claxton, 2002). Number one is ‘*Questioning*’ (getting below the surface; playing with situations). Gilbert finds that giving opportunities for students to think for themselves, for example, through questioning, creates motivation. This is a process with which feelings and intuitions are intimately connected. According to Gilbert all kinds of many and various ideas may count in generative thinking and freewheeling ideation (2002, p. 167). The failure of some of these ideas is part of the creative process of ‘working out’ and has a positive place in the process as it does in scientific research. In the creative learning environment there are no absolutes and many possibilities. Gilbert advises teachers to motivate by showing pupils how to defer judgment, build on the ideas of others, stay focused on the topic, take turns, generate lots of ideas and explore ‘wild’ ideas (ibid., p. 168). This appears to be the ‘possibility thinking’ to which Craft (2000b) also refers. Such a process might be seen as being at the heart of transformational learning as individuals learn to develop their ideas, creating new meaning through the interplay of physical and mental sensation.

It is Creative Partnerships' policy to encourage pupils by supporting them in researching and evaluating their own work. They recognise questioning, making meaning and finding answers in a personal way as being a major factor in motivation. This was acknowledged as an objective in my evaluation report. However, it is hard to achieve within an educational climate where evaluation is seen as judgmental and external. Teachers, in meeting simplistic government targets, indicated that they were sometimes forced to restrict experimentation in favour of a more 'controlled' teaching approach. However, because of natural cognitive inclination, it could be that the active participation of young people in the evaluation of their own work might in some respects improve efficiency and motivation. An example of dynamic teaching improvisation using intuition took place with Primary School 2. In preparing for The Festival several pupils spontaneously drew butterflies. Jane, the professional artist realised that this would provide an ideal metaphor for the regeneration of their district, a theme requested by the school. As well as artwork, this idea produced cross-curricular spin offs included studying the life cycle of the butterfly (natural science) and a story of a caterpillar dreaming about becoming a butterfly (English) (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 2).

Number two behaviour or skill associated with resourcefulness is '*Making links*' (seeking coherence, relevance and meaning) (Claxton, 2002). Our individual worlds exist as a 'mountain of information' and the value of making links of meaning through metaphor is evident in our language. Metaphors 'zip' (to use a computer term) information within small, user-friendly, 'implied' packages. Metaphors allow us to communicate conceptual significances to others and ourselves by inference (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000). They give a more holistic impression of an idea or experience or process than can be communicated by wordy explanations. In understanding metaphors, we experience a whole range of associated feelings, which help to conceptualise our thoughts. These may be differentiated in subtle ways for individuals, but general, similar conceptions and reactions are also experienced which create empathy, communication and meaning. Many examples of metaphor could be identified within The Primary Arts Festival work, which appeared to express feelings and views about the world. Much of The Festival artwork school projects dealt in metaphor. For example the map of Ghana with Primary School 1; the butterfly idea

and work with Primary School 2; the scenes of possible ‘future’ human life with Primary School 3 and the use of cartoon characters and sculptures with Primary School 4. Comments recorded at The Festival show the value of this type of conceptual learning and the way it engaged pupils’ on an emotional level. For example, when asked what their artwork was about, Year 3 pupils from Primary School 2 showed that they understood the butterfly project in quite a sophisticated way:

- “*It was about regeneration*” (Jodie)
- “*Making things better*” (Chloe)
- “*Making District a nicer place*” (Leah)
- “*We used butterflies because they also change to become beautiful*” (Leah)  
(Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 2)

The third behaviour or skill linked to resourcefulness, according to Claxton (2002) is ‘**Imagining**’ (using the mind’s eye as a learning theatre). In drama and dance lessons and workshops confidence was developed by improvisation and invention, working with a range of physical and mental sensations which were visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Pupils used imagination to solve problems making moves more interesting. For example Primary School 3 improvised their own robot dance and Primary School 6 developed a dance to celebrate their school’s fiftieth anniversary. The benefits were evidenced in the pupils’ exuberant and skilled performance. As the dance specialist said: “*Confidence was built, fun was had... all the young people completed the project. They were proud and felt positive about what they had achieved*” (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 6). In Primary School 4, the teacher wanted to facilitate Year 6 pupils in their transition to secondary school. She suggested the project should focus on promoting the children’s ‘sense of identity’ in their environment, to prepare them for work planned in high school to produce autobiographical collages. She and the artist agreed that the children would:

*...create a character, which might have some of their own characteristics and emotions. Pupils used imagination in exploring drawing, portraiture, cartoons, sculpture, looks, personality and character traits.* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 4)

‘**Reasoning**’ (thinking rigorously and methodically) is the fourth and final behaviour or skill associated with resourcefulness (Claxton, 2002). Reasoning in combination with memory has traditionally been regarded as the principle process of learning. However, it is sometimes unappreciated in education that sensory inputs provide

information with which to reason. They are necessary to the logical (mathematical) intelligence described by Gardner (1993). The School Creativity Festival showed that experiences of varied physical and mental sensations may be provided in pre-determined contexts, which tend to provoke a reasoned response in pupils. For example, Action Researcher 4, a creative educator in science, working with a high school and a city museum, recorded this comment from a Year 8 teacher:

*I was impressed by quite a few of the pupils who normally do not share their thoughts readily in class but were enthusiastic about their photos and were able to explain why they had taken them. (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day)*

The long-term effect of logical investigation where the emotions are engaged was forecast (by a Year 4 pupil) on Action Researcher 9, a primary school teacher's poster:

*I have really enjoyed the whole project. I didn't know any of this stuff about my family at the beginning. I will always remember my poem it's stuck in my brain. I think I will still be able to perform it when I'm fourteen! (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day)*

### **7.7 Reflectiveness**

In developing reflectiveness it is necessary to develop awareness and intuitive feelings and responses are very much a part of this process. The opposite of awareness might be seen as ignorance. In order to be reflective it is necessary to have some conception of oneself as a learner. There is an important distinction to be made between 'reflection' and 'reflexivity'. Reflection implies considering and reflexivity includes the consideration of oneself in the process. Reflexive teaching may involve the teacher in considering and communicating his or her own personality, expertise, reality and limitations to benefit the learner. Reflexive learning involves the learner in considering and choosing, with reference to his or her own preferences. Schon (1987) states that in the process of learning there are three aspects or goals. These are to perform, to produce a product and to be able to re-design (or improvise) in performance. This may be seen as, in effect, the action research cycle appearing in yet another guise. Schon looks at two models for coaching: '*joint experimentation*' and '*Follow me!*' (1987, pp. 212-215). The former, he explains, is only feasible when '*...several conditions [are] met. There must be a way of breaking the larger task into manageable instrumental problems*' (p. 212). Schon finds perhaps surprisingly that

the second model for coaching, namely “*Follow me!*” is fundamental to a reflective *practicum* [through] *demonstration and imitation*’ and also that:

*The invitation to imitate is also, in its way, an invitation to experiment; for in order to “follow”, the student must construct in her own performance what she takes to be the essential features of the coach's demonstration.* (ibid., pp. 212-215)

Much of The Festival process involved the creative practitioners in coaching both the pupils and teaching staff. This frequently involved demonstrating their own learning process as they worked out ideas. For example, many creative practitioners gave in service training (INSET) to groups of school staff, while working in schools. Less obviously, but a definite element, were the coaching experiences given by teachers to ‘artists educators’ in return; for example, when teachers shared how they planned the foci of their own school’s projects to incorporate educational themes and goals.

Again Claxton (2002) identifies four behaviours or skills associated with reflectiveness in students’ learning. Number one is ‘**Planning**’ (working learning out in advance). Both the action researcher programme and The School Creativity Festival demonstrated learning planned by professionals flexibly to facilitate both pupils’ and their own learning. Pupils experimented within the contexts provided, planning and developing their own learning with imagination and a maturity that often surprised staff. From a professional perspective, this was a complex and multi-dimensional process involving inter-professional engagement with Creative Partnerships, the theatre, teachers and creative practitioners. Organisation of learning processes depended very much on the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence skills described by Gardner (1993). These involved feelings, intuitions and perceptions at every level. The second skill linked to reflectiveness is ‘**Revising**’ (monitoring and adapting along the way) (Claxton, 2002). This could be seen as an action researching process in itself, again involving aspects of the logical (mathematical) intelligence recognised by Gardner (1993). The Festival work involved staff and pupils in revising and working out ideas and then rehearsing. In being creative they solved puzzles, made visual representations, analysed, charted, predicted consequences, sequenced, worked out rules and patterns and did experiments. This work led up to and refined the final exhibitions and performances at various stages.

**'Distilling'** (drawing out the lessons from experience) is the third skill or behaviour linked to reflectiveness in Claxton's (2002) model. At the pupil level, a Year 5's comment, chosen by Action Researcher 3, an art gallery education officer working with two primary schools and his art gallery, provides an example. He was investigating the impact of creative and reflective environments on pupils and noted: *"I really like the gallery. I can think here, it was big, calm and there was no noise. The artworks on the wall helped me think of how to make my own work better"* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day). The distilling of knowledge was very much in evidence both in the action researcher's presentations and at the final festival schools evaluation sessions.

Number four is **'Meta-learning'** (understanding learning and yourself as a learner) (Claxton, 2002). An important aspect in developing meta-learning is being given an element of choice. Gilbert points out that teachers should ensure young people have some control, give opportunities for choice and offer young people responsibility. He advises teachers that it is possible, paradoxically, to gain control by giving it (Gilbert, 2002, pp. 94-102). Choice was a key element in much of The Festival work. In Primary School 4's project, pupils decided on their own project titles. The teacher wrote that the pupils produced *"...30 individual creative directions – they decided and developed their own directions for each painting and sculpture"* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 4). Emma, a pupil in Primary School 3, explained on her evaluation sheet how the pupils were helped to use their own imaginations. She stated that, *"Chloe was very kind and let us have our own choices and not have her choosing everything we do and say. We chose the things we wanted to happen in each scene."* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 3) It was evident that the work involved some complicated thinking and meta-learning, on the part of Chloe and the pupils, as she made adjustments to the piece in the theatre. Chloe had to coordinate positions of the actors, decide on the detailed sequencing of the performance and make it appropriate to the themes and stories. It was evident that the improvisations I had seen previously had been incorporated into a script using the children's ideas. Chloe consulted the children on every point, cueing changes with the music and checking that they were happy with their choices. In drama and dance lessons and workshops, confidence was developed through self-awareness and self-concept

development. In carrying out the project with Primary School 1, teacher Ken noted that unusually, “...*a very quiet girl – read her work out loud at the festival*” (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 1). He noted also that the pupils learning increased in being able to express opinions in discussion.

### **7.8 Reciprocity**

In developing reciprocity it is necessary to feel empathy and to be sympathetic in acknowledging other perceptions of learning. Feelings on all kinds of levels and of all types are intrinsic to the process of reciprocity and their expression a developmental process of language acquisition (This thesis, Chapter 1: 1.10). Again there are four behaviours or skills associated with reciprocity in students’ learning (Claxton, 2002). Number one is *‘Interdependence’* (balancing self-reliance and sociability) and number two is *‘Collaboration’* (the skills of learning with others). This implies that human beings develop skills using interaction with others as a resource for learning. In this all kinds of physical, mental and emotional sensations are likely to be involved. The building of trust between partners in dance and drama exercises demonstrates these aspects of learning. Physiognomic perception, an inherent visual and intuitive skill, can be refined and developed only through interactions with other human beings (Neisser, 1976; this thesis, Chapter 2: 2.9).

Interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal and linguistic intelligences as defined by Gardner (1993) and emotional intelligence described by Goleman (1996) are necessarily involved in interdependent learning. The action researcher and primary school festival work involved working in groups and teams collaborating towards a common goal, as in drama productions. Teachers and creative practitioners also collaborated with each other in various ways, planning, implementing and evaluating. In watching festival workshops, I observed pupils using self-discipline and self-control, communication and social skills. For example, they constructively criticised, helping and thanking each other using team building and language skills. An infant pupil’s comment was chosen by Action Researcher 1, an infant teacher working with a drama specialist, which illustrates the motivational value of collaboration: “*I liked being part of the machine because we made lots of noises. I felt really excited*” (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day).

Number three is *'Empathy and listening'* (getting inside others' minds) (Claxton, 2002). In drama and dance lessons and workshops, confidence was developed by using role play, imagining others' points of view and behaviour. Although this was frequently done to produce imaginative work, the interactions of learning together also sometimes provoked genuine concern for others. This showed in the politeness of audiences of pupils at performances. Another example was Action Researcher 8's poster. She was a special schoolteacher who had been working with a music specialist to help pupils with hearing impairment, selective mutism, profound and multiple learning difficulties. She chose the following comment made by a teacher:

*Within 30 minutes of working together the group recognised each other's problems and were very supportive of each other. It was as if they were hungry for the project, as if they had been waiting for it for years. (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day)*

The fourth and last skill or behaviour associated with reciprocity, according to Claxton (2002), is *'Imitation'* (picking up others' habits and values). Gilbert (2002) points out that relating teaching to the real life experience of pupils in an open dynamic way can be a problem for the traditional teacher. According to Gilbert, traditional fixed educational frameworks tend to splinter *'...life into a variety of academic specialisms'* putting *'...the teaching ahead of the learning process by slowing it down and then blame the student if they switch off halfway through the course'* (ibid., pp.114-115). Employing 'empathy' is an extremely challenging way to teach and requires different skills and more sensitivity to pupils' needs than some of those generally used in 'traditional' teaching. However, these skills can be learned. The teacher and artist working with seven to eight-year-olds from Primary School 5 remarked on this point in their final evaluation session for their cross-curricular drama project. Julie, the class teacher, appreciated the artistic skills she learned from Mat and he in turn learned class control teaching techniques from Julie. I had watched them writing their drama in an interactive session with Julie's class; a session in which Julie had written the words on the computer as Mat improvised with the class, soliciting children's suggestions and adapting them collaboratively. A great deal of fellow feeling, empathy, co-operation and trust was evident on all sides. Julie showed that she found it, though hard work, a rewarding way to teach. She said she was very proud of her class after their final performances at the theatre and that she had learned a lot herself by the experience (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Primary school 5).

### **7.9 Whole body learning through physical and mental sensations**

In exploring the relationship between feelings thinking and learning through The School Creativity Festival data, it is worth considering the area of whole body learning through physical and mental sensation. In analysing the data, two aspects were evidently important. These were firstly that cross-curricular projects help young people to relate, while learning, to the real world in the round with all its complex sensory impact. This includes the five senses of seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling and tasting as well as the kinaesthetic approach recommended by Bandler & Grinder (1979). It may be argued that cross-curricular projects create an environment which opens up the realms of subject specific learning to learners, showing children their relevance to the 'real' world in a natural way. This idea ties in with naturalistic intelligence described by Gardener (1993). These projects help pupils to relate subject specialist modes of knowledge to their own world. Gilbert finds that the

*...compartments we call subjects at primary level, departments at secondary, academic faculties beyond that are a fallacious and arbitrary dissection of a far more complex and brain-friendly world. (2002, p. 113)*

The Festival evaluation cross curriculum project content was assessed according to the National Curriculum in appropriate key stages and found to be covering several subjects simultaneously. The Festival showed how important feelings, physical and mental sensations were to learning processes across subject areas such as art, physical education, drama, English language and literature, geography, history, science, personal social and health education (PSHE).

The attention paid to young people's own physical and mental sensations at The Festival evidenced the importance of these phenomena in the artistic learning process. Feeling responsive contexts were provided by professionals encouraging the interplay of feeling reactions to take place in the process of learning. These are often called Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning modes: interactive, multi-sensory learning (VAK) (Caviglioli, 2004). This is an approach to teaching recommended by Bandler and Grinder (1979), which is also called Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP. It refers to the way or modes in which people absorb information. These modes of human information input and thought development, rely on the senses and appear to

be part of a simultaneous multi-sensory experience, which informs complex rational and subjective brain activity. Berkowitz (2000) elucidates on how we experience feelings:

*It is ...important to recognise that however feelings are aroused, their representation in our mind, our conscious experience, is often a mental construction based to a certain extent on the awareness of bodily changes. (p. 3)*

He cites James (1890) who stated that:

*...we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble ...The mind integrates the bodily sensations along with other mental representations. (ibid., p. 3)*

In other words ‘bodily feedback’ involving levels of feeling is an intrinsic component of thought and aids thinking, reasoning and learning. Gilbert explains that by moving we stimulate the vestibular system – the part of our bodies dealing with balance, body awareness in space and gravity (2002, p. 110). This involves visual and spatial intelligence (Gardener, 1993) and the senses of sight, touch and hearing, smelling and tasting, by drawing on memory and imagination as well as current physical experience.

Gilbert explains that bodily feedback and goals connected with survival are important. They alert the mind to relevance and meaning in response to the challenge of events around us. They activate the RAS or reticular activating system to be alert to new information,

*...a small network of neurons that deliver the wake-up call from deep in the brain to the neocortex [is] another reason why linking what is taking place in your lessons to the goals and needs of the learners is important. (2002, p. 102)*

He finds that regularly focussing on

*...achievable [goals] helps keep the RAS on the ball as it means the brain is primed to seek out and capture opportunities, experiences and knowledge that will help us achieve these goals. (ibid., p. 110).*

Significantly a Year 6 pupil, Thomas, in Primary School 4 expressed his preference for activity on his questionnaire when he wrote “...less talking – more doing in the lessons”. Since most participants at The Festival appeared highly motivated, it seems likely that many activities were arousing Reticular Activating Systems at all levels. This includes staff, the organisers and me, because we were all challenged to action

and involved in personal learning in various ways – in my case in recording and evaluating.

The Arts tend to interrelate and integrate the making of meaning through physical and mental sensation, language, sound, movement and behaviour, which may facilitate learning, making it more accessible and understandable on different levels. Tina's festival dance workshop illustrated the benefits of the kinaesthetic approach. On the way to the workshop I had heard some boys say there was 'no way' they were going to dance, but they became rapidly absorbed in the session and remained engaged throughout. I observed the following skills and attributes being developed within the session: confidence, self-awareness and self-concept development through performing to an audience; physical skills such as stretching, balancing, 'holding a position' and body control and skills of improvisation – for example, using imagination, solving problems and making moves more interesting. Furthermore, self-discipline, self-control and co-operation were nurtured alongside communication and social skills in the course of constructively criticising, helping, encouraging, team building and thanking each other. In the process, the language skills of speaking and listening were also improved. Higher order, complex, conceptual words were used, such as 'transition' and 'choreography'. One deputy head, witnessed her pupils' skill development. She observed that the pupils were interacting in groups they would not normally mix with. One pupil with low academic ability was excelling in dance and she was surprised to note that another boy, on 'Ritalin' and attending a special behaviour unit, was very much engaged. At the close of The Festival there were enthusiastic comments about dance on the pupil comment wall (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Evaluator's educational evidencing of the workshops and performances).

Drama, in particular, mixes worded and 'unworded' thought with behaviour, interacting with and acknowledging feeling states (Gilbert, 2002, p. 102). I had an interesting encounter with Mat, a drama specialist during The Festival. We discussed his project with Primary School 5 and he agreed that drama offered a multi-modal way of learning by enabling mind and body to make connections on different levels and in different ways. We considered how creative work involves using 'emotional' thinking and exercising the mind subjectively. Mat said he had experienced this in

working with a musical friend on the sound track for the children's performance. They had worked on merging different pieces of music together. He thought the 'right' music had brought the whole piece together for him on an emotional level. It had made him appreciate the power of music to contribute mood in support of the pupils' work (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Evaluator's educational evidencing of the workshops and performances). This area of musical intelligence (Gardner, 1993) was now an area he was keen to develop skills in for future projects. One final poster pupil comment chosen by Action Researcher 11, a high school teacher, who had researched with drama specialists, musicians, visual artists, dancers, and fashion designers, succinctly affirms the children's feelings about multi-modal learning through the Arts: *"It is much better to learn in this way...it is not boring and better than copying out of a book"* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day).

### **7.10 Learning through inter-professional engagement**

Teachers themselves learn in many similar ways to those of their pupils as shown in this chapter. In order to be successful in teaching effectively, many teachers develop high-level emotional intelligence skills, but may not have time to fully reflect on them and so cultivate them further. Schon explains and clarifies the advantages and limitations of conscious reflection in the profession (1987). He points out that much teaching depends on implicit knowledge and intuitions (quick reflections) in action; for example, in sport the coach's words interact with the learner's actions and feelings, but they cannot always accurately describe them (*ibid.*, p. 24). This type of intuited skill frequently involves teachers in simulating (for example, as in dramatic reading) and stimulating feelings (for example, curiosity) and setting up contexts. These are highly skilled aspects of the job, which teachers have not always been able to justify and explain. This is a major reason why good teachers often still fail to be fully appreciated. Their own and their pupils' reflective feedback (on different levels) may offer us a means of understanding and explaining their work. Although this may be positive, it also involves understanding failures through learners' constructive (and biased) criticism. In time, such research, may offer the potential to enhance self-esteem and professional competence. This was evident to me, when I reflected on The Festival data (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Researchers' narrative evaluative summary of a school creativity festival at a commercial theatre).

Another reason for constant and necessary re-evaluation in teaching is that knowledge, expertise, contexts and pupils change every year and therefore action research might be envisaged as part of the educational process from the pupils upwards. For example, the Creative Partnerships action research scheme (CCE, 2008) proved that the dynamic, reflective action research process promotes the continuing professional development of teachers. This work also improved pupils learning environments and experiences, giving exciting opportunities to become motivated to learn. The opportunity to be involved in an ‘open-minded’ community of practice and enquiry is a valuable part of this. Bolton (2001) states that,

*...political and social structures...are increasingly hemming professionals in. Their right to make moral and professional judgments is being eroded daily; they are being reduced to technicians, their skills to mere technical competence.*  
(p. 3)

She believes that education can be improved through open discussion with peers and practitioners outside teachers’ own milieu and finds that ‘*Reflective practice work can then become politically, socially as well as psychologically useful, rather than a mere quietist navel-gazing exercise*’ (ibid., p. 3).

At The Festival, teachers sometimes expressed their feelings about their ‘normal’ work and the pressures and frustrations of a rigid curriculum and regime of testing. However, although these were taking their toll on morale, at times creating a feeling of insufficiency and hopelessness, they generally seized on The Festival work as an enjoyable relief, both for themselves and their pupils. They also began to appreciate educational benefits, problems and solutions through interactive and private reflection. Positive attitudes developed in the process of the work, often as a result of the pupils’ positive responses, both educational and behavioural. The final evaluation dyad and group reflective discussion session was productive in terms of learning. Teachers’ and creative practitioners’ feelings were evidently an important part of this. They felt a sense of achievement at being able to create enjoyable, challenging, non-stressful learning contexts for pupils. In their own case the research showed that the process of inter-professional engagement between teachers and creative practitioners encouraged professional reflection and promoted skill development. It was clear that many of the teachers were unused to having their professional opinions solicited, but their confidence and self-esteem appeared improved as a result of being listened to.

In the primary school evaluation my request for teachers and artists thoughts and feelings about the work led to some interesting educational questions coming to light, perhaps because there was no need to be defensive. For example, Primary School 1's project gave the teacher Ken and me some food for thought regarding the acquisition of English language skills. Ken's experience in teaching writing, together with his past experience as a journalist, made him wonder if the final written work needed more structure. However, he noted that twelve 'very advanced' pupils' writing, though not as structured as usual, was richer in factual information. As an English language teacher, I agreed with him that enthusiasm in this context might be more important than producing technically 'accurate' work, which might lack originality. These pupils might have needed longer to redraft their work into polished pieces, but this might have reduced the enjoyable spontaneity of the work in the short term. Language skills other than structured writing were being learned; for example, interactive verbalising, 'brain-storming', discussing, questioning, note taking, performing to an audience, researching and manipulating words imaginatively and artistically. These skills and experiences are all necessary foundation literacy skills, which require practice. The teacher's slight reservations about the quality of the writing in no way reduced his enthusiasm for this project (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3, Primary school 1).

Opportunities to observe successful practices were of great importance to teachers, who wished to engage less academically able and responsive pupils. School 2 found that disruptive pupils became engaged. There was evidence of concerted group engagement and concentration, far beyond that normally expected of a full range mixed ability class, in the drama work produced by School 3 and 5, and School 4 found evidence of improved personal writing, particularly that of less able pupils. The teacher in School 3 made an important point about the fact that their drama project stimulated less able pupils to learn naturally at their own pace, without being judged or stigmatised. They became valued members of the peer group team effort. Confidence development, skills improvement and engagement of less able pupils were also particularly noted with pupils in School 4 and 6. In his evaluation for Primary school 1, Ken found that: "...one *stamented* child produced huge volumes of work and became more talkative during the project" (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2,

Primary school 1). As previously mentioned, there were two workshops (dance and drama) in which teachers made unsolicited remarks to me about the surprising engagement of 'problem' children, some of whom were on prescribed medication.

The opportunity for group evaluation and reflection, which was given to artists and teachers after The Festival, resulted in raising self-esteem and appreciation of each other's skills and achievements. Ken praised Tommy, who he referred to as a very creative and flexible artist, and found he had learned new art skills from him. He had enjoyed working with Tommy and stated that The Festival provided "...a *valuable local display*" and gave the children "...a *PURPOSE to produce their work*". He found that pupils had benefited in "...*confidence, teamwork, Art, world knowledge*" and that their imaginations had been improved (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 1). All of the teachers said they would benefit from future partnerships with creative professionals and stated areas of interest. Most of the creative educators gave in-service training to whole groups of staff while in residence at schools and project teachers reported keen interest. In one school staff wanted an artist in permanent residence (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3: Final evaluation meeting).

While resident in School 2, Jane, the artist, had talked to staff at the school about her techniques and ways to generate ideas. They discussed brainstorming, time lining, windows, laminating and papermaking. She used different materials and techniques to those she had used the previous year and so extended staff knowledge. She said that she herself learnt about using new materials during the project. All of the work was very professionally mounted and displayed by Jane, which apart from increasing the final impact, demonstrated to staff and other teachers visiting The Festival how this might be done. Diane, the teacher, and Jane collaborated and developed new insight and skills. Although Diane had created a very artistically enhanced and interesting classroom, she was rather sceptical and unenthusiastic about doing an Arts project. She did not come to any meetings. However, in the end, she did a very positive written evaluation and said she would like to expand her knowledge of teaching the Arts by doing a drama project next time. Jane said that the project has made her "...*realise that it is essential that teachers are involved in the planning process for a successful project*". Diane agreed and said (with hindsight) that she would like

“...more quality time to discuss and plan with [the] artist”. She realised now that this would have enabled them to work together to vary the day for her Year 3 children, who “...found it difficult to focus all day”. She said, “They worked really well and with effort but needed a break” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 2). In turn, creative practitioners Jane and Mat compared notes about the challenges of working with younger pupils to further their own professional development (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3: Final evaluation meeting).

General discussions between creative educators and teachers could have been helpful at the start of the work. With some direction this might have led to consideration of how to stimulate the pupils to express and record opinions as part of the project process. This might possibly have helped to make the staff’s job easier in managing the work and recording progress. With the teacher’s help, the artist could have pre-planned feedback points, after the whole staff in-service training session and before the project started. In School 3, the teacher (Carol) and artist (Chloe), who had worked together the previous year, found that they had now “...embedded skills previously developed”. For example, the teacher could now work by herself and the artist felt confident that rehearsing would “...be done to a great standard.” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3: Final evaluation meeting) They exchanged observations and knowledge of individual children to mix pupils in groups, which facilitated learning in different ways. It was a productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, which also benefited the pupils. Chloe said she and Carol noticed an “...increase in confidence, teamwork, cooperation, listening and performing skills” during the project. She noted:

*...collaborating was done through – improvisation in Drama sessions – this then developed with children and teacher in classroom through literacy. This then helped to constantly restructure the piece... [through the] ...teacher/pupil/artist relationship.* (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 3)

In School 4, the artist, Sanjay, appreciated the teacher’s input into the project:

*Excellent resources and support from Susan made it a pleasure to teach artwork. Susan helped immensely in maintaining order and clarifying the more difficult exercises.* (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 4)

Susan created her own pupil questionnaire, which showed that pupils really enjoyed learning in this way. The fact that quite a few pupils disliked writing by comparison with the artwork deserves some consideration, although Susan found written work

improved. For example: “...*less talking – more doing in the lessons [Thomas]*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 4). It may be that they simply preferred art or it may be that there could have been improved planning to integrate English into the project in a more enjoyable way. The artist pointed out that “...*the [Festival] workshops gave all schools a taster of what the other groups had been working on, and experience with the different artists*”. The other school staff were enthusiastic and appreciative of Sanjay and ‘dropped in’ to see work progress using his methods in their own classes. The large mural on the container in the playground and the artwork to be displayed permanently left a legacy in the school (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 4).

In School 5, artist Mat found the teacher, Julie was “...*brilliant to work alongside*” and felt they complimented each other’s skills and teaching styles (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). Julie agreed that they made a good team. She was delighted to have learned “*how to put on, produce, write, direct and create a drama production that went from a blank piece of paper to a 17 minute production*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). During the collaboration the artist felt he had learned from the teacher’s ‘organised’ approach and learned to be clearer in his delivery. He appreciated her teaching role saying, “...*there is no way I could do Julie’s job*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). Mat’s reservations about doing a big performance with Year 3 pupils, deserves consideration. It is possible that some of the pupils found this a strain. Michael, a pupil, commented: “*When i was asleep near the end of the Play was my Faverowt part. Because I got a rest from the over work*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). However, the thoughtful consideration given to the pupils by both Mat and Julie indicates that this could be ironed out in future projects, for example by the inclusion of rest and play breaks in between active periods, and perhaps, as Mat suggests, “...*a more informal ‘showing’ of their work*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). He believed that the young people found the experience of being on stage with lights, sound and an audience there to watch them, an exciting and stimulating one. The teacher felt pupils benefited because they enjoyed being part of a project with such an enormous outcome and found that “...*some quiet children found new skills through this project and took on major roles*” (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 5). The most significant moment for

her was watching the children perform independently in a well rehearsed and moving production in a professional theatre setting, which she said made her feel proud.

### 7.11 Feelings engendered within positively responsive environments

In looking at The Festival data I was able to appreciate different ways in which positive feelings were likely to be engendered by feeling responsive contexts. These feelings are described below in no particular order. Tommy, a creative practitioner, who led poetry and art workshops, demonstrates **satisfaction and pride in ownership** in the following enthusiastic comment. He summed up the general air of enthusiasm for The Festival as follows:

*Been one of the best projects I've been involved with by a long chalk...just get more schools involved...get more schools and staff etcetera to see the final presentations...and I always think that more publicity should be given to these things in general...get as many people as possible to see the positive things that go on in schools and not the negative all the time...get it in the press and on telly...not for the creatives' sake but for the pupils'. How would I describe the Festival? ... a fantastic opportunity for all of us...a celebration of what can happen when artists, kids, schools and staff work together utilising everybody's strong points and skills to produce something that can be proudly shown to, viewed by and enjoyed by others. (Appendix Strand 4, 4.3 Primary school 1)*

The feeling of being able to **express oneself freely** in working things out was evident in all the creative lessons and workshops. Action Researcher 10, a primary school teacher working with a drama specialist, recorded this comment by a Year 5 child: *“Drama helps you not to be shy, to come in and feel free. You feel free to say anything but it has to be in character”* (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day). Both staff and pupils experimented and an inevitable part of experimentation is **experiencing failure as a positive learning process**. Learning is an emotional experience and the process of understanding and expressing feelings is part of its challenge. Gilbert (2002) points out that ‘failure’ and ‘success’ are intellectual constructions and that in teaching and learning failure should be treated as constructive ‘feedback’ and ‘hope’ maintained. The educator or modeller’s attitude to this is undoubtedly crucial.

Another useful process, which may involve some ‘difficult’ feelings in learning, is **risk taking and braving confusion**. Again the educator or modeller’s example is important. Gilbert claims that:

*Of all the keys to effective learning that research throws up, it is the “state” that we are in when we learn which comes through time and time again as the single most important factor in the learning process... Good teachers know that enthusiasm is contagious. What we sometimes forget is that lack of enthusiasm is also contagious. (2002, pp. 35-37)*

In addition, feeling **self-respect and pride in achievement** is vital to effective learning. For example, Action Researcher 2, a drama teacher working on literacy at a high school for boys with a theatre company, noted this comment by a pupil: “*I enjoyed being treated as though what I had to say was important*” (Appendix, Strand 4; 4.2, Day 1 – (3 July) – Action Researcher Day). A motivational aspect in learning is **feeling supported and appreciated as a person**. This is where the idea of positive regard, first described and developed by Rogers (1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983), can be effective. As a mentor and evaluator, I found that positive regard involved really listening with full attention and being open to other professionals’ ideas. This approach can ‘spark’ in others the will to ‘dig deeper’ to make sense of their knowledge bank, recognising truths, making new connections and reaching fresh conclusions. It was evident that the pupils particularly appreciated being asked their opinions. Professionals were much less spontaneous, being evidently surprised to be consulted. This may be seen as an indictment of the current ‘judgmental’ approach to educational evaluation. For example, I had to overcome teachers’ expectation that my job was to foist my own opinions on them, rather than to solicit theirs.

Another requirement of the feeling-responsive environment appears to be that of **being challenged to think and act independently**. Following on from the previous point, it was evident that teachers were challenged, by having the opportunity of being involved in The Festival. Many, particularly Year 6 teachers, expressed relief for themselves and their pupils in having a break from the tedium of Specific Attainment Targets’ (SATS’) preparation. Refreshingly, they were not deterred by the huge amount of work involved in The Festival, perhaps because they were designing, adapting, teaching and learning in an independently satisfying way. This is not to imply that teachers did not appreciate the value of the SATS framework, but rather that they felt the uniform outcomes recommended were inappropriately restrictive in view of pupils’ needs. One aspect of learning that these approaches did not allow for was the value of **being surprised, encountering novelty and being entertained and**

**absorbed by new contexts.** This was a very evident feature of The Festival work in varied contexts.

Another aspect of feeling responsive contexts was in **having one's curiosity aroused, being provoked to experimentation.** This applied to the young people involved and to professionals working with them. Having encouraged the youngsters to experiment, staff in turn, experimented themselves with the outcomes produced, in order to facilitate learning in developing, concluding and displaying. It was evident that The Festival provided an overall motive, which brought people together in a common goal. This evidenced the idea that **feeling needed and valued through being engaged in companionship and joint endeavour** is a strong motivation to learning. Modelling the process of working things out involved joint learning between young people themselves, but also between pupils and staff and through inter-professional engagement. A major feature of The Festival was unmistakably the learning incentive of **experiencing pleasure, amusement and happiness.** This is an aspect, which is frequently unconsidered and dismissed as irrelevant in education. I found that all of the above feeling-responsive aspects or phenomena were conducive to learning in contexts created for The Festival.

### **7.12 Conclusion**

This chapter shows that feelings in the form of all kinds of physical and mental sensations are an essential ingredient in learning and are evident in action within the 'effectively managed' learning environment. In answer to the subsidiary question posed in Strand 4, I found that creative learning projects can show educators how to engage learners' feelings in transformational learning, through curriculum development appropriate to individual school communities. It was also evident that educators' feelings played an important part in their work, professional development and evaluation processes. It may be worth noting here that Greenfield has stated her concerns that modern technology may be undermining humans' 'quality' of life and stability, by undermining individuality (2003, 2007). As one of our foremost neuro-cognitive scientists, she believes that we should consider the way we teach future generations so that we avoid losing our human values and originality. She believes that creativity is the key to educating in coping with the future. This makes sense to me since creativity challenges our realities and helps us make sense of them. Our

future development depends on understanding how we can use our full body and brain capacities, our limitations and achievements to better effect and this involves a better grasp, practice and use of our emotional and subconscious minds as well as our conscious brains. In this it may be increasingly necessary for educators to deliberately set up feeling responsive ecological environments for learning. This does not have to necessarily involve the Arts, but The Primary Arts Festival data demonstrates some ways in which this may be achieved and my analysis above shows some reasons why this process can work.

In relation to my guiding question, therefore, the primary school pupils, teachers and creative practitioners, who took part in this research, were profoundly affected by their feelings. The Festival demonstrated in diverse ways that there were many important connections between their feelings, thinking and learning. Firstly, feelings engendered within the children through environmental contexts, both incidental and structured, had an effect on their motivation to learn. For example, they engaged much more readily with lessons which had an immediate purpose and meaning for them. Teachers and creative practitioners learned how to research with pupils, providing a supportive context for pupil experimentation. They felt rewarded and proud of their own and their pupils' engagement and achievements. This was the case even though they worked more actively and adaptively than within the restricted teaching frameworks currently required in their jobs. There was a feeling of general delight by the whole community in the opportunity for flexible learning provided by The Festival, which was expressed in many ways; for example, by the wall of happy faces. Secondly, feelings expressed through workshops, involving both physical and mental sensations, were transformed as learning developed by further emotionally linked learning experiences. This could be seen by the growing satisfaction in their burgeoning physical and mental skills. These were generally triggered and/or influenced through an 'active' learning environment, which provided new challenges and a 'positive regard' teaching approach (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). Thirdly, strong feelings arose in pupils, teachers and creative practitioners, informing and affecting their thinking on a day to day basis as they learned. Fourthly, sharing these with other people was appreciated by them and appeared to facilitate their learning. Evidence for this was provided in the discussions, by the improvisation

of pupils within their groups, and in inter-professional evaluations of the adults working in dyads.

To reiterate, the consideration of emotional states (feedback on feelings) may therefore be seen, not only as both an indicator of and stimulus to learning, but also as a source of information. It appears that on occasions feelings represented logical subjective thoughts, which can inform and facilitate the learning process. An awareness of feelings, therefore, may contribute to the networking of new cognitive connections, correcting erroneous thoughts, appreciating correct ones, updating and adapting as we learn. Again their acknowledgement rather than suppression may be more desirable than previously appreciated in educational circles. Further, The Festival data reveals that it is possible to create emotionally and physically generative 'feeling' contexts, providing an arena for the discovery and construction of 'new' knowledge by individuals. It shows that if suitable environments, resources and professional expertise are provided, then the skill of recognising and responding to feelings, in ways that facilitate effective learning, can be learned by teachers, creative practitioners and perhaps potentially other professionals in other fields. Further research may be needed as to ways in which this can be achieved.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

In this thesis I researched my own cognitive processes as a student, practising teacher, educational mentor, researcher and evaluator as I investigated the effects of feelings in learning. Feelings were defined as an individual's perceived physical and mental sensations. In the process I also collected data about other people's learning. I asked the guiding question: "What is the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning?" My aims developed during seven years of data collection as I worked in opportune areas, recording four data strands, each seeking to answer a related question. The first strand involved collecting data while tutoring teenage school refusers, the second strand was based on my own personal and professional history, the third strand was developed through mentoring other teachers and the final, fourth strand was derived through an educational evaluation I undertook of a primary schools' creativity festival. As I developed ideas around my main question, I moved from inquiry into negative emotional aspects which might prevent learning, to looking at ways in which provisions for engaging learners' feelings might compensate for environmental deficits, facilitating cognitive development. In this chapter I discuss my research method and how it facilitated my research process (Section 8.2). I go on to give the findings of my analysis of two principal themes, which emerged from the four strands of enquiry. These were: Barriers to learning, both physical and emotional (Section 8.3) and Enabling learning environments, which are feeling responsive (Section 8.4). In the next section: Possible implications for learning theory (Section 8.5), I recommend a new 'feelings theory' as a way of giving a new perspective to existing learning theories. This chapter also contains sections on: Possible implications for educational policy and practice (Section 8.6) and Reflections on the research process (Section 8.7). The chapter ends with a Conclusion (Section 8.8).

#### **8.2 The research method**

The methodological development of the analysis of each of the strands was performed as appropriate as a type of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, according to my personal rationale. I used my learning experience to inform my work as I shifted

frames of reference within the main focus of exploring the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning; such as my different roles as a learner, a teacher, a mentor and an evaluator and participants' own perspectives. The strands have sometimes appeared as consecutive areas of enquiry following a 'logical' progression and at other times have overlapped and existed in parallel. There was a reiterative current of ideas flowing throughout, informed by theoretical literature, my own and my participants' experience. All of this indicates that I (and my participants also, to some extent) have been involved in a process of phenomenological reduction in carrying out the research (Bruzina, 2004).

In pursuing my own route, I created a hybrid methodology, exhibiting ideas found in IPA and Grounded theory (Willig 2001; this thesis, Chapter 3: 3.9). I used a combination of thematic analysis and Claxton's observed learning behaviour categories (2002) in the form of an already established, potentially useful, coding paradigm in the analysis (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.9). The methodology was based on the original aims 1, 2 and 5 and as the research developed, aims 3 and 4 were added with associated data collection (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.2 – The aims of the research and strands of inquiry). This was a pragmatic approach, each stage of the research informing the next, as the work moved broadly from considering deficits to answering learners' needs. I was circumspect throughout, tentatively crosschecking participants' comments with possible environmental influences and behaviours, avoiding hasty judgments as far as possible, mindful that I could not have been aware of all the influences upon participants. Sometimes a participant's interest and enthusiasm was a driving factor, when communicating spontaneously in volunteering unsolicited information. The method, in taking a deliberately 'open minded' approach, was able to accommodate the unexpected within the overall research focus. The action research proceeded in cycles as each strand followed each of my research aims. In Inquiry Strand 1, I sought to discover reasons why students, labelled as school refusers, were disaffected with education, considering their points of view by collecting data while home-tutoring. I looked at emotional blocks to learning, their possible causes, how they might be addressed and what this might reveal in relation to learning. I produced twelve analytic narratives over four years performing thematic analyses. These revealed a range of ecological factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; this thesis, Chapter 4).

The experiences of these young people had a profound effect upon my own learning at an emotional and professional level.

The young people's stories included in Strand 1 inspired me to the task of addressing my own emotional learning difficulties. In Inquiry Strand 2, after much reflection and heart searching, I asked myself how my own learning and teaching was affected by feelings (This thesis, Chapter 5). My inquiries led to a further investigation in Inquiry Strand 3 to compare and contrast other teachers' experiences and feelings about their learning and teaching (This thesis, Chapter 6). I then took my new found perceptions back into actual teaching contexts, in order to explore the usefulness of my new understandings. In Inquiry Strand 4, I explored the potential of my 'feelings theory' to inform and describe significant teaching strategies while witnessing practice without being prescriptive, observing and recording 'feeling based' learning in action (This thesis, Chapter 7). In dealing with professional adult learners, Strands 2, 3 and 4 were analysed thematically, but with additional reference as stated above to Claxton's Effective Learning Profile (2002) used as a retrospective coding frame.

All of the participants readily understood the research focus, immediately accepting feelings as important to their learning, although they had not explored their significance previously in the same way. This research focus necessitated enlisting participants' interest and it was relatively easy to engage them in expressing their feelings about their learning. It was a subject of immediate and significant interest to them, a finding in itself. I researched with participants rather than simply about them. I took what they said incidentally as potentially serious data and often found it to be so. In this way the research process was indeed phenomenological in looking at some of the participants' points of view (primary pupils, teenagers and adults) and witnessing and supporting them in their own inquiries and development. Within this process I also drew my own phenomenological conclusions based on real teaching observations and interactions with individuals, including a consideration of my own idiosyncratic learning problems. I questioned my own, my participants' and other people's assumptions. This method, in acquiring new and un-circumscribed information, was a successful approach and appeared to fit the research purpose. The amount of detailed information collected in the Appendix created a dilemma in deciding what should be included in the thesis. The only solution is to strongly

recommend the reader to take time to read it, particularly the stories, which offer convincing evidence in support of my conclusions. In spite of this dilemma, it was a method which I found informative and which, with appropriate adaptation, I recommend to others in carrying out social research.

I developed and adapted the research method in a creative manner, recording 'emotional' feedback, whatever the content, whenever it was given or observed. However, the guiding question and focus remained constant throughout my explorations. I analysed each of the four strands in relation to their own subsidiary question. In doing so I have found not only some information in answer to those questions, but some confirmation of evidence points across them, which answered my guiding question. I find that the data evidenced, being present in four different contexts, the conclusions and arguments made in this final chapter. The main findings of all four strands of the research were about the effects, both physical and mental, of 'inappropriate' and 'appropriate' emotional learning environments. These environments either restricted or enabled 'freedom to learn', affecting different learners, in different ways (Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). In doing this work I concluded that the effect of discounting emotional and subjective learning might result potentially in serious long-term costs to society. In the areas under investigation this tended to be towards the wastage of school refusers, under achievers and even teachers as a human resource.

### **8.3 Barriers to learning, both physical and emotional**

Strand 1 yielded a considerable amount of information about twelve school-refusers learning within environments, which caused emotional barriers to learning (This thesis, Chapter 4: Home tutoring 12 school refusers). Exploring my own emotional blocks to learning in Strand 2 also gave me new insight into these types of learning difficulties. I considered my own emotional difficulties with learning from different viewpoints – as a child and as a teacher (This thesis, Chapter 5: The author's own learning process). It was evident in Strand 3 that other teachers had also experienced emotional difficulties in childhood and adult ecological environments, which impacted in different negative ways on their learning and teaching (This thesis, Chapter 6: Mentoring 8 teachers as learners). In Strand 4, which was largely made up of positive data about learning environments, the points emerging tended to be about

how The Festival projects compensated for deficits in 'feelings based' learning in the current education system. This strand showed how feelings might be engendered within environments deliberately created to be feeling responsive (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice). The first two strands included evidence about environments, which were so negative that they damaged learning ability in the long term. These environmental influences and effects were complex, idiosyncratic and variable within individuals as well as different in themselves.

Social class did not impact directly on emotional difficulties, simple generalisations were not sufficient and situations required complex personal knowledge and explanation (This thesis, Chapter 4: 4.61). Although some participants evidently had latent ability, subconscious 'conditioning' in childhood appeared in some cases to have caused hidden or obscured emotional difficulties (Bennett-Goleman, 2001). This was compounded at certain crucial times during life histories by the absence of sufficient positive regard (a deficit) to build and sustain confidence (Rogers, 1961). This only became truly understandable to me when I faced up to and investigated my own emotional blocks to learning in Strand 2. Taking into account natural propensities and abilities, the complex effects of ecological environments over time, tended to compound learning difficulties. In all four strands it was evident that enabling, 'emotionally supportive' learning environments tended to aid recovery from detrimental learning experiences. Furthermore these environments might be, to some extent, created through emotional' skills and educational understanding; for example, by using counselling and teaching skills.

I discovered that participants' confusion of feelings including embarrassment, depression and low self-esteem based in complex causes led to an inability to learn. In the case of teachers, this failure to do their best work as they saw it gave rise to disaffection with work (This thesis, Chapter 6: 6.6 Ecological environments: teaching). The causes were generally outside participants' control and this lack of control exacerbated participants' problems. Many had experienced fear through bullying in childhood and some adults had experienced or witnessed it in the work place on different levels. Some of the institutional bullying constituted a neglect of human rights, its victims denigrated by the dismissive behaviour, lack of concern and

support by management. Other participants had suffered shocks and traumas, leaving them with unresolved self-esteem issues. Several people had lost loved ones, depriving them of much needed support, companionship and guidance; for example, through parents' divorce. Some were experiencing or had had serious illnesses, which had slowed normal learning development. Others were suffering and being treated for depression, caused by, for example, their current situation, previous emotional or sexual abuse. In all these cases, the participants' negative feelings about themselves could be exacerbated by the inappropriate responses of others. Participants' feelings and behaviour acted as indicators of the fundamental environmental problems giving rise to them. These should therefore be noted and attended to in various ways with more urgency by parents, educators and other professionals.

The causes of emotional learning difficulties were complex. Learning confidence was affected by poor self-image, limiting learning aspirations. In the case of children, this often had environmental causes outside school resulting in a lack of normal social interaction with peers. The resulting peer group rejection caused fear of ridicule and disregard and further social withdrawal (This thesis, Chapter 4: 4.53 Fear and bullying). This was sometimes created through cultural difference and also families' social isolation. Social status in the accepted sense did not necessarily prevent this (This thesis, Chapter 5: 5.2 Ecological environments: childhood). Within school, formal lessons in primary and secondary school, when they were exclusive of other methods, tended to reduce opportunities for participation in low stress interactive learning with peers. This might not necessarily involve negative learning experiences within individuals, but appeared to be a contextual problem creating an inherent deficit in positive stimuli. An overly competitive ethos and a confrontational general teaching style consisting of exhortation to more effort, which ignored pupil difficulties and feelings, tended to compound problems. The labelling of failure to attain the teaching goals as due to laziness tended to increase student anxiety leading to recurring failure. Demands for quick responses and 'correct' answers took no account of slower, questioning, reflective learning styles, creating aversions to particular subjects or even education in general. Schools caused emotional problems by sometimes failing to recognise that young people had not experienced the same encouragement and grounding from their families in certain skills and subject areas. They needed to be inducted into them more sympathetically. This deficit, seen as

inability or defiance, induced learners to label themselves, reducing their own expectations of their own abilities, even when in fact they did not lack natural ability. It is important that educationalists develop skills of awareness and reflection, learning how to assess and deliver appropriate teaching styles, curriculum plans and resources in relation to learners' needs. Such training is likely to be resource efficient in pupils' general learning improvement.

Participants' educational problems were exacerbated by schools and colleges, which were generally disinterested in pupils' emotional welfare, failing to monitor and provide appropriate work and/or emotional support (This thesis, Chapter 4: 4.65 Variable school and college response). Teachers expressed concern about environmental conditions they perceived as unfavourable to their students. One teacher was concerned about the undermining effect of parental indifference on educational achievement. Such issues require discussion, training, research and resources to be instituted in order for pupils and parents to be supported in overcoming their problems. Teachers were concerned about teaching practices they perceived as unethical (having a detrimental effect upon learning entitlement) within a range of employment contexts (This thesis, Chapter 6: 6.6 Ecological environments: teaching). These types of issues were not flagged up and discussed as training and management concerns. Whether or not deliberate, it was evident that uninformed criticism, judgment and isolation did not solve participants' problems and tended to compound ill effects. There is an urgent requirement, shown by this research for ethical arbitration systems to be instituted in educational establishments, subject to impartial and professional monitoring in the course of normal working practice.

Parenting problems experienced by participants tended to involve parents who had had childhood problems themselves and had emotional problems with parenting. As well as parents under current treatment, participants may have been affected by those who had undiagnosed mental health difficulties. There were unstable parental relationships and the aftermath of financial and emotional problems, some of these caused by divorce and bereavement. Across the four strands of research, parents generally loved their children and wanted the 'best' for them. However, if they suffered from emotional problems themselves, they sometimes behaved in ways detrimental to their children's self-esteem. They sometimes reacted with

unconstructive parenting habits, perhaps learned from their own upbringing, which were not beneficial for their children; for example, keeping them off school (This thesis, Chapter 4: 4.52 Young people's confusion and parenting problems). Subconscious confusions thus acquired by children caused withdrawal, inhibition and poor self-esteem contributing to later problems in adult learning and parenting. They subverted learning engagement, breaking the absorption and flow causing students to fail in managing their learning independently. Such was the complexity of some situations, young people found themselves powerless to respond differently without support. They needed a conducive teaching approach, which allowed for, and connected with, their existing and current experience. Even where teachers were aware of social problems, there was a marked lack of training and provision for referral to family and social support strategies and systems. Where these did exist, the systems might still break down through lack of communication and understanding. This illustrates the need for more context based research and training in both positive and negative emotional aspects of learning at all professional levels. Resources for practical skills training in 'family support' issues and therapy and the infrastructure for its delivery would tend to improve the learning success of disadvantaged students.

In the era in which I and many colleagues studied, we had little advice available regarding teaching and learning approaches to facilitate emotional re-engagement with learning. I did find, however, that the participatory action research in itself, in acknowledging emotional problems in partnership with the student, could in some respects facilitate a revival in educational interest. This approach, though dependent on individual teacher interpretation, appeared to offer some solutions to the problem of how to teach disaffected learners (This thesis, Chapter 4: 4.64 Using counselling and teaching skills). Acknowledgement of feelings in teaching and learning, whatever they might be, tended to facilitate some level of re-engagement, adaptation, development, meta-learning and resolution of thoughts across all four strands. Some teachers found that their unique, often negative experiences in childhood had contributed not only to their choice of occupation, but also to their intuitive teaching skills (This thesis, Chapter 6: Mentoring Eight teachers). They had gone on to develop their own humanitarian principles in learning and teaching and to be more empathic towards pupils as a result. This implies that reflection and reflexivity are useful in developing teaching skills. It may be necessary for personal experience to be linked

with formal training in consideration of justice, equality, entitlement and inclusion in order for widespread educational change to be effected.

I found that although environment, incidental history and parental influence were important and the individual combinations of these complex, current learning contexts were also influential. Emotional problems could arise in adult life as people continued to learn through employment and in further education. Work overload and poor management of educational programmes caused conflict, stress and depression. This was evidenced by many of the feelings expressed by teachers in Strands 3 and 4 (This thesis, Chapter 7: 7.5 Resilience). Many of these problems could have been resolved through appropriate feedback mechanisms and more consideration for the feelings of teachers as learners through management systems. At work there existed a problem for some experienced teachers in coping with unrealistic and inappropriate expectations for preparation and evidencing of their work by 'ticking boxes' using general performance criteria, which were not always appropriate. These did not allow for the creative development of courses for different pupil groups and teaching situations and caused anger (This thesis, Chapter 7: 7.3 Discussion of issues regarding creativity and the research focus).

There was pressure on many of the teachers due to high levels of assessment, preparation and marking. This had caused some teachers to be so angry they resigned from their positions (This thesis, Chapter 6: Mentoring Eight teachers). However, many of them demonstrated a willingness to commit to high levels of workload when their concerns were acknowledged and they were allowed and given agency to research and resolve problems themselves (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice). There seems to be a valid argument here for placing more responsibility upon teachers to research and develop their own solutions through networking within large and small communities of educational practice. In order to be successful and consistent across education systems, this would require government funding and organisational support and a more trusting respect from society for teachers' organisational ability in the setting up of systems for the self-regulation of ethical issues (This thesis, Chapter 7: 7.10 Learning through inter-professional engagement). This would also involve teachers in taking on such

responsibility and undertaking to accept accountability, which according to this research many would be able, with training, to undertake.

#### **8.4 Enabling learning environments, which are feeling responsive**

Learning achievement was generally facilitated by environments, which provided opportunities for learners to achieve some success at their own level. This was particularly the case where idiosyncratic differentiated outcomes were accepted as a useful part of the development process. Contexts involving active experimentation, group interaction and teacher / pupil modelling and discussion were found to be particularly motivating (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice). Where these opportunities existed, the behaviour of special needs pupils with behaviour difficulties improved. Their responses were seen to be improved in comparison to more formal school contexts. For example, they appeared to be engaged by opportunities for whole body learning through physical and mental sensations. Teachers learned most meaningfully through actively researching with learners, both from similar and different perspectives. They created and adapted curriculum contexts in which to teach using a range of resources and adapted educational situations with consideration of likely learner engagement. That learners' engagement was engendered by these positively tailored and responsive environments was evidenced by teacher and pupil expressions of feelings about their work.

Learning environments were constructed to give learners the opportunity to discover new interests and abilities. This exposure to new experience, allowed for, and encouraged, individual exploration, experimentation and development, during and after which, feelings could be expressed and supported. These environments, which encouraged participatory action research in learning, engaged and acknowledged feelings at all levels, improved pupil and teacher motivation (CCE, 2008). Participant teachers considered that adapting the syllabus to accommodate different pupils was a necessary and rewarding part of the job, even though it involved a high level of commitment and effort. It would be beneficial for teachers to undergo training in the collection and evaluation of 'emotional' engagement and feedback data from learners, and practice in ways to implement the information in adapting the curriculum to create positively responsive environments.

Learners benefited from an open teaching approach which incorporated counselling skills and positive regard (Rogers, 1951, 1961). Motivation in learners was promoted by teachers' adapting courses to pupils needs, evaluating through pupil affective, as well as, factual feedback. This approach seemed to also motivate teachers themselves. A policy of eliciting pupils' and teachers' suggestions and feeling reactions, which allowed choices within the laid down frameworks, motivated learners of all ages. It was possible to make and offer choices within the subject framework guidelines. This leaning approach was successful to some extent with almost all participants. A policy of trying to understand learners' behaviour through emotional feedback and observation was conducive to remedy in adapting teaching responses. It was also useful in teachers' own reflexive professional development to consider their own emotional lives and behaviour. It was possible to promote motivation and interest in learning by eliciting and responding to learner feedback from disaffected, disadvantaged students and to help them re-engage in learning. It was not necessary to know about all the participants' problems in detail in order to respect them and help them to engage in learning. However, as a teacher, considering my own life and learning increased my empathy and intuitive skills and improved my professional attitude. Most learners, both pupils and adults in this research, expressed gratitude for positive support in their learning and wanted to be listened to and acknowledged.

When I was evaluating, I found teachers' idiosyncratic enthusiasms, emotional engagement with, talents and skills for, certain subject matter within the curriculum could provide a valuable contribution to student learning in modelling the personal satisfactions of learning. This was the case even where these were not specifically prescribed or required in detail by the National Curriculum. For example, creative practitioners described their career successes at The Creativity Festival or demonstrated their own artistic abilities in workshops. It should be recognised that learners who perceive the beneficial effects of learning in others are more likely to discriminate and find their own path to fulfilment in life by copying this kind of enthusiasm for learning, making their own, different choices. Feelings were engendered within positively responsive environments (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice). In some cases, creative work such as visual art, drama, creative writing and poetry provided an enjoyable personal context to which learners related, even though they might have no obvious talent. It is

possible that this may be partly because these subject areas often already acknowledge feelings as a matter of course. It was evident that involvement through feelings and their effects engendered thought processes, encouraging cognitive engagement and learning development. Participants showed by their comments and behaviour that their feelings, both positive and negative were important in their learning. In this the connection was clearly evident between positive feelings modelled, shared, exchanged and supported by enthusiastic teachers and peers, and learners' increased engagement with tasks (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice). This phenomenon included teachers and artists, who learned by exchanging ideas and conclusions, both in the process of developing work and in their own final group evaluations (This thesis, Chapter 7: 7.10 Learning through inter-professional engagement).

Parents showed me and colleagues that they appreciated teachers' acknowledgement of their children's feelings and needs. They were grateful for a sympathetic ear, non-judgmental advice and support and relieved to be able to discuss their children's problems, provided they were listened to and received appropriate feedback. Learners' resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity improved with family involvement with educational learning goals. This was evident both when addressing the learning problems of teenage school refusers and in the positive questionnaire responses given by parents during the creativity festival. In Strand 3, teachers explained the benefits of various positive aspects of their own childhood environment in relation to learning. In the case of these 'successful' learners their parents' aspirations and encouragement to succeed were important factors in their educational success. These demonstrate the complexity of schema influence and accidents of upbringing as they affect future thinking. As children, these parents, who were presumably 'highly intelligent' and 'sensitively aware', had formed perceptions and made reasoned subjective assumptions about their environment, which affected their subsequent feelings, attitudes to learning and career choices. Disadvantaged learners, who appeared incapable of learning at some stage, were later sometimes able to re-engage with formal education entering higher education training courses and university, with considerable success when environmental conditions improved (This thesis, Chapter 6: 6.4 Ecological environments: childhood and Chapter 4: 4.7 Conclusion). In Strand 1, some knowledge of the complex home situations facing

students in context certainly facilitated ‘teaching understanding and empathy’ facilitating student engagement. Some of the difficulties faced by students and parents were revealed to be complex and difficult to overcome without support (DCSF, 2007: Parent Support Advisor Pilot). Some educational establishments provided very effective support for learners with emotional learning problems whereas others did not, as was evidenced in Strand 1 by the variable school and college responses. This showed that training and resources need to be more effectively targeted in supporting the emotional ups and downs of learning through life experienced by students, parents, teachers and support staff.

### **8.5 Possible implications for learning theory**

The theory I have developed through this research is extrapolated as a contribution to existing learning theory in Chapter 2: The function of feelings in learning. It offers an additional dimension not previously researched in this manner, which is supported by the findings in the empirical chapters. It represents an argument worked out over the whole period of the research but positioned at the beginning in order to inform the reader. As a result of this, references to the empirical chapters in Chapter 2 were not included in consideration of the readers’ lack of foreknowledge of the data. This is pointed out in the introduction to these first two theory chapters, which explains that these have been revisited and redrafted throughout the research as part of my re-iterative process of analysis (This thesis, Chapter 1: 1.1 Introduction). Other theories and fields of enquiry are not entered into in great depth in this final chapter, because my theory is not considered to be a negation of existing theories, but rather offers an additional perspective. However, it is worth making some reference in this section to some contemporary learning theorists to explain the potential of the ‘feelings theory’ approach to extend and support existing theories. Jarvis (2009) refers to the ‘*complex*’ transformation of sensations in learning from ‘*primary experience*’ and talks about how a person’s emotions, beliefs, attitudes and values are changed through learning and transform social situations as a result. He states that he does not need to have a meaning to learn from experience though he might want to give meaning to his experiences as he reflects upon them. He concludes ‘...*that learning involves three transformations: the sensation, the person and then the social situation*’ (ibid., p. 29). I suggest that a greater awareness of subconscious rationalisations, perhaps accessed

through feelings feedback and observations of student behaviour might help to explain some of these complex, interactional, dynamic transformational processes.

My research revealed that feelings, both as physical and mental sensations, were implicit, conducive to, and necessary for, cognition in complex ways and that learning provided a suitable arena within which to research their effects and function. I used this evidenced conclusion as a basis for developing a theory, which I found of practical value in developing teaching approaches. In this theory, feelings are seen to be 'information highways' for apprehending and accumulating knowledge about the world using the senses. Across all the inquiry strands a consideration of emotional states (feedback on feelings) might be seen, not only as both an indicator of and stimulus to learning, but also as a source of information. It appeared that on occasions both positive and negative feelings represented logical subjective thoughts, which could inform and facilitate the learning process. They were also sometimes a means of expressing subjective un-worded or pre-worded 'logical' thought through complex, often idiosyncratic learning behaviours, which might be explored and developed by both teachers and learners. Feeling based personal 'intuitive' research offered ways of working with feelings to make meaning and improve understandings of 'realities'. For teachers it opened up developmental possibilities and the benefits of being more aware of conducive and non-conducive environments for learning. As a teacher I found it was not necessarily so much a question of requiring an all-embracing theory as of developing a better 'working' metaphor for approaching and understanding the problem of subconscious, emotional cognition. I found that, from a teaching perspective, the working assumption that my pupils' *'feelings were logical'* (in their owners' own terms) was a helpful and practical one. This was true in terms of considering and endeavouring to understand student perspectives, evaluating learning processes, engagement and acquisition and also in designing potentially motivating curricular approaches. The theory, therefore, may be seen as one of Bruner's (2009) 'interesting' learning theories of mind since it does indeed:

*...contain specifications of some kind about the "resources" required for a mind to operate effectively...more "outside-in," indicating the kind of world needed to make it possible to use mind (or heart!) effectively. (Bruner, 2009, p. 165)*

In researching over a period of eight years, I found the focus of my research to be contrary to much that was happening in practice within the United Kingdom

education system during the time reported. In spite of initiatives resulting from the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda, successful inclusion of all learners to develop to best potential levels was hindered by a lack of awareness of ‘feelings based’ learning as a component of learning theory and professional training (Department for Education and Skills, 2006a). Bruner (2009) points out: ‘...it is often said that all “cognitive psychology”, even its cultural version, neglects or even ignores the place of emotion and feeling ‘...in the life of the mind’, but does not believe that this is necessarily true (ibid., p. 167). He states that ‘Surely emotions and feelings are represented in the processes of meaning making and in our constructions of reality’ (ibid., p. 167). This research supports this idea, but goes further showing that contrary to accepted beliefs ‘emotional’ learning is not so much a ‘desirable’ curricular addition but is already present within the learning process as well as offering a useful approach which can be chosen consciously. It appears that if this dimension to human learning is not utilised positively by teachers, not only is the educational system’s efficiency reduced, but damage to future learners’ learning abilities may result. In this respect some of these theoretical conclusions might be considered ground breaking in contributing to knowledge and practice.

In this research, the interactive sharing and expressing of feelings as within a ‘community of practice’ appears to inform and ‘leverage’ the learning process at all levels (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 54; Wenger, 2008). Consideration of emotional states through learner feedback might therefore be seen as useful in informing developmental planning as well as being indicative of achievements (as in evaluation) and stimulating to the production of creative ideas. My findings provide compelling evidence that the acknowledgement of feelings, rather than traditionally their suppression, is much more desirable than previously appreciated in educational circles. It is possible that the ‘feelings theory’ might facilitate the development of other theories and ideas by offering an evaluative dimension through ‘feelings feedback.’ For example, Gardner (2009) states that:

*...the theory of multiple intelligences provides an opportunity, so to speak, to transcend, mere variation and selection. It is possible to examine a topic in detail to determine, **which** intelligences, **which** analogies, **which** examples are most likely **both** to capture important aspects of the topic **and** to reach a significant number of students. (ibid., 2009, p. 111 - author’s emphasis)*

The theory I have developed shows some ways in which this process might be approached.

In this research I gained knowledge regarding the types of detrimental environmental conditions, which give rise to school refusal, the resulting emotional effects on school refusers' learning and ways in which this might be addressed. These ways, however, depend for their success upon an intuitive and empathic professionally grounded teaching approach, influenced by a practical theory such as the one I suggest. Two points came to light in the research. Firstly, in the first three strands feelings engendered in childhood within environmental contexts, both incidental and structured, often had a lasting effect on later learning. They might continue to 'operate' and affect later learning 'inappropriately' because they were actually a means of reasoning or 'thinking' in themselves, operating often beneath the level of conscious commentary. Secondly, learning was especially difficult if learners were experiencing negative environmental influences at the same time as they were being taught. This was particularly the case if they received general and/or specific condemnation of their 'emotionally' based behaviour, which they were unable, due to fear, embarrassment, confusion or lack of awareness, to explain. I found here that the simple realisation that feelings can represent hidden 'rational' thought processes enabled me to give respect to participants, **even when I remained ignorant of their subconscious reasoning. This applied even when students' behaviour and ideas were eventually found, by them or me, to be mistaken.** This 'theory' and approach which I recommend tended, after a period of time, to enable them to surface their thinking and open it up for further development through further emotionally linked learning experiences. For example, they eventually shared their satisfaction in achievement, the connection of ideas, the finding of a purpose and the discovery of meaning.

Swick and Williams (2006) find that 'Bronfenbrenner's bioecological models (1979, 2005): (1) Microsystem, (2) Mesosystem, (3) Exosystem, (4) Macrosystem, and (5) Chronosystem are helpful to professionals seeking to understand how to provide appropriate interventions for families experiencing stress syndromes that create serious problems such as chemical dependency, family violence, and homelessness. They find that *'each system depends on the contextual nature of the person's life and*

*offers an evergrowing diversity of options and sources of growth'* (p. 371). They quote Bronfenbrenner's (1979) advice to practitioners working with families in crisis:

*Our understanding of the "contexts" in which family stressors occur can help us in being effective helpers. Each family and each person experiences stress in unique ways... We can gain insights related to patterns of family responses to various stress syndromes but must be cautious as to how we use these generalizations in our work with families. We must always follow the admonition "do no harm" as we seek to understand and support families. (qtd. in Swick and Williams, 2006, p. 372)*

It is not just the sequence and importance of events in the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) which impact on ongoing development, but the interaction and effect of established, ongoing and spontaneous feelings, which affect learning progress in the process. My research shows that complex emotional rationales operate in the human subconscious impacting on learning development as it takes place. Some of these have a basis in previous experience, but others are spontaneous based in moments of learning experience as they happen. Situations which are conducive to thoughtful feelings in learning can be created by 'feeling aware' educationalists and other professionals. The effect of the interplay between feelings as thoughts arising from environments and emotional history may be accessed, rationalised, developed and to some extent even predetermined and elicited, when these processes are considered seriously by learners and educators. Learning development can be enhanced by taking the attitude that feelings enhance learning and are intrinsic to the legitimate thought processes necessary to learning. Feelings may be an expression of complicated subconscious rationales not yet realised and their consideration can aid learning. In taking this learning approach it is not necessary to immediately understand or agree with these emotional expressions; indeed questioning and disagreeing is part of the internal process of adjustment. For example it is often the case that an emotional assertion leads to an eventual leap in understanding which encompasses quite the opposite view. Too often, these 'mistakes' are not voiced and are overlooked and ignored by both learners and teachers, reducing the likelihood of correction instead of progressing and leveraging understanding. Acknowledging the usefulness to learners of expressing and exploring feelings can facilitate learning through the practical action of educators. It is possible to research various student cohort expectations, culture and context in devising approaches to teaching and

curriculum adaptation with ongoing mentoring and further adaptation in the process as appropriate through consideration of ‘feelings feedback’.

As my research proceeded it was found that learning could be triggered and/or influenced through a positive change in environment. Learners benefited from the opportunity and encouragement to think in a ‘feeling’ way, exposure to a new challenge through ‘feelings’ stimulation, satisfaction in achievement of physical and mental skills and a forgiving ‘positive regard’ teaching approach (Rogers, 1951, 1961; Rogers & Freiberg, 1983). It was clearly evident that various ‘successful’ environments might be engineered through the ‘emotional’ skills and understandings of professionals as in The Creativity Festival Strand. One major conclusion necessary, in order to underpin such an approach, is the recognition by educationalists that human feelings, both physical and mental arise, informing and affecting learners thinking and negotiating skills on a day to day, minute by minute basis as they learn. It is, therefore, necessary for those who aspire to teach efficiently to have a more sophisticated awareness of these complex factors and to be professionally trained in curriculum adaptation. This creative approach in researching while teaching goes *‘beyond the acquisition of new tricks or techniques, however valuable they may be, to a more deep, “therapeutic” type of professional development’* (Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy, 2004, p. 45). To some extent as professionals, considering both our own and pupils’ feelings may also help us to be more aware of the effects of our teaching principles and methods.

The main finding arising throughout the entire body of work of this thesis was that mental including some physical feelings, being intrinsic to learning, may be, and perhaps should be, considered as legitimate ‘thoughts’. This finding arose initially through improving my own professional understanding of my own thinking processes and through the evidence obtained from participants in all four inquiry strands. In reaching this conclusion I found much within the currently relevant literature across a range of disciplines that might be seen as compatible with it and a great deal that could be interpreted as supporting. In pursuing an idiosyncratic enquiry into the relationship between feelings, thinking and learning, I found the following: I discovered that combining counselling skills with teaching added to my understanding and the efficacy of my work. I learned to question my own pre-conceived ideas and

possible prejudice. I discovered my limitations and how my professional intuitions might be worked with, and reflected upon, in planning teaching approaches. I came to a better understanding of differing combinations of environmental conditions in all their complexity and how they may affect individual learners' feelings and learning progress. This process was complex and accumulative rather than finite in nature. This 'feelings related' theory was a result of the findings obtained and analysed in my action research process, but appears to have the potential to be similarly diverse and accumulative in its further use by others.

### **8.6 Implications for educational policy and practice**

The work being undertaken by current government initiatives in remodelling education services in the United Kingdom requires ongoing research to make it more effective. For example the Sure-Start extended schools' programme (DCSF, 2007b), is being further developed through different initiatives to help older age groups. Research by teachers on the ground in devising feeling responsive educational environments is necessary to increase efficiency of delivery to learners (This thesis, Chapter 7: 7.10 Learning through inter-professional engagement). My research might facilitate better teacher training in conjunction with the development of appropriate educational systems aimed at engaging learners through their emotions. This researching approach using 'feelings feedback' might facilitate the development of curriculum adaptation creating student friendly contexts on the 'ground'. This is not a simple option since it would rely on the devolvement of professional responsibility for individual action. This would require a constructive, adaptable and intelligent approach to solving problems at all levels of the education system (Waters, 2007).

If it is the case that feelings, both positive and negative are important in learning at all levels, then this has positive implications for educational policy. Recent government research initiatives and directives indicate that the time is ripe for furthering this concept as a force for improving the educational system. For example the Early Years and Foundation Stage initiative flags up the following four areas: 1. a unique child, 2. positive relationships, 3. enabling environments and 4. learning and development (Children's Workforce Development Council, 2007-8). Further, a 'feelings based theory' about learning could enable practitioners to improve the implementation of government targets and outcomes in dealing with children. It could facilitate a more

sophisticated approach to teaching children, one which perceptive practitioners themselves might favour. For example while writing this chapter; I have been lecturing a class of teaching assistants in the final year of their education degrees. A number of them working in the area of remedial reading have produced assignments exploring phonics as it is used in the work setting. It is evident from these, that there has been a range of teacher response to the recent and 'influential' Rose Report (DfES, 2006b), an independent review of the teaching of early reading. These assignments showed that some teachers interpret the phonics approach sensitively, some use it restrictively and un-inspiringly, while a few appear to 'teach' it haphazardly and with little understanding. Rose himself states, '*when to introduce phonic work systematically is, and should be, a matter of principled, professional judgment based on careful observation and robust assessment*' (DES, 2006, p. 92.). This illustrates how the good intentions of experts may be subverted, unless professionals are given permission and give themselves permission to think for themselves in adapting the curriculum appropriately according to the 'emotional' feedback of pupils in their different settings.

Since the finding that feelings are vital to learning success appears to be incontrovertible, then ways must be found to accommodate and utilise this information within the educational system. If it is accepted by implication, that interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogue must also be conducive to learning, systems should be set up at all levels of the educational system to facilitate this process. If this is not done then there appears little hope of achieving the well founded recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review in answering children's present and future needs through: 1. quality, 2. equity, 3. breadth and 4. balance (Alexander, 2009). The contexts I studied suggest the following possibilities.

### **8.61 Learners**

My explorations in Strand 1 involving school refusers, revealed some of the combinations of environmental conditions, which may cause young people to become disassociated with school and unable to learn, in some cases while still attending it. The research also revealed that the full complexities of individual problems were frequently hidden and never looked for by educational professionals. They were in any case, by their nature, not explainable in simple terms. This was due largely to a

unique combination of accidental life history and current events, over which participants had no control, but which affected their feelings negatively about learning. The full complexity of these problems was sometimes hard for an individual to appreciate even in their own case, because underlying causes might be related to childhood contexts long forgotten. Once negative behavioural responses were established, it was difficult to trace their origins and adjust thinking patterns and behaviour. There were a range of complex environmental problems affecting school refusers and under achievers, which when known were certainly understandable on some level in human terms. Although they appeared to be illogical from the outside, when understood they were not. It was not sufficient (or practical) to claim that these young people were *just* badly behaved or defiant of authority. In the time and contexts referred to, the education system though it paid lip service to supporting disadvantaged learners. In practice, with the exception of one or two individuals, it generally either ignored or condemned them. This finding infers that legislation and financial provision are ineffective unless those that administer them understand the issues and how a means of possible remedy may be accomplished and have funding and the incentive to act.

The research suggests that supportive, practical educational intervention in 'feelings based' learning contexts is needed, offering understanding and acceptance of young people's own perspectives. Learners, particularly those in difficulty, need a counselling skills approach in teaching, to be seriously listened to and given a voice. This includes teachers as they learn through planning, teaching and evaluating in various ways. They too would benefit from professional mentoring as a means of researching, developing ideas and knowledge. A mentoring approach might be adopted much more widely in teaching since it would tend towards the resolution of human rights issues such as entitlement and inclusion. There are also advantages in a mentoring approach in estimating efficiency in absorption of and transformation of knowledge, acquisition of learning skills and suitability of education programmes through feelings feedback. This approach could also provide an efficient form of self assessment for learners.

The active participation of young people in the evaluation of their own work and learning programmes can improve efficiency and motivation. Learners also respond

well to learning in inter-active cross-curricular and in the case of teachers inter-professional development. For pupils, these demonstrated the relevance of subject area work in the more 'real world' context of projects. Learners generally enjoyed and benefited from Arts based, 'feelings based' and 'whole body' creative researching and learning, confirming that such programmes could facilitate learning in all areas of the curriculum. It was evident in Strand 4 of the research that pleasure, enjoyment, success and other people's acknowledgment of learning achievement promoted further learning engagement. It was also evident that educators' feelings played an important part in professional development and evaluation processes. Learning is a personal, idiosyncratic process and therefore the process of self-discovery through feelings was proved to be a valuable learning method in itself (This thesis, Chapter 7: Researching a community of education practice).

### **8.62 Educational management (and social) agencies**

Since the time of this research there have been extensive programmes linking social agencies with education to support young people who are coping with problematic environmental influences (DCSF 2006, The Common Assessment Framework: The Integrated Children's System). The Common Assessment Framework came about because of horrific child abuse resulting in child murder. However, a recent case (that of 'Baby P'), showed that legislative programmes and government directives do not always bring about the required reforms. These types of programmes (which have social responsibilities implicit within them), however well intentioned, require a change in social attitude and an improved level of personal and professional responsibility. Professional intuitions (with appropriate checks and balances) require opportunities for expression. Young people with social and learning difficulties have cognitive, emotional and practical problems, which are complex and not obvious. Agency needs to be given for individual professionals to express their concerns so that appropriate actions can be taken. Similar research to mine into this area (which may involve teachers) by the 'child at risk' team might be useful.

In education, questions about coercion and co-operation require careful consideration on humanitarian and practical grounds. Engagement and research with individuals may be an effective option; for example, family learning, therapy and research about the effects of criminal prosecution of parents. Educational management, related

agencies and support workers might benefit from training in those affective aspects of learning theory relevant to their work. Training might include information about various negative educational environments associated with disinterestedness, judgment and denunciation and their likely effects on young people. Educating and supporting parents in supporting and educating their children is currently being initiated as social and educational policy\*. This research supports the idea that the community outside school should be considered in curriculum planning for example, family learning and extended school learning projects. I suggest that these initiatives, in order to be fully effective, might benefit from the theoretical underpinning, which ‘feelings related’ learning theory might provide (DCSF 2007: *Parent Support Advisor Pilot*).

### 8.63 Teachers

In doing this research I found ways to document feelings and emotions in learning, showing that this was a viable and necessary area of exploration in teaching. I found that understanding the importance of feelings allowed:

*...me to respect my students thinking processes even if we are in complete opposition. It gives me some chance of finding out “where they are coming from”, and provided I listen to them carefully, a context for negotiating meanings. It also offers me the possibility of forming strategies for developing their thoughts interacting with them, providing them with additional ideas, but also whole complex experiences and situations, which may provoke change. It enables me to develop myself, giving consideration to my teacher’s own subjective intuitions and skills in teaching. (This thesis, Chapter 5: 5.9, p. 177)*

I raised my awareness of non-conductive learning factors, justifying a more empathic view of school refusers and their families. I found that parental and principal carer contexts were important to learning and I documented complex problems of which I had previously been unaware. The work also made me acknowledge the value and relevance of research, which notes feeling responses as part of the evaluation and curriculum planning process in teaching.

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\* Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006 *Common Assessment Framework*; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007a *Parent Support Advisory Service*; Sure Start, 2007 *Extended schools*; Training and Development Agency for Schools (2006-2008) *Remodelling and extended schools*; Share 2008 *A fun programme that encourages parents/carers, children, teachers, managers, facilitators to all work together*

The data suggested that teacher retention is affected by respectful relations towards staff by management where concerns are shared; for example, entitlement, justice and inclusion (This thesis. Chapter 6: 6.6 Ecological environments: teaching). It was found that a key teaching motivation was teachers' personal satisfaction and pleasure in pupils' achievement. Teachers' own talents, personality, skills, interests, enthusiasm and work experience affected their feelings in teaching pupils successfully. Some experienced teachers had special skills, strongly held opinions and insights, which were not sufficiently shared or appreciated by the larger educational community. Pupils' and teachers' ultimate wellbeing was not always prioritised by government programmes in practice; for example, the anxiety and stress caused by Ofsted (Office of Standards in Education) school inspections aimed at political targets and league tables. Politicians and educational system managers (particularly of commercially driven private companies, working for the educational state system) did not necessarily share teachers' vocations, motivations and values. Their training in the efficiency and efficacy of a more humanitarian approach in achieving efficient results might be beneficial. Teachers were concerned about management practices they perceived as unethical. Several teachers mentioned the need for a more realistic approach from managers and head teachers acknowledging feelings at all levels within school. In dealing with this, the teacher's role was found to be too complex to be judged in simple terms. Students coming from widely differing home environments required appropriate curriculum adaptation and it might be effective to enable teachers to develop these skills through practitioner action research.

Although many of the teachers were unused to having their professional opinions solicited, their confidence and self-esteem improved as a result. This demonstrates the value of making provision for this type of work in schools. These findings support those expressed by Honan (2004a), who found that the teachers she worked with were '*...willing participants in the search for more effective teaching practices*' through a continual process of '*bricolage*' (Cited by Honan, 2006, p. 94). She describes teachers as:

*bricoleurs who take advantage of subject positions, discourses, theories and practices that are made available to them, to construct meaningful assemblages of praxis, or bricolage. The bricoleur is active in her (or his) composition, ordering and arranging of practices drawn from diverse sources; syllabus and*

*curriculum documents; teacher resources; other teachers; pre-service and in-service teacher education. (ibid., p. 80)*

Awareness might be developed consciously through training, by considering methods, ethics and social contexts in relation to ‘feelings theory’. Teachers might benefit from appropriate peer and management mentoring systems in coping with pupils problems. This might aid reflexive professional development and help to adapt the education system more efficiently to current social and curriculum needs. This research shows that teacher and pupil individuality may be a resource for learning and supports the view that:

*...if as educators we value individuality, then we must work diligently to preserve the concept and practice of mentorship within the current context of the economic rationalisation of teaching resources. (Gabel Dunk & Craft, 2004, p. 277)*

The research demonstrated ways in which teachers might be empowered to relate their practice to theory, adapting lesson contexts and formats for greater learning efficiency. It was possible to create emotionally and physically ‘active’ arenas for the discovery and construction of ‘new’ knowledge by individuals. Teachers were able to evaluate and enhance pupils’ positive feelings about learning and were proud of their and their pupils’ resulting achievements. This was realised, for example, through one-to-one discussions between teachers and learners, the improvisation of learners within groups and in inter-professional evaluations of the adults working in dyads. The data showed that if suitable environments and resources were provided then teachers could develop their empathic teaching skills. The implication of such findings as these is not only that further research may be needed about ways in which this can be achieved, but also that there needs to be greater acceptance amongst the academic community of action research as a means of generating and authenticating ‘feelings theory’ in practice (Honan, 2006, p. 94). Such a theory might be seen as having practical value as a ‘living’ theory capable of idiosyncratic development by individual teachers in diverse ways for the benefit of differing pupil cohorts (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

My research suggests that there is a need for more awareness that emotional factors are important in learning. Emotional dilemmas, traumatic experiences, difficulties and preoccupations restrict the ability to engage with learning. For example learners are inclined towards forgetfulness, confusion and avoidance, when facing feelings arising

from painful unresolved feelings. There are teaching strategies, which might be based on feelings feedback, still to be discovered, which might alleviate these human problems. Teaching and learning are multi-dimensional, dynamic, complex activities. A change of attitudes towards the nature of learning to accommodate its affective aspects might facilitate a sea change and an improvement in 'efficiency'. In this the various micro-, meso- and exosystems involved in education need constant reconsideration along with their ecological effects in the light of participant feedback (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8). Learning stands at the core of society's culture, survival, renewal, progress and happiness through the production and circulation of new knowledge. This is important because under achievers, with ability but lacking qualifications, may never make their full potential contribution to the world. They may be deprived of their entitlement as human beings to enjoy a fulfilled life. Their resulting difficulty in gaining employment carries a long-term financial and behavioural effect likely to be detrimental to society.

#### **8.64 Future research possibilities**

In 2007, Waters, as director of the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency in the United Kingdom, stated in a keynote speech his aim to be *'to develop a modern, world-class curriculum that will inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future'*. He understood this to mean enabling teachers to present the curriculum in ways, which were meaningful to pupils. With this view in mind, he said that, *'people in schools need to set understandings of their children alongside the learning they should meet to create learning that is irresistible'*. This research shows that teachers are able to do just this and are able to explain their motivations, principles and difficulties. The teachers who participated had strong opinions about how to improve the educational system and believed that feelings were important in their pupils' and their own learning. The work being undertaken by current government initiatives in remodelling education services in the United Kingdom supports the need for further work to make it more effective. Research by teachers on the ground in devising feeling responsive educational environments is necessary for education to increase efficiency of delivery to learners. This would involve the provision and development of appropriate systems. My research methodology, which demonstrates ways to document feelings and emotions may have potential, with adaptation, for use by other researchers in other fields; for example, the inter-professional Common

Assessment Framework, where a lead professional researches in practice (DCSF, 2006).

This research shows that all teaching involves a degree of practitioner action research on some level; for example, teachers experiment with appropriate responses to learners in different situations and at different ability levels and find ways to incorporate new aspects of knowledge. This should be more generally recognised by educational management and teachers themselves. Teachers' feelings were often based in sound professional judgments and that when they had time to reflect on, and elucidate on them, their practice improved. Different types of solicited and unsolicited observational pupil feedback were useful as part of the ongoing planning, teaching, learning and evaluating processes; for example, insights were gained in assessing productive learning avenues. Teachers in this research were able to transfer knowledge about aspects of learning on a deeper level than the simple transferring of facts. They achieved this by identifying areas of interest to pupils and current feelings about their world and responding to them, modelling, challenging and extending their knowledge, by eliciting feeling responses. I suggest that training in practitioner action research to investigate the feeling responses of learners in different learning contexts should be a compulsory part of teacher training programmes. These skills should be taught to trainee teachers and extended in subsequent continuing professional development programmes.

This research supports the view that teacher training might include information about the various possible negative educational contexts (including disinterestedness, judgment and denunciation), which can lead to disaffection. Such training programmes might include the study, through day-to-day practical research, of young people's verbal feedback and behaviour as representing logical responses (within their own terms) to their various situations. This would involve networking, developing and implementing successful programmes. Listening and 'getting inside' others' minds by collecting 'feelings' feedback might be an integral part of such a research process, adapting and justifying curriculum contexts in order to variously engage learners. The whole field of emotional engagement in learning is ripe for more reflexive observational evidencing and research, such as: researching and mentoring adults in further education, who were previously school refusers; researching and

mentoring parents to alleviate their children's problems; and researching curriculum differentiation to match pupils' abilities and social contexts. Teacher research using affective feedback might thus contribute to educational efficiency.

### **8.7 Reflections on the research**

Ethical dilemmas arose in this study regarding the possible inclusion of my personal life experiences, specifically the traumatic deaths of my mother and husband. I found it necessary for my own problem resolution and peace of mind to get these into perspective (Appendix, 2.1 Table of author's writing). In the event, considering their problems based in their own childhood according to my privileged information as a relative (although without their own involvement), informed my research. However, I decided that a full account of these were not pertinent to this thesis and, in any case, might be detrimental to my family's interests. A seminal moment, which was important to my learning process was included however, when I realised I was experiencing a reluctance to engage with the counselling skills course necessary for this research. This feeling:

*...was based in an unconscious piece of logic involving feelings of guilt. The gist of this was that if I completed the course, it might prove that I could, after all, have helped my husband solve his mental health difficulties...This experience caused me to think and aroused my interest further in the possible subconscious 'logic' and function of feelings in thinking. I wondered about accessing thoughts through feelings. It occurred to me that subjective connective reasoning processes evoke or trigger feelings and vice versa. My awareness of this process within myself was raised. (This thesis, Chapter 5: 5.7 p. 172)*

This brought home to me that 'implicit' thinking may involve complicated unconscious reasoning processes of which we are unaware until strong feelings emerge and force us to acknowledge and understand them. After this revelation I found it easier to work with my subconscious processes and to facilitate and respect the feelings of others. Since then I have found that a realisation or awareness of my subconscious mind at work continues to aid understanding through a more deliberate process of self-examination reflecting on feelings and actions.

In parallel with actively collecting data, I looked at literature which might shed light on feelings through ecological (that is to say social, cultural, technological, political and commercial) influences on education. These included some social effects of

psychological theories, educational policies, education and educational researcher attitudes, developmental theories, language and cognitive neuroscience research, as they might ultimately influence an educationalist's perspective in education about the nature of cognition. This was a huge and daunting undertaking. Amongst the literature which was read and not referenced were several books by de Bono (1933-) on cognition, populist philosophers such as Scott Peck (1936-2005), some counselling psychology literature such as Abrahams' (ed.) book *Reclaiming the inner child* (1991) and Alice Miller's work and artwork around childhood trauma (1923-). I looked at Erikson (1902-1994) on child development, I considered psychoanalytic works by Winnicott (1896-1971) and Melanie Klein (1882-1960), populist self-help psychology books, autobiographies such as *A boy called It* by David Pelzer (1995) and biographies, for example, of Winston Churchill (1874-1965), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). I did not go into the history of humanism although this might have been an interesting avenue to pursue. I did mention Dewey (1859-1952) in passing, but decided that Rogers (1902-1987), having had a profound effect on modern methods of counselling and to some extent teaching, had more pertinence to my 'feelings' practitioner research.

Relating to and empathising with others was sometimes painful, including agonising upon ethical difficulties (This thesis, Chapter 3: 3.8). I had fears about my own vulnerability to possible prosecution, so to safeguard myself, school refusers were only taught when another adult was in the home and ways had to be found to protect their anonymity, while maintaining authenticity. It was also important to me to give them a voice within the education system, but endeavour to protect them from possible further emotional upset due to my research by destroying original data after authentication. Balancing all of the research considerations has often been confusing, even on occasion frightening in personal terms; for example, meeting participants in potentially violent settings. I had worries about my professional responsibilities to participants and these were often upsetting, frustrating and difficult to surface and express. In researching feelings in learning I have, to a degree, deepened my understanding of those principles, such as justice and entitlement, which are fundamental to my professional role as a teacher. In the process I have also developed my character, personal and professional knowledge and general life skills.

My practitioner research used a 'bricolage approach' to researching, in that it was limited and enabled by pragmatic considerations (Honan, 2006). I felt my way intuitively, with connections between ideas developing in the process. Inevitably I will have overlooked some potentially promising aspects. 'Testing' out and comparing theoretical ideas, against concurrent real world situations I encountered, was central to this development. My own personality and focus may be criticised as influencing the results, but these are judgments which are open to the reader to make. This practice based theorising is also an example of action research 'living theory' as propounded by Whitehead & McNiff (2006), and as such is necessarily personal. These authors present this approach as an alternative to traditional social research methodologies, which have been generally based on 'performance indicators'. They introduce the idea of '*living critical standards of judgment*' arising from '*the lived realities of people's lives*' (ibid., p. 82). According to their theory, a practitioner action researcher may validate their research conclusions using these to make value judgments from a reasoned position involving ontological disclosure and commitment (ibid., p. 82). The living critical standards of judgment, which are implicit and prevailing throughout this thesis, have been those of equality, justice, entitlement and inclusion. The recurring finding throughout, has been one of the necessity for respecting learners' feelings in order to achieve better results in education for individuals' and for society's mutual benefit.

My participants have been relatively small in number, but this has allowed more in-depth reflection on individual learning situations and events. The research yielded a range of incredibly rich and varied data, demonstrating the complexities of types of environmental influences and complications arising, affecting cognitive development in learners. This in turn led to a very rich elaborated Appendix of data, which made analysis difficult. The richness of the narratives gave rise to concerns about how to do justice to the data. The choice of participants was random to some extent, though they were chosen by individual availability within groups likely to yield relevant data. The 'open minded' approach adopted should have prevented me from anticipating and planning for specific data and contributed to authenticity. However, I acknowledge that there were possibly subtle ways in which I may have elicited evidence supporting my beliefs. The conclusions I have reached can therefore only be fully validated by

future further research by others and through the evidence, opinions and discussions of my readers.

My hope is that my work will contribute to raising awareness and opening up a dialogue leading to some helpful changes in perceptions of learning processes. My contact with participants was restricted and I was not always able to give them feedback and find out about subsequent learning development. However, this ad hoc contact has been in accord with and has arisen from authentic teaching, evaluating and learning situations. The research will have been affected in some ways by my own personal limitations such as making prejudicial assumptions at times, my cognitive deficiencies, my ignorance in certain areas and lack of confidence at particular points. However, notwithstanding these shortcomings, I have been able to use my personal skills and strengths of artistic ability and empathy with fellow learners to facilitate my study. The research very much depended on participants' individual behaviours, personalities, situations and perceptions. Our lives have moved on and our perspectives likely changed since the data was collected. However, I believe that the accumulated evidence of the participants' and my fellow action researchers' observations gives an authentic record of some of our feelings and thinking during the research period.

## **8.8 Conclusion**

This thesis is, as its title states, an exploration of the evidence acquired. As such it is aiming at opening up a discourse, dealing with practical professional concerns, adjusting practice by engaging with and sharing findings with other practitioners and seeking their views. It has come to represent for me an example of the argument and embodiment of the theory inducted from the process of analysis of the data it is based on; that is to say that feelings represent ways of apprehending and comprehending using a process of internal logic and are a necessary process in cognition. I have done this through a process of personal rather than epistemological reflexivity because of limited space here, but also because this method suited my purpose in opening up a debate. This phenomenological research was based on pragmatic professional concerns aimed at improving my professional understanding. For example:

*I started to use my subjective mind to better effect. I came to understand that empathy for my pupils was not enough. I needed to appreciate and allow for*

*these thought processes in learners. My perception of the aim of teaching changed from transferring units of information and skills to learners towards facilitating a process of on-going learning transformation within individuals.* (This thesis, Chapter 5: 5.7, p. 172)

I gained an awareness of possible influences upon learners with regard to upbringing, genetic propensity, physical states, subjective patterns of thought and possible curricular opportunities for learning. I found that these can be researched with the learner's participation through acknowledging feelings feedback and dealing with it in professional ways.

This research has consisted of my personal search for meaning driven by professional and personal feelings within the learning process. These appear now to have been in retrospect based in logical thought, though they were not always open to conscious explanation as I learned. My motivation was caused by professional curiosity and anxiety, initially caused by a feeling of frustration in teaching apparently intelligent young people who were unable to learn. The children, who remain in my memory and I taught in the special unit during my teaching career, many of whom were my special responsibility for the whole of their secondary career, left me with many serious concerns unanswered. For example:

*These events had emotional consequences for me, I still feel to some extent distressed about them and guilty, because my help was ineffective. The system at the time did not allow for my making any meaningful intervention. I felt and still do feel that these children were making logical responses to situations they were helpless to address. They were somehow being further abused by default in an unsympathetic system within which I was, in some sense, a helpless actor.* (Appendix, 2.2 Author's auto-ethnography of learning influences 1947-2008: Earning respect and gaining experience)

Freed from the restrictions of demanding and distracting full-time employment, I set out to answer some of these concerns. Such a process is evidenced by the following reflections made after my first home-tutoring experience in 2001:

*I would have had great difficulty as an ordinary teacher in responding to Wayne's needs within the routine curriculum of a state school. He would probably have been embarrassed and unhappy to be placed in a special unit. He was of "normal" or even "high" intelligence and appeared to have been behind due to developmental and emotional problems. It is evident to me that he needed a more rounded, engaging and practically based curriculum, which allowed for "non-academic" learning and skill acquisition and the building of self worth and confidence as part of a "normal" curriculum (Claxton, 2002; Gilbert,*

2002; Waters, 2007). This might involve multi-modal learning such as imaginative expression and creative learning in academic subjects, which develop interpersonal skills (See this thesis, Chapter 7). Examples include: role-play through drama, community involvement projects and practical and/or career skills based technical education. He also needed the enjoyable patient one-to-one reading he had missed as a toddler. This last point would have been better addressed earlier at foundation and primary level, with some practical advice to his parents. (This thesis, Chapter 4: Home tutoring twelve school refusers – 4.41 Wayne’s story, pp. 127-8)

As the action research proceeded I found a sustaining force was that *‘the sense of mutual endeavour, benefit and achievement when “connecting” with others was a huge motivation for me in my work’* (This thesis, Chapter 5: The author’s own learning process – 5.8 Reciprocity, p. 174). I was motivated to action by empathy for participants and a widening of my professional curiosity as my research developed. At the same time, I was energised and enthused by my growing realisation of the benefits to cognition of a feeling based approach to learning. Personal questions which needed addressing were also an important impetus to the research process. For example, it became necessary to investigate my own emotional learning difficulties, both in order to inform the research, but also in order to carry it out.

I have come to believe that feelings, both physical and mental, are intrinsic to the cognitive process, give evidence of subconscious thought and learning acquisition and are oftentimes a means of connective reasoning. In all four strands of my research, ‘Creative’ learning through the Arts provided a context for practicing these cognitive processes in implicit and explicit ways. These opportunities were of value because they embodied, extended and reinforced general creative cognitive processing skills in a satisfying and enjoyable way. These subjective skills appeared to be a necessary constituent of higher order cognition in all subjects and areas of life and with further research might be developed and taught as such. If affective aspects of cognition were officially recognised, considered and worked with at all levels in the current education system, learning might be more efficiently enabled. To put it simply – **human feelings matter in learning processes, whether we understand and /or agree with them or not.** Feelings expressed in this research certainly reveal *‘the remarkable potential of human beings to respond constructively to an ecologically compatible milieu once it is made available’* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7).



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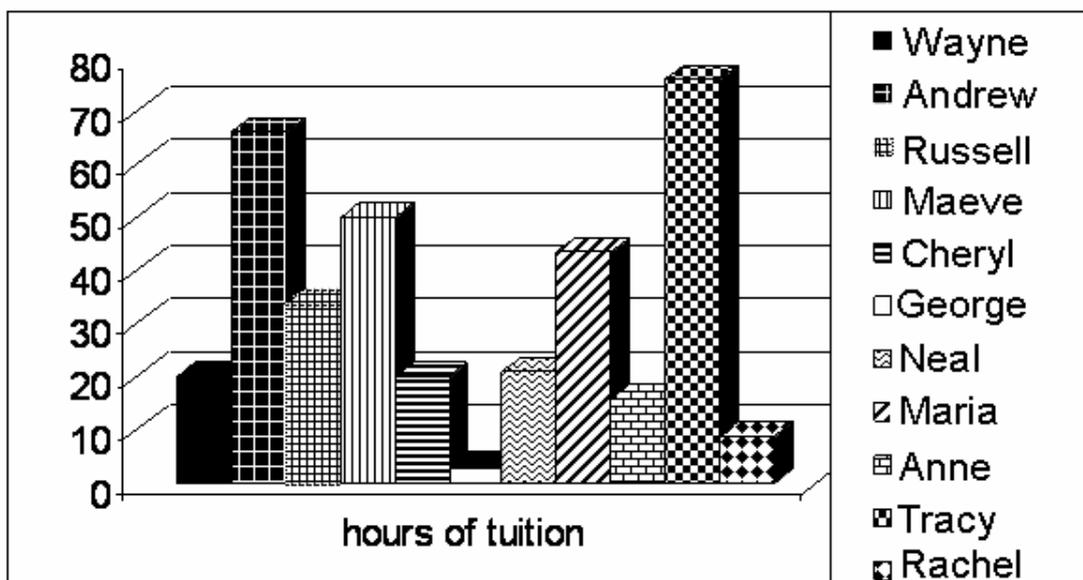


# APPENDIX



**STRAND 1 - HOME TUTORING 12 SCHOOL REFUSERS (CHAPTER 4)****1.1 Table 1 - Hours of tuition and data collected & Table 2: Graph of tutoring hours per pupil.**

Name	Date	Hours of tuition	Talks with parents & school teachers	Work records	Critical points lists	Final No. of words
Wayne	Apr 1999-Jan 2000	About 20 hours (1hr per wk given)	About 30 mins-mother	NO transcript	YES	1806
Andrew	31.01.00-30.05.00	66 hours (5 hrs per wk given)	About 30 mins-mother & 3 hrs-school teachers	YES	YES	2136
Russell	25.02.00-13.04.00	33.75 hours (5 hrs per wk given)	About 2 hrs-mother & 1 hr-school teachers	YES	YES	(with Andrew)
Cheryl	01.12.00-07.01.01	50 hours (5 hrs per wk given)	About 5 hrs-mother & 1 hr-school teachers	YES	YES	2007
Maeve	28.11.00-May 2001	20 hours (3 hrs per wk given)	About 30 mins-welfare officer, 1 hr-father, 30 mins-mother & 30 mins-school teacher	YES	YES	1844
George	16.01.01-Feb 2001	3 hours (3 hrs per wk given)	About 1 hr-welfare officer, 3 hrs-mother, 15 mins-school teacher	YES	YES	1019
Neal	11.02.01-11.6.01	21 hours (paid privately)	No contact with school	YES	YES	440
Maria	31.10.01-16.5.02	43.5 hours (3 hrs per wk given)	About 4 hours-mother & 30 mins- school teachers	YES	YES	966
Anne	28.11.01-11.4.02	16 hours (3 hrs per wk given)	About 2 hrs-mother, no school contact	YES	YES	1079
Tracy	12.10.01-12.03.03	76 hours (about 3 hrs per wk paid privately)	About 20 mins-art teacher	NO not typed up	NO not enough information	(with Neal summary)
Rachel	13.06.02-27.6.02	9 hours (3 hours per week given)	30 mins-mother & father, no school contact.	YES	YES	720
Tom	Mar - Jun 2004	18 hours (3 hrs per wk given)	Brief phone call- Deputy Head & 30 mins- father.	NO (lost)	NO cut short - parent prosecuted	624



### **1.1 Strand 1 – Table 2: Graph of tutoring hours per pupil**

#### **1.2 Cases data files - author's narrative summaries, work records and critical points**

**Wayne (1999), Andrew (2000), Russell (2000), Cheryl (2000-2002), Maeve (2001-2002), George (2001), Maria (2001), Anne (2001), Neal (2001), Tracy (2001-2003), Rachel (2002), Tom (2004) \***

In reading the following critical points analyses it should be borne in mind that each is based on the limited information available to the author and by her interpretations of it.

#### **Pupil 1: Wayne**

Wayne was a pupil who had officially left school and was attending a college of further education. I taught him as a volunteer basic skills helper at the college in a two-hour class every week. I was asked to teach him to read. He had joined the college the previous autumn and been to other classes, but his attendance was erratic. The head of department showed me his poor, hardly attempted English and mathematics entry test papers. Wayne was a smartly dressed, sixteen year-old with a quiet and serious manner. When I approached him initially he was frustrated and angry. He said he had just been re-issued with work he had already done twice and which had not been marked. By adopting a quiet friendly, humorous, calm and matter of fact approach, I gradually overcame his angry and defensive attitude towards me. I sometimes found this quite an effort. I thought his anger might indicate poor treatment by teachers in the past. On the other hand, was this due to his attitude and behaviour? It is hard to meet surliness and resentment and not to take it amiss. In a full class-teaching situation, I would probably have misunderstood him and labelled him as a troublemaker.

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\* All names are pseudonyms and personal details fictionalised while maintaining essential stories and dilemmas revealed to the author.

Outwardly sophisticated, confident and a little defiant, Wayne turned out to be very nervous and unsure at reading. However, when he relaxed, he read some difficult words well. He had no physical disabilities, was articulate and intelligent, yet his reading was extremely variable and inconsistent with a steady build up of competence. He chose a very suitable level of reading material when not under pressure and could recognise work done previously. These clues indicated to me that he could read at some level. He seemed to have some kind of emotional block to learning. I chose a reading book about a lonely teenage boy, which he engaged with and worked on for several weeks. About the middle of the next term, Wayne started to stop attending his other classes. I considered whether my own approach might be at fault, but it seems likely in retrospect that the college environment was not meeting his needs. We found the classroom printer did not work, since it was old and un-serviced and we could not print off his summary of his reading book. In an effort to overcome this, I arranged to meet him in the library to continue one to one language tuition on the computer. When we arrived in the busy library a computer was unavailable, even though I had pre-booked and explained the situation. The librarian was not discreet and when we eventually got a computer, Wayne was self-conscious and embarrassed in the large room full of students and staff. Later he rang to ask if I would consider giving him lessons at home.

It is difficult to imagine how he saw me at this point. Looking back I guess that he was desperate to placate his parents, who it transpired had been paying him to go to college. I agreed to teach him at home guessing that he was likely to leave anyway. I hoped that if he gained confidence, he might return. This eventually turned out to be the case. Over the next term I worked with him on an unpaid basis on his own computer for about an hour a week, with the stipulation that a parent was in the house. The house was large, detached and in an affluent area, but being newly established was lacking in cultural and social networks. My cheerful, accepting approach and methods for teaching reading seemed to work and he started to enjoy reading. A significant moment occurred when he turned to me and said, "I can't believe I just read that!" He started a weekend job in a shop and we studied the words for items for sale so that he could read them. After working with him for about six months, he rang me out of the blue. He was very upset. He begged me to come to the college to explain his problems. He felt sick and faint at the thought of sitting the basic tests again, which were required to get on a vocational course and he just 'couldn't do it'. This surprise phone call meant that I had to do some mental readjustment of my own. I had not known he was interested in the vocational course, but I took his cry for help seriously. I went to the college with him and met the admissions tutor. The tutor seemed unable to understand that Wayne had a genuine emotional difficulty. He was smiling and dismissive, saying if Wayne would just take the test, he was sure he would be fine.

I explained that Wayne had a long-standing reading problem. He could not face the test and had developed a fear of scholastic environments and exams due to his previous bad experiences in school. All of this was very much guess work. At this point I had no knowledge of his school career. I explained that Wayne knew he would fail the tests, because this had happened the previous year. Eventually after using a lot of persuasion, I was able to get him on the vocational course on a trial basis without having to take the tests again. This act of support on my part then led on to Wayne's revelations in the counselling session which followed and showed my guesswork about school to be generally correct. I had started a counselling skills course the previous term. As part of this course we were asked to transcribe ten minutes of a 'counselling' session. I asked Wayne's father if I could counsel Wayne for an hour before he started back to college. I explained about my course and the need for taped data for my work. He readily agreed saying that he thought it might help Wayne. He gave me a sheaf of Wayne's old school reports when he brought him to see me. Wayne was bursting to talk and over the space of an hour and a half he told me many of the reasons for his learning problems. He had suffered a serious illness (whooping cough) as a toddler, spending a long time in hospital and missing the first stages of reading. (His father confirmed this saying he had been ill for over a year and they had not wanted to bother him with reading.) Coincidentally, I could appreciate the seriousness of this illness because I had suffered with it myself at the age of four.

Assessed as dyslexic at the age of nine and stated by a psychologist, this history of illness had been overlooked and at secondary school he was given no extra help. Later when I read Wayne's reports with pupil feedback sections, I saw that all through secondary school he had requested help, often asking friends to fill in the forms for him. In his early teens he began to refuse to go, locking himself in the bathroom, truanting repeatedly (unknown to his parents) and shoplifting in a nearby city, when they thought he was in school. At fourteen his parents had appealed to social services for help,

threatening him with going into care because they did not know what to do. He admitted he had shown off to the other pupils and sworn at the 'poor teachers.' It must have been difficult for them, he now realised. Wayne was profoundly sorry for his behaviour and appeared to be apologising to me. I felt that he saw me as a representative for those teachers and I realised he was very close to tears. He understood why the headmaster allowed him to leave before the due date because he was so disruptive. He had hardly attended the final year.

I pointed out his attitude at the time, though I did not condone it, was understandable given his probable point of view, because his need for help was being ignored. He had probably felt angry, embarrassed, ashamed, humiliated and bored because of his inability to read and write. For a variety of reasons his parents and most of his teachers had not helped him. He readily agreed with this assessment, though unable to explain it in those terms himself:

*I just got frustrated at school...and I couldn't go in 'cos I just used to sit there and have all these books thrown at me... I used to have a special needs class I went to. I used to do loads of art and sit in there for an hour, but when I went to the other school I got held up...Dad noticed it and said like to my teacher, "He's not learning properly!" And my teacher said, "Yes, he can do it! He's just not trying!"*

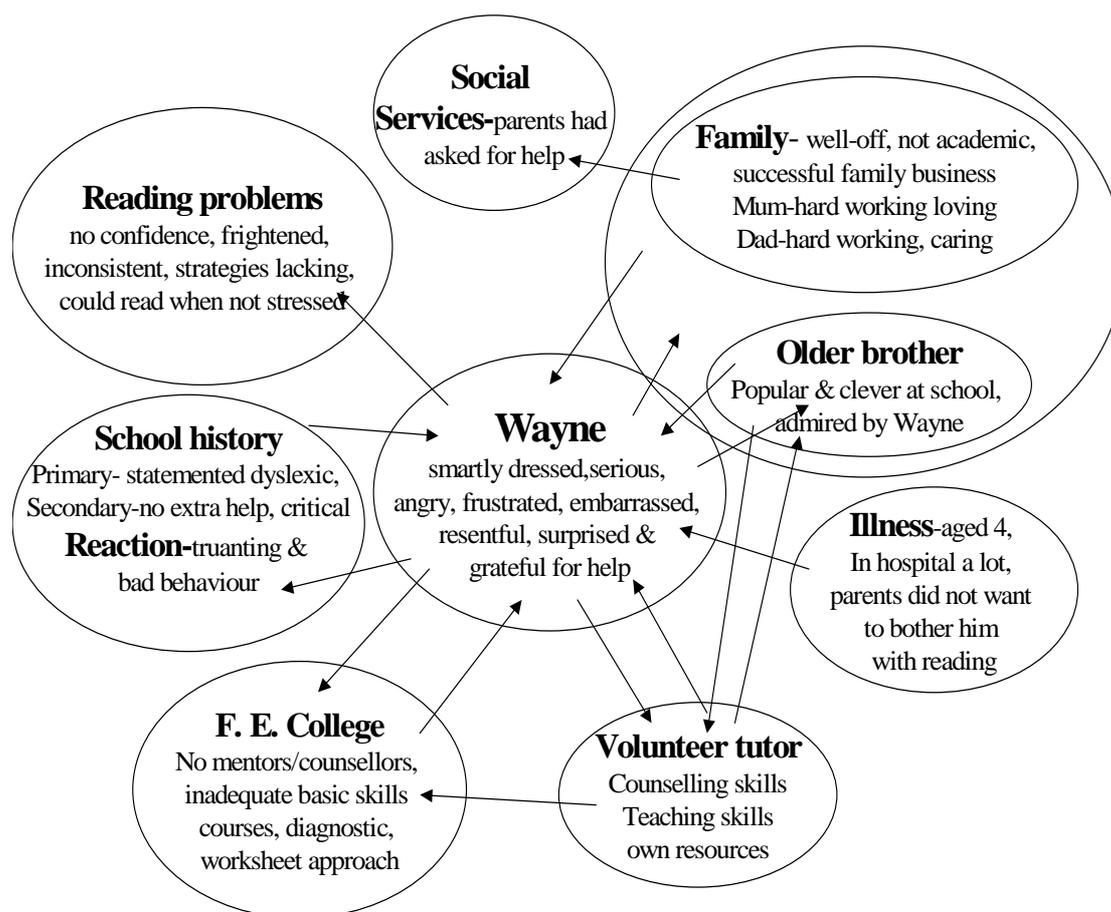
Wayne

It seems likely that he had needed to express his feelings of shame, offloading his story and receiving some understanding and forgiveness before he could put his bad experiences behind him.

Wayne had been upset that he could not read and probably bored in some lessons. He felt marginalized and excluded within school and responded logically by behaving badly and then refusing to go. Looking back on Wayne's story, it seems to me that my assessment of the subconscious logic behind his angry feelings was, as far as it goes, generally correct. This story provides evidence of some kind of learning and thinking process within him being resolved on an emotional level, enabling further learning. He no longer felt condemned as an unworthy, inherently bad person because another person (significantly a teacher) had supported him. The fact that I believed his behaviour was logical and valid for him, even when I didn't understand it in the early stages of our relationship, appears to have helped raise his self-esteem and enabled him to move on. Although I was eventually able to explain and to some extent excuse his behaviour, it appeared to be the positive regard and practical help I had given, which counted most. His history, environment and perceptions had influenced his behaviour at school. He was not *entirely* responsible for everything that had happened to him. It is evident that his original problems had been caused by ill health, but these were exacerbated by inappropriate educational provision throughout his school career.

I would have had great difficulty as an ordinary teacher in responding to Wayne's needs within the routine curriculum of my state school. He would probably have been embarrassed and unhappy to be placed in a special unit. He was of 'normal' or even 'high' intelligence and appeared to have been behind due to developmental and emotional problems. It is evident to me that he needed a more rounded, engaging and practically based curriculum, which allowed for 'non-academic' learning and skill acquisition and the building of self worth and confidence as part of a 'normal' curriculum (Claxton, 2002; Gilbert, 2002). This might involve multi-modal learning such as imaginative expression and creative learning in academic subjects (See this thesis, chapter 7), developing interpersonal skills e.g. role-play through drama, community involvement projects and a practical and/or career skills based technical education. He also needed the enjoyable and patient one-to-one reading he had missed as a toddler. This last point would have been better addressed earlier at foundation and primary level, with some practical advice to his parents.

Postscript: A few weeks later he rang me in a state of excitement. Everything was working out brilliantly and he wanted to thank me for my help. He was enjoying the vocational course and working part-time in his parents' business. He had written a homework assignment for college about himself with his parents' help and had written about how I had helped him. I was sorry in some ways to see him go, just as we were progressing so well with his reading, but I made a conscious decision to accept that this was his choice. I understood that after all his bad experiences he did not want to develop his academic education further in the conventional sense. I was pleased that he had the confidence to get on with his life. I have not seen him again.



**Table 4.41 Model of influences in Wayne's learning environment**

**Case Study 1 Wayne 1999-2000: Student feedback from counselling session**  
(Based upon a B.A.C. counselling skills assignment - May 2000 - transcription of first ten minutes of 1 hour)

(Counselling Tutor's marking comments in bold print.)

Person	Content	Process
Me	What do you want to talk about? (I offered him the other end of a comfortable settee and half turned to face him in an open posture) We both laughed.	Open question. The laughter may have been due to nervousness, on my part because I was afraid of not meeting his expectations and perhaps some relief on his part that at last a teacher was taking him seriously. <b>Attempt to set agenda, lean back.</b>
W	He looked at me questioningly.	Attending. I interpreted this as a request for a prompt.
Me	Do you want to tell me about what it was like being at school? (RETROSPECTIVE COMMENT- this is in fact quite an open question, but the tutor did not point this out)	Closed question. Probing. I am inviting him to tell the story of his school life. I felt he needed to explore and understand other factors than his own inability, which had contributed to his failure at school. <b>You're leading him where you think he needs to go.</b>
W	It was horrible. I just dreaded going into school. I used to lock myself in the bathroom when I went to secondary. (He looked apprehensive)	Empathising. He is unburdening himself and I am attending closely. This was a very emotional issue for him. He thinks I may disapprove.
Me	Right (long pause).....So it wasn't that bad when you were younger.	Empathising * My tone and attitude are accepting that he has just shared a painful memory with me. I

	<b>* Not empathic to what he's just said. Why not be empathic about what he did say? It's full of feeling and fear.</b>	pause. I am aware that he is apprehensive. At this point he might have gone into more depth about his feelings if I had encouraged him by reflecting. However, I believe my own fear of his becoming upset influenced me to change the emphasis. I was aware of my own outlook as a teacher and a mother, but was able to avoid being judgemental. I encouraged him to explain further.
W	Not when I was at primary school, no....I couldn't tell you why....I just got frustrated at school.....and I couldn't go in 'cos I just used to sit there and have all these books thrown at me.	Attending. During the silences I looked steadily at W and gave him my full attention. He was getting quite emotional.
Me	It sounds as though you felt they were not treating you like a person.	Summarising. I used my previous knowledge of W to try advanced empathy. This seemed effective, but I might also have reflected back to him and explored his feelings with him.
W	(He leant forward and nodded) Yeah...in my first school they were brilliant. I used to have a special needs class I went to. I used to do loads of art and sit in there for an hour, but when I went to the other school I got held up. I loved it because I met loads of friends there and I liked going to school with my friends - it was brilliant.	Attending and listening. I made encouraging noises. He was steering the conversation into areas, which turned out to be relevant, as peer pressure had influenced some of his behaviour (something I was unaware of at this point).
Me	So you had lots of friends in secondary school. What do you think went wrong? <b>Could have safely left it there.</b>	Summarising, but not enough accuracy on feelings. Probing open question. Inviting him to look for reasons.
W	I don't know - it was like all my friends. I'd be like sitting next to them in class and it was like they'd be wading through everything and I just used to copy off my friends...and the teachers feel horrible because they were making me feel like it.	Listening and attending and maintaining steady eye contact. He is looking for reasons for his feelings and behaviour.
Me	That makes sense, doesn't it....mm  So...what went wrong earlier on at juniors when your friends were getting on with their work and you were having problems...what happened?	Empathy, attending, affirming. This was not a question, but a statement of agreement. I could see how the teachers had let him down especially as I knew from my basic skills work with him that he had serious problems. I think maybe I should have explained this to him, perhaps my loyalty to my profession was getting in the way. Open question. I changed the frame of reference here to try and pinpoint if teachers and parents responded to him appropriately. I am trying to find out the reasons for his failure at school. <b>Do you change the frame of reference to avoid him becoming upset?</b>
W	It was right back early on when I used to bring my spellings and reading books home from school and my Dad noticed it and said like to my teacher, " He's not learning properly!" And my	Listening. He is realising that he didn't receive enough help from teachers at a very early stage as well as later on.

	teacher said, “ Yes, he can do it! He’s just not trying!”	
Me	Can you remember how you felt then?	Open ( <b>closed - yes-no</b> ) question. Trying to stimulate memories, which may help. I should have simply reflected back here, which would have helped him explore his feelings. <b>YES!</b>
W	No, I can’t remember any of it	Listening. He doesn’t recall anything, my question has not helped him remember.
Me	So things might have gone on that you’ve forgotten about (RETROSPECTIVE COMMENT- a questioning tone would turn this into a leading question)	Statement. Concrete fact. I am trying to show him that there has been a progression and build-up of problems without his full awareness. <b>Irrelevant? It also puts you in position of being an “expert” in his problems.</b>
W	Yes, I can’t remember nothing from Primary school....nothing at all. First year I was all right, second year I was just having problems.	Listening
Me	What about before that?	Probing question. I should have reflected again. The questions are blocking a response.
W	Nothing about that really.	Affirming by nodding.
Me	When you were four apparently, your Mum said you had some illnesses. Can you remember anything about that?	Probing. Closed question. I try to jog his memory about his early life. My teacher’s role is making me look for explanations.
W	No, whooping cough, bronchitis and measles, did she say?	Listening. He does not see the point.
Me	Mmmm...whooping cough is a very serious illness, you know. It’s difficult to breathe, you cough horribly and it’s really scary.	Statement. <b>Explanation - totally outside his frame of reference.</b> I am exploring some possible reasons for his problems with the idea of explaining to him that these illnesses could have prevented early learning taking place, but I miss the opportunity. He moves on. I file this information, it seems inappropriate to interrupt him.
W	I can remember going to school with my Dad and my brother.	Listening. Telling the story.
Me	Can you, how did you get on with your brother? What sort of games did you play?	Open questions. I think I am just exploring here, looking for leverage. <b>Closed. Danger of multiple questions - which do you focus on?</b>
W	We just used to play mothers and fathers and stuff like that and schools. We used to have nine or ten of us like, all the little kids came round.	Attending and smiling. Affirmation. There were happy times.
Me	What sort of things did you do?	Open question
W	Oh, I couldn’t do much. My brother and his friend would be the teachers and I would be like the secretary...just scribbling on bits of paper.	Listening. He had a low opinion of his ability at a young age. I could have picked up on this and reflected it back to make him aware of it.
Me	Mmmm....so that was a kind of acting then. Your Mum said you were very good at that.	Focussing on a positive ability. <b>Your frame of reference.</b> I think my teacher’s view interfered with empathising here. It would have been more beneficial to reflect his feelings.
W	Yeah...I love that.	Smiling. Affirmation.
Me	Are you in any kind of amateur dramatics at the moment? I wonder if there is a local group you could join.	Closed question. I am looking for a way forward. A way he may build on his proven ability and interests. My teacher’s agenda is getting in the way. I’m offering a solution instead of reflecting W’s positive

		feelings.
W	No, I was. I used to do drama and modelling. My friend Steve used to do it with me, but we had an argument so I don't do it any more.	He does not seem interested. I did not pursue the problem with the friend as it seemed outside our frame of reference ie. finding ways to overcome W's emotional difficulties in a conventional learning situation.
Me	So you can't really remember much about your early life then? You know everything we experience in life is there really - it's just that we're not aware of it. You don't think playing school with your brother put you off school did it?! Was she very bossy?!	Closed rhetorical question, a statement, which is not particularly helpful as it tends to close the subject. I was unaware of this. Statement.  Two closed questions. (I am joking rather feebly) I return to the previous subject in an attempt to find leverage. <b>Huge assumptions x making 2 x questions</b>
W	Oh yeah. (Laughed as if acknowledging a truth)	Smiling in affirmation.
Me	He's only a year older than you?	Closed question.
W	Yeah, he was clever, when we got to the high school he just got in with the wrong crowd. He is clever, but his exams....I expected him to get a lot better and all that.	Listening. Shift in frame of reference to brother. He admired his older brother, but could see now that he was not perfect.
Me	What sort of wrong crowd did he get in with?	Open question.
W	Going out at weekends and they'd bunk off. They weren't really into school work, but they'd go to the lessons and do it, but I wasn't going.	Listening.
Me	And did you get into that too?	Closed question.
W	Yes	Listening
Me	So you missed out on a lot of stuff you should have learnt by wanting to be with your brother and his friends.	Summarising.
W	Yes, I was really popular at school. I was like with the crowd in school, but my brother got down to work in school and I couldn't.	Listening. It was important to him to be accepted.
Me	But I suppose you had really missed out the basics unfortunately, so that would make it difficult for you.	Empathic statement. Summarising. <b>Your perspective.</b> Clarification from my teacher's perspective. (RETROSPECTIVE COMMENT-this could have been a question)
W	I used to love it when I was off school 'cos I was really horrible to the teachers.	Listening. He claims that he didn't want to misbehave. He is confessing.
Me	How were you horrible?	Open question. Asking for clarification.
W	I just couldn't do it and they'd tell me to do something and I'd go "No!" I'd say something cheeky like "Shove me on report or DT!" They'd say, "We don't like destructive people, go to DT!"	Empathy. I am paying close attention. I am totally absorbed in his story. I am being non-judgemental and understanding of his feelings. I am showing him that a teacher can understand his feelings, because I feel that this is important to his recovery from his feelings of alienation from education.

	And I'd say "No! Are you going to make me go?!" They were horrible to me and I just used to walk out of the school and go.	
Me	It seems as though it was like you were having a fight.	Summarising. Empathy. Clarifying. <b>Metaphore</b>
W	Yeah, I was.	Listening. I was correct.
Me	Like a battle of wills.	Interrupted but showed empathy and understanding. Use of imagery.
W	The teachers just used to let me go and I got suspended and I used to bunk off school a lot.	Telling the story. He is confessing.
Me	So really for you that was a solution. That's like a short-term solution and that solves the problem of not being able to work. It's like you're saying I'll make a fuss and I'll get chucked out.	Summarising. Empathy. Showing understanding of how he felt. Clarifying and focussing. <b>Last sentence - paraphrase</b>
W	Yeah, I was the class clown.	Listening and maintaining eye contact.
Me?	How do you feel about that now?	Open question.
W	I wish I'd never said the things that I said. I could hardly believe I'd said those things. I mean I'd walk out and I'd think "Why did I say that?" I mean I used to swear and everything, I think it was that, when I'd say something all the class'd laugh at me for saying stuff. When I think about it now, I think about the teachers, the poor teachers, what I used to say to them!	Attending. He is apologising for his behaviour. He is sorry. He enjoyed being the centre of attention. He liked being popular. He is confessing. He feels sorry for the teachers.
Me	Yes, but it was a way of solving your immediate problems. In the beginning, they probably hadn't handled it very well if they had created that situation with you, by not understanding your needs. It sounds as if once it had built up and got established, it was hard to get out of, so that you were fighting all the time. How do you feel about that now?	Missed opportunity to summarise? Seeing his point of view? Could be justifying, which might not be helpful. <b>Yes</b> Giving my view, as a teacher, of my colleagues Summarising. Open question (?) - am I right? Does this fit?  <b>Empathic statement.</b>  <b>Open question.</b>
W	If I was back at school now I wouldn't be nasty to the teachers. I would just explain to them why.	Attending. This could be a strategy for the future, which he has taken on board since our interview with the tutor, where I encouraged him to explain his problems. Although we came back to this point later, I missed an opportunity here to explore his feelings. I think that this is where my own agenda of disliking exploring feelings has influenced my response.
Me	When you are asked to do school work now, do the very strong feelings still hit you, you know like having to do the assessment at college?	Challenging. Closed question. I am trying to get him to acknowledge that his feelings over his past treatment are preventing his present progress.
W	Yeah. Yes.	He is realising that past feelings are preventing his present progress.

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Wayne's learning problems and their resolution

- Reading development was probably affected by illness early on. This conclusion is based on the fact that his brother's reading progress was successful and that he came from an otherwise caring, stable and affluent home. This ties in with the theory that reading skills were not achieved at the optimum time. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation/Developmental, Physiological theories and research)
- His parents may have treated him differently because of his illness, feeling anxious about him. He could have interpreted this as proof that he was 'different' and had 'problems.' (Psychodynamic theory)
- No investigation or remedy by health authority, nursery or infant school. There was no support for his parents (resources and training implications)
- The fact that he was able to read reasonably well with me after only a few lessons shows that he was probably not dyslexic. (Environmental/Ecological theories, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- He was assessed as dyslexic at the age of nine and received help, but did not learn to read. His stamentering may have made him feel inferior and labelled, which together with a wish to gain status and appear 'normal' in his peer group, could have led to his bad behaviour. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- There may have been a failure of communication between junior and secondary school.
- There was no special needs teaching at secondary school, no allowance made for reading difficulties and no help from social services. Bad behaviour was seen as the cause of his problems. (Environmental/Ecological theories, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- He was allowed to leave early as he was disruptive. (Right of education under law, legal duty of education authority)
- The college didn't give him the help they promised and didn't understand his emotional problems. (resources and training implications)
- He was a young person with a conscience. He admitted his defiance, was sorry for his behaviour and blamed himself, showing that he believed other people's views of him. (Personal Construct theory)
- Being taught by a teacher he respected as an 'expert', who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well with him and gave him the self-esteem to try for the hairdressing course. He realised that there were some reasons for his problems outside himself. *He was then able to admit to the problems he had caused himself.* (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He gained awareness and metacognition, discovering that his reading problems weren't so bad and could be resolved if he worked at them. We worked these out by building up on ways which worked for him. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case reading, was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. I continued to support him and back his judgement even when he decided he no longer needed me. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He felt very upset in educational settings especially in a written test situation, presumably when memories of failure returned. (Psychodynamic theory)
- In the past he had not been able to explain his feelings perhaps because of a lack of understanding of his problems by home and school, but also because of his emotional involvement in a complex situation as it developed. (Psychodynamic theory, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Wayne's responses were logical given his situation as he developed from a young child. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Wayne's own reactions to his situation were key: for example he used my help in ways, which suited him e.g.. asking to learn the names for clothing for his holiday job in a shop (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

- He was continuing to resolve his problems in his own way, when we parted company.  
(Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

## Pupil 2: Andrew and Pupil 3: Russell

I commenced home tutoring two school refusers, who had both made suicide attempts the previous year. I explained to the person employing me at the local authority that I was collecting data for a master's degree, which was to focus on school refusers and their problems. Because I wanted to research feelings in learning, without being distracted by behaviour problems as such, I asked for pupils who had refused school, rather than those excluded for bad behaviour. I continued using the work record developed with Wayne. I wrote down the work of each lesson and we both made a written comment. I asked the students what work he or she thought might be suitable for the next lesson, eliciting possible choices from work set by school. This gave time to adjust ideas and reflect between lessons. I sometimes suggested work to be done, but was not rigidly prescriptive, though I might explain the requirements of the exam syllabus. At the start of each lesson I asked which work the student wanted to do from the choices written down previously. We would always proceed with their choice, even if it involved one which was not on the list. I was constantly surprised and pleased by student choices, since they often turned out to be more appropriate than my own. We both kept a copy of the work record (by the use of carbon paper). This gave us both an opportunity to think about our work between lessons and gave us a record of problems and progress to look back on, which parents could also read.

These two students had both overdosed themselves deliberately the previous year. They were the only students in the group with this known history. Fortunately they appeared to be recovering. They both had materially comfortable homes and life styles. Andrew was my first pupil as a home tutor. In his final GCSE year, he had been off school with anxiety and depression. He looked apprehensive at our first meeting with his father. In view of this and in order to reassure him I decided to be open with him. I told him I knew about him overdose. I mentioned my counselling skills course and said I would listen if he wanted to talk, but would not refer to it unless he brought it up. Andrew looked relieved and told me about himself and his schoolwork.

Andrew was the youngest of a big family. He and his older sister were the only children still living at home. Teachers at his school supported Andrew's work effort, taking trouble to talk to him and mark his work. His older siblings had been to the school. Though puzzled, teachers accepted his absence from some classes. Both his Art and English teachers gave up lunchtimes to explain his exam work to me. He was an able pupil and had good relationships with his teachers. I went to see his Head of Year who said he could not understand what was wrong with Andrew. He had named a 'really nice' boy called James previously his best friend, as his bully. James' mother had died recently and he felt Andrew should have been more sympathetic to James. He suggested I teach Art and English to Andrew with my other pupil, Russell. They would be good company for each other. Andrew would be a good influence on Russell, who was not so able. I suggested this to Andrew's father, who looked worried and said he didn't think Andrew would agree. I found out later that Russell was now James' best friend. This appears significant as things turned out.

Andrew was doing particularly well academically, having two private tutors for other academic subjects and going in to school to join in some lessons, which James did not take. He was studying a full number of GCSEs as a top grade student. When he was moody, unhappy or struggling with the work I showed by my own comments that I sometimes also found the work difficult or tiring. This gave him 'permission' to express negative as well as some very positive feelings. Such negative comments were, "*Very tired and finding the book difficult to grasp.*" "*I'm very tired and not really in the mood for concentrating really hard.*" He was a highly articulate student and I found these comments enlightening and often encouraging when he expressed enthusiasm for lesson content. Example comments of this type are, "*Another good and enjoyable lesson. I am very surprised at how much I enjoy poetry.*" "*Learned how to use watercolours and different techniques on portraits. I really enjoyed it.*"

I started working with Russell a few weeks after starting to teach Andrew. His parents were divorced and his father had remarried. His stepmother was heavily pregnant. Though a younger brother stayed with them, a younger sister and older brother had chosen to stay with their mother in London. Six months after he had started his new school, about six months previously, Russell had taken an overdose. He was off school with anxiety and depression. During the whole time I knew him he never mentioned his suicide attempt. His stepmother believed he had done it because he was missing his brother and sister, his friends and school in London. He seemed to have been badly affected by the

break-up of his family, the introduction of his parents' new partners and his change of environment. His stepmother was preoccupied with her own problems and starting a new family. The emotional stress of his situation may have limited Russell's learning development. Even though he had attained an average level of work in school, he showed signs of higher potential.

Teachers simply did not have time to help Russell (he required more help than Andrew), but the school was very supportive when I contacted it. Russell's stepmother could not provide the stable environment he needed in which to study and her own needs and emotional problems were affecting her stepson. She had had an unhappy childhood herself, been raised by her grandmother, married very young and said she had escaped an abusive relationship with her first husband. Russell's father decided to move the family back to London shortly after I started teaching him. He had got a new job there and he wanted his family with him. Presumably he also missed his other two children. Russell's stepmother actually packed up the house around us as we worked amongst the boxes of belongings. I was told that they would be leaving before Russell's exams. There was a great deal of uncertainty about whether Russell would take the exams and whether his friend James' father would let him stay with them. This disrupted, unsettled situation was probably the cause of Russell's de-motivation and depression. He was often in bed when I arrived and frequently did his lessons in his pyjamas.

Russell was not able to explain his feelings perhaps partly because of loyalty to his father, but also because of his emotional involvement in a very complex situation. He frequently got up and dressed when I arrived. He was not as articulate as Andrew, but his written comments were significant as in *"Feel more positive about my future plans."* and *"It's getting better and it sounds interesting there are still parts that need improving... I give Jenny permission to nag if I'm playing up."* and *"Not really too keen on maths but I got through it. It wasn't as bad as I thought."* After hiding his art exam instructions, which arrived by post, he eventually produced a very good piece of work for his exam, which significantly involved some images of a present given to him by his mother.

In March Andrew and Russell were at the same stage of their art GCSE exam, which involved collecting information about famous artists' work. I organised a day out to three art galleries in the nearby city. They both thanked me and said they had enjoyed the day. Next time I visited Russell his stepmother was very grave and said that Andrew had tried to sell her son some drugs. She said Andrew and his sister, a sixth former, smoked pot in their bedrooms. I said I was very surprised as Andrew and his sister were both working hard on their schoolwork and I had not seen any signs of these kinds of problems. In any case I could not report something unless I had witnessed it. This was quite a serious situation for me. I was worried by the implication that I had been negligent. I decided to wait and think it over before reacting and eventually decided not to say anything to Andrew or his father or at school, because I was sure it would disrupt exam preparation. Although I liked Russell, I could not equate his accusations with what I knew of Andrew. I rang the education authority to explain about a possible complaint from one of my pupils about the other.

It eventually occurred to me that James might have put Russell up to this in an attempt to get Andrew into trouble. This was to some extent confirmed when I was told that Russell's stepmother had rung an astonished Head of Year to tell him that I was a very good teacher and none of the rumours circulating about me and the Art teacher were true! I never actually found out what they were, but this development seems to support my theory about James. Presumably he spread the rumours to pay me back for my lack of action and was possibly annoyed when Andrew was given a special school award for Art. At about this time, James' father told Russell's stepmother that he could definitely not stay with them for the exams, when his family moved to London. It seems possible that James had blackmailed Russell with this 'carrot' if he would get Andrew into trouble! All of these events would appear to prove that Andrew's estimations and fears of the lengths to which James was prepared to go in his bullying campaign were quite justified.

One day just before his exams, after one of our last lessons, Andrew decided to tell me, without prompting, about his suicide attempt and his problems with bullying by James, a boy who had once been his best friend. He told me the full story of how his former friend had turned his other friends against him, told lies about him to his parents and physically attacked him on one occasion. At the time he had felt too shocked to defend himself. Now that his friends had finally realised what his bully had done, James was incurring their disapproval and Andrew felt vindicated. I never told him how I thought James had tried to get him into trouble. He eventually gained a good set of grades at GCSE, an A\* in Art and went off to sixth form college to do A levels. It seemed to me that both of the above

pupils turned out to have had some understandable reasons for their behaviour in refusing or being too depressed to go to school. Their feelings of distress appear to have been quite logical from the point of view of their age and experience.

Russell's art exam was in April and as his stepmother could not take him I gave him a lift to school on the exam three mornings. Although he had missed so much school he gained a C and came back from London that summer to sit Maths and English language with reasonable results. He had come back and stayed at his girlfriend's family house during the exams. Some time later his stepmother and father had returned from London and bought a house nearby. I found this out when I bumped into Russell one evening three years later in our local pub. He rushed over and thanked me. He was extremely grateful for my help. He said he would never have got where he was without my support. He had been to college, was now working in a 'top' business in a nearby town and was planning to marry his girlfriend. I admit that I found this response pleasing, rewarding and touching.

Postscript: - I received a Christmas card from Russell after this meeting, which was effusive and said, "We will have to catch up some time. I'm where I am because of you. Russell."

### Case study 2 Andrew 2000: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
31.01.00 2-4 pm (2)	English GCSE Anthology	I am surprised at how much I have learnt in class. I am pleased with the lesson. A	Look up a definition of a sonnet. Impressed by Andrew's commitment and ideas.	
3.02.00 1.45-4.pm (2.25)	Poem	<i>A to ask teacher about practice exam questions.</i> I am very pleased again with my work. A	Andrew shows a lot of interest and insight - I am still impressed.	I was trying to get A to get the information we needed from his teacher. He had a problem with this, which I found out later
4.02.00 2-4pm (2)	Checked homework which was set and done by P	Another good and enjoyable lesson. I am very surprised at how much I enjoy poetry. A	Hard work, but I am enjoying our lessons and learning a lot.	
16.02.00 2-4.15 (2.25)	Reading set book	Worked out a study plan. Very pleased again and looking forward to working on the <i>Crucible</i> . A	<i>See English teacher and ask for books. Ask about practice questions, old language papers, newspaper article.</i> A continues to work constructively and hard.	A asked me to visit his teacher. He was afraid to confess to him that the video tape he had been lent had been recorded over by A's mother. I was able to video the play again for him.
17.02.00 2.30-4pm (1.25)	Poetry, revised and made notes	Enjoyed our lesson again. A	I am still very pleased with A's work.	
18.02.00	Went to see English teacher.			We had a long chat. Teacher was disappointed in A not coming into school and not returning video.
21.02.00 2-4pm (2)	Worked on <i>Crucible</i> , planned assignment	<i>Read play. Work on assignment for homework.</i> Still a lot of work to do in a	Good effort from A	

		small time. A		
23.02.00 2-3.15 (1.25)	Worked on Crucible, planned assignment	Very tired and finding the book difficult to grasp. a	I am feeling the same. Hard work but we are learning a lot-I think.	I stopped when A was tired even though I lost out financially by this.
28.02.00 2-4 (2)	Worked on Crucible, watched video.	Video's helping understanding of the book. A	Pleased that we made lots of progress.	
1.03.00 2-3.45 (1.45)	Act1&2	Enjoyed the video a lot. A	Steady progress.	
2.03.00 2-3.45 (1.75)	Worked on Crucible, finished notes	<i>Homework. Go and see English teacher.</i> Pleased with the progress with the book and enjoying it a lot more now. P	Nice to have such an enthusiastic pupil. Well done.	
6.03.00 2-4pm (2)	Finished rough draft.	<i>Copy in best and take into school.</i> Extremely pleased with my monologue and hope it gets good marks after all our effort. A	This is great. I am enjoying watching A think up good ideas.	
8.03.00 2-3.30 (1.25)	A read me his assignment	Very pleased with essay and already seen the progress with descriptive writing. A	Delighted with A's work. Great effort and result on Crucible assignment.	
9.03.00 2-4pm (2)	Preparation for art GCSE exam	Can't wait to begin work really looking forward to it. A	Pleased with all the good ideas. Looking forward to watching work develop.	
13.03.00 2-4pm (2)	Preparation for art GCSE exam	Learned how to use watercolours and different techniques on portraits. I really enjoyed it. A	Good pupil. I enjoyed this lesson too.	I lent A some of my own art materials.
15.03.00 3-4.15 (1.25)	Art work. Pastel pencils on face.	Love working in pastel pencils. A	A is working very well.	I lent A some of my own art materials.
16.03.00 12.45- 2.45 (2)	Career Fair at local sport's stadium	Didn't seem to be very helpful, but enjoyed myself. A	Interesting but not very helpful.	A had already decided to go to 6th form college.
20.03.00 9.30-2.30 (5)	Art Trip to local city art galleries	Really enjoyed the '--- -----' art gallery. A	A super day out.	This trip was made with my other current pupil, Russell.
22.03.00 2-3.30 (1.5)	Experimenti ng with wax crayon and inks. Planning research sheets.	Found a new interesting style of working-could be very useful! A	Great to see ideas developing. A is working hard and gaining confidence.	By now Russell's mother has told me that A tried to sell Russell drugs on art trip, but I say nothing to A.
23.03.00 2-3.30	Art work.	<i>Homework list.</i> Pleased with my	Very encouraging ideas and work. Lots more to	Rang education officer and told him

(1.5)		work so far. A	do!	about accusation on art trip, also that I had no evidence.
27.03.00 2-4 (2)	Art work	<i>Homework list.</i> Everything is coming on well.	Very pleased to see A's work coming together for the exam.	I never did tell A about Russell's accusation, but I did not teach them together again.
29.03.00 2-4 (2)	Art work	Good start. A	Made a really good start.	
30.03.00 2-3.30 (1.5)	Art work	Love working in acrylics! A	Surprised how good A's technique is!	
3.04.00 2-4 (2)	Art work	Andrew	Good progress.	
10.04.00 2,15-4.15 (2)	History	Really pleased with work.	Go and see English teacher about next assignment.	P went to see English teacher, but was disappointed at his grade for last assignment.
12.04.00 2-4 (2)	Finished English assignment. Started RE	I'm very tired and not really in the mood for concentrating really hard. A	It seemed hard to get going today, but we did our best.	A was going into school for music, taking tests in science and maths and having other tutors most mornings.
13.04.00 12.45-1.45 (1)	Went to school to see Head of Year and English teacher.			Very informative discussions and instructions for English exam.
3.05.00 2-3.30 (1.5)	Planning English revision.	Happy about 'Mockingbird' so we have decided to write notes on H's & P's. They are really helpful. A	Glad A is feeling better about revision.	
4.05.00 2-3.45 (1.75)	Science revision.	Really pleased with my notes so far. A	Pleased that A feels that I am helping him learn and organise his notes as I am not very 'scientific'!	
8.05.00 2-4 (2)	Science revision	Revision is on its way and its very pleasing to know it. A	Very interesting-impressed with A's effort and understanding.	
10.05.00 2-4 (2)	Science revision	Progressing OK with revision 5 modules to go! A	I have definitely learned a lot from A!	
11.05.00 9.30-11 (1.25)	Science revision	Really hard work but getting there. A	A is slogging through this really well. Very pleased about art subject award.	A was given a special subject award for Art by the school.
15.05.00 9.30-11 (1,5)	Science revision	Getting through all the work A	Steady progress.	
17.05.00	Science	Pleased with my	Pleased to be finished	

2-3.30 (1.5)	revision	work so far. A	with this bit.	
18.05.00 2-4 (2)	English.	Enjoyed the poem we did although it made me want to argue for the girls!!! A	I have a feeling A will do really well in the exam! Fingers crossed for good questions! You deserve to succeed.	
24.05.00 2-4 (2)	Science.	Can't wait to finish exams. A	Flogging through it nicely - well done A!	
30.05.00 2-3.30 (1.25)	Maths	Everything is going OK! Confident about exams. A	Help! Good job A is so good at these.	I wished A good luck and later heard he had passed all 7 GCSE's with flying colours, B's in English and an A* in Art.

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Andrew's learning problems and their resolution

- Teachers had very little idea of Andrew's problems with James and assumed that he was being difficult, but James really was victimising Andrew and making his school life unbearable. He found it hard to explain his feelings to his teachers. They did not believe he was being bullied. (Environmental/Ecological theories, teacher training in counselling skills, policy and resources implications)
- His mother's discouraging behaviour when she threw away his schoolbooks and spoilt the school video may have affected his self-esteem. (Psychodynamic theory)
- Teachers supported Andrew's work effort and took the trouble to talk to him and mark his work. Though reluctant to, they accepted his absence from some classes. They gave their own time to guide his exam work. He was an able pupil who had had good relationships with teachers. This may have affected their willingness to help. (Good professional ethics, right to education in law, legal duty of education authority)
- He was a young person with a conscience. He was sorry for his behaviour and blamed himself and eventually overcame his problem with his bully. (Personal Construct theory)
- Andrew's own reactions to his situation were key, for example he used my help in ways which suited him. He overcame his problems with school to go in and discuss work with teachers and to join in with some lessons. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- His confidence grew over the tuition period. . Being taught by a teacher, who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well with him and supported him during a testing time. My non-judgemental approach and appreciation of his hard work helped his confidence as he resolved his problem with his bully. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He gained awareness, metacognition and confidence, discovering ways of revising and learning successfully. We worked these out by building up on ways, which worked for him. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case studying, was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He was not able to explain all of his feelings because of lack of understanding at school, but also because of his emotional involvement in a complex situation. (Psychodynamic theory, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Andrew's responses were logical given his situation. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Andrew was continuing to resolve his problems in his own way, when we parted company. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

## Case study 3. Russell 2000: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
25.02.00 2-3 (1)	Introductory chat.	R to plan first three lessons.	Looking forward to working with R.	R & his stepmother were in dressing gowns although visit was pre-booked.
28.02.00 10-12.00 (2)	Comprehension on a piece of writing about counselling.	The work was hard at first but once the teacher helped me I understood a lot more. R	R worked <u>very</u> hard.	This was a very difficult piece about a nun who counselled criminals. It was too hard and I would not have chosen it myself.
2.03.00 10-11 (1)	Sorted English file	Sort out all my notes into sections for Friday. Lots of work to do. I will finish! R	Very encouraged to see how much R has done - it just needs work.	
3.03.00 2-3.30 (1.5)	English	<i>Homework</i> Feel much better about my English. R	<i>Get texts.</i> Very pleased with R's progress.	
6.03.00 10-12 (2)	English assignment	It felt more understanding and interesting to. R	Good homework done. R tried very hard and is making a lot of progress.	Father gets a new job in London and the following week goes away to start.
9.03.00 10-12 (2)	Talked about Careers.	Feel more positive about my future plans. R	Exams? Are re-sits possible? Timetable? Maths? RE? Helpful chat about R's future.	Queries about taking exams. Stepmother looked worried but said she was moving to London before R's exams.
10.03.00 2-4 (2)	Talked about exams. Prepared Art. Did timetable.	It's getting better and it sounds interesting. There are still parts that need improving. Art homework. Start my first design sheet. I give Jenny permission to nag if I'm playing up. R	Definitely nice to see R so positive about her work. I am really pleased he is willing to have a go at the exams. I give R permission to disagree with me.	Stepmother seemed to have agreed that arrangements would be made for R to take exams, but these were never resolved to my knowledge. This lesson was followed by a long weekend in London when father found a house to rent.
13.03.00 10.40-12.40 (2)	Art work set Career work set.	<i>Homework tasks</i> Tired at first but once I got going time flew by. It was real interesting. R x	<i>Teacher tasks</i> R was tired after busy weekend but worked very hard when he got going.	
16.03.00 10-12 (2)	Maths & Art	<i>Homework tasks</i> Not really to keen on maths but I got through it. It wasn't as bad as I thought. R x	<i>Teacher tasks</i> This boy has got ability. Progress is being made!  I agree.	Significance of the kiss is probably just how he would sign a card to a friend. I did not notice it at the time.

16.03.00 12.45-2.45 (2)	Career Fair at local sport's stadium		Agreed with Career officer that she would ring to make an appointment to see R and her mother.	She rang me to say she wanted me to be present. When the career officer called, R's stepmother left the house asking me to deal with it! She refused to stay.
17.03.00 2-3 (1)	Art painting lesson	Do as much maths as poss. Sketch watch Loved painting today. Brill can't wait till next lesson! R	Good pupil.	I lent some Art materials. The watch given to R by his natural mother.
20.03.00 9.30-2.30 (5)	Art Trip to local city art galleries	Interesting. Gutted that the gallery was closed. R	A good day out.	One gallery was closed. We visited two others.
23.03.00	R was ill and so I had a wasted journey. I talked to him and said I would give him a lift to school on his three Art exam mornings.		R was in bed. I realise now that he was having a crisis because he had told his stepmother that the other pupil Andrew had offered him drugs	It seems likely in retrospect that James had offered to put him up for his exams if he would agree to get Andrew into trouble.
24.03.00 2-3.30(1.5)	Artwork.	Didn't like the look at first but when finished, loved it. R	R worked well.	I was carefully non-judgemental with R and did not comment on her behaviour.
27.03.00 11.30-12.30 (1)	Pre-booked chat with Russell and Art teacher at school.	Might get a good grade if I work hard.	R tried hard to understand teacher's instructions.	The teacher was very helpful.
28.03.00 6-7 (1)	Artwork.	Still have a lot to do. R	Worked well.	I had to be very flexible about the times we worked.
29.03.00 10-11(1)	Art exam preparation.	<i>Homework tasks</i> A bit difficult at first but gets better.	Good start.	
30.03.00 10-11.30 (1.5)	Art exam preparation.	<i>Homework tasks</i> I haven't done much today but I will get moving fast.	More work needed.	
3.04.00 10-12 (2)	Art exam preparation.	It is looking better but I'm still not so positive about it. R	I am impressed with R's work.	
4.04.00 8.30am (.75)	Gave R a lift to school		I was very pleased to hear R had got up at 6am! Her preparation was excellent.	R needed a lift because his stepmother didn't drive and in any case

				her baby was due.
5.04.00 (.75)	Gave R a lift to school			
6.04.00 (.75)	Gave R a lift to school			
13.04.00 2.30-3.30 (1)	Rang and called to pick up Art materials.	R was in London.	Talked to stepmother about careers and further education options.	R's stepmother seemed worried, intended to try and make sure R came back to sit exams.

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Russell's learning problems and their resolution

- He had been badly affected by the break-up of his family, the introduction of new step parents and changing environments and the fact that his stepmother was starting a new family. The emotional stress may have limited his learning development. Even though he had attained an average level, he showed signs of higher potential. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation/Developmental, Physiological theories and research, Environmental, Ecological theories)
- Teachers simply did not have time to help Russell, but the school was very supportive when I contacted them. (Environmental/Ecological theories, teacher training in counselling skills, policy and resources implications)
- Russell's stepmother was not providing the stable environment he needed in which to study. She had needed advice on parenting and counselling help to deal with her personal problems in the past and she still needed them. Her emotional problems were affecting her stepson. (Psychodynamic theory)
- Uncertainty about whether he would take the exams caused de-motivation and depression. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories)
- Russell responded when he was given a clear plan and support for his art exam. He was capable of working and responding to schoolwork when uncertainty was removed. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Humanistic theory - positive-regard)
- My acting with restraint gave Russell the opportunity to make amends, resisting the pressure put upon him by James the bully, telling his mother about the rumours circulating about me. (Counselling skills training) This showed that he was a young person with a conscience.
- Being taught by a teacher, who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well with him and gave him the motivation to do his Art exam. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He gained awareness, meta-cognition and confidence, discovering ways of revising and learning successfully. We worked these out by building up on ways, which worked for him. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case English and Art was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Russell's own reactions to his situation were key: for example he worked hard at his Artwork, but still refused to go into school before his exams (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He was not able to explain all of his feelings perhaps partly because of loyalty to his mother, but also because of his emotional involvement in a complex situation. (Psychodynamic theory, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Russell's responses were logical given his situation. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Russell was continuing to resolve his problems in his own way, when we parted company. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

#### **Pupil 4: Maeve**

In November 2000 Maeve was in her final school year. Her parents, local factory workers, were anxious to get help for her. She would not go to school. She lived in a notorious outlying estate of a sixties 'new town' well known for its social problems. Maeve's estate was remote and approached by a series of confusing access roads. The house was one of hundreds of small terraced houses landscaped into scenic footpaths and 'cul de sacs'. So confusing was this 'rabbit warren', that I was nearly an hour late for my first visit, using my mobile phone to ask for help to find the house. The welfare officer met me there. He had told me that Maeve had refused to open the door to him on one occasion. He had warned her parents they could be prosecuted for their daughter's non-attendance at school. I had asked him to tell Maeve that I would give her a trial lesson. I also asked him to explain that I required an adult present when I visited. There was one living room with attached open plan kitchen. Maeve sat at the dining table in smart clothes looking apprehensive and sulky. Weighing up the situation I knew that I had to make an impact on Maeve immediately in order to gain her interest and confidence. I joked and said I didn't suppose she would want to have me as a tutor if I couldn't even find her house. It might be too far for me to come anyway. I suggested Maeve and I get on with a lesson to see if we could work together, saving her from an embarrassing discussion about her bad behaviour. Maeve's father hovered in the kitchen part of the open plan house. We got off to a promising start. I asked Maeve to criticise a humorous poem I had written about the design of the new town. She replied that she couldn't, because she liked it! I explained that criticism could also be positive and she asked me for a copy.

I visited the school and spoke to Maeve's Head of Year who said she could not understand Maeve's problem. She had been popular and good at sports at school. She would try to get some work for her to do. She told me the sports teacher wouldn't give her written work as she had missed too much practical work and would not be able to take the exam. I got the impression that the sports teacher was annoyed with Maeve. I was given a sociology textbook. We worked on sociology, careers and life skills work sheets. Maeve was always polite, though usually dressed in pyjamas and clutching a pillow. We worked at the dining table and either her mother or father would be in the kitchen. Maeve had two older brothers, both at work. The youngest brother, a little older than Maeve was doing an apprenticeship. These two boys, according to Maeve's father were no trouble at all, but they had to keep a lock on their bedroom door to stop Maeve taking things. Maeve spent a lot of time using her exercise equipment in her bedroom to keep fit. Maeve showed me her row of athletics trophies, proudly displayed on the mantelpiece. She competed in town and county events, but had now given it up. She had also earned money as a child model and had enjoyed this experience.

We settled down to a reasonable pattern of work. We read a novel, which dealt with teenage issues. Maeve was initially very enthusiastic about the book asking her mother to get it for her but when she didn't Maeve lost interest in it. Maeve would not go out of the house even to shop. As a teenager Maeve's mother had been in trouble with the law. Maeve was very proud of her mother's Irish family and wanted to go back to live in the city where she was born. When Maeve was born the family had a big party because she was the first girl grandchild. She appeared to have been spoiled by them. Maeve said she stopped going to school because a teacher had pushed her against a radiator and hurt her. She had been shocked and let down because nobody including her parents believed her. Maeve said she had been on a wonderful holiday to America, paid for by her father and she would love to write about it. His father had had a very good job at the time, but had since been made redundant. Maeve was worried about him smoking.

We discussed careers and she assumed she wanted to do the same job as her mother, but when she thought about it realised she didn't. She wanted to be a travel rep. or a sports journalist. With no prompting from me, Maeve suddenly said she wanted to write about her life. She was very excited and motivated by this idea. She listed the major events in her life and included a photograph, but although she was pleased with the result, she said her parents showed no interest. I tried to talk about it to her mother, but she was dismissive and wouldn't look at it. Maeve's father said very little. He often had a rather grim, apprehensive expression. He said he did not want Maeve to have a laptop computer for Christmas because of the cost, but his wife had ordered it anyway. He said it would be cancelled, because it was too expensive and would be unfair to her brothers, but it was in fact still bought. One day Maeve's father appeared very depressed and angry. They had a big shouting match in my presence. It was almost as if they were demonstrating a well worn routine for my benefit. He was very angry with

Maeve for taking his cigarettes. In the ensuing shouted argument he overlooked Maeve's genuinely concerned comments about his smoking. He seemed to have a lot of pent up anger.

Maeve's mother appeared to have a problem standing up to Maeve, agreeing to her request one day for sirloin steak from the chip shop and rewarding her with cigarettes for doing schoolwork! Eventually Maeve admitted to me she had been very badly behaved at school. She was always being sent out of lessons and knew she would be expelled, so had decided to leave first. I asked why she had misbehaved and she said she had got very big headed and enjoyed showing off to her friends. During one of my tutoring sessions One day Maeve refused to do her lessons and so while she played on her laptop, Maeve's mother told me about her own deprived childhood. She readily agreed when I suggested to her that this might have affected her parenting. As a girl she had wanted take up sports professionally, but had had to look after her baby brother a lot because her mother, a single parent had to work long hours. She could not understand why Maeve had given up on sport after recovering from a minor injury. She readily agreed that she was spoiling Maeve and confusing what she would have wanted as a child herself with Maeve's needs. She had no faith in Maeve's ability to do well in a job. She was very certain that her daughter would not cope as she herself had failed to do as a teenager when she had been prosecuted by the police. She was surprised when I suggested this could not possibly be predicted, because Maeve was a different person to her. She seemed to realise for the first time that she had not recognised her daughter as a separate person in her own right.

Although the career officer and I and also Maeve's parents tried to get her to go out, she had largely withdrawn from the outside world. She sometimes appeared quite frightened and unsure. Although she was defiant to her parents she was shocked to hear she would be losing me in May 2001, even though there was no chance of a prosecution at this stage and she was keen to arrange to see me again. Maeve requested three counselling 'discussions' at the end of May as her lessons. She organised this herself, presumably to try and work things out with her parents. In this way she said things, which were overheard by first her mother, then her father and finally just by me. In the first discussion she said that she was getting on much better now with her mother. She was very emotional about the fact that she thought her father hated her. In the second she said things had improved a lot with her father. Presumably mother had heard her outburst and something was communicated to her father and resolved.

In the final session things appeared to have improved further between Maeve and her parents. They went out. They waved and smiled at me from their car as I arrived, a brother was upstairs. This was the first time we were left alone together. I imagine until then they had been afraid she would become aggressive and misbehave. They had obviously not believed her about the incident with the teacher at school. Maeve told me how badly she had behaved towards her family. I asked her how I would react if I saw a video of her with her family when I wasn't there and she said, "You would be frightened!" Her parents, then, had been correct in thinking that she might be aggressive towards me. The atmosphere of tension, which puzzled me and which I had struggled to overcome was explained. This was the last 'lesson.' Unfortunately although she appeared to trust me and was realising her need for help, I was not in a position to counsel her further. I was left still feeling unsure if I had handled the situation as well as I could have, but there didn't appear to be anything else I could have done as a home tutor.

Looking back on this case it seems to me that Maeve was having problems with her self-image and was ontologically confused and insecure (Laing, 1956, 1961, 1965, 1968; Bowen, 1966; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Donaldson, 1987; Hendrix & Hunt, 1997). She had become afraid to go out. She was receiving mixed messages from other members of her family. On the one hand her mother and maternal grandparents thought she was special and applauded her just because she was a girl. Her father and brothers presumably resented this undeserved special treatment, especially in view of her bad behaviour at school. She was given things by her mother she didn't particularly need, but not given things she asked for such as the schoolbook. She was angry that her parents had believed the teacher about the incident at school. At the same time as spoiling her, her mother had a fixed conviction that she knew Maeve could not be trusted and could not cope. This appeared to be placing her in a 'double bind' situation. Maeve had responded by venting her anger on her family and refusing to go out. Maeve appeared to have psychological problems and needed help. Unfortunately there was no mechanism within the system for me to recommend Maeve for psychological assessment and possible family therapy; although I gained the impression that her parents would have welcomed appropriate help.

Postscript: - When I rang to check her progress a few weeks after I finished tutoring Maeve, her mother said that she would still not go out, but thank you for my help. I rang the career officer who said she still could not persuade Maeve to go for any career interviews.

#### Case study 5 Maeve 2000-2001: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
28.11.00 11.30-12.30 (1)	Read two poems and two chapters of 'About a Boy' by Nick Hornby	I thought the reading was interesting. I like to write about the poems. M	Looking good but I won't hold my breath until we've done a few more lessons.	I did not want to appear too grateful for her cooperation.
30.11.00 1.30-3pm (1.5)	3 careers work sheets. Read chapter 3 of book.	I enjoyed the worksheets and the reading. M	Look up Liverpool poets & photocopy more career sheets. M made me work hard-a bit sad for an old teacher-I feel tired! Well done.	
7.12.00 1.30-3pm (1.5)	Some notes on bullying from novel. Sociology.	Homework. I thought it was OK. I would have been better but I had a headache	A good lesson. Maeve tried hard with some quite difficult work.	
14.12.00 1.30-2.30 (1)	English novel. Changed lessons to Mon, Thurs, Fri 1.30-2.30	We read and I liked the story. M	I enjoyed it. Maeve suggested that Will was ' <u>manipulative</u> ' - brilliant word - I'm impressed!	Interesting in retrospect as I suspect Maeve was an expert manipulator of her family to get her own way.
15.12.00 1.30-2.30 (1)	Sorted out school file into categories. English	We read another chapter in the book.	Enjoyed teasing Maeve. She has agreed to let me nag her. She worked OK	Maeve wanted her Mother to buy her the novel, new file and pens. She was not doing all the homework
18.12.00 1.30-2.30 (1)	Long chat about English assignment and letter to local airport to ask about careers.	Homework. Said too tired to write comment.	No comment	Maeve's mother bought her an expensive laptop for Christmas, which annoyed her father.
4.1.01 (2)	Visit by Career officer	I enjoyed it. M	Useful - possible college N. V. Q. 's in Sport & Leisure & Tourism	
5.1.01 1.30-2.30 (1)	English	Good to hear somebody else's view. M	Good progress.	
8.1.01 1.30-2.30 (1)	Checked airport letter	Copy & post letter. Keep rough copy. No comment.	Interesting lesson.	
18.1.01 1.30-2.30 (1)	Wrote letter asking about Sport NVQ	Homework Maeve	Very useful session.	

22.1.01 1.30-2.30 (1)	Write a list of life events. Holiday diary of trip to America. Plan a holiday from brochures.	I picked some homework. T	Maeve was cooperative and suggested a list of work to do. We had an interesting talk about Anne Frank and Van Gogh	Maeve had 'lost' all her work and her file.
24.1.01 2.00-3.30 (1.5)	Career sheets - oral English	I enjoyed it. M	I enjoyed it.	
25.1.01 2.15-3.15 (1)	Discussion about careers	Maeve	A good discussion.	
30.1.01 2.30-3.30 (1)	Letters for info. On careers.		Maeve worked well.	
1.2.01 2-3 (1)	Writing and discussing.	No comment.	Completed form.	This was a career form.
9.2.01 2.30-3.30 (1)	Talking about work experience.	No comment.	Maeve has convinced me that this is something she has serious doubts about. I will not raise it again.	It seems to me now that perhaps Maeve's fear of work experience reflected her parent's lack of confidence in her.
1 hour	Discussion with mother present in the background, within hearing distance.			Maeve asked for a discussion, mother hovered in the background-this was really a counselling session. She said her father hated her.
.75 hour	Discussion with father in kitchen, but within hearing distance			Maeve wanted another discussion-she said her father was much nicer to her now.
.75 hour	Parents went out and left us			Maeve wanted another discussion-she said her family were being nicer to her now. She told me that she had terrorised her family

### My Life by Maeve

**1987 We moved to Westbank Way in the 'New town'**

**1988 I started junior school. My first teacher's name was Miss Smith.**

**1991 I started my athletics career. My first team was Westbank.**

**1992 I started competing with 'New town' juniors and we had our first holiday in Devon.**

**1993 I started competing in athletics for my school, Shawditch West.**

**1994 Me and my family went to the new Pine Centre in Wales for two weeks.**

**I started competing for Orion Athletics club.**

**1995 I started competing for the county, but I got laid off because of a knee injury.**

**1996 I went on a school trip to Holland, it was boss.**

**1996 I modelled for a sports company which I enjoyed.**

**1996 I started Westbank Way senior school.**

**1997 I started drinking with my mates.**

**1998 I started competing for the County Team.**

**1999 I went abroad with my family to Toronto (Canada), New York and Niagara Falls – it was the best.**

**2000 I started dancing and singing, I left school and got a tutor.**

**DESCRIPTION OF MYSELF– BLUE EYES HEIGHT – 5ft4in – 5ft5in**

**WEIGHT – 7st7lb**

**MY DREAM IS TO COMPETE AT ATHLETICS IN THE OLYMPICS**

**I AM VERY PROUD OF MY FAMILY’S BACKGROUND BEING IRISH**

**My analysis of possible critical points affecting Maeve’s learning problems and their resolution**

- She appeared to be in a caring, stable home, but where money was in short supply. It was isolated from the town. It was not conducive to going out as there was no local shopping centre. (Environmental, Ecological theories)
- She lived in a tough neighbourhood where it was necessary to be street wise, but got on well with her peers. This might have put her in the position of finding it difficult to show loss of face by going back to school. Her wish to gain status and show off to her peer group, could have led to her original ‘bad’ behaviour. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic, Environmental, Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- She was a ringleader of bad behaviour at school in her own eyes and yet her Head of Year liked her and did not mention it. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Her father had been made redundant from a good job and this could have contributed to his depression and anger about his situation. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Psychodynamic and Social Learning theories)
- The fact that she had been badly behaved but had refused school rather than remaining to be disruptive was seen as removing any serious duty of care by the education authority and its psychological service. This implies that bad behaviour is ‘normal’ and not necessarily an indication of needing extra investigation, intervention and psychological services. (Right of education under law, legal duty of education authority, future mental health implications)
- Emotional problems may have developed over the years due to inadequate parenting. This may have been partly due to the demands of shift work and the difficulty of finding well-paid work in the area. Evidence, which supports this includes her parent’s problems in communicating with him. (Environmental, Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- *Maeve seemed to have been subjected to conflicting family messages and expectations.* Her mother's family and her mother treated her as very special and spoiled her simply for being a girl. Her success in athletics and modelling would have reinforced this superior image. (Environmental, Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- Her father may have been angry because of Maeve’s privileged treatment by his wife and her family, which he may have seen as unfair to his two sons. He may have felt aggrieved by unequal treatment between the sexes. He and his sons might have been jealous and disliked the attention given to her and money spent on her. Evidence of this might be the family celebrations when Maeve was born simply because of her sex. He might have been frustrated by his wife’s behaviour towards her. Evidence of this is that he felt she did not deserve and they could not afford Maeve’s laptop computer. Her father was angry with her because of her unreasonable behaviour, but ignored her when she was being considerate. Evidence of this is he did not listen when she was speaking about her concern for his smoking. Since she loved and respected her father, this would reinforce his confusion. His attitude over time may have been interpreted by Maeve as a lack of love and damaged her self-esteem. This could have pushed her into making more and more unreasonable demands in order to feel valued. Thus her father was reinforcing her bad behaviour image of herself. (Psychodynamic, Behaviourist, Personal Construct theories)
- Her mother spoiled her by giving her the things she thought she would have wanted herself as a child, not realising she was not always listening to Maeve’s real needs. Evidence of this is that she ignored Maeve’s request for the novel and school equipment - things, which she asked for and which would have been beneficial to her education. If she had a symbiotic attitude to her daughter, she might not have been really surprised at Maeve’s bad behaviour and even expected Maeve’s life

to mirror her own. (Hendrix, H. & Hunt, H. 1997) Evidence of this was when Maeve said she thought she would do the same job as her mother, although she had little idea of what it involved. Since she loved and respected her mother, this reinforced her confusion, as her mother seemed to expect her to rebel in the same way that she had herself. Thus her mother was bringing about what she feared most. Maeve may have become confused about who she was. (Personal construct, Self Social Learning, Organic Maturation/Developmental, Psychodynamic theories about the unconscious, Physiological, Cognitive theories and my own theory about unworded logic)

- There was support for Maeve from the school, the welfare, education and career services, but this did not include the expert psychological help and counselling which she and her parents seem to have needed. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- The school did not have counselling facilities to help parents or students. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- The lack of counselling help for Maeve and her parents probably increased the likelihood of her falling prey to psychological problems such as withdrawal and depression due to isolation causing possible agoraphobia. (Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case studying careers, Sociology and English was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Being taught by a teacher who used a person centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well for her and gave her the self-esteem to try to sort things out with her parents. (Humanistic, Person Centred Counselling theories)
- She was polite, respectful and articulate in all her lessons with me. (Humanistic, Person Centred Counselling theories)
- She gained a more stable image of herself because I only praised her when she deserved it, I encouraged her to think about herself and I did not show gratitude for her cooperation. She gained awareness, metacognition and confidence, discovering ways of expressing herself. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She was fond of her father and mother, but was not able to explain her mixed feelings about them because she was confused and upset by their inability to give her autonomy. These conflicting feelings, due to being alternately spoilt and disapproved of created a complex situation which was causing emotional and behavioural problems.(Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- She was trying to overcome her problems herself in her own way, but had not done so when I stopped seeing her, because her parents needed to be made aware of their own problems and supported in parenting her. The issues were too complex for her to sort out, due to her dependent position and inexperience at that stage in her life. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

## Pupil 5: Cheryl

When I started working with Cheryl, she had been at her second secondary school for one term before being off with 'depression'. She had missed nearly a full term before getting home tuition. I spoke to her Head of Faculty and Deputy Head. Some girls had bullied her and accused her of being a 'lesbian', saying she had behaved 'inappropriately' towards another girl in the town's swimming club. The other girls had said they were upset by her behaviour. This charge was not investigated. She was moved from her previous school, because she was being bullied. Cheryl had had 'no problems' at her new school until another girl found out the story. The two teachers did not understand why being called 'lesbian' should upset her so much. She could have shrugged her shoulders and ignored it. They did not believe she had been seriously bullied. They seemed offended that she had rejected their school. The deputy had visited Cheryl at home and told her she had punished the bully by making her write a letter of apology. She could do no more for Cheryl if she refused to be reasonable and return to school. They were sorry the welfare officer had not delivered the letter to Cheryl, but it was not their fault. They had done their very best for her and she was being unreasonable. The head of year believed Cheryl's father should send her to a school outside the town where she was unknown. However, no effort appeared to be being made to find her an alternative state school elsewhere. Work had been set and Cheryl had not done all of it, which proved her unwillingness to co-operate.

Cheryl aged 15 and her younger brother Mark lived with their adoptive parents in an immaculately kept semi-detached house. Their parents had been together over twenty-five years and had grown up children who had left home. The two children had been left with them, by a male relative for brief periods as babies and toddlers, because he could not cope, until eventually they adopted them officially. Cheryl's adoptive mother thought it likely that her real parents' past rejection was causing Cheryl's depression. Her adoptive mother also admitted to spoiling Cheryl (possibly because she had lost a young daughter through illness in her youth). She and her husband had had poverty stricken, deprived childhoods with low school attendance themselves. They wanted to give the children a better start than they had had themselves, but they had little experience of education. Hence they had bought and continued to pay for computer equipment, an Internet connection and a laptop they could not use themselves. Cheryl had her own bedroom, computer and designer brand clothes.

Her birth father had applied for custody of Cheryl and her brother when Cheryl was 11, but it was not given because of his poor parenting record and the fact that he had other children to care for. Her adoptive mother thought Cheryl had not known she was adopted until this custody battle occurred. It seems probable to me, however, that Cheryl was aware of her change of circumstances on some level as a toddler. Cheryl's mother volunteered family information to me before and after lessons. Cheryl had had a normal school career before her depressive illness. She was now on antidepressants, but often cancelled her counselling sessions through the doctor. Most of her time was spent in bed. She was a serious, quiet girl, who responded with minimum communication to my questions. Her demeanour was inoffensive and pleasant. Cheryl proved to be polite, co-operative and intelligent in lessons, she thought carefully about her work. She rarely made any written comment other than "*O.K. Cheryl*" on her work record. The most positive comments were "*Enjoyed the lesson*" and "*Thank you.*"

I did a lot of work with her over eighteen months, though she would cancel when depressed. Sometimes she found it difficult to concentrate, but she tried hard. She hoped to do some GCSEs. She appeared to have the ability to do well. During the home tutor period I often called at school to ask for work and asked to talk to teachers, twice talking to the Head of Year. I gave him a note to display in the staff room explaining Cheryl's case and thanking staff for any help. He said this was a good idea, as most of them did not know her. After this I tried regularly to communicate with him through a secretary. I handed in a considerable amount of Maths, English and History never commented on, marked or returned, though I kept calling for it. Fortunately I had photocopied it. The secretary explained that the school had many staff off ill. By the end of year 10 Cheryl had progressed in her work, grasping meaning, expressing important points and bettering my suggestions. She had a good grasp of historical issues and basic maths. However, she finished the term in a low mood.

I wrote to school asking them to refer Cheryl to the new learning mentor, giving her a flexible timetable for the next school year. I recommended counselling during the holiday. I copied this letter to all the agencies involved. I asked the careers' officer to call and show her possible future options, including a special course for fifteen year olds at a college next door to her home. Disappointingly no response was made to either request even though I sent a report to the education office. The welfare

officer never got in touch with Cheryl or me although I repeatedly rang him. I informed my placement officer by phone and report. No action was taken by any of the people I contacted. I found all of this affected me emotionally, making me feel frustrated and depressed myself. I struggled and hopefully succeeded to some extent to keep a cheerful, supportive attitude. However, having to explain and to some extent justify my colleagues' lack of response to my pupil and her parents was difficult for me. Over that summer her parents became worried when a policeman brought her home in the early hours. A neighbour said she had stood on the sidelines of a group who were misbehaving in the street and he blamed her parents for letting her out. Her parents threatened her with going into care if she did not behave.

My contact with Cheryl over the following autumn term was minimal. She had two serious accidents while mixing with a group of girls and boys outside her house: one when a stone permanently damaged one eye and another when her arm was broken playing a game. She denied that either accident involved bullying. Cheryl was getting to know her peer group and making friends, but her father was worried about the crowd she was mixing with. Her eye was damaged when she was out with a group who were throwing stones at passing cars. I contacted the local youth service about help or activities, but no action was taken. I visited a local youth counselling scheme and gave her father contact information. I took her to the college next door and spoke to the tutor who ran a course for excluded fifteen year olds. Just before Christmas, Cheryl was feeling better and wanted to go with a friend to college on the special course. She went on her own initiative to see the tutor and was told there was a place for her if funding was available. She did not want any more home tutoring as lack of support from school meant she could not now enter any exams.

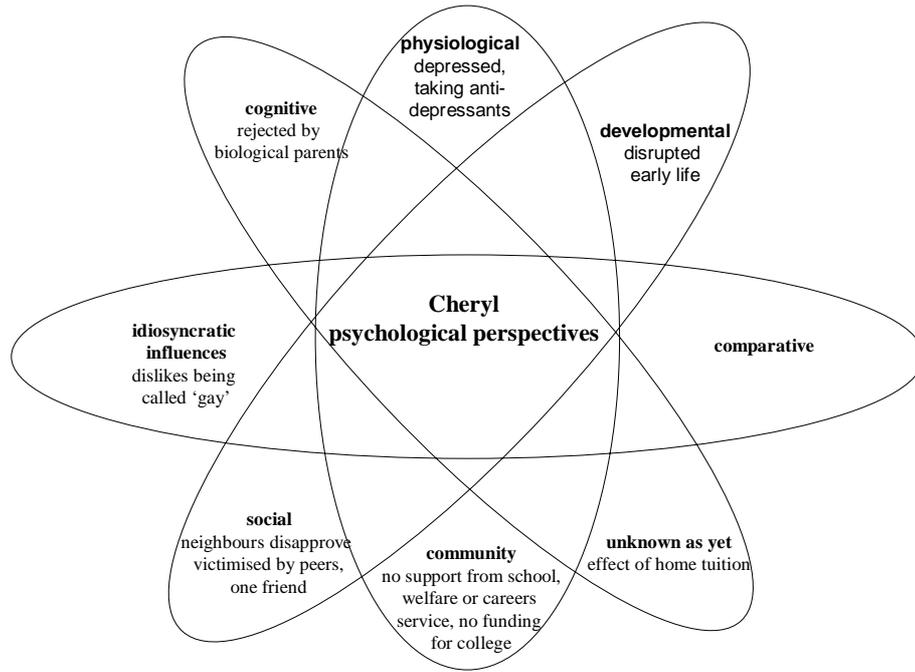
I was delighted that Cheryl had decided to go to college. Her father and I both rang the Behaviour Support Team officer, who places students, but were told that because school had received her money allocation, it could not be reallocated half way through the academic year to college and she would be unable to go. Cheryl had not been disruptive at school so did not qualify! This person apparently also told Cheryl's father that bullying in the college was much worse than at school implying that she would be unhappy there. This seems to me unprofessional as well as uncaring. I wrote a report explaining that although Cheryl appreciated my help, she had decided to go to college and no longer wanted my services. I copied it to all those official bodies involved in her case. I hoped by this to force someone, who might be in a position to do something for her, to take action but again there was absolutely no response! At this point, I am sorry to say, I stopped teaching her.

I found myself running out of the practical and emotional resources to continue helping Cheryl. I no longer had any schoolwork that would be helpful or relevant to her, especially as the appropriate subject teachers at school had not marked her work. During the previous eighteen months I had received no teaching support other than very minimal work handed out. The two subjects she liked were Maths and History, which I was unable to teach at GCSE level without guidance. I doubted very much if she would be willing to continue and, therefore I did not persevere. I felt angry, upset and frustrated by the lack of support for Cheryl and me when I felt we had achieved so much. It seemed unfair that the school had benefited from money for Cheryl's education, but provided so little support.

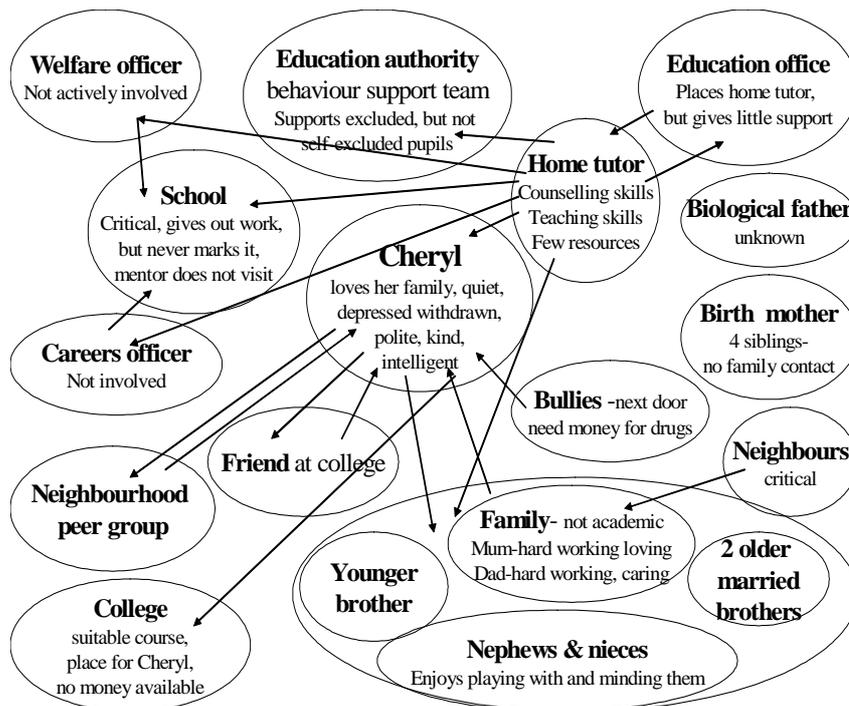
Although Cheryl appeared to be in a caring, stable and comfortable home where she was well provided for, it could not protect her from her neighbourhood, which was experiencing the effects of drug taking and vandalism and where she was probably experiencing intimidation, jealousy, blackmail and physical violence. Evidence for this is that her drug taking 'friend' of nineteen who lived next-door kept asking for money. At one point this person's mother returned Cheryl's laptop, which she found under her younger daughter's bed. The older girl next door was hardly mentioned except as someone who had asked Cheryl for money and who she had been told to avoid. Her parents did not appear to realise what was happening. It seems likely that she was in fact the architect of Cheryl's problems. Cheryl kept incurring physical injury through 'accidents' while out with her 'friends'. It seems to me now that Cheryl simply had nowhere to turn. Her behaviour of giving up and staying at home in bed seems to me entirely logical for a person in her situation. She had a comfortable home with a well meaning, loving but uneducated immediate family, but she faced a hostile world outside. Cheryl's lack of confidence was also not surprising in view of her history of being given away by her original parents. She may have wondered at a young age what was wrong with her and why she had a different background to her classmates. Cheryl's main problem seems to have been that she was being straightforwardly and brutally intimidated and she was too frightened to talk about it. I saw no sign of the defiance, laziness and oddness implied by the school's treatment of her. Even when depressed,

Cheryl was not aggressive or moody. She went with and supported her father who had to be persuaded to go to hospital and babysat her younger brother and small cousins. To me she still appeared a gentle and likeable person when I stopped teaching her.

Postscript: Cheryl's mother continued to ring me to chat for six months after I stopped teaching her. Cheryl eventually secured a place at the college on a post sixteen course for the following September. Meanwhile she got into trouble with the police, being prosecuted by another girl for assault. It seems that she decided to take her father's advice and 'fight back.' She did this by going with several friends round to her neighbour's house to confront the girl who had 'borrowed' her laptop. This person was the younger sister of her original persecutor who was, apparently now in prison for drug dealing. I met Cheryl's mother in 2006 and she told me that Cheryl was still at home and unemployed.



**The 'muddle' model – Cheryl (see Chapter 4)**



**Table 4.42 Model of influences in Cheryl's learning environment**

**Case Study 4. Cheryl 2000-2002: Student feedback from work record**

DATE & HOURS	WORK	STUDENT	TUTOR	RESEARCH COMMENT
28.11.00	Talked to mother and saw Cheryl briefly at the end.			
30.11.00	Picked work up from school secretary			
1/12/00 1-3 p.m.	Talked about options for Cheryl & possibilities. Read "About a Boy" by Nick Hornby. Half an hour English practice exam paper	I enjoyed the lesson. Cheryl	A cautious start on work. We need to sort out proper backup from school to make sure work is relevant. I would like to thank Cheryl for her co-operation.	Cheryl looked at schoolwork – it was not very helpful (apart from practice English language exam paper), as we need proper study guides. There was work issued by school, which had not been returned for marking. We did some English language – quite difficult but seemed to understand it - jumped ahead of me a couple of times - tried hard
4.12.00 1-1.30				I arrived prepared to carry on with the English we had started and was disappointed that CHERYL did not want to work. I chatted to her mother who said she was worried because I had suggested we work on her computer and she didn't want me to go in her bedroom. I said no problem I could set IT work for homework.
5.12.00 11.30-12.00	Appointment with Head of Year and Deputy Head.			I found myself being persuaded by the school staff that Cheryl was somehow to blame, but decided to reserve judgement.
11/12/00 11-12 a.m.	English language continued.	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl tried hard. Jenny	
12/12/00 11-12 a.m.	English language continued	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl tried hard. J	
8/1/01 11-12	Two units of maths.	Cheryl	Cheryl worked well. Get I.T. From school. Sort out timetable & print off.	
9/1/01 11.30-12.30 a.m.	First 2 chapters of "About a Boy" done. Noting important points in story.	I liked the book. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well - very co-operative. I hope to get better organised as	

			we go on. Cheryl showed very good understanding. Jenny	
10/1/01 11-12 a.m.	Talked about computer hardware & software. No I.T. Worksheet from school yet. Read chapter 4 of book.	O.K. Cheryl	Good progress. Jenny	Cheryl was taking anti-depressants, but was refusing to go for counselling
11/1/01 11-12 a.m.	History - oral comprehension World War 1. Homework-copy up	O.K. Cheryl	Bring an atlas. Very impressed with Cheryl's responses. Worked hard. Jenny	
16/1/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths Pages 17,18,19	Cheryl	Look at study guides in Smiths. Bring tape measure & kitchen scales	
17/1/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths estimating in metric & imperial	Cheryl	Cheryl worked hard. Jenny	
23/1/01 11-12 a.m.	Two English units done and copied up.	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl has worked very hard today especially as she is not feeling well. J	
24/1/01 11-12 a.m.	Set some I.T. Talked about how our minds work as we learn things.	Helpful Cheryl	Cheryl was very co-operative & listened patiently to my advice. Jenny	
26/1/01 11-12.30 a.m.	Some quite hard history done using English skills and exam technique	O.K. Cheryl	Impressed by Cheryl's intelligent responses. Jenny	
29/1/01 11-12 a.m.	More maths done.	O.K. Cheryl	Bring a ruler. Cheryl worked hard. The work was difficult. Jenny	
30/1/01 11-12 a.m.	More maths done	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked hard. The work was difficult. Jenny	
31/1/01 11-12 a.m.	History booklet	Enjoyed the lesson Cheryl	Cheryl worked very hard & I was delighted with her effort & answers.	
8/2/01 11-12 a.m.	History-start of World War 2	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked very hard. She gave some	

			very intelligent answers	
9/2/01 11-12 a.m.	Finished maths exercise	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well Jenny	
6/3/01 11-12 a.m.	History lesson, 3 pages Copy and give in to school	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl did her best, but we need more information and work to do. Jenny	
1/4/01 11-12 a.m.	History-evacueesP21-24	Thanks Cheryl	Good start back to work Jenny	
2/4/01 11-12 a.m.	To page 26	O.K. Cheryl	Good work Jenny	
8/5/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths booklet	O.K. Cheryl	I am very rusty in maths but we did quite well. Thanks to Cheryl for being so patient.	
9/5/01 11-12 a.m.	English	O.K. Cheryl	Excellent effort by Cheryl as usual. Jenny	
14/5/01 11-12 a.m.	English	O.K. Cheryl	Good progress. Jenny	
15/5/01 11-12 a.m.	History	O.K. Cheryl	Good progress. Jenny	
16/5/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths	O.K. Cheryl	Very co-operative at trying to learn some difficult maths Good progress. Jenny	
22/5/01 11-12 a.m.	Finished some English work to hand in	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl stuck at it really well considering she had a headache. Well done. Jenny	
5/6/01 11-12 a.m.	History - the cold war	O.K. Cheryl	Difficult subject but interesting. Jenny	
11/6/01 11-12 a.m.	English practice paper	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well. I wrote down her answers because of her bad arm. Jenny	Cheryl had been out with her 'friends' and come home with a broken arm.
14/6/01	History	O.K.	Cheryl worked	The slightest hint that Cheryl

11-12 a.m.		Cheryl	hard Jenny	was bullied made her clam up.
19/6/01 11-12 a.m.	English - writing skills	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well Jenny	
21/6/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths - number sequences, fractions, equations	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked hard at this - a subject we both find quite difficult. Jenny	
22/6/01 11-12 a.m.	History - end of World War Two and the Cold War	O.K. Cheryl	Good effort from Cheryl. Jenny	I talked about 'bullying' indirectly.
27/6/01 11-12 a.m.	English - reading skills	O.K. Cheryl	Good progress and some good use of words by Cheryl. Jenny	I wrote to the school asking for a mentor to call before the end of term.
28/6/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well Jenny	I suggested Cheryl could go into school for History and Maths in September.
2/7/01 11-12 a.m.	History	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked hard. Jenny	I copied the letter to the education office.
3/7/01 11-12 a.m.	English	O.K. Cheryl	Really delighted with Cheryl's effort. Excellent work. Jenny	There was no reply.
4/7/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths - formulae	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well. Jenny	
10/7/01 1-12 a.m.	History - Cold War	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well. Jenny	Cheryl had produced lots of very good work. I had taken it to school.
13/7/01 11-12 a.m.	English - the Media - newspapers	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl worked well. Jenny	I had been into school to return work and be given work about five times.
16/7/01 11-12 a.m.	Maths	O.K. Cheryl	Cheryl listened carefully and worked well. Jenny	None of Cheryl's work was marked or returned.
19/7/01 11-12 a.m.	Cheryl's report and chat to Mum	O.K. Trudy	I have enjoyed working with Cheryl this year. Jenny	I had photocopied all the work, I marked it and put it in a file for Cheryl.
Summer Holiday				
Aug. 01	I rang Cheryl's mum to see how she was.			Cheryl's Mum was upset, as she had been brought back by the Police in the early hours. Neighbours told her she had been seen hanging round with a group of youths who were throwing stones at cars and vandalising walls. She and her husband had threatened her with being sent into care if she

				did not behave.
Aug. 01	I rang and spoke to Cheryl's eldest brother, who said he thought she was being bullied and that she was a gentle rather than a violent person.			
Sept. 01	I rang Trudy who said Cheryl wanted to resume lessons. No contact had been made by school.			I rang the education office and expressed my concerns. These were: 1. No response to Cheryl's work. 2. No guidance re exams. 3. No reintegration package from school. 4. No action by Welfare officer. 5. No action by Career officer. 6. No action re college course. The response was sympathetic but did not promise any action. I was told that my report had not been read due to absence and that the college course was now likely to be full.
16/10/01 11-12 a.m.	News report on Afghanistan for English	Pleased with lesson. Cheryl	Very pleased with Cheryl's work. Jenny	
17/10/01 11-12 a.m.	Making notes for English	Happy with lesson Cheryl	Cheryl co-operated well. Jenny	
18/10/01	Mother cancelled lesson			She told me that Cheryl had fallen down stairs and was not well.
22/10/01	Half Term			I wondered if Cheryl was being abused, but dismissed this as she seemed so well looked after.
26/10/01	Mother rang up very upset.			She told me that Cheryl had been hit in the eye with a stone and would miss her lesson next Tuesday because of an appointment at the eye hospital.
29/11/01	Newspaper article on Afghanistan	Cheryl	Cheryl worked hard. Jenny	
31/10/01	I rang Cheryl's Mum.			I went round to pick up a book and she told me Cheryl's eye was permanently damaged. She said Cheryl got very annoyed and denied she was being bullied.
2/11/01	I sent Cheryl a get well card		"Hi Cheryl! Sorry to hear about your accident. Now have 2 other girls your age to teach not far	I hoped to show by this card that I accepted that Cheryl had said she had had an accident. I informed her that there were others of her peer group in the situation of being off school. I intimated my willingness to do

			from you. Have got hold of a good Maths book off one of them with answers (big help!) I am willing, if you are to work with your bad eye - maybe I can write answers down for you. Let me know if you want to give it a go. Love Jenny”	Maths, which she liked. I showed my concern and willingness to work with her on her schoolwork. I decided that this was all I could do at present and I would await a response if any. This last comment reveals my own underlying frustration with the situation and the need to accept my own limitations!
14/11/01	Mother rang to ask if Cheryl could resume her lessons.			I suggested that she came with me to the college with three other girls I taught from other parts of the town. This was arranged and carried out.
27/11/01	Last lesson with Cheryl.			She was too depressed to work but appeared very receptive to my advice.
28/11/01	Mother rang to say Cheryl had decided to go to college.			I was very pleased that she had decided to get back into formal education.
7/12/01	I rang the college tutor who said Cheryl sounded very suitable and she had two places on her course, but there could be a funding problem. I rang the education placement officer who said he would do his best to get funding. I rang Cheryl’s mother to inform her.			
12/12/01	Mother rang to say Cheryl had broken her arm again trying to climb out of a locked yard while playing ball.			
7/01/01	Mother rang to say Cheryl had been to the college with her friend who was on the course and the tutor had given her the placement officer’s phone number. I rang the placement officer and reminded him about Cheryl. He said he was afraid it was too late in the academic year to change the money over for Cheryl’s education from the school to			I wrote a report, which was sent to the education authority special needs office, the school, the welfare officer, the career officer and the college.

	the college. She would have got funding if she had been a behaviour problem or was disruptive in class, but she did not fit into this category.			
16/01/01	I called round at Cheryl's house. Her mother told me she was too depressed to do lessons. She was happy to work with me personally, but she could see no point, as she wanted to go to college with her friend.		I told her that I would write a report and send it to all concerned who might help her get into college. I gave her the file of work and took back her schoolbooks.	I was angry and upset by the lack of any response to my report and phone calls. This was compounded when I heard from her mother several months later that Cheryl was being prosecuted for assaulting the girl next door who had been bullying her. She had gone round with a group of 'friends' to sort her out.

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Cheryl's learning problems and their resolution

- Emotional problems may have developed early on due to poor parenting, deprivation and possible abuse. Evidence, which supports this includes her biological father's abandonment of her at the age of four and his failure to secure custody of her and her brother when she was eleven. (Environmental, Ecological Psychodynamic, theories)
- She appeared to be in a caring, stable and comfortable home where she was well provided for, but this did not make up for the neighbourhood which was experiencing the effects of drug taking and vandalism and where she was probably experiencing intimidation, jealousy, blackmail and physical violence. Evidence for this is that her drug taking 'friend' kept asking for money, that she kept incurring physical injury and that her laptop was taken, but returned by another mother. (Environmental/Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- Her mother may have protected and cosseted her because of her own deprived childhood and because she had lost a daughter. This could have made her feel inadequate and undermined her self-esteem. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Psychodynamic, Behaviourist, Personal Construct theories)
- Her mother was inclined to help and lend money to people who abused her kindness and she may have taken her as a role model for relationships with others. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Psychodynamic and Social Learning theories)
- There was little investigation or remedy by schools for bullying other than removal from situation, this increased her low self esteem and caused her to lose confidence in the school. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- There was no counselling at secondary school, no allowance made for emotional difficulties and no help from the new mentor system. Refusal to go to school and an inability to ignore being verbally abused was seen as the cause of her problems. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- The lack of action itself implied that a refusal to attend school justified the school's indifference to her problems and removed any duty of care beyond lip service. (Right of education under law, legal duty of education authority)
- Her response of withdrawal was a logical course of action for someone who is being threatened and denigrated both physically and mentally. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation/Developmental, Psychodynamic theories about the unconscious, Physiological, Cognitive theories and my own theory about unworded logic)
- There was no understanding or support for her or her parents by the school, the welfare, education, career or youth services apart from myself. Since I had no support, there was little I could do to help. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)

- There was a failure of action and communication by and between the various agencies set up to help young people. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- If she had been disruptive, the school would have relinquished her money allocation and recommended her for the college course. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- The officers in the education authority, welfare and careers did not give the help they promised and were limited by bureaucratic systems, which could not respond appropriately. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- The neighbours labelled her as no good because she was seen talking to a group of badly behaved youths. (Environmental, Ecological theories, local prejudice against young people)
- Her wish to gain status and appear 'normal' in her peer group, could have led to her 'bad' behaviour, which appeared to have been minimal. She may have been trying to fight back when she assaulted the other girl as her mother had told her to. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She was a polite young woman, who was shy and inarticulate. She was fond of her father and mother saying that they were her real parents and accompanying her father to hospital when he was ill. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She was afraid of the bullies who were threatening her, taking her money and possessions. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Being taught by a teacher who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well for her and gave her the self-esteem to try for the college course. She overcame her reluctance towards education and applied for college. She was trying to overcome her problems herself. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She gained awareness and metacognition, discovering she was capable of learning and making meaningful comments and that other people were off school with problems as well as her self. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case studying History, Maths and English was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. I continued to support her and back her judgement even, when she decided she no longer needed me. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Cheryl's own reactions to her situation were key. For example she showed evidence of recovery in her efforts to get into college, but her options were cut off by the services put in place to help her. She was trying to resolve her problems with her bullies in her own way, but unfortunately this was getting her into more trouble. (Environmental, Ecological, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She was not able to explain her feelings because she had been traumatised by early experiences of abuse and neglect, which made the taunts of her bullies have more effect. This emotional involvement in a complex situation, which she could not explain to teachers caused her depression and exacerbated her problems. (Psychodynamic theory, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Cheryl's responses were logical given her situation. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)

## Pupil 6: George

I started tutoring George in January 2001. He was aged 15, a very pleasant, well-spoken and intelligent boy, who claimed he was being bullied and refused to go to school. He was the youngest of six children. The school were adamant there had been no bullying. There could not possibly have been as they had a strict policy against it. The welfare officer also said she could find no evidence of bullying. The school said they would find some work for George, but it would be difficult, as staff hardly knew him. In year 7, his attendance had been 74%, in year 8 it had been 40% and in year 9 only 4%! He had not attended at all so far in year 10. The welfare officer had visited frequently, but could not improve attendance. She thought, looking back, that George's mother did not really seem to want him to go to school. She treated him as if he was much younger than he was. The welfare officer asked me to go with her to meet George and see if I could do anything to help. The previous home tutor had had to give up. He had said that the only way he could work with George was away from the house and George would not agree to another venue.

The house was hard to find, a tiny, old, back street terrace in a run down part of town by the deserted docks. The front door went straight into a tiny, poorly furnished living room. George's mother sat in an armchair. She was a well-spoken and extremely talkative person and spent the first half hour telling us her life story. Every time we tried to divert her onto George, she was dismissive. The main points of the information she gave us were, that her father, George's grandfather, had had severe schizophrenia. Her mother had looked after the family as best she could with a part time job, preventing her husband being taken away to the mental hospital. George's mother admitted she had mental health problems herself and was being treated by a psychiatrist. She had had a great battle to get herself off addictive medication. She had an older son in London with a ten-year-old son, a married daughter and two married sons nearby, a daughter at home and George, who was the youngest. She was separated from her husband, but occasionally let him sleep on the settee because she felt sorry for him. Her husband had had a difficult upbringing too and she had married him when she was very young against her father's wishes. He had a drink problem. He and George's sister were both present when I subsequently taught George. There was only a tiny kitchen in which we could work quietly for short periods.

When he eventually appeared, George appeared smartly dressed and mature for his age. He seemed composed and quietly self-assured. It was impossible for him to interrupt his mother without appearing rude. George seemed respectful and resigned to listening. Eventually the conversation turned to George, his mother insisting that getting a council house for her and George was the most important thing for their future. George contradicted her quite firmly several times, but his mother paused for a moment and then continued to talk as if nothing had been said. George seemed mature for his age with a strong personality. He said he would really like to study Home Economics, his favourite subject, alongside English and art. His mother became quite enthusiastic about his doing Art and said George was very good at it. This was not evident when we did an art lesson.

At our first lesson, his mother ushered me into the minute kitchen saying that she must try not to talk and let me get on with teaching him. She was holding a baby grandchild and retreated to the main room. George and I mostly talked. He thought that he would like to join the police force and might go and live with his sister and go to college. He told me the area where they lived was very bad and he was afraid to go out. Local youths would not leave him alone and constantly shouted at him. He had been bullied on the way to and from school, which was some distance away. Since he had been present when his mother talked about her mental health problems, I told him I had had similar problems with my own mother. I had left home when I went to teacher training college. Although unintentional, in retrospect this may have reinforced his wish to leave home, which under the circumstances, if he found somewhere suitable would probably have been the best thing.

I would have found it very difficult to help George. His home environment was not conducive to learning. His father was semi-resident and had an alcohol problem. Accommodation must have been inadequate. He had a sister at home and his mother was often babysitting grandchildren. It seemed unlikely there were more than two bedrooms. His mother had mental health problems, talked constantly and treated him as if he was still a very small child. Studying was impossible in the tiny, draughty kitchen, which the rest of the family needed to use. I turned up twice more for lessons without gaining entry though lessons were arranged. Eventually I managed to contact the mother by phone. I went to visit her and had about a half hour chat. She was very distressed as she said the family had just gone through a dreadful experience. Her ten-year-old grandson had been staying. He and another boy

had collapsed after taking an overdose of some tablets and had nearly died. She had had to take him to hospital and his stomach was pumped out. George was now living in London with his brother and seemed likely to stay there. The welfare officer said that there was nothing more she could do as he was now outside her jurisdiction.

#### Case study 6 George 2001: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
16.01.01 3-4.00pm (1)	Timetable, subject options and careers.	Read a couple of chapters write a couple of paragraphs of the story. Good story. George	Contact Head of Year, teachers- Maths, Eng. Lang, Art, History and I.T. Contact careers re. Police.	I note now that I must have said that Home Economics was not possible. George wanted to do this, but in the tiny house and small ill-equipped kitchen it would have been impractical.
17.01.01 3.30-4.30	Art lesson. Watercolour painting technique and drawing.	Homework set Good lesson. George	Very pleased with George's English. He has tried hard. I hope to be able to sort out some more suitable work.	I had no indication that this would be the last time I would see him. He did not seem particularly interested or talented at art, although his mother had insisted that he was.

#### My analysis of possible critical points affecting George's learning problems and their resolution

- George was a child whose environment restricted him from being able to take full advantage of his free education. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- His parents were unable to give him adequate financial and practical support: for example. help getting to school, money for uniform, equipment and a house having comfortable facilities with peace, quiet and space to do homework and where friends could be invited round. Comments could have been made at school about his poor clothing, lack of possessions and poor housing. He would not have been able to be on equal terms with classmates. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- He said that he was being bullied in his own neighbourhood. It is possible he was being bullied on the way to school, and that staff had misinterpreted this, since they saw no evidence of bullying in school. Sorting out a safer school journey might have helped to solve the problem, but would still not have answered his material needs or put him on a par with the other children. The school was in a much better area of the town. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories)
- He may have been badly affected by the break-up of his family when his parents separated (if indeed they had), but his father's return may have reduced this. The emotional stress of coping with his mother's psychological and his father's drinking problems and the poverty stricken and changing environment associated with these, may have limited his learning development, but the only sign of this was his refusal to attend school. Evidence for this is that he was operating at a competent level in English considering his lack of secondary education. He was well spoken and appeared intelligent in general conversation. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation / Developmental, Physiological theories and research, Environmental, Ecological theories,)
- George's father and mother were not providing the emotionally stable environment he needed in which to study. His mother's emotional and psychological problems were affecting her son. She seemed unaware and had not come to terms with the fact that her youngest son was a young adult. She needed help in dealing with her own personal and psychological problems and she needed advice on parenting George. (Psychodynamic theory)
- George was capable of working and responding to schoolwork, but he seemed to have realised that he needed a better environment. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Humanistic theory - positive regard)
- My arrival on the scene was too late for me to help George apart from sharing a very little of my own experience. (Counselling skills training)

- Being taught by a teacher who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling did allow him to communicate something of his problems and ambitions in our brief conversation. (Humanistic)
- He could not explain his feelings perhaps partly because of loyalty to his parents and even his own embarrassment. His home situation had probably been normal to him, having been brought up with it, until he reached an age to make comparisons with other children. At a younger age, he may have felt his best option was simply to avoid all the problems associated with school. It would have been easy to persuade his mother to let him stay off, with a variety of excuses. It was possible that she was even actively discouraging him from going as the welfare officer suspected. He was probably only now acquiring an awareness that he would need qualifications, a career and could have a better life. George's responses were logical given his situation. (Environmental, Cognitive, Psychodynamic, Metacognition, Self theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- George's own reactions to his situation were key, for example he decided that his best course of action was to go and stay with an older established brother or sister and their families. (Cognitive, Psychodynamic, Metacognition, Self theories)

## Pupil 7: Maria

Maria was a very personable, self-possessed young woman who spoke well on the phone. She arranged to meet me at Macdonald's (presumably to vet me first!) and took me to her house. She was in her final GCSE year. One of her first comments was that she was relieved to have been told by an educational psychologist that she was not barmy. She had completed a questionnaire to that effect earlier in the year. This was T.M Achenbach's Child Behaviour Checklist (University of Vermont 1993). Her father was very indignant and quite offended by some of the questions especially those referring to 'breaking wind,' toilet habits and thinking about sex. The results sheet with a graph and list of figures she had been given was incomprehensible to an ordinary person.

Maria's father, who seemed a very pleasant person, told me he had had problems with learning himself. He could not drive, go out to work or go out much, but he did go shopping. He had panic attacks in which he saw blue flashing lights. He had had a limited education and was too ill to work. He showed signs of a frustrated intellect. He had written stories and poems for his daughter to take to school and give in as her own work. He and Maria were proud of this work and showed it to me. I thought them quite well done, though I didn't condone the deception. Since he seemed eager for help, I offered to stay and talk to Maria's father if he wished. He readily agreed and I stayed to discuss his problems (with Maria in the house) about four times. I got the impression Maria thought this might help her father. These invitations to stay for a coffee stopped after a few weeks when his wife returned home. He had said his wife came and went as she pleased, often staying away for long periods. Although he was worried about the relationship, he said she was a clever woman and he thought a lot of her. Maria made it very clear that she had a very low opinion of her mother. I asked her at one point if she was worried about her father and suggested this might explain her absence from school. She said no she had a very strong dislike for the building, though she liked her teachers. As soon as she got in the building now she felt 'funny' and saw blue flashing lights and just couldn't stand it. I was baffled by Maria's difficulty with school, since she seemed so willing to work, confident and capable in lessons. It was evident that she had a good relationship with her teachers especially in Drama and English. They were happy to mark her work, sympathetic and encouraging and tried to get her into school on a restricted timetable.

Maria's father said that he had had problems with Maria's first infant school teacher, who treated her as if she was much older than she was. At the time he had gone in and shouted at the head teacher. Maria's father had had a sad life story. His grandparents had brought him up, because his mother rejected and hated him. She had blamed him for being born, making her a single mother and causing her boyfriend to leave. He had not got on with his stepfather and his real father had shown no interest in him, when he visited him as an adult. His mother and his younger half brother still bullied him. He felt unable to fight back and the grandparents who had cared for him were now dead. He was religious and had tried his best to give his children a good start. He would doodle on bits of paper and often found himself writing letters saying 'Dear Sir, I am writing to ask if you can help me.' He drew cubes over and over again and wrote 'a box' next to them. He wondered if perhaps he was putting a box around himself. Whatever the meaning of this, it was evident that he had some psychological difficulties, which may have affected his daughter.

After Christmas I arrived one day to find Maria unwilling to have her lesson. At first I thought this was because school wanted her to go in for a Maths test. Her father soon told me, however, that he was very upset because she had wanted to spend the night at an older boy's house. He did not trust her and he was worried that the boy would lead her astray and get her pregnant. This seemed reasonable, though I was taken aback when he showed me the angry, shouting and swearing side of his nature. The next time I spoke to him he had done a complete about face and said that Maria could do as she liked. He had warned her and he could not stop her from seeing the boy. It would be her own fault when things went wrong. I was worried about the effect of this erratic behaviour upon his daughter.

I discovered that Maria was a very sensitive person when I took a particularly difficult old book about Macbeth to introduce her to the story before reading the play. When I realised how difficult it was going to be to explain some of the archaic words to her I became quite apprehensive. Maria immediately sensed this, said she felt funny and was unable to work. I realised what it was and after I explained about the book we were able to get on. This was the nearest I got to understanding her panic attacks, which I thought might be due to sensitivity to her father's feelings. She loved the work and showed an intelligent understanding, producing some very good work. Her drama teacher said she was

exceptionally talented and tried to get her to take her exam, but to no avail. Maria was an enthusiastic, hardworking and likeable student and appreciated working on her own terms, making her own choices about work set. The English teacher wrote to her, marking and praising her creative writing even though she did not take the exam. She also had good support from the Career Service and her Head of Year. This was helped by her pleasant and positive attitude towards adults. Maria was booked in to do a drama course the following summer holiday and intended to go to the college of further education like her older sister.

Postscript: - She gave me a box of chocolates and a thank you card, which said, " *To Jenny Thank you for all what you have done for me. Loads a love, Maria.*" Two years later I met her helping her father in the supermarket. She was evidently still looking after him and a neighbour told me that she had still not gone to college.

#### Case study 7 Maria 2001-2002: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
31.10.01 1-2.30 pm (1.5)	Sorted out subjects to do. Jenny will ask at school.	Very good sorted everything out. M	Good start.	M met me at Macdonald's and showed me her home. Her father was not there.
1.11.01 1-2.30 (1.50)	Maths English	Homework set by M V.V. Good learnt Maths and a lot of my work was done and a lot achieved.	Liase with school. Brilliant progress - well done!	Met father who told me about psychology test. M said, "I'm not barmy."
8.11.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Maths	Enjoyed it Maths again. I have gotten up to page 18 but I want to try something else next time. M	Waiting for response from school. Brilliant again-my brain hurts! Well done.	M had done quite a lot of homework. I offered to listen to Dad's problems separately as he wanted to talk.
21.11.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Discussion	Decided what subjects to do. M	Enjoyed chatting to Maria	More homework done
22.11.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Planned an English assignment.	Got my framework on paper and it looks promising. M	Blown away by having such a hard working motivated pupil.	More homework done
28.11.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	English	Worked really hard today and I started my actual essay and have earned a rest. M	Hard work but very productive. M is very quick to 'get it' I think she might be working me too hard! (Joke)	I listened to Dad on about four occasions and he told me about his own problems. He and Maria described having panic attacks in exactly the same way.
29.11.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	<u>Strategies that seem to work for M</u> 1. Go ahead and get ideas down as quickly as you want. DO NOT HOLD BACK! 1.After you've	Enjoyed the lesson as usual. M	Get maths answer book from school. Please get some new floppies and stop giving me biscuits 'cos I am too fat already! It is great working with Maria!	School was very supportive and were trying to persuade Maria to go in for her favourite drama lessons but she said she could not bring herself to enter the building.

	got everything down, have a rest and then check it.			
5.12.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	English	Enjoyed my lesson and have gotten further. M	Impressed with M's ideas and hard work. I noticed improved spelling!	Maria was very dismissive about her mother. She seemed to have a very poor opinion of her.
6.12.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	English assignment. Reading Macbeth.	I have gotten to know myself better and started Macbeth.M	Maria coped well with all the work. We found out some clues about her feeling anxious. It looks like we may be able to work things out.	We discovered that M picked up that I was anxious about doing Macbeth with her. She had a brief panic attack and recovered.
12.12.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Finished reading Macbeth-an old difficult version of the story.	Finished reading Macbeth and Jenny really knows her text! M	Maria showed understanding and determination with this difficult text.	
13.12.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Finished English assignment! Hurray!	Ace lesson. Finished it early (English) compared to how long I thought it would have taken us. M	Good lesson - glad we have finished it.	
16.12.01 1-2.30 (1.5)	Started "Three witches" Discussed anthology. Maria said it would be a good idea to put the witches words into modern English. I agree this is a good idea	Started work on the witches and explained what I have to do! M x	Good progress on Macbeth. I will try and get a video.	
17.1.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	First 7 pages of Macbeth - the play. 19 and a bit to go.	Started the play and managed 7 pages in one lesson. Wahay. M xx	Impressed as usual but I know Maria doesn't believe me. She made some clever points.	
30.1.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Reviewed Maria' work-decided on a plan for the future.	Discussed and reviewed my completed work. M x	Very interesting discussion.	
31.1.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Creative writing assignment. "Fever at school"	Shown Jenny my story and we done it up a bit. M x	Great story. Enjoyed the lesson.	School said Maria must go in and do a maths test if she wanted to do Maths GCSE, but she refused to.
5.2.02	Talked to M's	Sorry Maria	Disappointed	Father David talked to

1-2.30 (1.5)	Dad	missed lesson. David	Maria couldn't work but will see her tomorrow.	me about his worries about Maria's new boyfriend who he disliked.
6.2.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Worked on Fever story	Worked on my story and it has potential.	I think it is coming along well.	
13.3.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Redrafting fever story.	Had a great lesson and learnt some new words. M	Interesting to see M's progress - great vocabulary - enjoyed lesson.	
14.3.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Cont'd Fever and watched video of Macbeth - 3 witches. Made notes for assignment	Done Fever and watched Macbeth. Really good. M	Maria worked really well.	
21. 3.02 1.30-4.30 (3)	Visit to cinema to see film "Beautiful Mind"	Brill film Very interesting. M	Maria showed an intelligent interest.	I took her with another pupil Anne
10.4.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Redrafting English assignment on 'Discovery Cove'	Redone my English work. M	M worked hard - English skills are improving.	The careers officer called on Maria and she decided to go to the local further education college her sister attended.
11.4.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Started Macbeth assignment. Looked at Steven King's advice about writing	Started my assignment for English and read Ste King. M	Spelling continues to improve with confidence.	
24.4.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	'Fever'	Fixed up my story. M	Very good effort.	
25.4.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Finished 'Fever'	Well chuffed. Finished my story.	Pleased with M's work.	
1.5.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Remedial grammar course	A very good lesson. Covered a lot of words. M x	A very stimulating lesson. My brain hurts - well done Maria.	Maria could not face English exam in school.
2.5.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Looking at verbs and common mistakes	Learnt a lot of basic mistakes and how to correct them. M xxx	Seems a worthwhile exercise for M to do. She worked hard.	
15.5.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Punctuation.	I've got it now so I'm going to punctuate the world. M	Maria worked very well.	
16.5.02 1-2.30 (1.5)	Finished grammar course.	Don't worry Jenny, you'll get your tickets oh and enjoy the chocolates. Love Maria.	I am very pleased that Maria is ready to get on with her life. I wish her all the best. PS. Free tickets to her next	Maria had been given a place on a drama course during the summer holidays.

			play please!	
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### **My analysis of possible critical points affecting Maria' learning problems and their resolution**

- She may have been affected by the fact that her parents had a problematic relationship. Her mother's financial and emotional support was inconsistent and her father felt helpless to sort it out. The emotional stress may have limited her learning development. Evidence of this is that even though she had attained an average level of ability, she showed signs of higher potential. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation/Developmental, Physiological theories and research, Environmental, Ecological theories)
- Teachers simply did not have time to help Maria, but the school was very supportive when I contacted them. (Environmental/Ecological theories, teacher training in counselling skills, policy and resources implications)
- Maria's father was not always providing the stable environment she needed in which to study. He had needed advice on parenting and counselling help to deal with his personal problems in the past and he still needed them. He had had a limited education and showed signs of a frustrated intellect when he had written stories and poems for his daughter to take to school and give in as her own work. He was inconsistent in his parenting. For example he forbade her from staying at a boy's house and then changed his mind. His emotional problems were affecting his daughter. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theory)
- Uncertainty about her father's ability to cope/emotional problems/ panic attacks/ fears about school may have caused de-motivation and depression. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Being taught by a teacher who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well with her and gave her the motivation to do a lot of English and Maths.(Humanistic)
- Maria responded when she was given guidance and support for her work. She was capable of working and responding to schoolwork when she was given help at home. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Humanistic theory - positive regard)
- She gained awareness and metacognition, discovering that she could succeed if she worked hard. We worked this out by building up on ways, which worked for her. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case English and Art was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Maria' own reactions to her situation were key, for example she worked particularly hard at her English, but could not bring herself to go to school. She might have benefited from counselling and psychological help. (Psychodynamic theory)
- She could not explain her feelings, because she did not understand her reactions in having similar panic attacks to her mother when she was at school. Her feelings about her parents dysfunctional relationship were also difficult to explain perhaps because she was in the middle of a complex emotional situation where her loyalties were confused and she was emotionally involved. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Maria' responses were logical given her acute empathic responses to other people's and particularly her mother's feelings. This was evidenced by her response to me when I was worried about my ability to explain a difficult book. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)

## Pupil 8: Anne

The education officer informed me over the phone that Anne suffered from a mental illness, possibly schizophrenia, which was still in the process of investigation. The behaviour support team had tried to help her and failed. In year 7, her attendance had been 52%, in year 8 it had been 41%, in year 9 - 39% and in year 10 only 2%! I tried to make contact with Anne's father through the phone number given by the education authority, but was unsuccessful. When I went to the address (a dilapidated house in a rough part of town), I was shocked by the appearance of the house. There was a boarded up window in the front door. I arranged to meet the career officer there, explaining that I thought it unwise to make the first visit on my own. When she saw the house she advised me against teaching there. We could not get any response, but some children told us that Anne and her family had moved to a pub a few streets away. I returned leaving a letter at the house explaining my job. Anne's father rang me and said he was keen for his daughter to have tuition and that his Christian name, given by the education office was incorrect. I visited Anne's father and talked to him in the pub for about an hour. There was a neglected atmosphere about the pub, which was in a run down part of town, but he seemed pleased to see me. "This is great having someone to help!" he said. He told me his story and some background on Anne. He looked worn out and said it was a relief to talk to someone. He said he had suffered with a bi-polar disorder for five years. Over that time he had been admitted to a secure hospital unit several times, once as a result of assaulting someone.

He and his wife, mother of his three children, had run another pub years before. His psychological difficulties had been triggered by his wife's sudden death from a heart attack, witnessed by the whole family when Anne was 13. He said this had sent him off the rails; he could not cope, became depressed and drank heavily. His parents had been landlords of a pub and he was skilled in that business. He hoped he could now turn his life around by running this huge old pub. His own family had suffered many traumas and setbacks in the past, including one member who was murdered. His father and older sister, who had previously given him help, were now both seriously ill. His eldest son, who had been assaulted by a babysitter, had been involved in the babysitter's prosecution and had now taken up with a much older barmaid, causing his father a lot of worry. His younger son was frequently refusing to go to school. Anne's father had a new girlfriend, who was giving him help and support. His children liked her and he thought she was a good influence. Anne's father told me Anne suffered with a chronic back complaint called Sherman's disease and he had been told it was possible that she had schizophrenia, but she was too young to be definitely diagnosed. She was on medication for both conditions and was doing physiotherapy to strengthen her back. He told me that she heard voices and had invisible 'friends.' He had been very distressed when his brother in law made ignorant comments about Anne's illness.

After hearing all of this, I was quite apprehensive about teaching Anne especially upstairs in the huge old pub, which apparently had over 50 bedrooms. This was a seedy world, which was largely unknown to me. Anne was gentle, polite, considerate and well spoken. She had competent reading skills and a good verbal vocabulary. She did sometimes appear unwell and at one point developed a skin rash caused by her medication. She liked Art and wanted to learn to draw cartoons. She also had some natural talent and had produced quite a lot of skilled artwork. I took her and another student to see the film 'Beautiful Mind' in the hope that this would help them to see mental illness in a more positive way. I could not tell what her response was to this experience.

Although she made a good start on lessons, events and her environment eventually led to their breakdown. Her father was worried that her boyfriend was taking drugs, but he thought she had broken up with him. I turned up several times to be told she was out or had forgotten by a very apologetic and stressed father. After several weeks I eventually visited the pub again and was greeted as a friend. Anne's father had lost the pub and a group of locals were sitting about gloomily. He had been given a week's notice to leave and was looking for other accommodation. He admitted that the big pub had been too much for him on his own. However, I found out from another student's father that Anne had been caught taking money from the till while helping out. Presumably, since she was also under age the brewery had terminated their tenancy.

Anne was intelligent and had good academic skills, but was simply not motivated. She was in an extremely non-conducive environment for education. Her family problems outweighed the demands of school. Petty crime and drugs, some of which probably centred on the pub, affected the local area. All the family's energy was taken up with surviving as best they could. They were grateful for my interest,

always polite to me and gave me the impression they appreciated the contact with me. Anne's father obviously loved his children, but his illness had made him an unfit father while he had suffered from it. He was now turning his life around, but the huge pub had proved too much for him. Anne may have had a genetic tendency towards her psychological problems, but she was fortunate in having a father who understood how she felt and was now doing his best to support her. It is not really surprising that Anne had missed so much school.

Postscript: A few months later I met Anne and her father while out shopping and they greeted me enthusiastically. Apparently they had rented a house, made a fresh start and their lives were improving. Anne asked me if I wanted a cartoon book I had lent her and I told her she could keep it. I wished them good luck for the future.

#### Case study 8 Anne 2001-2002: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
28.11.01 3-4.30 (1.5)	Introductory chat <u>Interests</u> Horror films Football Keeping fit Wants to be a chef. Art	Had a talk. It was all right. A	Art homework. Contact school.  I have enjoyed chatting.	This took place in a quiet corner of the pub. I asked if there was anywhere we could work privately next time.
5.12.01 3-4.30 (1.5)	Sketch of Titanic and an iceberg and another of a church in pencil. (Own designs)	Done Art on the Titanic and a church.	Really made up with Anne's artistic ability - she is a natural. Looking forward to working with her on Art.	Prior to the lessons I spoke to father, who told me he had had a bi-polar disorder for 5 years and that Anne had been diagnosed with possible schizophrenia
12.12.01 3-4.30 (1.5)	Read the beginning of a book on football Drew a bigger picture of Titanic.	Done a big scale drawing on the titanic. A	Anne is a very good reader and knows a lot of words. We are going to do Art tomorrow.	I was quite nervous of being alone with Anne in the huge empty function room upstairs in the pub.
17.1.02 3-4.30 (1.5)	Prime numbers in Maths. Chinese ink portrait. Watercolour technique.	Done Art enjoyed it. A	Great lesson brill pupil - enjoyed it.	This portrait of Tina Turner was put in a frame by her Dad and put in her bedroom for safekeeping.
21.1.02 3-4.30 (1.5)	Finished Tina Turner in mixed media.	Finished Art lesson. A	Another good lesson. Well done Anne.	
30.1.02 3-4.30 (1.5)	Started new piece of work	Quite hard at first but it turned out OK. A	Anne worked well once she got into it.	
31.1.02 3-4 (1)	Finished sketch of couple in bar. Prepared board for painting.	Finished picture.	Really pleased with Anne's work.	Anne was obviously not well so we finished early. She had had an allergic reaction to her medicine for her back problem.
21.3.02 1.30-4.30	Film "Beautiful Mind" at cinema	Enjoyed film. A	Anne showed an intelligent interest.	This is a film about a famous mathematician with

				schizophrenia. I thought it might help her to come to terms with her possible schizophrenia. I never talked about this to her.
10.4.02 3-4.30 (1.5)	Painting with acrylics	Painted Art picture. A	Anne worked hard and she is learning fast.	
11.4.02 3-4.30 (1.5)	Painting with watercolours- cartoons	Done watercolour painting. A	Anne worked really well. Impressed with her good eye for copying.	I turned up a few more times, but each time Anne was out. Father apologised, but said he couldn't get her to co-operate.

### **My analysis of possible critical points affecting Anne's learning problems and their resolution**

- Anne was a child whose environment restricted her from being able to take full advantage of her state education.
- School had been supportive, but they had no personnel resources with which to help Anne when she had needed it. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- The education authority behaviour support team had not succeeded in helping Anne. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, teacher training in counselling skills and resources implications)
- She lived in a tough neighbourhood, where it was necessary to be street-wise and she had some disreputable friends. Drugs, vandalism and petty crime were a problem in the neighbourhood. This might have put her in the position of finding it difficult to show loss of face by going to school. She had a reputation amongst her peers for behaving oddly and was the subject of amusement to them, according to another pupil, though she was not bullied. (Personal Construct, Psychodynamic, Environmental, Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- She had been badly affected by the break down of her family life on her mother's death. The emotional stress of coping with her father's psychological and drinking problems and changing environment associated with these, may have limited her learning development. Evidence for this apart from her refusal to attend school were her immature writing and mathematical skills. She was operating on a competent level verbally in English considering her lack of secondary education. She appeared intelligent in general conversation. (Social Learning, Organic Maturation / Developmental, Physiological theories and research, Environmental, Ecological theories,)
- Anne's father had not provided the emotionally stable environment she needed in which to study. Her father's emotional and psychological problems had probably affected his daughter. He seemed aware of this and was trying to give his children some stability, but he had taken on too much and could not cope. He needed help in dealing with his own personal, financial and psychological problems and he needed support in parenting Anne and her two brothers. He was only now recovering, realising the effect of his behaviour on his children. For example, Anne had let her 'friends' into the old family home, which was trashed and all the family photos destroyed. Anne's father was now trying to recover himself and acquiring an awareness that he could make a better life for them. (Cognitive, Psychodynamic, Metacognition, Self theories)
- Anne was capable of working and responding to schoolwork when she was well, but she needed a better environment. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Humanistic theory - positive regard)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case English and Art was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

- She gained awareness, metacognition and confidence, discovering ways communicating and doing Art successfully. We worked these out by building up on ways which worked for her. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- My arrival was rather late on the scene but I was able to give some support to Anne and her father at a very difficult time. (Counselling skills training)
- Being taught by a teacher who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling did help the family's self esteem in that it kept them in touch with mainstream society. (Humanistic)
- Anne's responses were logical given her situation. She would not have been able to explain her problems at school perhaps partly because of loyalty to her father or even her own embarrassment about her illnesses. Her home situation was normal to her, but was outside most teachers' experience. She was involved in a very complex emotional situation following her mother's sudden death. It may have seemed the best option was simply to avoid school. It would have been easy to persuade her father to let her stay off while he was in such a state. (Psychodynamic theory, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Anne's own reactions to her situation were key: for example, she was polite and cooperative, but she was unable to resist temptation and caused her father and family more upset, stress and disruption, when she took money from the pub till. As she was under age to be serving, this cost her father his pub licence and they were forced to leave. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

### Pupil 9: Neal and Pupil 10: Tracy

Neal had been off school with glandular fever. I tutored him for English Literature in the run up to his GCSE exams. He was an excellent, highly intelligent pupil. However, he was often off school because of his illness, which was complicated by asthma. He continued to go into school to collect work, when he was well enough. The disruption to his school life had affected him for several years. He had a small group of friends but said that he felt a lot of his peer group were childish compared to himself. They sometimes called after him because he dressed differently in a long black coat. He did well in his exams, gaining B's in his two English exams and eventually went to the local sixth form college. Neal lived in a caring, stable and comfortable home and was well provided for. He eventually went to university.

I taught Art to Tracy, who was Neal's sister for two years until I supervised her Art GCSE exam at school. She was taking English and Maths with another tutor. She was keen to do graphic art as a career. During the time I taught her, she produced an average level of artwork, but persisted in her ambition, which without being unrealistically encouraging, I supported. A pleasant girl, she appeared intelligent and achieved a reasonable grade in GCSE Art. Although I taught her for two years, I could not discover a strong reason for her non-attendance at school. I asked her why she did not go to school several times, but she remained noncommittal. Eventually she told me that she had been put off at primary school, when a bully had pushed her over and her collarbone had been broken. I asked her if the fact that her brother had missed school had given her the idea that she could do the same, but she just said she didn't know why she was unhappy in school. Tracy went on to complete 'A' levels at sixth-form college. She told me she was much happier with the college format and way of working. Tracy worked in her parents' shop for a year after sixth-form college to save for university and eventually went to college to study graphic art.

Postscript: - Tracy gave me a thank you card, which said, "To Jenny, Thank you for helping me with my artwork over the last couple of years and for invigilating me in my exam, Best wishes from Tracy." She went to 6th form college and university. I did not type up her work record, because it was long and not informative apart from work covered. I never did gain very much information about Tracy's feelings. Neal has kept in touch with me occasionally by email and eventually achieved a degree.

#### Case study 9 Neal 2001-2002: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
11.02.01 2-4 (2)	Working on GCSE assignment	It was hard work but I had a good time. N	Hard work but I enjoyed it.	
13.02.02 5-6 (1)	New assignment in English Literature. Planning and starting.	It was good. I liked the first story. I hope the second one's as good. N	Terrific if a bit 'cheesy' ghost story-good fun! I look forward to reading a copy of N's work.	
About 5 hours of English (missing sheet)				
9.5.01 5-6 (1)	Notes for Anthology	It's interesting making notes on what I should have already done. Thanx Jenny! X	Interesting challenge. Intelligent pupil. Good start!	
13.5.01 5-6 (1)	'Kiss Miss Carol'	Good lesson. Did a lot of work. N x	Good progress.	

17.5.01 5-6 (1)	' Your Shoes' Notes and reading	Good. N x	Good progress.	
18.5.01 5-6 (1)	' The Darkness Out'	Good. N x	Good progress.	
23.5.01 5-6 (1)	' The Genius' Revision notes.	Very good lesson today. The genius is very comical so far. Thanks Jenny! N x	Very enjoyable lesson with lots of discussion and good input from N. Pleased to see he has a lot of potential in this subject.	
24.5.01 5-6 (1)	' The Genius' Upon My Son' Revision notes.	Ditto. N x	Good progress. We need a past exam paper.	
28.5.01 5-6 (1)	Past exam papers. Made a plan.	Thanks Jenny for all your help. I think I have a good chance now. N x	Got things 'in perspective' and feel N can do it.	
29.5.01 5-6 (1)	Poems Revision notes.	Thanks! (smiley- face) I'm enjoying reading/working with the anthology at the moment. Thanks Jenny. N x	Impressed with N's level of commitment and concentration.	N was going into school to take the exams.
3.6.01 5-6 (1)	English	Thank you! I hope it goes OK. Thanks again 4 ur help! N x	Good luck in exam.	
4.6.01 5-6 (1)	Physics. What a struggle! Sorry Physics is not my subject!	Thanks for helping with physics. It's the worst science subject ever! (smiley-face) N x	Well done, N for keeping your cool!	
5.6.01 5-6 (1)	Maths revision	Thanks jenny, I hope my brain doesn't seize up tomorrow. N x	I'm rather slow at maths. N seems quite capable at calculating in his head- good luck!	
10.6.01 5-6 (1)	Physics practice paper 2 English	Thanks 4 helping. I'm getting there anyway. Thanks. N x	N worked very hard and seems on top of things.	
11.6.01 5-6 (1)	History revision-the Cold War	Thank you only 4 exams to go now! N x	N is sticking at it really well and keeping his cool. Well done.	

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Neal's learning problems and their resolution

- Neal's main problem was his illness. Evidence for his normality in other respects was that he had friends at school and did well in his GCSE exams.
- He appeared to be in a caring, stable and comfortable home where he was well provided for. (Environmental/Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)

- Uncertainty about whether he would take the exams had caused de-motivation and depression. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories)
- Neal responded when he was supported and given extra tuition for his exams. He was capable of working and responding to schoolwork when he was well. (Environmental, Ecological theories, Humanistic theory - positive regard)
- Being taught by a teacher, who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling worked well with him and gave him the motivation to do her exams. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- He gained awareness, metacognition and confidence, discovering ways of revising and learning successfully. We worked these out by building up on ways which worked for him. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case English, was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Neal's own reactions to his situation were key: for example, he worked hard. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Neal's response of staying off school, when he felt depressed and unwell, were logical given his situation. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Neal was continuing to resolve his problems in his own way, when we parted company. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

### **Pupil 11: Rachel**

I had six tutoring sessions with Rachel at the end of one summer term. Her parents had waited all year to be allocated a tutor. She lived in a small, well-kept, modern council house in a remote location on the outskirts of a 'new' town. The first time I visited, I went with another teacher to meet Rachel. This teacher, a retired head teacher, said to me that she thought Rachel's parents were being irresponsible in not getting her to school. Her parents seemed to me to be intelligent, articulate and caring and were both studying part time for degrees. She had an older sister who was at work. Rachel's behaviour was polite, considerate and thoughtful. She appeared to me to be an intelligent, honest and well-motivated student. She said that she had mostly enjoyed school and regretted having been unable to attend due to illness. She had found it hard to cope with the lack of knowledge about her illness, which had recently been diagnosed by a consultant as Myalgic-Encephalomyelitis or M.E. I found her parents helpful and supportive. Rachel said she would like a job as a teacher in I.T. or P.E.

It turned out that the local high school had been closed down, which meant that Rachel had to take two buses to school. Sometimes her illness made her so exhausted that she had to return home from school early. Rachel was the leader of her local youth club and was upset about the imminent closure of the local recreation centre with its swimming pool and sports facilities. She had been a champion swimmer before the onset of her illness. Rachel's parents told me about their difficulties in getting the authorities to believe that she was really ill. They said that they had had problems getting referred to a specialist because her doctor did not believe in the illness. She had suffered constant headaches, weakness and joint pains, which were interspersed with periods of normality when she went to school. They had been very worried about her. Sometimes she rolled on the floor screaming in pain. They had eventually been given videotapes of an American consultant describing the symptoms and effects of the illness and did believe that Rachel had M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis).

They were now in touch with the school mentor and he was trying to get her a reduced timetable for next year when she would rejoin a year below her age group and take GCSE's. Rachel's parents were still having difficulty getting the school to understand that Rachel needed a reduced workload. It seems very unlikely that Rachel was pretending to be ill. She had been a champion swimmer, wanted to be a PE teacher, was willing to drop down a year in order to take her exams again and was a leading light in her local youth club. She was organising an anti litter campaign, and trying to save her local community leisure club. We produced English work around this theme and discussed her maths. She was an extremely intelligent and motivated pupil.

Rachel worked very hard in our lessons. Her school work, questions she asked, the way she approached and organised her work, her ability to make relevant and insightful comments, her use of vocabulary and grasp of ideas indicated well developed, quite sophisticated thinking. Rachel could work at a high level of concentration for about half an hour and then again after a short break. There were periods when she seemed to be tired, but she tried hard and succeeded in overcoming her fatigue. I put this tiredness down to her illness. We discussed how this had affected her. She said that she could be normal for a few weeks at school and then suffer a relapse. In view of this I recommended that a reduced timetable and a limited number of GCSE subjects would be advisable when she returned to school. I suggested that since other people did not understand the illness she could write a statement explaining it and we worked on this in her last lesson. She could then present this to new teachers.

Postscript: - She gave me a thank you card, which said,

*“Thank you for coming round,*

*Thank you for understanding,*

*Thank you for taking time to understand my illness,*

*Thank you for the intellectual talk,*

*Thank you for helping me with my Math, English and I.T.*

*THANK YOU JENNY!”*

Rachel

#### Case study 10 Rachel 2002: Student feedback from work record

Date & Hours	Work in brief	Student Tasks & Comment	Tutor Tasks & Comment	Research Comment
13.6.02 2-3.30 (1.5)	Possible work 1. Maths GCSE 2. English 3.IT	I have got to know Jenny better and have cleared up a lot of options for work. Looks like I've got plenty to do. R	Contact school 4 GCSE's Really impressed with Rachel's sophisticated thinking skills on the English assignment she showed me.	
18.6.02 2-3.30 (1.5)	Quick look at Rachel's autobiography (taken to read) Decided on project for English "Save Pembury Recreation centre" Drafted letter to local MP, newspaper and council.	Finish letter for homework. I am excited about the new English project, as it is something I'm really interested in. Got to know Jenny more as well as using the PC	Delighted with project - very suitable for English work. Look forward to seeing how Rachel develops her ideas.	
20.6.02 2-3.30 (1.5)	Maths	Had difficulty with Maths as both used different systems but both got the right answer in the end. Rachel	Rachel worked really well.	
25.6.02 2-3.30 (1.5)	Maths - corrections Planned campaign on Pembury Rec. Talked about how people think and learn, bit of philosophy, environmental	Had a very interesting chat about everything from pollution to infinity, also cleared up questions about Maths and helped along my campaign. R	A stimulating discussion, which I enjoyed.	

	politics.			
27.6.02 2-3.30 (1.5)	End of term. Discussed autobiography and worked out plan of action for school. Wrote a statement explaining M.E.(Myalgic-Encephomyelitis ) Could this possibly be typed up to give to teachers?	Got to know Jenny well over the past few weeks and am sad to see her go. I am going to keep in touch and send her the complete version of my autobiography for her study. Rachel	An interesting final lesson. I think Rachel should do a limited timetable next year- not more than 5 or 6 subjects at GCSE. This would give her the chance to recover her health. She is a very intelligent, keen pupil and I wish her every success for her future.	

### My analysis of possible critical points affecting Rachel's learning problems and their resolution

- Rachel's main problem was her illness. Evidence for her normality in other respects was that she had been a champion swimmer, had done well at junior school and was a responsible member of the local youth club.
- She appeared to be in a caring, stable and comfortable home where she was well provided for, but her neighbourhood was becoming isolated with deteriorating social facilities e.g. the local High school had closed and the leisure centre was under threat. (Environmental/Ecological, Psychodynamic theories)
- The lack of understanding and support from her school was undermining her and her parents' self esteem and caused them to lose confidence in the authorities. She had to catch two buses to get to school as her parents, who were both working did not own a car. (Environmental, Ecological theories, policy, organisation, resources and training implications)
- My arrival was rather late on the scene but I was able to give some support to Rachel and her parents at a difficult time. (Counselling skills training)
- Being taught by a teacher who used a person-centred teaching approach, combined with counselling helped to increase Rachel's confidence and self-esteem. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- She would not have been able to explain her problems at school because at the time she did not understand her illness herself. Uncertainty about whether she would take her exams was causing de-motivation and depression. (Environmental, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- Rachel responded when she was given support and appreciation of her work. She was capable and highly intelligent. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- My demonstrating my willingness to believe in her illness improved her confidence. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories, theory of unworded and partially worded thought)
- She gained awareness, metacognition and confidence, discovering ways of communicating and explaining her illness successfully. We worked these out by building up on ways, which worked for her e.g. the campaign to keep the Leisure Centre open. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Concentrating on a task, in this case English was less confrontational than conventional counselling sessions would have been, gave opportunities for observation of the student in the process of learning and a context for active, practical support. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)
- Rachel's own reactions to her situation were key: for example, she worked hard at her work in spite of her illness. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

- Rachel was continuing to resolve her problems and work out how she would cope with returning to school, when we parted company. (Humanistic, Social Learning, Personal Construct, Psychodynamic theories)

## **Pupil 12: Tom**

Tom was a fifteen year old who was refusing to go to school. He was something of a puzzle to his school since his younger brother who was twelve appeared quite happy there. Both boys were considered to be quite able. The head of year thought Tom's mother was keeping him off to help look after the house. I saw no evidence of this. Tom's mother was concerned, but did not feel able to make him go. She said the teachers were at fault and she did not know what to believe. She felt that the authorities were wrong to blame her. She went out to work to support the family. She appeared to look after the small modern, clean terraced house, making meals when I was there. Her husband had died from cancer a year previously and there were large family photos of him throughout the house. Tom had a small pleasant bedroom complete with a tidy desk. We agreed to work at the desk and for the first few visits I made, Tom had to move aside a pile of family photos of his father, which were positioned on an otherwise empty desk just where we needed to work.. I asked if he wanted to talk about his father taking this as perhaps being an indication of a need to talk about him. There then followed a conversation in which he described his father's illness. He did not cry. The next time I went the photos had been put away.

I worked with Tom for three months in the spring and early summer. He produced some very good English, including creative writing and Art, which I gave in at school. This resulted in his head of year making a visit, praising his work and demanding that he return to school. The creative writing appeared to be connected with his father's death in some way, since it was a story about a woman who discovers she is terminally ill. I found it quite moving and encouraged him to develop the story, which was about this woman's relationship with her estranged son. The story related to his own life in his imagining what it would be like to know one was terminally ill and to have to make decisions about telling the family.

Tom's comments about his work showed some non-specific resentment towards schoolwork. He was always polite to me, though a bit guarded. I am inclined to think that he was angry with his parents for not telling him that his father's illness was terminal, but I cannot substantiate this. He may have felt his 'difference' in school. Perhaps his father's death had not been known about or acknowledged by some of his teachers. Perhaps other pupils or staff had made unsympathetic or inappropriate comments. I think he was confused since he showed me a very loving mother's day card he had made his mother, but appeared unconcerned that his absence from school could end in her being prosecuted. It seems to me he would have benefited from counselling and possibly some family therapy would have been appropriate. His mother gave the impression of being out of her depth in coping with two wilful teenage boys while recovering from her own loss. This seems understandable given the circumstances.

Tom wanted to go to another school, which his cousin attended, but this was refused. His mother was eventually told that she would indeed be prosecuted and my employment was terminated before I could finish helping Tom. In my final lesson I invited her to join us and pointed out that I thought it likely that her husband's death had probably affected them all very badly. I made some general comments about bereavement saying that a common reaction was anger, even sometimes against the person who had died.

Postscript: - I received an invitation to attend (unpaid) a case conference about Tom, but was unable to go. I received no more information about his case. Unfortunately I lost his work record.



## STRAND 2 - THE AUTHOR'S LEARNING PROCESS (CHAPTER 5)

### 2.1 Table of author's writing - a dated list of private personal development outpourings contributing to chapter 5

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>No. of words</b>
Spring 2002	Self-assessment summary - beginning the course.	4,275
Autumn 2002	How did my childhood feel? Subjective Autobiography	8,343
*Spring 2003	How does my childhood look now? Observational autobiography	1,668
Autumn 2004	My mother (1908-2004) - my responsibility 1990-2004	2,057
01.09.04	Personal Development Assignment	4,048
2003-06	Self-assessment summary - my personal learning during the research.	11,890
Autumn 2006	My late husband (1947-1992)	3,389
*07.10.06	Critical events timeline	1,684
*Autumn 2006	Possible schemas	1,806
*Spring 2007	An auto-ethnographic summary of learning influences and processes.	13,603
<b>Total</b>		<b>52,763</b>

## 2.2 Author's auto-ethnography of learning 1947-2008

In this account, I have occasionally put *my own feeling responses as a child* (to family situations and events) in brackets.

### My 'miserable' childhood

My father had a rather Victorian view of being a father and a man. He had an affable personality and was a benign father, though not very 'hands on' in the current meaning of the phrase. He had been brought up in the belief that his role was to support the family financially and to maintain a "stiff upper lip". I can not remember him ever hugging or kissing me. He rarely showed strong emotion and never talked about his six years as a prisoner of war. He had lost his father at the age of six and could not remember much about him. He had been brought up by his sometimes kind, but often domineering widowed mother. She was proud and refused financial assistance from her wealthy brother, preferring to keep her three sons by running a sweet shop. My father worked as an errand boy from a young age, whereas his cousins went to private 'public' schools. He won scholarships to grammar school and university, attending the former, but not the latter. His mother could not afford university, so he became an industrial chemist working his way up in a chemical factory in the Midlands. A sergeant major in the Territorial Army, he had spent six years as a German prisoner of war in Poland, after being captured at Dunkirk (Sympathy, Love, Admiration, Pity and Pride). When pressed he said he had gone to look after his men and to fight for his family and country. It had taken him a year in hospital to recover his health some time before coming home and fathering me. He took a strong barbiturate prescribed by the doctor for his 'nerves.' He was a bookworm, escaping the realities of every day life by reading. He read history books and novels constantly (at least ten or eleven a week). This presumably helped him to forget his memories of being a prisoner of war and to block out my mother's nagging and shouting. Amongst other things including the move to Wales, my mother resented the fact that my father had gone to war voluntarily as he had been over recruitment age and in a protected occupation (Unpleasantness, Anxiety).

My mother was largely self-educated, having left school at twelve and read at least as much as my father, mostly books on health, religion and philosophy (Love and Pride) and women's magazines. Religion was a great support for her and she read prayers and bible readings every day (Obedience). She was diagnosed as neurotic by the local family doctor and had spells in bed with various psychosomatic illnesses: headaches, severe temperatures and joint pains (Sympathy, Distress). There were brief interludes of 'normality', but many angry, hysterical and depressive spells, during which she would cry and talk incessantly and incoherently (Confusion, Stress and Insecurity). She did, however, pull herself together to cope with essential household demands. Before she died in 2004 at the age of ninety-six with no medical infirmities apart from 'old age', the geriatric psychologist informed me as her main carer that her medical notes stated that she suffered from a personality disorder (Responsibility). She had been diagnosed in her seventies during a spell in a psychiatric hospital when she was suffering from depression and had stopped eating. About two years before she died she revealed that, as a child, she had been sexually abused and also that she had not wanted me (Sympathy, Hurt and Sadness). Her mental state briefly improved a little when she told me this. She appeared more co-operative and calmer and stopped being unpleasant to me, even showing affection on occasion. This was followed by depression again when she refused to eat properly for a long period before her death (Sympathy, Regret and Sadness).

My mother was angry, depressed and lonely when I was a child and I frequently stayed off school to look after her, when she was 'unwell'. The family doctor diagnosed her as neurotic. Religion was a major preoccupation of hers and my obedience and attention very important to her. She was inclined to talk at me rather than to me, sharing her adult problems and dissatisfactions with her life. She not only overlooked my emotional needs, she ignored and dismissed them. I can never remember her asking me how I felt or what I wished for. My sister always had to remind her about my birthday. I learned not to express my thoughts and feelings for fear of being hurt by her. She criticised my appearance and behaviour with other people in my presence. I kept a low profile from a wish not to be noticed and since I was tall with auburn hair this was not often possible. Any direct request I made was always refused, though she would often relent later without any additional pressure from me. I got in the habit, which has been hard to break, of never asking directly for anything. I think there were periods when I was a young child when I was quite frightened of her. It was always a great surprise to my mother if I succeeded, e.g. passing the eleven-plus (partly in Welsh) to go to grammar school. I still find it hard to

give myself credit. She seemed annoyed if I succeeded and frequently reminded me of my faults, failures and the terrible experience of my birth. I achieved only 4 'O' and 1 'A' level. I have had, therefore personal experience of being a teenage under achiever with emotional problems possibly contributed to by my environment. At grammar school I continued to be bullied, suffering such 'ignominies' as being laughed at in the dining hall when a chair was pulled out as I sat down and being jeered at on sports day in front of the whole school (Humiliation). I was tall and gangly with big feet, poorly co-ordinated and nervous, which must have made me amusing to watch.

I wrote a poem at the age of 10 and it was passed to an elderly English teacher who worked with my sister, who was a primary schoolteacher. He was quite ecstatic about it and asked for more (Pleasure), but when I sent him another more childish effort he was quite rude and dismissive and unconvinced that I had written the first one myself. This caused me to hide my poetry for years afterwards and regard it as worthless (Hurt and Disappointment). My art teacher at the local grammar school was very dismissive of my artistic abilities and resented any attempt at originality of thought. He was surprised when I got a GCE in the subject. Although when I look back at my teenage artwork it seems of quite a good standard from my adult, art teacher perspective, it was not thought to be so by my art teacher. Nevertheless I enjoyed my lessons and learned quite a lot from him. At secondary school I had an encouraging English teacher up to sixteen, who gave me high marks for my creative writing and English language skills. She would turn to me, when no one else could answer questions in class and 'oblige' me reluctantly to give the correct answer. Unfortunately I had a dismissive and very literal teacher at English 'A' level. Creativity was not encouraged and I was not engaged in creative criticism of the texts studied. I felt helpless in being unable to remember facts, which seemed meaningless to me. This combined with the disruptive atmosphere at home and my own general apathy and immaturity led to me failing my English 'A' level.

Although my mother sometimes surprisingly encouraged my art in tones of exaggerated amazement, she generally disliked me to achieve any academic success (Confusion). This was obvious to me by the way she never looked at my school reports and was cruel and dismissive of any successes I had (Hurt and Confusion). For example when I landed a main part in the primary school play, she failed to produce the costume she had promised to make or even come to see the play (Humiliation, Hurt and Embarrassment). Perhaps this was because I reminded her that she had been forced to leave school at twelve, a fact, which she often referred to with the added reference to how clever and talented she had been. Many years later this childlike jealousy showed itself when she responded to the news that I had passed my degree by the comment, "What's a degree?" (Hurt and Disappointment) I think she took her jealousy and anger out on me consciously and subconsciously in ways which were camouflaged. Although as a baby she told me often that she loved me, implying that she had given up much for me (Guilt), her behaviour towards me indicated dislike (Fear). For example she continually repeated that she had been lucky to survive my birth, as I was a very big baby (Indebtedness). There were several occasions when she suddenly disappeared while out shopping with me, and two occasions when I was taken to police stations by kindly passers by (Hurt and Confusion). She dressed me in huge, ugly and unbecoming clothes. She was constantly perming and cutting my hair because it was 'difficult to manage', actually cutting my neck on one occasion (Pain, Discomfort). When we went to buy clothes or shoes she would loudly remark on my 'huge bones', 'big feet', 'big ears', 'fat stomach' and 'unmanageable ginger hair' (Humiliation, Embarrassment).

In spite of my problems I can also appreciate that there were many good aspects to my childhood (Security). In many ways I was very fortunate and came from a privileged background (Happiness). We were relatively well off and I could roam free in the beautiful Welsh countryside with practically no risk (Self-sufficiency and Freedom). My parents loved books and I was taught to read by my siblings at the age of four (Pleasure and Gratitude). They took an intelligent interest in the world and we had one of the first televisions (Interest). My mother was a good cook and we ate well (Security, Gratitude and Well-being). We went for days out in our car in to North Wales when few other families could (Interest, Pleasure and Curiosity). We had a comfortable house of the period and could afford the occasional holiday (Happiness and Security). My father supported my wish to study art at the local technical college and to go away to teacher training college (Gratitude), but my mother tried hard to prevent me from going (Anxiety, Confusion and Hurt). There were long incomprehensible tirades, tears and tempers, which I knew would cease if I did not go (Determination). However, although I felt sorry for her (empathy), I finally decided that since there was no hope that I could please or help her, I might as well do what I wanted (Realism, Common sense). I was given a modest parental allowance, which was not always paid. Generally I could not afford new clothes or luxuries, but I was fortunate that my

grant paid for food and board (Security and Gratitude). As time went on I developed through my teaching career and discovered I had abilities and insights, which have gradually led me to my current research project (Self-sufficiency and Determination).

**Photographs at various ages in the author's life**



Aged 2



Aged 7



Aged 20



Aged 60



With the my family Aged 5



At primary school (front middle picture)

### **Finding an escape route**

After grammar school, I went to the local further education college for a pre-diploma foundation Art course and found a new, friendlier peer group. This course gave me a comprehensive, quite rigorous grounding in Art, but lacking confidence, any final assessment (apart from a pass), advice about my work and encouragement to go to Art School, I opted to do teacher training. I had discovered a spirit for adventure at 16 when I had done an exchange with a French girl. I visited Paris and the South of France travelling with my friend and returning on my own. I applied to colleges, which were all a long way from my home. The fact that my sister (13 years older) was a primary school teacher probably influenced my career choice. My mother tried to prevent my going away, but my father insisted I should have the opportunity.

For my state assisted teacher training I first went in 1967 on a two-year course to a 'student-centred' arts college connected with Dartington Hall School in Devon. This was followed by one year at a teacher training college in Exmouth. Dartington Hall School was a 'child-centred' private establishment run by a group from the 'progressive' education school of thought and the college was run along the same lines. Although I appreciated the beautiful environment, trust and positive regard, which its ethos implied, I was very much aware of being short-changed where academic structure and intellectual stimulus and rigour were concerned. In my opinion, knowledge was not offered through a sufficiently organised competence building structure with skill acquisition opportunities. In my case the whole process of learning was too unsupported and haphazard to yield efficient results. There was a final exhibition of work in which I displayed my poems and paintings. The painting tutor who had never spoken to me previously or assessed my work told me that he thought that one day I might become a painter. The principle's wife told me she liked my poems. I filed these two tiny bits of encouragement at the back of my mind.

My impression of Dartington Hall is that although I gained confidence away from the pressures at home and enjoyed my time there with new friends, I did not achieve a great deal. This was undoubtedly also due to my own immaturity and inability to take advantage of the opportunity. Although I worked at a modest pace, many did not. A large percentage of students on my course failed the final assessment, since it was not clear what was required e.g. there were no exams and no marking. Many of the students simply did not work. Gribble (1985), a head teacher at the private school explains the philosophy by which the college was also run. This seemed to be based on the idea that formal structured education somehow corrupts the individual intellect.

*Conventional education is based on the idea of original sin: The child is born wicked and must be taught to be good. Neill's system is based on the opposite idea: The child is born good and becomes wicked only if corrupted. My own position is in between, though very much closer to Neill's. I believe that the child is born amoral, but soon develops moral sensitivity unless mishandled or deprived.*

Gribble 1985, p.59

### **Earning respect and gaining experience**

I worked in the English educational system from 1971 to 1977 starting out as an Art specialist, completing my probationary year and working part time in three secondary schools and a primary school while bringing up my own two children. The time I took off work with them was a great opportunity to experience the happy childhood times I had missed. The first two secondary schools gave me good references for taking over run down classrooms and art courses and revitalising them. I was young, enthusiastic, learning on the job and gaining confidence in my own abilities. During that time two pupils who puzzled me stand out in my memory arousing my curiosity: One who exclusively painted skulls and appeared obsessed with death and another I now think was being bullied and staff thought had a very possessive mother. In 1980 to 1982 I worked as a teacher to male young offenders aged 14 to 21 in a large prison remand centre in England. While teaching basic Maths and English there, I developed an interest in special needs teaching. I had some interesting and moving conversations with some of the inmates. I began to think about the environmental effects of upbringing on learners.

In 1980 to 1983 I took a part time education degree in 'special education' subjects (reading development, psychology and audio-visual studies). In 1983 following the Warnock report on Special

Education, I became a teacher helping to set up a new 60-place specialist unit for minor learning difficulties (MLD) attached to a large comprehensive school (Warnock 2004). I specialised in English, Art and basic skills subjects as a special needs teacher, supporting and liaising with colleagues in main school. This work involved adapting and teaching Home Economics, Gardening, Life Skills, Community Service, Outdoor Pursuits, Art and English leavers' courses for special needs pupils, often with support from main school colleagues, instructors and the education advisory service. I found, since I had very low physical, sports skills, the 'outdoor pursuits' benefited my confidence and self-esteem as much as it did my pupils. I created a combined City & Guilds course with GCSE English language. I devised course programmes and certificates since pupils could not take state exams. These programmes were accredited by the county scheme board, which I attended. All the courses, had an active 'hands-on' element to them e.g. each English unit involved a trip out to a relevant location. I dealt with special needs work experience, finding and monitoring suitable placements with employers. I taught my subjects to ordinary lower school classes and was a form teacher in mainstream. All of this was very much a practical, hands on learning experience for me.

Some special needs pupils had specific types of learning problems. Briefly these included different types of perceptual problems such as dyslexia, difficulties with long and short-term memory, poor understanding and minor physical disability. Sequenced courses for teaching reading, diagnosing and remedying problems would be used with varied and surprisingly limited success. These included work and behaviour programmes with built in 'rewards' and 'punishments. Environmental problems were acknowledged to have affected some of the pupils e.g. children who had suffered time out of education through illness, had been abused or came from disadvantaged homes. The department catered for many emotionally and behaviourally disturbed pupils (EBD). Within this special needs department the demands of the school timetable and the in-service training of staff made no allowance for planned reflexive research, student therapy or counselling for pupils and staff.

Two eleven to twelve year old children, a boy and a girl aroused my particular pity and interest. The girl was in my special needs group, could read and write well, but was often disruptive in class. She was always in trouble for taking her asthma inhaler inappropriately and for banging herself into walls. One Christmas, although they were now estranged, she was sent to stay with her stepmother and stepsiblings, while her father was in hospital. His father now had a new girlfriend. Her biological mother had gone to a local city, had a new boyfriend and rarely saw her. After Christmas she confided in me that her stepmother was hitting her. I took her to the member of staff to whom I had been told to refer such cases. He asked her if she was sure she wanted to get her stepmother in trouble. This was a very serious matter and the stepmother could go to jail. The girl changed her mind, refused to speak to me again and was eventually excluded from school for her 'bad' behaviour. Two years later her friend told me she was now homeless and living on the streets as a drug addict.

The boy, aged eleven and also disruptive, was not in my class. He could read and write adequately when not upset. I remarked to a colleague on his odd and disruptive behaviour and was told he was the victim of sexual abuse and lived in care. One day he was distraught, in tears and refusing to leave school. He refused to go with the waiting social worker. I rang social services and was told that this was unfortunate because his new social worker needed to 'form a relationship' with him and planned to take him for tea. It seemed he was refusing to go in a car with a man he didn't know. I took him home. He rushed off to show me his photographs of his estranged family. His foster parents told me, they were having trouble calming him down. He was constantly talking about his family's abuse. He looked at this photo album and talked about it to a social worker every week. Although his educational ability was normal, because of his emotional state, he was sent to a special school for disabled pupils.

These stories are shocking in terms of these children's plight. It is also shocking that we had no adequate system, training or support for dealing with their difficulties. These events had emotional consequences for me; I still feel to some extent distressed about them and guilty, because my help was ineffective. The system at the time did not allow for my making any meaningful intervention. I felt and still do feel that these children were making logical responses to situations they were helpless to address. They were somehow being further abused by default in an unsympathetic system within which I was, in some sense, a helpless actor.

During twenty-seven years of teaching in secondary schools I found it assumed that form teachers and heads of year could give pastoral care to pupils. Many teachers felt this beyond them due to lack of training and resources. Most teachers were not trained in counselling or life skills and even if they had

them, little time was given for such activity. Students problems, when known, were noted, inadequacies accepted and expectations reduced for academic progress. The emphasis was on description of behaviours and acceptance of lower performance after examination as regrettable, but in “no way the school’s or teacher’s responsibility.” The problems were seen as pupil failure to perform to ‘normal’ expectations. These findings were reinforced by educational psychologists’ reports and statements, which concentrated upon performance and deficit.

In 1985 to 1987 I took a post-graduate certificate in English. I carried out research with a small group of special needs pupils which showed that some of them were very intelligent. The findings demonstrated that they had excellent aural/oral comprehension skills compared with poor read and written ones. Many of them showed complex skills in practical tasks and had a large oral vocabulary, which demonstrated their aptitude in discussion and argument. It saddened me that, at that time, the system was unable to examine, measure, value and develop special needs pupils’ abilities within its curriculum. It was not possible to examine orally even though Special Needs did not necessarily refer to their level of intelligence. For example, children within the autistic spectrum are often highly intelligent. There did not appear to be any reliable way of assessing and crediting this intelligence. Only written evidence of ability was acceptable to exam boards. The system was unable to give acknowledgement, record or properly research and plan to develop the pupils’ cognitive abilities in other ways (such as role-play and discussion with video and voice recording). Since they could not conform to conventional targets, these children were effectively excluded from a ‘proper’ education even within the system.

My tutor was impressed with my research, he recommended I take a Master's degree, but my full-time job and family made this difficult. I was to follow it up ten years later. My 'hands on' courses for children with minor learning difficulties were abandoned when the National Curriculum came into effect. Since the system became even less responsive to pupil needs, this contributed to my decision to take early retirement. I conclude, looking back on this experience, resources should be available for teachers to research and develop educational ideas, where they are most needed and appropriate. This could be supported by a system for networking findings between working teachers, including group discussion, in-service training and resource banks. This is happening now often rather haphazardly via the Internet, colleges and various organised education initiatives. However, specialist areas require proper coordination and management by teachers, trained to encourage and mentor class teachers working with complex factors in modern schools. Many teachers have special skills and insights not sufficiently shared, developed or appreciated by the larger educational community.

### **Growing intuitions and curiosity**

During my career I had taught and had pastoral responsibility for secondary mainstream and special needs pupils and was often puzzled and frustrated by some pupils’ inability to learn. This problem affected a number of the pupils in both groups. I became aware that there were some children I could not help. I seemed to be grappling with unseen forces and yet I felt an affinity with, and sympathy, for my pupils. The following questions puzzled me: Why were some apparently intelligent children so resistant to learning? Why did well-behaved students fail to build on what they had already learned? Why did some show a high level of intelligence in some situations but not in others? In some cases all the necessary preparation had been done, an ‘apparently’ encouraging environment was provided, ‘good’ teaching aids were in use and evidently the ‘process’ understood by the teacher and yet we would repeatedly hit a blank wall. Parents too would often be surprised by their child’s difficulties. After taking early retirement in 1997, I continued to be interested in these questions. Over the next three years I came to realise I now had the opportunity to undertake this type of research as an independent researcher. As time went on I found that the answer to these questions lay in listening and observing pupils, acknowledging pupil feedback, taking it seriously and using my professional judgement to work out my response.

Over my life I often pondered my own lack of learning progress. I sometimes felt I wanted to be an artist and a poet, but could not apply myself. I knew I should be able to learn but for some inexplicable reason could not. Ambitions, ideas and even talents, kept recurring and surfacing, but progress could not be achieved and dissatisfaction, frustration and self-recrimination often made me abandon my efforts. Motivation and confidence tended to fail even when, and sometimes particularly it seemed achievement was within my grasp. At the start of my research I was intrigued by the puzzles presented by emotional blocks to learning and the ways in which they might be solved for my students. I was

curious to find out if there were common themes and strategies. Then, when I was asked to do a personal development module, it gradually dawned on me that I could also attempt to solve these problems for myself. I found that, whilst guarding against, or at least being aware of projecting unconsciously on to others, exploring my own problems provided insight and improved my depth of understanding in teaching and mentoring. I knew that I had suffered from emotional problems with learning, and I felt that some of my students, though different to me, might have been affected in some similar ways.

### **Seeking a suitable research context**

In September 1998 I volunteered to help an adult literacy class one morning a week at a further education college. The head of department, Mr. Green was delighted at my qualifications, but said I must still take a generic training course for volunteers. The college bureaucracy could not be changed to accommodate my 'peculiar situation' as a qualified special needs teacher with a degree. This lack of acknowledgement of my professional skills, amongst other things, affected my commitment to the college and within a year led me elsewhere. In the meantime I learned a lot through incidental observation. Eventually these experiences contributed to my choice of research subject and direction. I joined the volunteer course mostly taught by Mr. Green, consisting of a term of weekly lectures and eight assignments. There were case studies of typical adult students to consider and information about teaching literacy. The former I found interesting, the latter not since I knew more about literacy than the tutor. I received top marks for six of my assignments. Mike, the tutor who marked them was surprised and enthusiastic, but I was not motivated to complete all eight. It seemed unnecessary as I was qualified and experienced. I could not see the point of most of the work for me personally. This was a feeling I had, which I later found I had in common with many of my future 'school refusers'.

In one lecture Mr. Green asked us for suggestions for attracting more adult students to literacy courses. One ex adult literacy class student, John, had come back to help after completing a degree. John was a successful graduate of the system. However, Mr. Green did not acknowledge his experience and opinion or mine, as a qualified special needs teacher. He 'delivered' the generic course without eliciting feedback or seeking any relationship with his students. I felt his attitude was dismissive and hypocritical, especially in view of his advocacy of sympathy and understanding for students. These feelings whether justifiable or not affected my 'success'. Over the next few months I considered the implications of my experiences from my newly acquired student and experienced teacher points of view. Looking back I observe that although I generally liked Mr. Green, his lack of awareness put me off.

Meanwhile I was placed in the class of an unpopular teacher, Mr. Jones, though I only gradually made this discovery. He had a formal manner of teaching and I was uncomfortable, sensing he disliked the presence of another teacher in his class. I tried to maintain a friendly, supportive relationship, keeping an uncritical, low profile. This became difficult as students increasingly asked for my help and revealed that their work was often unmarked and reissued. The atmosphere in the class became less positive as time went on and students gradually left. For a short while I tutored a middle-aged woman who was very nervous about her reading difficulties, accompanying her during her introduction to another class. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere in this class, which was oversubscribed with students, struck me. The teacher and teaching assistant were welcoming, informal and easy to get on with and I found myself wishing I could join them. I saw clearly how atmosphere and social environment impact on learning.

A middle-aged student, Victor, who had been at the college two years, told me privately that he felt discriminated against because his work was frequently mislaid, unmarked and reissued. Victor was never recommended to go to the next level. Having observed Victor over at least a term, I found him a willing student. He was capable and eventually showed me a large file of competent, unmarked work. The teacher immediately took this work away from us. Victor suspected the teacher disliked him because he had had expensive hospital treatment. This treatment had been denied, due to an age restriction, to Mr. Jones' close relative, who had the same life threatening condition. Mr. Jones had told Victor he felt this was unfair. I suggested Victor spoke to the head of department and ask for a different class. Victor did this, but the teacher continued to maintain that his work was not good enough. This had not been resolved when I left. Whatever his reason, I regard this behaviour as an example of a teacher's prejudice discouraging and blocking learning. This type of prejudice should be openly warned about and discussed in educational circles, at teacher and administration training levels.

The lack of an effective student arbitration system, with a right of appeal to an impartial tutor was significant to me as illustrating uncaring and inefficient practices; inefficient because they militate against learning. It appeared likely that Mr. Jones, even though he appeared to have acted unfairly, needed support in acknowledging his own problems and that Victor needed encouragement. Mr. Jones might have benefited from further training, instead of facing the prospect of losing his job through failure to motivate students. This kind of injustice caused me to think about the necessity for ethical educational policies, which allow for fair arbitration and the protection of individual rights, both of teachers and students at every level. The fact that such a policy exists in our university psychology department has definitely been a reassuring feature for me, though I have never had to use it. There is no doubt that being a student (and sometimes a teacher) can place a person in a vulnerable position, through misunderstanding, subconscious prejudice and deliberate discrimination.

In this first research environment I found myself encountering my own personal emotional blocks to learning! This was for a variety of reasons. I was warned several times by Mr. Green that I must not allow students to become dependent on me. This attitude puzzled and annoyed me. Apart from showing a lack of respect for my professional judgement, the implications were that either the students were dependent and weak, or that he wanted to prevent me poaching students away to privately paid lessons. He had a 'pathologising' view of students (though I had not yet learned the term) or my motives were being questioned. I did eventually teach my first teenage school refuser at home free of charge, when he became disaffected with the college (this thesis, chapter 4). I had to fight the bureaucratic system of entry to get this student back into the college. Although some good work was being done, it was in areas to which I had no access. I found the situation frustrating. I was annoyed at the injustice of some 'basic skills' students being ignored and their difficulties compounded. I was becoming interested in pursuing my research subject and the college was not an encouraging environment. I needed a different educational environment in which to learn, i.e. university.

I was too discouraged to complete the course. I withdrew my services. This period of voluntary work gave me the opportunity to observe how students and teachers could be disaffected by staff attitudes, college systems and bureaucracy and so for me it was a valuable learning experience. At the time I was unable to articulate my feelings. Looking back I see that my behaviour in leaving was logical for me in view of my subsequent further studies and inquiries. My anger and frustration on behalf of those who were 'unheard' in the 'system' has been an important motivation for my research. I felt that it was not just a question of helping by altruism but research was needed to prove and acknowledge the effect and function of emotions in learning. In a nutshell that 'people's feelings are important in learning, whether we agree with them or not'. These thoughts and my teaching and counselling success with Wayne, encouraged me to focus on researching emotional blocks to learning as a possibly fruitful area of study.

### **Risk taking to gain skills**

I applied to my present university department to do a master's degree in psychology by research. I was advised to take a British Association of Counselling course in person-centred counselling skills first. I did this in 1999 to 2000, under the auspices of a different university. Although I learned a lot and found the course helpful and interesting I approached it with some trepidation. I had to overcome emotional fears and problems in doing it. I had two major issues, which I was afraid to face. The first was my 'mother problem', which I have already described and the second was my 'late husband problem.' In 1991 after twenty years of marriage and two children he had committed suicide leaving me with unresolved emotional problems which undermined my confidence. Some aspects of the counselling course tuition also had a negative effect on my learning progress. My first assignment was a resounding failure. For this I had asked a friend who was depressed if I could 'counsel' her. We had been advised against this, but there had been no one else available. I asked far too many 'closed' questions and we went round and round in circles. Although I produced a written piece in which I freely criticised myself, I think this initial failure, may have affected the course tutor, Jim's, opinion of me, causing him to label me and mark me down.

Jim's view may also have been influenced by my behaviour in class. I tended to consider carefully and ask questions. He may have mistaken this as challenging his authority. We were a similar age. I redid this assignment using the first ten minutes of my 'counselling' session with Wayne. I reflected and commented on the dialogue as taught on the course. Although I passed, I felt this assignment

inadequate, partly due to my lack of writing expertise, but also because the marking it received did not acknowledge my knowledge and skills as a teacher counselling a student. Jim criticised me for explaining in an overly long introduction and for offering explanations to my 'client'. In this case my teaching experience told me these would be helpful. Wayne needed to hear my professional views as a teacher and forgive himself. I had provided enough positive regard over the teaching period for Wayne not to be greatly affected by 'mistakes' of emphasis or questioning. Wayne's subsequent progress showed that my interpretation was correct. Taking a dogmatic approach in sticking to the counselling skills methods would have been inappropriate. I would have appeared to agree with him by only listening and reflecting and this would have reinforced his low self-esteem. Due to lack of confidence and awareness, that I was a novice in counselling, I did not explain to Jim that this assignment was based on a different situation than the 'usual' counselling one.

I felt Jim misjudged my professional expertise, learning ability, judgement and good intent. He looked at me as a prospective counsellor even though my own perspective was necessarily, in this case, that of a teacher. Jim could not adapt his view, because he did not ask me to explain. His lack of understanding affected my confidence, which made it hard to explain to him. He wrote critical comments on my work before reading on, failing to acknowledge my own. He did not acknowledge my educational expertise, as it was outside his 'frame of reference.' However, at this stage we were studying counselling skills for use within our own individual professional workplace. Although he passed it, I was concerned by Jim's comment on my Wayne assignment that I did not appear to understand the concept of empathy. The feeling that I had been misjudged and labelled was reinforced by my experience with my next assignment. I 'counselled' a fellow student who was a special needs mentor in a secondary school, mostly as it turned out about her problems with teachers. This video recording of a counselling session was given a trial marking by Jim, who failed it. We looked at the video together. I said I was worried my 'teacher's agenda' had got in the way. Jim agreed that this had happened and criticised me for it. He wrote *'Use of empathy in your processing needs some clarification – I think what you mean is your being in touch with her feelings. Shows good use of stage 1 skills initially – but wanders off to look at things from teacher's perspective. Good that you're using less questions and staying in client's frame of reference.'* Afterwards the other student, who was present, told me she was surprised by Jim's negative response as she felt the session had really helped her. She knew I was a special needs teacher, but this had not been referred to.

Some time after I looked at this tape again. I decided to submit it for my course work. This time another tutor, Ravi, marked it and gave me a pass. He made some very positive comments, including that my approach was *"positively therapeutic."* I asked Ravi if he had noticed if my being a teacher had influenced my work. He replied he would not have been able to tell my profession from the tape, if he had not already known it. Looking at his assessment I am surprised and pleased by his written comments. Ravi notes that my listening was active, calm, still and therapeutic, attending skills were illustrated, I was warm and respectful and there was *"much illustration of empathy."* Apparently my *"genuineness shone through"*, non-verbal clues were *"shared in the discussion"*; open questions were *"powerfully illustrated."* There was some probing and challenging and the session was *"naturally conducted and moved on"*. Ravi's final comments were *"offered client a beginning – introduction – core conditions powerfully evident. You kept at the client's frame of reference (keeping hold of the identification you shared here in terms of work roles shared). Much progression from other discussions we've had. Well done."* Perhaps he was being overly kind, but the difference between these two assessments of the same tape shows the importance of crosschecking in order to achieve balance. It illustrates the problems of subjective bias.

The personal development group on the counselling course caused me quite a lot of anxiety because issues raised were unsupported by any expression of understanding by the tutor. Because no comment or facial acknowledgement was made this left most of us (other students said the same) feeling silently judged. This was the opposite of Mary, the tutor's declared intention. After about a term, I mentioned in my personal development group that I had realised the value of counselling after my husband's death by suicide, eight years before. I did not go into details. I was rather shocked, therefore, at the effect my revelation had on two other students, who subsequently stopped speaking to me. All of us were mature and almost everyone apart from me had already revealed a traumatic life event for which they had received counselling. Receiving no support from Mary, I did not mention it in the group again. This experience helped me to understand that people can become dismissive of, or angry with, victims of trauma, simply for representing an unacceptable or unpleasant issue.

An inability to face unpleasant issues can lead to victimising some people or withdrawing empathy. I found out the difficulties and unexpected effects of bringing up a taboo subject even in what appeared to be a 'suitable' context. I began to appreciate my students' feelings in similar situations. I also discovered the therapeutic effect of hearing about people who have experienced similar traumas to one's own. I read a book about other survivors whose close relatives had died by suicide. This helped me understand the value of hearing about those suffering similar traumatic events. I was subsequently able to ease my students' feeling of 'difference' and isolation helping them to feel more 'normal' by referring in passing, though anonymously, to other school refusers. I began to appreciate the value of self-help groups.

I had a bad experience in the final course lecture when the course leader, Jim, gave a talk on suicide, producing data on suicide rates, etc. I was taken aback when he addressed me directly and said he was sure I knew all about it! I had never discussed the subject with him. Half the class were not in my personal development group. I was worried they would think I had suicidal tendencies. This breakdown in confidentiality was ground for serious complaint. However, like many of my students, I found the struggle to cope with my emotional 'baggage' meant that I was vulnerable and unable to object. The effect was cruel and painful. I felt helpless in the situation. Looking back on it, I am at least able to comment on Jim's lack of empathy!

At the end of the course I knew I still wanted to pursue my studies through educational research, and was undecided about qualifying to be a counsellor. I decided to apply and find out how I felt about it. Before my interview with a person I had not met before, I chatted to others in the waiting room. I found they seemed much keener and more dedicated than me and had no doubts about their ability to perform the role. At the interview I was totally honest about my mixed feelings, left feeling it was probably not for me and was not surprised to be turned down. I was rather annoyed and astonished by the letter I received however. This stated *'I am sorry to have to reject you for a place on this course as we have had a very large number of high quality applicants this year.'* I felt the inclusion of the words *'high quality'* was unnecessarily unsympathetic implying I was an inferior student or person. From the interviewer's perspective I see I was possibly of a lower quality to other interviewees, not least due to my lack of commitment. However, I regard this statement as inappropriate, particularly in view of the person centred nature of the course.

I had an opportunity to make an official complaint! I had volunteered to be a student representative when the course inspectors came in and I went to meet them on a designated day. However, I felt if I made a complaint, I might fail the course since the 'critical' tutor, Jim would be marking my work. I had no way of knowing what had been said about me and so I opted in my own interest to keep quiet. Significantly, after this session, Ravi followed me out of the building, asking me what I had said. I responded that I thought the library facilities could have been better! Nothing more was said except he told me he was not staying and had got another job. I wished him well. I completed all the work and passed the course. I had persisted and won through! These experiences gave me a much clearer idea of the kinds of complicated emotional issues and situations which can arise in the process of education and can militate against an individual's success.

### **Facing my own emotional blocks to learning.**

I discovered on the counselling skills course that my unconscious agenda of disliking exploring emotions and feelings, especially if they caused crying, might lead me to block my 'client'. At the start I tended to divert attention, 'changing the frame of reference.' I came to realise that I distracted myself from my own emotional issues in the same way, by turning by attention to something else, instead of dealing with problems. I traced my behaviour back to fear of my mother's neurotic outbursts in my childhood. It was a coping strategy, which might be termed 'self-distraction' related to the stronger emotion phenomenon encountered in counselling of 'denial'. Over time my new realisations helped resolve my own learning problems. I realised that ignoring or subverting other people's needs could be an expression of aggression and anger. I was a passive aggressive and I had human needs and faults! This helped me to see the value of considering the logic behind my feelings instead of avoiding thinking about them. Sorting out my attitude to other people's feelings enabled me to accept and consider my own. I had had considerable skills of supporting and empathising with others, but they were uninformed by self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-esteem. My lack of confidence made me a poor communicator and manager.

My husband had died eight years before. This had been an extremely traumatic bereavement, leaving me emotionally battered. This tragedy together with my childhood experiences caused me emotional problems I needed to overcome in order to undertake my research. In 1994 - 95 I had been for counselling myself in order to 'get over' my husband's suicide in 1992. I had spent a lot of time talking about my mother, who I had recently discovered was diagnosed by psychiatrists as having a personality disorder. Significantly, I remembered being irritated by the counsellor constantly asking me about myself as I explained everybody else's problems! This illustrates my subconscious schema strategy of avoidance. Presumably the subconscious logic behind this was based in my childhood experience founded in a fear of reprisals for revealing my intelligent understanding and vulnerability. I eventually concluded that, for various reasons including maternal and peer bullying in childhood, I was inclined to suppress my own intellectual and emotional needs. Two pieces of historical evidence for this have stayed with me. The first was a tutor on my Art foundation course, who was puzzled by my 'fey' quality, which he thought, hindered my work. The second was when I went for interview at Dartington College of Arts and had the frightening experience of momentarily forgetting my own identity. I was asked for my name and was quite unable to recall it for several seconds until rescued by the interviewer. I was not nervous about the interview, but I was profoundly shaken by forgetting who I was. This problem of self-awareness can be seen in my habit of discounting positive comments and a tendency not to react when unfairly treated. Recently an old colleague told me that at the last school I taught at I let the management "walk all over me."

The counselling skills course helped me appreciate the value of releasing emotions, for example by getting angry or crying. The full realisation of this came when a fellow student gave me a session of private 'counselling' about my bereavement. She wanted to be a bereavement counsellor and was grateful to me for allowing her to use this in an assignment. I felt able to trust this person, something due to past 'betrayal', I found difficult. I found this session helpful; for the first time I was able to cry over my personal loss, without worrying about anyone else. After this, I felt better and I was able to work out an important reason why I had reluctance and inner conflict in doing the course. Apart from being afraid of reliving the past, the emotional block I pinpointed was based in an unconscious piece of logic involving feelings of guilt. The gist of this was that if I completed the course, it might prove that I could, after all, have helped my husband solve his mental health difficulties. As soon as I could put this thought into words, I realised how unrealistic it was. I realised my subconscious mind had put together a 'logical' argument, giving me feelings not understood consciously until 'released' by crying. This experience caused me to think and aroused my interest further in the possible subconscious 'logic' and function of feelings in thinking. I considered the idea of accessing thoughts through feelings. It occurred to me that subjective connective reasoning processes evoke or trigger feelings and vice versa. My awareness of this process within myself was raised.

I concluded over the course of this research that my continuing unconscious lack of self-awareness and self-esteem, reinforced by a fear of rejection and abandonment formed in childhood, undermined my learning to some extent. However, these problems have also given me insights in my research. I have had communication problems with myself when I have dismissed and avoided my own thoughts and ideas and been afraid and unable to voice them clearly to others. In embarking on and carrying out a project I have sometimes experienced an inability to prioritise and focus, producing rambling and repetitious work. These seem to me to be avoidance mechanisms resulting from misplaced, 'logical', habitual schemas (Bennett-Goleman 2001). Even when understood, they can be a recurring problem. Eventually towards the end of my research, I finalised a critical events timeline and a list of possible schema. The counselling skills course and my own personal development work have informed my studies and my teaching, and made me more understanding, less judgemental and more aware of my own hidden attitudes and agendas.

The worst manifestation of my personal emotional block is total paralysis of action. This is an effect and 'behaviour' which I have perceived at various levels for different reasons and in others when mentoring. It is difficult to explain this phenomenon because it is experienced as a strong emotional reluctance based on unique, unconscious, unworded, implicit cognitions (schemas). Understanding how some of these became established was useful to a limited extent. Equally important was my awareness that they probably had a valid, in the sense of some kind of 'logical' basis, which was no longer appropriate. This knowledge empowered me in finding my own active ways of counteracting them even if I could not understand their source. Working out my own solutions as appropriate to me, I exposed myself to different environments and slowly began to readjust and progress. For example: paying attention to myself by asking myself what I really want to do; performing a verbal self-esteem

exercise; doing activities at a leisure club including yoga; paying more attention to my personal appearance, diet and health; undertaking a university course; communicating with other students; building up old and new friendships; working as a freelance researcher and action research mentor.

I worked on my own emotional blocks to learning with 'subjective' and 'observational' autobiographies leading to a better understanding of some of my feelings (Bennett-Goleman, 2001). I also developed my personal work in art (through courses, exhibiting and undertaking commissioned paintings), using a cross-fertilisation of ideas, e.g. series of symbolic paintings portraying various feelings about learning (See below researcher's paintings "Emotional Blocks to Learning"). I have expressed my personal feelings in poetry on a variety of subjects, including poems about other artists. As is the case, I believe, with all learning, this process has been ongoing and very much work still in progress. Looking at my own learning problems has made me aware that my students and mentees are engaged in their own unique, ongoing learning processes, based in experiences they might not be able to explain. I realise how unlikely it is that I can easily comprehend their difficulties. This change in attitude has taught me a greater respect for them and their idiosyncratic learning process. It has improved my understanding and hopefully also my teaching, mentoring and evaluating. The poem below, written while I was on the counselling skills course illustrates my progress.

### Poem - I am human (24.10.99)

I am human  
 I am here, biological entity -  
 no apology, no excuse.  
 I grow and age in a natural pattern,  
 and in a unique way.  
 I am affected by outside events  
 and I affect them.  
 I have free will and choice,  
 yet I am bound or aided  
 by my abilities and perceptions.  
 I am a living, changing being,  
 in the process of balancing myself  
 against reality or I am unaware.  
 My life is a paradox I can't control,  
 but when I am aware of this  
 I am in control of myself.

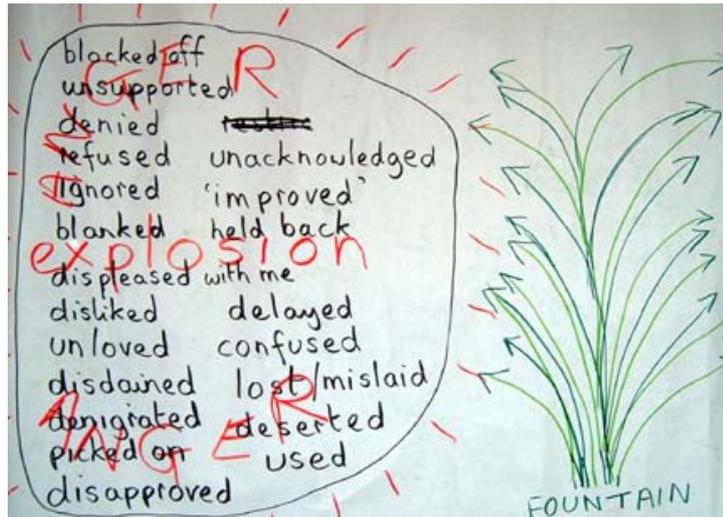
### **Experiencing unworded thought**

In 2002 I had a weekend in the Lake District of symbolic modelling therapy through pictorial metaphor with David Grove, which I found very helpful (Lawley & Tomkins 2000). This type of therapy offers the client the opportunity to access the unworded, implicit schema of their unconscious and work with them in their own way towards resolution of personal problems. This work opens up the possibility of consideration by the conscious mind, but only at the client's behest. The therapist acts as a facilitator. I produced pictures spontaneously and reflected afterwards on their possible meaning for my personal life. My pictures showed my mother as a dinosaur, my partner and children in symbolic form, lakes, waterfalls and mountains, various pits I might fall into labelled 'vanity', 'self-deception' and 'laziness' and a 'beautiful' landscape in the distance. I wrote strings of words out which expressed my inner feelings about my life. I found sharing my feelings with others in the group and looking at their work, all so different from each other, very helpful and interesting. I was later able to offer my adult mentees the option of expressing themselves through symbolic modelling (by drawing pictures and diagrams) as a result of this experience.

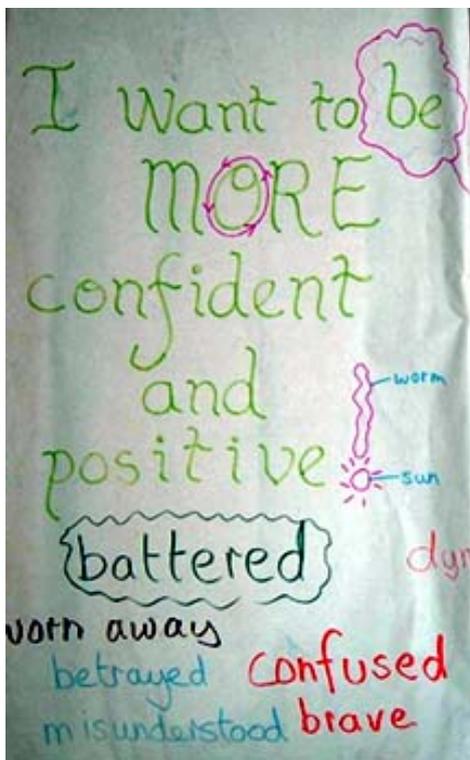
In 2000 I had started a painting, eventually entitled 'Twilight 2000', which was a self-portrait at twilight over an industrial landscape. It was ostensibly about global warming and pollution at the end of the millennium. It took me 18 months to complete and I was shocked when it dawned on me that it also revealed my subconscious emotions about my childhood. I had been brought up near the chemical factory where my father was works manager. I must have been subconsciously aware of its polluting effect in the unspoilt part of Wales where it was built after the war. I realised the painting was also

about my childhood despair in coping with my socially inadequate parents and a hostile community. I came to see that a picture could express/encompass several lines of reasoning simultaneously through the feelings and ideas it embodied. I became more aware of how my subconscious mind operated and that feelings (in this case accessed through art work) offered a means of working with and accessing it.

**Author's symbolic models created on a therapy course with David Grove in 2002.**



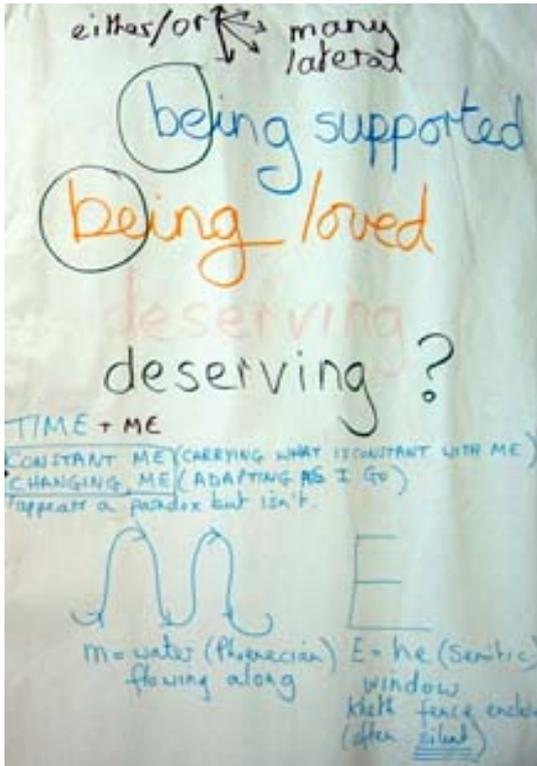
**Model 1**



**Model 2**



**Model 3**



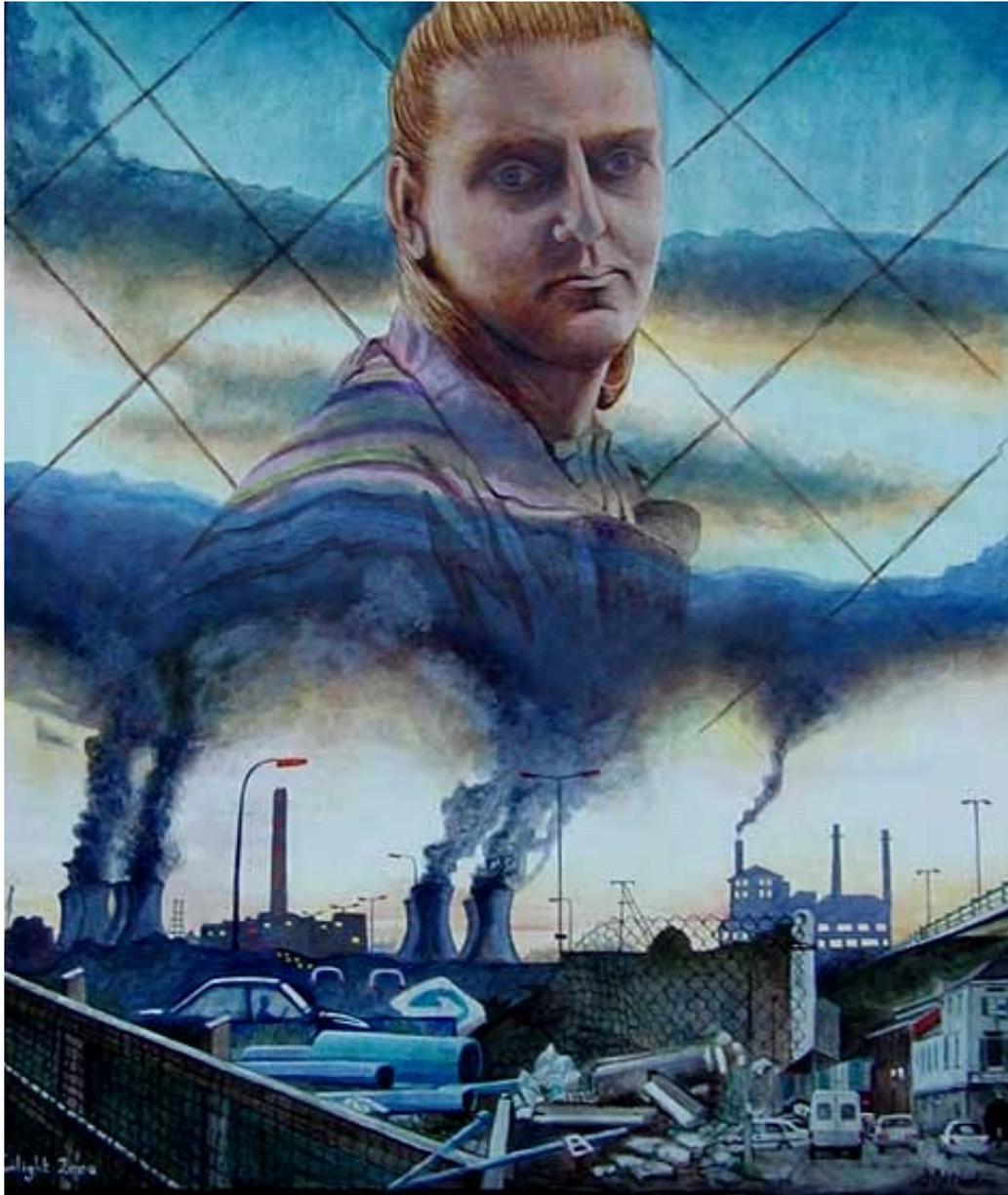
Model 4



Model 5



Model 6



**Author's painting 'Twilight 2000' (Acrylic on canvas)  
Venturing into an academic environment**

I started a Masters by research at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2001. The initial title for my research was *'Liberating Learning Processes - an investigation into possible ways of overcoming those unconscious emotional constructs which prevent learning'*. My aims were *'to produce a body of work, which would aid students, parents and teachers in recognising and overcoming emotional learning difficulties and help them to create a climate for learning.'* I joined the course at the beginning of October, commencing with an interview with Carolyn Kagan. I realised, in talking things over, prompted by Carolyn, that my use of words in describing my area of study and the difficulties of proceeding revealed my own emotional difficulties, e.g. *'struggle,' 'fight,'* etc. Afterwards this gave me some cause for reflection. It was decided that I would proceed with a MSc. Psychology by Research undertaking the Qualitative Research module as well as the compulsory Personal Development module, with the bulk of the work as a researched dissertation. This had been previously worked out in discussions with Carol Tindall and Rebecca Lawthom.

Since I intended to base my research upon my own and other people's interpretations, I realised from the start that this would not be a value free study. My own education, culture and personal history

would inevitably have an effect on my perceptions. For this reason I intended to be open-minded and to investigate my own background, feelings, possible prejudices and opinions. I also set out to find out about and acknowledge ideas, theories, perspectives and methods, which I might not have considered previously. There are many interpretations of and viewpoints on education, I hoped to shed some light on these by attempting to understand my participants' own individual perspectives from my teacher's and fellow learner's perspective. In taking up this research I was to some extent giving a formal purpose to subconscious, partially conscious subjective conjecture I had been in a sense doing all my life.

During the first year of the course I 'sampled' different lectures in areas I considered might be appropriate, e.g. Educational Psychology with Erica Burman, Psychological Perspectives on Counselling and Psychology, Culture and Identity with Carolyn Kagan and Carol Tindall, Cath Knowles, Rebecca Lawthom and Ian Parker. Rebecca Lawthom was and has remained an encouraging supervisor of my studies throughout. Even though I was very much older, I found fellow students included me and I was able to chat informally, discuss and interact with them. I started to keep a self-assessment, learning diary, on which I have based this auto-ethnography. I found lecturers helpful and encouraging as far as they were able, but realised I needed to take an independent course in order to pursue my aims in my chosen area of research. Some lectures had spin-offs, in giving pause for thought, informing my other interests of poetry and painting as well as writing. A lecture with Carolyn about people's common perceptions in society led me to think about different group perceptions. I wondered if I could write a poem about the 9/11 atrocity in America and following a lecture with Ian Parker in which he read us his personal response; I was able to do so. The concrete effect of the suicide bombers' 'logical' feelings used to create mayhem gave me some food for thought.

#### Terrorist Attack on September

You did not care about them,  
 Focussed as you were only on death,  
 Your thoughts and actions,  
 A weapon against the innocent,  
 And against yourselves,  
 So much needless destruction,  
 Pain, blood, death, tears ... all for an idea.  
 Thoughts deaf to other worlds,  
 Become frightening reality,  
 And we are left wondering why. (October 2001)

At the end of the first two years I had achieved the following goals and tasks:

- I had learned how to access information within the college, sampled appropriate lectures and chosen courses, joined the college library and set up and accessed the internet services on my home computer (I had previously had little experience of computers), met and talked to key members of staff and got to know other students. In the process I familiarised myself with the college and created a base to meet my learning needs.
- I had written the following: 'Self-assessment summary - beginning the course' (Spring 2002), Subjective autobiography: "How did my childhood feel?" (Autumn 2002), Observational autobiography: "How does my childhood look now?"
- I passed a module entitled 'Psychological perspectives on counselling'
- I had worked out a model showing how different psychological and environmental points could affect my students (the Muddle Model) and looked at family history effects on individuals (Family Tree Syndrome).

During this time I was home tutoring 15-16 year-old teenagers who had refused to go to school. I worked as a home tutor in English, Maths, History and Art.

#### **The stresses of tutoring school refusers**

My being retired from full time teaching gave me the opportunity to be flexible and adaptive in my teaching methods and to observe school refusers in their home setting. However, the work was emotionally very demanding and could be quite stressful. Work conditions were often awkward because of arranging visits, coping with cancellations and liaising with schools, welfare officers, career

officers and the education office. Home tutor meetings were infrequent and unpaid. A retired headmaster, who briefly visited the home tutors at work, warned me that some of my venues appeared to him potentially dangerous e.g. a run down public house in a rough part of town. My own personal problems affected my ability to work, when I became distressed about my 94-year-old mother's refusal to eat after being admitted to hospital in 2002. Although she wanted to die, I was told starvation would be painful. I had to decide that she would be force-fed and was conflicted about the decision. At the same time I was also frustrated by my inability to help my current three students because of the indifference and unresponsiveness of the education authority. These factors affected my ability to produce clear, well-written and structured work, since my mind was distracted and my thoughts clouded by underlying stress. I have seen the same kinds of effects of personal, environmental worries upon my students' abilities to work, e.g. Russell's worries about his imminent move during his GCSEs and George's and Anne's very unsettled home lives.

### **Further research development**

In September 2003 I applied for a transfer to Master of philosophy level. My aims were:

1. To undertake an ethnographic study designed to report and evaluate my own teaching experiences, development and understanding of myself and my work, while home-tutoring students who refused to go to school.
2. To identify critical and common factors, themes and differences through analyses of cases.
3. To extrapolate helpful teaching and learning practices.
4. To explore the link between learning and emotion and thought.
5. To contribute to an eclectic, integrative, flexible and inclusive perspective of education.

The original aims of my research programme had been the first three. They were not particularly well written. I now added the last two in a logical progression of development. These last two aims had been with me at the back of my mind for a long time. My confidence had improved and I talked about myself as a freelance researcher. I had written up most of my phase 1 case studies with analyses, pinpointing different combinations of environmental factors. The separate thematic analysis of each cases looked interesting, although I had not put all the findings together. I was surprised at the depth and richness of the data I had been able to collect and felt it merited further study. My literature search had been productive and appeared to be leading to a discussion about cognition, emotional thinking, learning development and teaching attitudes. This was accepted and I gained confidence from the comments made in response and addressed myself to the issues raised.

Over the next year I worked on developing my literature review arguments and justifications on theory and method. These and several other parallel pieces of writing were produced and redrafted over the period. These were a 'Self-assessment summary - my personal learning during the research' (2003-06), 'My mother (1908-2004) - my responsibility 1990-2004' (2004), 'My husband (1947-1991)' (2006). I also continued to learn from my own emotional and family problems, working on my relationships with my mother's family, who she was more or less estranged from, and my own friends. Some of these, particularly a female cousin and an old friend I had got in touch with, encouraged me, making constructive suggestions and improving my confidence by understanding and valuing my work. I read biographies and talked to various people who had experienced similar and different problems and come to terms with them in different ways. An aunt of mine (my mother's younger sister) gave me direct and honest responses in conversation. Her unsolicited positive regard for me helped me to understand how almost totally lacking this had been in my relationship with my mother. When I compared her with my mother, considering that it is likely that she had a similar upbringing, I could see that individual experiences and responses can vary enormously, even between siblings. I also realised that my two daughters had been quietly doing their best to help me through all our trials and tribulations.

All of these emotional, family relationships and reflections helped me to understand something of the dynamics which influence family behaviour and informed my work about parents and students. I realised that my attitude towards teaching had been changing through my experiences. I know now that identifying a subconscious emotional problem is likely to be insufficient in its self to remedy it, although it may help. I no longer see most people as fixed, but rather, more likely to be, unique, adaptable, dynamic, evolving creatures in a changing world. This confirms for me that in my teaching role, it is not sufficient to diagnose or uncover reasons for problems. Stepping in and insisting on a rigid, prescribed educational plan may only serve to demotivate and dis-empower the student. Students need to take ongoing responsibility and actively problem solve in learning. They need support in dealing with feelings and finding their own solutions. The way in which I have found my own

idiosyncratic path is evidence of this. I realised that teaching, although there is no certainty of outcome, can provide 'safe' contexts for students for doing this.

In the autumn of 2004, I had come a long way on my personal journey, when I finally completed my Personal Development module by finishing my reflexive assignment. (2004) Before this could be done I wrote down the worries behind the conflicted feelings, which had dogged me all along. I was afraid that other people would criticise me as unscientific and dismiss me as a 'do-gooder' with emotional problems. I thought that I might be criticised for mentioning my parent's problems and my husband's suicide, which might be considered to be irrelevant and perhaps unprofessional. In order to resolve my own emotional problems and answer any possible criticisms as above, I felt the need to explain my husband's bi-polar disorder for myself and I could not face finishing the task. I was unsure if I could solve ethical problems and write respectfully enough and well enough to do justice to my participants' lives.

I could also see some positive points. For example, I could be honest but exercise self-restraint. There was no need for my 'personal stuff' to necessarily get in the way of the research. I could admit my mistakes and accept that I would be bound to miss and misinterpret some facts. My reflexive approach, if I could be sufficiently honest might add authenticity to the research. I was quite surprised and excited at times by the way some of my ideas seemed to check out. My previous special needs training; teaching background and research were sufficient to justify my suitability to do the work. I had now moved on and largely recovered from my problems. I had learned from, and to some extent turned to advantage, my experiences of emotional trauma and personal learning problems. My own experiences became strand 2 in the research.

### **Developing the research even further**

In autumn 2004 I started part-time work for Creative Partnerships mentoring teacher action researchers. In doing this work I drew on my experience as an artist, special needs teacher and academic researcher. Meanwhile I had started to mentor volunteer teachers, who were willing to explore their feelings in learning. In September 2005 I applied for a transfer to PhD level. On confirmation, Carol Tindall joined Rebecca Lawthom in supervising my work. My redrafted aims were:

1. To discover some reasons why students' labelled as school refusers are disaffected with education and consider their comments and points of view from data gained through home-tutoring them.
2. To evaluate my own learning and teaching experiences in helping students re-engage in education using a reflexive, ethnographic qualitative research method.
3. To explore the potential to inform and illustrate significant strategies and interventions regarding professional practice and theory without being prescriptive.
4. To disseminate findings, relating material from psychology, education and counselling literature to teachers and teacher trainers through mentoring and educational journal publication.

#### New Aim

5. To investigate and compare other teachers' experiences of learning and teaching through mentoring them.

Again I was surprised at the depth and richness of the data I had been able to collect and felt it merited further study. My literature search continued to be productive and appeared to merit an even deeper discussion about cognition, emotional thinking, and learning development in order to promote better teaching attitudes towards student needs. I wanted to contribute to the discussion and controversy regarding 'emotional intelligence.' Emotions seemed to me to be inseparable from feelings. I found I was able to contribute a down-to-earth perspective from my practical experiences. My work could be seen as recording some of the 'chains' of feelings experienced in the process of learning. I found the lack of research and literature doing this directly a major justification for my work. My transfer was accepted in the spring of 2006. Again I gained confidence from the comments made in response and addressed myself to reflecting on and answering queries.

Earlier on in the course, my supervisor Rebecca Lawthom had suggested teachers' points of view might be interesting. I took this idea up when I decided to develop strand 3 of my research through mentoring 8 volunteer teachers in 2004 and 2005 (See Chapter 6). I looked at how their feelings affected them professionally. These were three men and five women teachers of various ages. Two of them were

trainee teachers. The data revealed their motivations, feelings and concerns about their work. This research was informed by my experiences as a paid mentor to teacher action researchers from 2004 to 2007 with Creative Partnerships. My involvement, training and challenges in this work were very beneficial to my confidence. For example in July 2005, I devised and ran a successful workshop about 'creative learning', presented and contributed at management meetings, teacher training and networking groups. I regularly visited two primary and one special school. It was a very satisfying experience to be able to support other teachers and to receive acknowledgement of my experience and skills.

In the spring of 2006 I got a job educationally evaluating a primary school arts festival. Creative Partnerships were working with a big commercial theatre to develop the creative abilities of local primary school children and their teachers. This event involved six inner city primary schools and was in its second year. Their goal was to make the festival a regular event, with a programme of professional development and network events for teachers and artists, and special experiences for the young people involved. This festival took place at the theatre in July 2006 and showcased work by six city primary schools created during the previous five months. This event, and the planning, implementation and educational processes in evidence were the main focus of the evaluation report. I proposed creating a narrative network at all levels. This idea fulfilled the intentions of the brief and created an evaluation framework, which teachers and artists could use to evaluate their own projects against creative learning outcomes. If possible this was also to be done through the pupils own evaluations of their work.

In my role as Project Evaluator I evaluated the project by establishing whether the Creative Partnerships overall project objectives and the schools' own chosen objectives were met. I offered recommendations for the development of the schools programme and model in the future. The whole process, of presenting my model, talking to artists and teachers, collecting information by visiting schools and observing creative learning workshops and lessons was a valuable learning experience. I found my teaching experience very useful in this and was quite surprised to find how easily this could inform my work. This was true both of actually evaluating and also in interacting with other professionals and understanding and recording some of their professional opinions concerns and preoccupations. The pupils' and parents' opinions were also very informative. In re-analysing this report data for my thesis I have been able to fulfil my own aims in looking for evidence of the effect of individuals' feelings in the process of learning. The effectiveness of providing contexts for affective learning processes was evident to me in the work of the festival. This work gave me an opportunity to study 'feelings' related learning in progress. The data collected could be re-analysed to illustrate motivational learning involving exploration of feelings by pupils, teachers and creative practitioners.

The completed data strands now provided a range of information for the achievement of my aims as follows:

1. To discover some reasons why students' labelled as school refusers are disaffected with education and consider their comments and points of view from data gained through home-tutoring them (Inquiry Strand 1: Tutoring 12 school refusers).
2. To evaluate my own learning and teaching experiences in helping students re-engage in education using a reflexive, ethnographic qualitative research method (Inquiry Strand 2 The author's learning processes).
3. To investigate and compare other teachers' experiences of learning and teaching through mentoring them (Inquiry Strand 3 Mentoring 8 volunteer teachers as learners).
4. To explore the potential to inform and illustrate significant strategies/interventions regarding professional practice and theory without being prescriptive (Inquiry Strand 4 Evaluating a primary school arts festival: observations of feeling based learning in action).
5. To disseminate findings, relating material from psychology, education, and counselling literature to teachers and teacher trainers through mentoring, presentation and educational publication (All four inquiry strands).

### **Finding my voice**

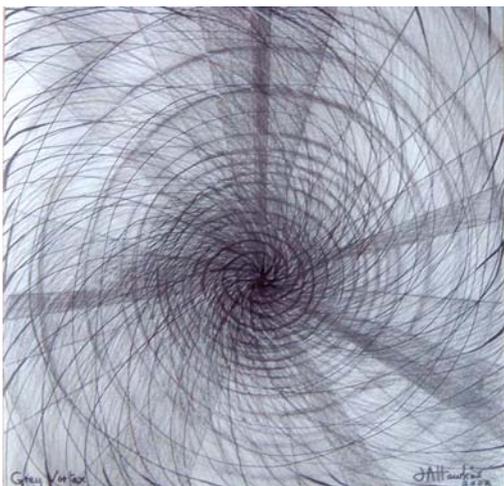
Looking back, I see that throughout the research I have continually explored, learned and rearranged my thoughts and ideas. Occasionally I wrote obscure and incoherent notes in my filofax, personal thoughts and feelings about my relationship problems (partner and parental), notes on counselling, arguments of principle about teaching and learning and parent/child relationships. The reluctance I felt in taking myself seriously and accepting my research as worthwhile has gone and also the need to write

obscure notes. My thinking is much more coherent. At the beginning my academic written work was often rambling, unfocussed and rather patronising in tone. For a short period I adopted the style of some self-help counselling books, where claims are made without clear evidence. I can see how difficult my work was to understand and feel grateful to my tutors for confining their main criticism to its good points! From a student's perspective this felt like an act of faith on their part, which I appreciated.

It took time, persistence and practice in redrafting to be able to communicate with clear purpose. For example in the spring of 2005 I bombarded Rebecca Lawthom and Carol Tindall with 20 abstracts for my PhD. I had a problem in being satisfied with any draft. This was due to anxiety in struggling to clarify my thoughts. Their patience in accepting my various offerings, their constructive criticism and support were vital to me. Their different styles were very helpful - Carol's attention to detailed understanding and Rebecca's conceptual approach. Both helped me develop my thoughts by asking me to clarify what I meant. This not only developed my writing style, it helped the learning and reasoning process.

My critical writing skills also developed by reading biographies of other people extracting points relevant to my research. Two in particular stood out early on. The first was a biography of Freud (Clark 1987) and the second was one about Einstein (Folsing 1997). In a sense these formed theoretical case studies on which I could practice using my teacher's and recently acquired psychology observation skills in readiness for ascertaining my participants' and my own possible perspectives. In the case of Freud I observed that his position in his family in relation to his siblings and his mother's attitude towards him could be seen to some extent to have influenced his theories. I gained confidence by discovering through my own modest teacher's analysis, that someone so 'important' in psychology could be shown to have made possible errors if one considered his upbringing (Clark 1987). I also looked at Einstein's childhood and discovered that he had been labelled as an under-achiever as a child. I found support for Einstein's family background as well as genetic potential having been an influence on his learning. He had referred to his subjective thinking processes as a child when his father gave him a magnet and made many other philosophical comments, which were helpful. As well as writing, I expressed my research through a series of metaphorical paintings entitled 'Emotional blocks to learning.'

### **Author's paintings entitled 'Emotional Blocks to Learning'**



**Grey vortex**



**Which way?**



**Thought trap**



**Bright idea**



**Camouflage**



**Endless vista**



**Thoughts**



**Stepping stones**



## Sky high

## Connections

### Overcoming my fear of ridicule and humiliation

In the first few years, although I was enjoying my course and felt there was much of value I had learned, I found it difficult to be objective. I wanted to communicate clearly, but my old habits of avoidance led to panic and confused thinking, even though I knew I had ideas which might be of value. My first presentation about the 'Muddle Model' went well, due I think to my initial enthusiasm for my subject. My second was a routine assessment outlining my research aims to a tutor I did not know. He appeared very disapproving and impatient, and I was surprised to get through. I had no feedback from this, so guessed that I had gone wrong by reading out my over complicated slides. I learned from this and my next one called 'What value narrative research?' given to a university research group in 2003, went reasonably, but was still too complicated in content. I struggled with presenting my work coherently while still coming to grips with its implications. However, my experiences in presenting had a profound effect on my thinking progression, thought re-organisation and learning. In 2005 I presented to the Social Change and Well Being group, breaking off to talk about my own emotional problems in presenting. This was a helpful 'breakthrough' for me emotionally, because the group members were sympathetic and uncritical of my incoherent ramblings. There were several underlying causes. I was struggling to cope with my emotional involvement and empathy for my school refusers - the complexity of their situations was hard to explain. My own emotional blocks to learning were causing communication problems, e.g. I was experiencing flashback feelings, no longer appropriate from hostile situations when my peers had bullied me as a child. I needed to practise and improve my communication skills in giving presentations. My third presentation entitled "Are emotions logical and if so should we change our teaching attitude?" was aimed at schoolteachers, which I realised too late, was inappropriate to most of the audience. I felt overwhelmed by the difficulty of semantics where emotions and feelings were concerned. I had not come to terms with my work and so could not present it to my own satisfaction.

I took part in two annual faculty conferences in 2004 and 2005, but found I was struggling to present my work coherently. They did not do justice to the practical work I had done and the profound gains in my understanding. It was hard to conceptualise the dynamic, interactive, adaptable, impermanent nature of learning processes. Eventually I came to understand that describing factually what I had done served as a structure, to which to some extent others could relate. They understood implicitly the difficulties of the subject, when it was brought to their attention. They had their own wisdoms and experiences to bring to it. My task was to raise awareness, rather than to explain everything. Throughout the research I found that producing PowerPoint work helped my conceptual thinking by enabling me to think in terms of bullet points, models and illustrations. Towards the end I undertook to run two workshops, which gave me confidence and learning opportunities. In 2005 I ran a short workshop for teachers during a Creative Partnerships networking day. I employed symbolic modelling techniques to encourage participants to think visually about the meaning of 'creative learning.' They appeared to find the experience enjoyable and worthwhile.

In March 2006 I organised a much more serious workshop for the North West Evaluation Network about the difficulties of evaluating with young people. The conference programme and presentations

including mine could be downloaded at that time from <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/files/W-EVAL-NET> (2007). This workshop was rather overcomplicated by my presentation at the beginning, which on realising I cut short, but even so went quite well. I learned a great deal by these experiences and met some very interesting people. In 2006 I produced four PowerPoint presentations. The first was together with a colleague in Creative Partnerships in order to justify further funding to prospective stakeholders. We each contributed slides, collaborated and presented it together. This was about the education action research programme I worked with as a mentor. I produced and presented two presentations to outline my plans for evaluating the primary schools' arts festival to teachers. Finally I was able to outline my 'practitioner' research and present it coherently at a British Educational Research Conference at a Teacher Training College near London. This last one was received very well and gave me confidence in the value of my research in terms of comments from others in the field who found it useful. In July 2007 I won the annual research poster competition for the faculty. At about this time, I met and forwarded my literature review chapters and poster to Mick Waters, Director of the National Curriculum and received a reference from him. In it he stated that, provided my analysis of data was sufficiently sound, he believed my work could have an impact on the British educational system. I am hoping that this will turn out to be the case after six months of substantial re-analysis and redrafting prior to re-submission.

### 2.3 Autobiography-a childhood view from memory 1947-1967 (written in 2002)

Where to start?

I remember being in my big wooden cot and the strange sensation when I found myself bottom to top. Suddenly my view changed!!! What else? I still recall a vivid picture in my mind's eye of the miniature pink roses on the fence in our back garden - a mass of blooms. Their beauty entranced me. Crawling through the long grass with a little friend and remembering his name Martin Widowson. A vague memory of a sore mouth when he pushed the swing at me, and it hit and broke my tooth. I developed a boil on the gum, which took a while to heal. Feeding hens on holiday in a field near a caravan-I have a photo of this. Seeing our little piano being attacked by a blind piano tuner and some material ripped out of it because he thought it was full of mice! No early memories of my brother or sister or father. One early painful memory remains, of my mother in our kitchen in the Midlands. I was less than four years old. We had been shopping. She had bought me a small plastic toy washer in pale blue and pink. It was just like her big one - a strange tub affair on legs with a mangle on the top! I threw it unthinkingly across the kitchen and it broke. I was devastated, but she was furious with me and threw it in the bin. I wanted to explain that I hadn't meant to do it I didn't know things broke, but she was ranting on and on. There was no forgiveness or understanding and I knew that it would not be mended or retrieved. I had blown it and a strange desolate feeling settled over me.

In 1951 we moved from WestBromwich in the Midlands to Mold in North Wales. We went in a big dark car on the long journey. We lived in a fairly modern farmhouse next to the chemical factory, which was being built along with our brand new house. My father would work as the works manager at the factory for the next 20 years. My father, an industrial chemist, spent long hours setting up the plant, organising building work. He would shut himself in the dining room to be away from mother's nagging monologues in order to do the factory stock-taking and accounts every month, using an odd looking calculating device - a sort of telescope with tiny numbers on it. I played a lot with my brother's little model cars with little traffic lights and zebra crossings. I was disappointed when it was given away. I longed for a toy train set and was disappointed to be given a big plastic, walking, talking doll I named Valerie. There were not many toys compared to today, but I did lots of drawing and mum saved the white sided cardboard out of Dad's new shirts for me to draw on. I would get her button box and spend happy hours making patterns and pictures on the sitting room carpet with the buttons. Hula-hoops were a later craze and I had a yellow one, but could not rotate my middle fast enough to keep it up for long! I had a rubber baby doll called Daisy who wore little red rubber Wellington boots that stained her legs pink. She always came in the bath with me every night before bed. After brushing my teeth I went to bed with a glass of cold milk and an apple. Why didn't I brush my teeth afterwards? I've no idea, but my mother was not a woman to argue with and I did as I was told.

One dark evening I got out of bed to find no one in the house. I went out in the dark, walked along the pavement on the main road, right along past the factory and the big main gates, down the path and into the new house. I looked about me, blinking at the bright light and looking up the huge, bare, whitewood stairs without banisters - at the top stood my family. There were exclamations and I looked down at my blue dressing gown with the little white rabbit appliquéd in the corner. Was I wearing slippers? Probably, I was a sensible child. In 1952 I was 5 and my brother and sister were aged 17 and 18 respectively and suddenly they disappeared. My brother went to stay with an aunt and uncle in the Midlands to do an apprenticeship in a car factory and my sister to teacher training college in Bangor in North Wales. They were kind and caring when they were home. They read bedside stories to me - even the dreaded 'Peter, Patsy and Primrose', which I could not get enough of and which was boring to them. I think my sister must have taught me to read, and my brother certainly listened to me occasionally. At home my mother seemed permanently suffused with rage. She ranted and raved at my father and me. She slammed the food on the table every mealtime, she slammed doors. She hated Wales, she hated Mold, she hated the factory, and she hated the neighbours. She particularly hated the manager and the manager's wife in their posh house. She hated our house, which admittedly was big and cold with 50's metal window frames and a big cold hall, stairs and landing, which had to be heated with paraffin heaters, a coal boiler in the kitchen and a coal fire in the sitting room.

My mother hated her family and especially her mother. She ignored family birthdays on all sides including sometimes her children's. My sister always organised these including mine. My mother despised my father's family who thought they were upper class and better than anybody else. She said nasty things about everybody, except her children. We were merely the subject of unhappy comments:

nobody liked us; we were no good at games (this was true as we never did any sport); and other people were jealous of us. We couldn't help being the way we were. She cried for days and days because my brother had left home, she would sit rocking herself to and fro in an agony of woe, repeating "Poor Barrie, poor Barrie!" Later there were periods of similar behaviour when it would be "Poor Kathleen, poor Kathleen! I couldn't love her when she was a baby! I was too shocked at giving birth!" "My mother never told me! She didn't care about me!" There would be more tears and rocking back and to and I would try desperately to cheer her up with cups of tea and anything else I could distract her with. I remember at the age of 4 or 5 packing a little old-fashioned leather suitcase and telling her I was going to live with my grandmother in the Midlands. She sat in floods of tears in the sitting room. She said, "You'd better go then!" I reached the end of the long wall beyond our long garden path, realised my foolishness and returned to find her sitting in exactly the same position I had left her in. I felt very alone, I had thought she would pull herself together and follow me, but she hadn't. Then there were the times when I was told to have nothing to do with certain people because they weren't like us: they were ignorant, dirty and rude.

I was told not to go to Parry's shop because Mr. Parry had looked in my mother's purse. I was to be careful of the shopkeepers in the town who were all after your money. They short changed you and gave you low weight. The cleaning lady was a thin, tired, gentle, dignified person who did a good job and was given my old clothes for her daughter. I can remember spending hours looking for the nutcrackers, because she was supposed to have pinched them, only to find them eventually down the back of the settee! According to my mother my father was a fool and an imbecile; he was no good with money. He would not have sex with her whatever that meant! He was always burning kettle bottoms out on the stove and leaving the gas poker in the fire to disintegrate, while he wandered off to read a book and forgot about them. The way she carried on you would have thought at the least he was a rapist or a drunkard or even a murderer. He had gone to the war to be one of the lads; he had enjoyed being away with them, leaving her on her own to cope with everything. She sat for hours crying and reading women's magazines. My father for his part would come in from work and disappear behind the Daily Telegraph until she had exhausted herself and calmed down. He would watch the television and go to bed and read a book in the light of his bedside lamp. Early evening I would go up to bed and leave the sitting room door and my bedroom door open and he would grumble gently at me "Put the wood in the hole!" because it was draughty and there was no central heating. This was largely because I had seen a science fiction series called Quatermass on the television and had been frightened by an episode in which the aliens had crushed someone. There was supposed to be blood coming out of a pipe. Of course it was all in black and white but I was still scared and the taunting introductory tune 'Little Red Monkey' made me shudder whenever I heard it for years afterwards. Even today the old black and white film based on that early series is recommended to be for adults only. I remember how I came to watch it - as bedtime approached I would become very quiet and try to be invisible and quite often would be overlooked and forgotten about as I tried to avoid the cold trek to bed.

During the night I would hear the sound of shouting and arguing, my father's voice shouting, "What's the matter with you woman? Don't talk so soft! Why are you so bloody minded?" Occasionally I would see him swig from a big medicine bottle full of a strange brown liquid, which was his medicine called barbitone. (I realise now this must have been a barbiturate prescribed by the doctor to calm his nerves after his wartime experiences.) Every morning without fail he would come into my bedroom at 8 o'clock to bring me a cup of tea and stand looking out of the window talking pleasantly to me about what he saw. Sometimes I would not even wake up on holiday days and I would wake later to find a cold cup of tea at my side. He called me 'Tuppence' and my big treat was to go to Mold market with him and go and see 'Old Pussy Whiskers', the old man on the second-hand bookstall and spend my half a crown pocket money. We would smuggle our books back, but would invariably be caught with "I don't know why you buy all these books, more rubbish for me to dust!" Another treat with my Dad was to patrol the works with him at the weekend and go and have a cup of tea with the security man and visit the little steam engine that carried the chemical stocks on the little railway line or go and stand on the weighing platform for the chemical tankers that rocked as you swayed on it or visit Mrs. Davies, an elderly widow who lived in a little cottage on works property, for a cup of tea and a piece of home made cake.

At the side of our house was the 'right of way', a footpath down which trooped all the local children, families and lovers during the summer holidays carrying their rugs and baskets of sandwiches and pop. They would climb the stile and go across Parry's field and run the gauntlet of his young bullocks and cows being fattened for market. Their cowpats were more dangerous than they were! There was a small

stream half way across with planks of wood making a wide bridge. They would climb the high ladder stile across the railway line, over a similar stile and along banks of the river Alun. I was once trapped on that far field stile, frozen with fear when a silly young cow tried to eat the skirt of my blue and white polka dot summer dress. I managed to drag it out of its mouth all slimy and dripping and held it away from my bare legs while it dried in the summer sun! I could wander quite a distance from home on my own, with only my natural caution preventing me from going too far. It was safe in those days and my mother rarely checked up on me. I had a wonderful area of country lanes and fields to wander around, which grew larger as I grew myself. The river Alun was a small, shallow meandering river with exciting stepping stones, mysterious animal holes in its banks, little shingle beaches for paddling and green slimy mossy streamers in its shaded stony parts. There was a little bridge under the railway for the adventurous where you could sit and listen to the little train go past overhead if you were lucky, for it made only about two journeys a day. It was glorious to spend happy hours fishing with nets for stickle backs and red bellies with my sometime friends, putting them into jam jars with string handles and taking them proudly home. The next day there would be exclamations of dismay to see the fish floating dead in the jam jar. We always hoped they would live and continued relentlessly and ignorantly to collect these hapless creatures. Only in my teens did I mourn their passing when I viewed the dead river devoid of all signs of life due to the waste from the factory. How could this have happened when my father went to meetings of the local water authority? Sadly I wonder now why I never asked him. Ecology was not an issue of such public interest as it is today.

My mother did not like having local children round, but I was allowed to make friends with two nice little girls called June and Ann who lived nearby. When they came to play, she locked all the doors so we could not come into the house, but we would go and make dens in the long grass in the wild part of our garden, which was in the process of being converted from a field. We ate the sour 'goosegogs' off the gooseberry bushes and picked blackcurrants for my mother to make jam. Ann and June were good friends and lived with their Gran, quite near in one of the old council houses where I would visit them and play in the old garden shed. Sadly their mother had died from Tuberculosis, and other relatives were bringing up their two brothers. Their father was a steeplejack who sent money home for them to their Gran. If Mum was in a good mood she would give us a bowl of sugar to dip raw rhubarb stems in, to suck and chew. Sweets were a once a week treat we got with our pocket money from Parry's shop or Billie Box's. The most popular were sherbert dabs - little paper tubes of sherbert with a piece of liquorice tube to suck up the sherbert. There were liquorice bootlaces, gob stoppers which changed colour as you sucked them and were frequently and unhygienically removed at regular intervals to check their progress and Spanish wood (actual twigs of the liquorice to chew on)! Otherwise you bought a quarter of what you fancied from the massed ranks of glass sweet jars in each shop. These were an assortment of pear drops, aniseed balls, Everton toffees, dolly mixtures, fruit salad, orange drops, lemon drops, humbugs, glacier mints, spearmint toffees and liquorice allsorts.

I was eventually given our big old garden shed, previously a chicken coup as a proper den and we spent hours in there with an old garden table and tatty old bits of curtains and furniture. When I was about ten my sister came back from a holiday in Holland with a pair of Dutch clogs for me! Oh joy, I put them on and staggered my painful way up to Ann and June's house to show them off, only to find they were out. I had to stagger back doing the last bit in bare feet! I can still remember the agony and disappointment. After that they sat on the windowsill as ornaments! Sadly Ann and June went to another junior school on the other side of town and moved away about the time I started secondary school. I wrote to my sister at college telling her when I had measles. She kept all my letters, my birthday cards and cuttings of my baby hair. My sister tried out educational ideas on me. There were Cusenaire rods supposed to help my maths; there were country walks collecting, pressing and identifying flowers. She made me a lovely doll in a little wooden bed and showed me her puppets, pottery, weaving and sewing she had made at college. She taught me how to weed and do the garden. She and my brother gradually got the huge garden under control. My Dad mowed the grass that was mowable, and the lawn was gradually extended to most of the third of an acre plot by my brother's efforts over twenty years.

At eleven my sister arranged for me to join a school trip to Belgium with the school where she taught in Nuneaton. I don't know why she couldn't come with me. I went on my own, made friends with the other children and had a great time. In my teens she took me away on holiday to a holiday camp in Wales. Although I loved her I was not always very grateful, taking her rather for granted and I think playing her up a little as I would have done to my mother if I had dared. I once said I would never be a teacher like her in front of some children at my birthday party, which was lovely and which she had

organised for me. What an ungrateful brat! My brother was very patient with me and we would amuse ourselves singing funny little rhymes while washing up. I can remember making rude remarks about 'Six Five Special' the pop music programme on T.V. and saying I would never listen to pop music as they did when I grew up! Early on in Mold, two events happened, which stick in my mind; the buying of a television for the coronation and the death of my father's mother. The television was a large, ugly, dark brown, rectangular cuboid in wood with a small, bright, blurry grey screen. We sat and watched the coronation. A small black and white frightened looking woman appeared to be walking miles up a long carpet with a huge heavy hat on her head carrying some strange objects. Why was this interesting I wondered? It was obviously a big deal as some neighbours even came in to watch it with us, which had never happened before.

My Grandma Austin's house was in Westbromwich in the Midlands. Entering the house was like going into a dark cave. It had a peculiar musty earthy damp smell with a hint of old ladies' knickers, hardly surprising as this was obviously what it was. My mother, never one to mince words said Grandma couldn't cope with washing any more and simply dried her wet pants out and people were too scared to argue with her. The scullery was cold and had bare wooden shelves and a funny shallow sink as well as a huge deep white one. The living room was like a box with a tall ceiling; an old fashioned cast iron fire place; a coal fire burning brightly and a mantle piece above; heavy faded, dusty velvet curtains inside the doors on brass fittings, big sausage draught excluders; rugs and Grandma's old armchair and an old brown leather settee with faded cushions. There was a table with a plush cover in rusty brown. Grandma's bad tempered old corgi dog hid under there when I went and we viewed each other warily from a distance. Occasionally it would make little sorties into the room, veer towards me and nip at the air as if it was trying to get me into trouble. I suppose it was jealous because Grandma made much of me and fussed me, telling everybody I had hair the colour of a new penny and what a surprise it was. I was pleased but embarrassed by this attention. There was a long dark passage from the living room, which was the hall, on the left a little table with an old telephone like a little horn on a pole. On the right my Grandma's bedroom and beyond that the front room with grand oak dining table, chairs and sideboard all to match. There were lots of posh things in that room, silver, crystal and pictures. I was there after my Grandma died and felt a desperate need to go into her room to say goodbye, but it was not allowed.

Soon after my Grandma's death my huge uncle came to visit us in Wales and brought some jewellery to be shared between my sister and myself, a pendant and a brooch each and a gold watch and a doll for me. My uncle Fraser greeted me by lifting me up in his arms. I was terrified. He was six foot six and enormously broad with a dark moustache. It was like going up the side of a mountain! The doll was beautiful, a real treasure of Victoriana, a flower girl dressed in black velvet with an 'Eliza Dolittle' outfit, little black hat, long coat, dress, petticoat, long white pantaloons and a basket of violets. She disappeared mysteriously about two years later, never to be seen again. I chose the pendant and brooch I thought my sister didn't want. She wore the gold watch and it broke. I still have it. I started school at four and a half at the Church of England infant school in the little market town. Whenever the Mold assizes were in session, they started with the judge processing through the streets in his robes and the school pupils were all made to line up in the playground in his honour as he went past. I wonder if this was some dark warning to us to steer clear of a life of crime! When I walked into the infant class, the sight of the toys and games in prospect thrilled me, but when they found I could read and write these were not allowed and I was put straight into class work. I did not know any of the other children. My mother took me in the car at first but by the time I was 5 I was walking the long journey on my own.

I walked all the way past our new garden, which was half a rough field around our newly built house. Past a row of older council houses on the left, where some of the factory workers lived opposite Parry's shop (pronounced Paris by the locals) and on up the long road, past the garage on the left, the Drover's Arms Public House on the right, the row of terraced houses where our widowed cleaning lady and her two children lived, past Billy Box's shop crammed full of old boxes, along past a big open green in front of the brand new council house estate (more factory workers' families) Opposite was the little tin chapel where I had queued up with the other children for my coronation cup, saucer, plate and orange in 1952(?). I had worn an elaborate party frock, made especially for the event - a gorgeous creation in pale blue with tiny little coloured roses, which stood up on the braid around the waist and hem. I had loved it, but was embarrassed to see the other children in smart but plainer clothes. I walked on up the steep slope and round the big bend of Bailey's Hill with old houses along on the left and the big stone wall round the park on the right, down past more old houses, the chip shop and along past the huge Anglican church. We went twice on Sunday and I would sit patiently during the long services looking

around at its beautiful interior. There was a terrace of small old shops going derelict in front of it then - long since pulled down. On I went down into the town along the big high street with larger shops on either side, down to the traffic lights turn left and at last in a short distance on the left - the school. After the age of 11 the journey was even further; at least half the distance again to get to the secondary school on the far side of town. I seem to remember it as being two miles, but this could be wrong. Even when I got a bicycle it still seemed a long way and I still had to get off it to trek up Bailey's Hill.

School seemed interminable, it went on for 14 years and it felt like a penance. On the way I ran the gauntlet of the factory workers' children. I was called after and had my hat and gloves swiped, my glasses taken off me. One day, the cleaning lady's daughter ran out of her house and slapped my face. A boy regularly hit me with his toy sword from the wall at the end of his garden as I walked home from school. I was once nearly strangled by my school scarf when it was grabbed either end by two shouting groups of kids having a tug of war. I was gasping for breath and I don't remember why they stopped! Pens and pencil boxes were mysteriously taken from my satchel. My parents would be annoyed and buy me new ones and insist on them being taken back to school with me. "You need a good pen," my father would say, "Don't be so careless! Look after it!" My mother would shout at me to wear my glasses and harangue me about how important it was! She would hang out of the front door shouting at me as I disappeared on the long trek to school. Had I got this, had I got that, did I have my dinner money? I was always late and was made to stand in a corner or told off in front of the class. I was very religious and took in all I was taught at Sunday school and at home. I must be loving and kind at all times. I must overcome my own evil nature. I must turn the other cheek. I had a prayer corner in the corner of my bedroom with a little wooden cross on it and I said my prayers every night. I was meek and mild and if I did have the slightest improper thought it was confessed to Jesus immediately. He became my invisible friend. I was a proper little goody two shoes!

The primary school was a Victorian building in its original state. The infants and juniors had two huge rooms as well as smaller classrooms. They were divided by old, thick green curtains and, as frequently happened, when miscreants were shouted at for some wrongful act or misdemeanour, the neighbouring class became silent as they listened to the shouting from behind the curtain. Misdemeanours were many, from getting inkblots on your work, wriggling, talking or simply not paying attention or failure to get work done. All the teachers used anger and sarcasm as weapons of control, and we were made to feel small and powerless. In the top junior class, the ferocious, elderly Miss Lloyd who had red hair, warts and bristly hairs on her face taught me. She had a sister who was even worse and had terrified me in the upper infants' class. I was reading a book and I remember acting the voice of a character as I momentarily forgot my fear lost in the story. She was impressed and decided to give me a starring role in the school panto as the fairy godmother in Cinderella. I was thrilled though disbelieving; the only problem - would I be able to get a costume? Surely, I thought, my mother would make it; she was a good sewer. It was all arranged. My mother had an acquaintance at the other end of town she had met in the Inner Wheel ladies group. This lady had a daughter my size with a fairy outfit I could borrow. On the day of the dress rehearsal I asked my mother where the costume was. "Oh she's changed her mind," she said, "and I've no time to make it now, you'll have to manage without." Oh well, it was 'Hobson's choice'; I could not let the school down, so rehearsal and performance were done with my school coat round my shoulders and the routine silver foil star on a stick wand! The stage was set up so and the whole school attended, at the end there was loud applause and parents rushed up and congratulated their children. Needless to say neither of my parents attended. I don't suppose my father even knew about it.

At school I was a laughing stock in games because I could not catch a ball. I had never played or watched a team game or been told the rules. In junior school I was always sent to look for the ball in the wild garden of the empty house next door to the schoolyard. No one was sent to help me and the whole game was held up with much raising of eyes to heaven. Nobody wanted me on his or her team in rounders; there were loud groans when I went in to bat. At the Grammar school I was always on the 'reserves' in the hockey lesson and the teacher yelled and shouted like one possessed as I rushed about hitting wildly in all directions when she finally frightened me into action. 'Bullying off' was a good description of the start of the game and the choice language and swear words used by some of the other girls were an education to me! I missed balls in netball and fell over every piece of equipment in the shiny new gym. I was nicknamed 'Twinkle Toes' because I had long narrow feet, which at that time were out of proportion with my height. I seemed to be the only one who was jeered at on sport's day before the whole school. Luckily my family never came. I moved through the days at school in a frozen dream, I felt too shocked to show any feeling and a strange pride refused to let me cry. I would not

show weakness and my mother had advised me that I must not retaliate because it would be unchristian. Turning the other cheek and keeping a low profile were the only defence strategies she offered me. This was ineffective and if I responded in class to some taunt or mean action, it was usually me who got told off, given detention or made to go and stand outside.

In the first year I had made friends with Susan. She was quiet and shy on the face of it, but with an iron will, secretive and had a bit of a mean streak, though she was generally kind to me. She was nicknamed 'Olive Oil' after Popeye's girlfriend. She had pretty blue eyes and fair hair, but was painfully thin and she would blush in spectacular fashion when she was embarrassed. She too was an outsider with an elderly rather morose Norwegian father and a kind but ineffectual mother. She had been to the private school nicknamed 'Polly Parrots'. We stuck together, but were unable to fend off the verbal abuse of the other children. At 13, reluctantly I would go with her to meet the farm boy at dinnertime who worked on her father's farm. We would all stand about in a side street looking sheepish with our bicycles. When a teacher spotted us it was me who was shouted at and threatened back at school. It simply didn't occur to anybody that she was the instigator because she was so flat chested and immature looking. Neither did it occur to them that these dinnertime chats were entirely innocent. I was too loyal to tell on her and she did not confess. This went on secretly for about three years with a second farm boy, who she eventually married. In junior school I was terrified of maths lessons and the dreaded mental arithmetic. We would be made to stand up and recite our times tables in front of the class. I was too terrified to think at all and always got them wrong. I remember coming home with pride reciting 'Gentle Jesus' in Welsh and loving the rhythm and sound of the words and my father being annoyed that I was being taught Welsh. Why was this surprising, I wonder since we were living in Wales? I had to go for private Welsh lessons to get me through the Eleven-Plus Exam, which everyone had to take. I found out much later at eighteen that I had been offered a place in a Welsh secondary class because I did so well, but my father never told me. How I would have loved to have known that I was good at something!

There were happy times in the school holidays when my big brother and sister came home and we we toured around the Welsh countryside with my Dad driving the big blue Wolsley and my mother still haranguing him shouting "Brake! Stop! Slow down! Turn left! Change down! Watch out!" I learned to switch off and detach myself, taking exquisite pleasure in the scenery, especially the bare branches of trees against a blue sky, the beautiful sunsets on our way back from Wales and the mountains of Llandegla Moor, the Horseshoe Pass and Snowdonia. When we saw an RAC man on his motorbike he would salute us and if my mother wasn't watching I would salute back. On Sundays especially in Wales, where law strictly banned the public drinking of alcohol, every village and town appeared empty and still. It was a long quiet day when there was hardly any traffic. Small numbers of people walked to church or chapel at service times, but children did not play out and only the odd stray dog wandered the streets. What did people do? Officially they rested and avoided work because this was what God had decreed in the Bible. In summer some may have furtively mowed the lawn or washed the car, but this was not evident in our town. Dads mostly did these jobs on Saturday after Saturday morning work. My father worked Saturday mornings until he retired in about 1970, as did most other men. In the fifties Sundays in countryside Wales were only for looking at scenery. We took picnics using the new plastic 'Tupperware' containers the pride and joy of most Mums, because all the shops and cafes were closed. Seaside town shops were closed in summer, even when the beach was quite busy with day-trippers. These people had to organise themselves to bring all the necessary paraphernalia required for a day on the beach. There were very few facilities laid on and they could probably not have afforded them if there had been. Few people had cars in the early fifties, so many would come by train or bus or would be staying in local accommodation or caravans for their annual holiday. During the late fifties and early sixties traffic steadily increased until there were regular traffic jams. These were in and out of North Wales along the main routes: in on Friday evening and out on Sunday evening. The day was not complete if at some point you did not get fish and chips for one of your meals and these were increasingly available on Sundays too, though only at restricted times.

When my brother was home he would drive slowly round the works on a Sunday and I would be allowed to stand on the running board, holding onto the door handle for a treat! When he took me out in the new Morris Oxford for a spin he got it up to 90 miles an hour he said, but I was not frightened as he was a very good driver! I was sworn to secrecy but betrayed his trust to my parents who were not in the least concerned. Mum was a frightening driver, leaving the choke out and kangarooing in terrifying fashion, going the wrong way down one way streets on a regular basis, having to write to court admitting her guilt for this at one point. She had never taken a driving test and as she still held a licence

from before the war simply got in our first car after it and drove it (after a fashion!). During one journey home from the Welsh seaside, I was suddenly catapulted off the back seat onto the floor, spilling my bucket of shells and looked up to find we were in the middle of a field! In my teens there was another hair-raising adventure with Mum, though not altogether her fault. We were going to a wedding near Coventry before the days of motorways and, late as ever, were flying down a long straight hill far too fast, when a slow moving farm wagon came into view. My mother slammed on the brakes but they failed to respond. She shouted that she was going down through the gears and just made it through a gap in the cars coming the other way. I remember looking back to see a gesticulating old farm labourer glaring and yelling furiously after us!

In the days when I was growing up, it was the custom to take a photo of each group of wedding guests as they arrived in the hope that they would buy their picture. Since my father was often asked to the chemical factory employees' weddings I was often taken along. I also went with my parents to various family weddings which were always a good three or four hour journey away. As my mother always bought the picture, there are many photos of me with my parents arriving at weddings with a sullen and mutinous expression on my face. I wonder if I actually broke any cameras with my awful looks!! This was because I was always made to wear some dreadful - to my mind - coat, hat and gloves which I had tried to refuse when they had been bought. The annual Easter expedition to Lewis's in Liverpool or C&A's was fraught in itself and did not hold many happy memories. Even if I liked the outfit, the hours of standing about and my mother's discussion with my sister and the shop assistant about how to correct my tummy bulge and big bottom and get a colour to match my hair and a hat to hide my big ears, that would stay on my head because of my slippy hair, was enough to take the pleasure out of it! Another separate expedition, which was equally embarrassing, usually followed to try to find some smart shoes for my big feet!!

My mother gave the impression that 'sorting me out' and correcting my deficiencies was a major task, which had to be undertaken, however onerous, because it was her duty as a mother. She frequently told me what a difficult birth she had had and how the midwife told her, "My word you were lucky! Amazing to have such a big baby!" This was probably true as my mother was only a little over 5 feet and my father was six feet tall. I took after his mother, my Grandmother, in physique who had been nearly six feet tall and shuffled about in men's leather slippers because of her big feet. There had been some confusion at my birth because the midwife had told my distant father by telephone that I was a boy and cards were sent out telling relatives I was to be called Roger! This was put down to the fact that the poor midwife had 'flu and there had been six other deliveries that night. Surprisingly my father was not blamed for the mistake! Having been regaled with this tale I can remember daydreaming quite often that I had been mixed up and would be claimed one day by my true parents! These would be whatever my imagination fancied, from the obvious young, rich and good-looking to a gypsy girl's illegitimate child. I half hoped that my young aunt and uncle, who were active, personable and 'with it' people who ran a garage in the midlands had given me away. They had produced a son two days before me who also surprisingly had ginger hair like me! A new phenomenon in the family as they were all generally brown haired. Surely we could have been twins and I could then have parents of the correct age and outlook, which would have the advantage of making me more 'normal'! I was told that there had been much joking by uncles of an active ginger haired milkman in the midlands, the area both our mothers lived in when I was conceived. I do remember one conversation between my mother and her mother in which they were wondering where the strange hair came from. This was concluded with the comment that a long deceased Uncle Percy had had red hair but it was probably a wig! Neither party saw any humour in this conclusion whatsoever!

There are several photos of me at weddings looking very sullen, the reason being that I had usually just endured a frightening journey by car accompanied by a harangue from my mother. Topics ranged over my father's slowness and extravagance, his inability to drive properly and how hard done to she was. I would be tidied and straightened and my hair complained about as a major cause for concern because it was too fine and slippy (slides and bows would not stay in it and hats would not stay on straight!), then some strange creation of a hat would be firmly jammed on my head. I would be told to keep up, keep my hat on, to stand up straight and to smile. This last order was quite impossible to meet after the prelude to the photograph, which had rendered me anxious about our safety, self-conscious, worried we would be late and so attract even more attention by walking in after the bride. At one local wedding an imp of mischief got into me and when my father was standing for a hymn I slipped my horrible 'old lady' pink stepped straw hat, with its elastic band to hold it on at the back. on to his seat and he sat on it. Much to his concern and my delight it was squashed flat! On one of the wedding journeys my father

drove through three red lights while trying to adjust a small, loose transistor radio on the dashboard so maybe my mother had a point about his driving! He was slow and imperturbable and he just let all life's difficulties wash over him generally showing a good-natured smiling face to the world. He knew Mum couldn't help being the way she was and when he did remonstrate it seemed more from a sense of helpless incredulity than real anger. Once when I was thirteen and I complained out loud about her, he astonished me by slapping my face and saying, "You're talking about the woman I love!" It was the only time he ever laid a hand on me.

An early and vivid memory was of going to the seaside when I was about five. The big family car stopped on the prom and I was set me down with my bucket and spade. Suddenly it started up again and sped away leaving me there. I burst into tears and a kind lady took me to a phone box to report finding me to the police. In the police station, the story goes my mother was reporting the loss of her gold watch when the policeman looked up from the phone and he said, "I don't suppose you've lost a little girl with ginger hair have you?" "Oh no!" they replied, "wait a minute where's Jennifer?!" On another occasion Mum disappeared in Chester while we were walking past a shop: I looked round and she had gone. I was taken to the police station again by a kindly passer-by. She did come for me, but there was no sense of reassurance, only the feeling that I had been at fault and caused her worry and aggravation.

Mum was always taking me to the doctor's. She had a grim demeanour, which did not reassure me. We would go and sit on the row of old dining chairs at the surgery and wait to be seen by Dr. Dobson or Dr. Lewis. When I was four I had whooping cough and whooped and coughed my heart out. The doctor visited me and my mother purchased a strange large lamp, which he recommended. This was called 'infra red' and 'sun ray' depending which bulb was put in and I had to sit before it with a bare chest and sunglasses on. My feet were a further source of aggravation to my mother. They were huge for my age and flat. I was taken in and out of numerous shoe shops in Mold, Chester and Liverpool and bought big, ugly but comfortable 'Start-rite' shoes. Mum's idea of school clothes was pretty grim as her favourite colour was grey or fawn and so I went to infant and juniors in grey skirts, grey jumpers and grey knee stockings held up by elastic bands. I looked depressing with my pink national health specs, wispy auburn hair and sensible corrective shoes. Everyone else wore normal coloured clothes but I wore unremitting grey and it felt as though it was a price I had to pay for not being 'normal' like other children. At least at secondary school the others also wore school uniform, but I still felt different, conspicuous and odd throughout my school career.

I was also taken to the dentist every six months from an early age and at first screamed and screamed and refused to open my mouth until the son took over the practice and frightened me into submission by slapping me on the face to stop my hysterics - 'for my own good' he told my mother. This was the beginning of ten years of terror, during which the dentist saved money on injections because he knew I was afraid of them. He would always ask me if I wanted them and I would say no and suffer the pain rather than have them. Every six months from five to about fourteen. There was never an occasion when I didn't need a filling or a replacement filling. My mother was told that I had exceptionally soft teeth and it is only recently I have discovered that my adult teeth were actually very strong, when having become so unsightly and pockmarked with fillings I had to have them capped at the front. My modern dentist told me he got through two diamond cutters in order to do the job!

My eyes were yet another problem and I was always going for eye tests and glasses. At first I had the ugly pale pink national health ones with a bandage over one lens to get my 'lazy eye' to work and then later I was bought big ones with ugly old lady frames. I was often taunted about them at school, called 'four eyes' and had them snatched or bent by naughty boys. Mother would hang out of the front door as I left for school each day exhorting me to keep them on! It was irresistible not to take them off as soon as I got round the corner! In my mother's defence I have since discovered that I would have had great difficulty in seeing if I had not been trained into glasses as a child in this way since I have a bad astigmatism in my right eye.

My mother and sister played the piano. I enjoyed listening, but had no natural ability. I was given piano lessons and remember that I enjoyed the early stages, but could not progress. My mother was insistent and I had six consecutive teachers over about six years and I came to dread the lessons. I was taken to ballet classes because she hoped this would cure my clumsiness and flat feet. These took place in the assembly rooms in Mold. I was taken to the Hammond Ballet School in Chester for my exams and was upset when my mother threw my 'blue belt' away which I had struggled so hard to earn. At 11, I went

into the little 'cottage' hospital to have my tonsils out. I remember the doom-laden walk to the hospital, with my mother in determined and sombre mood, my fear before and the pain in my throat after the operation. There was much talk of ice cream by falsely smiling nurses on the ward as a reward for putting up bravely with the pain and not making a fuss. They didn't need to tell me, I had been rigorously trained by my mother to 'put up with things' for my own long term good! I was too miserable to enjoy the ice cream when it finally appeared - a small scoop of unadorned vanilla in a hospital dish.

When I was eleven I went to stay with an aunt and uncle (my mother was one of seven) in the Midlands, while my parents went on holiday. My younger boy cousin contracted influenza, which turned to pneumonia. At first I helped nurse him, but then started to feel ill myself. My uncle and aunt were too distressed to pay me much attention and realising that I was in the way I told my aunt I had packed my suitcase and I would go to my Grandma. I left and made the walk through strange industrial town streets finding my way with some trepidation. I had a sore throat and chest. My grandmother (my mother's mother) greeted me kindly and looked after me until I felt better. My grandfather, a short, bespectacled, fat old man, never normally spoke to me apart from giving me a painful bear hug on arrival. He was permanently ensconced in front of the television watching the horses, out at the bookies or at the pub. I shared a bedroom with a grown up second cousin. One night when she was out with her boyfriend, my grandfather suddenly appeared in my bedroom. I was standing by the open window in my pyjamas. I said "Hello Grandad, I can't breathe, the air is much worse than at home." He said, "Don't be so bloody stupid!" and looked very angry. I was shocked - these were the only words I can ever remember him speaking to me and with that he left. I was tall for my age and articulate. Looking back now, I wonder what was in his mind at the time. My mother was not concerned when she heard about my illness, but seemed shocked to find I was staying at her parents' house. I returned home with my parents by car.

#### 2.4 Critical events timeline-list of personal emotional events as I grew up 1947-1967 (written in 2006)

POSITIVE or incidental	NEGATIVE
06.06.47 Born. I was a large baby with auburn hair	Although my mother looked after me dutifully, she made me feel guilty. She constantly repeated the story of my birth and how she had been lucky to survive having such a large baby.
Under 3 - I remember being in my cot, the garden with the beautiful miniature climbing roses in bloom and my first playmate.	I was frightened when my mother got very angry with me when I broke a toy. She always talked to me as if I was an adult.
1950 We moved from the Midlands to North Wales. At first we lived in a temporary house.	I woke up one evening to an empty house. My family had gone down the road to look at the new house being built for us. I walked along the road to find them. They seemed surprised and annoyed to see me.
1951 My brother and sister taught me to read.	I had almost no contact with children of my own age until I started school.
Spring 1952 Started school early aged less than 5 years. The other children didn't know me and I stood out amongst so many dark haired children with my ginger hair, glasses, different accent and the grey clothes my mother favoured.	I was not allowed to play with the infant toys because I could already read. I was disliked and envied by some children and possibly teachers because I was the daughter of the local factory manager. They thought I needed taking down a peg.
Summer hols aged 4 -5 I enjoyed going out on trips round North Wales with the family in our car. I loved the beautiful countryside. I was lucky as not many people could afford cars.	I was forgotten by the whole family and left on the seaside prom at Rhyl. A kind woman rang the police station for me, where they were reporting my mothers lost watch. I was shocked to hear that on being asked if they had lost a little red haired girl they replied that they hadn't.
September 1952 I was given glasses. I enjoyed reading, visiting the library, walking around the chemical factory at weekends with	I walked to school half a mile on my own. From then on, through out junior school I was bullied, verbally abused and hit on the way to and from

<p>my father and drawing and colouring. We bought a television and I enjoyed watching it.</p>	<p>school and my pens, glasses, gloves, hat taken. I was disliked for having red hair, being the boss' daughter and having 'posh' clothes. My mother told me to ignore it. My father was irritated that I kept losing things, recited Welsh and had problems with maths. My father did not like me learning Welsh. I was afraid of mental arithmetic and times-tables lessons because we were made to stand up and recite them in class. I was no good at sport and was frequently shown up and laughed at in lessons by teachers and pupils. I knew nothing about the rules because my family had no interest in any sporting activity.</p> <p>My mother left me outside a shop in Chester and I was taken to the police station where she found me.</p>
<p>1953-1954 My sister always organised my birthday and Christmas presents. My parents, particularly my mother had little contact with their families and never sent presents or cards although we visited grandparents briefly about once a year.</p>	<p>Mother spent a lot of time crying and talking hysterically and being depressed. I remember her complaining that my father had no interest in sex, was stupid with money and that her mother didn't love her because she had blue eyes and that the neighbours disliked and were jealous of us. She complained that visitors stole things. When children came to play she locked the door to the house. My mother always responded negatively to any requests for anything at all. I learnt to hint at things I wanted without asking directly for them.</p>
<p>My brother and sister left home to do career training.</p>	<p>I packed my little suitcase and walked up the road to go to my Grandma's in the Midlands - I was shocked by my mother's lack of interest or response and returned of my own accord.</p>
<p>1954-1957 I loved listening to my mother playing the piano and singing.</p>	<p>My mother forced me to learn the piano for which I had no talent or ability, presumably because she was musical herself (over the years I had 6 different teachers). Practising always felt like a punishment. She also made me have ballet lessons, which she told me was to correct my being so big, awkward and clumsy.</p>
<p>I was taken to ballet lessons and after several years of going I passed an exam.</p>	<p>My mother threw away the belt I was awarded for the ballet exam.</p>
<p>I had private lessons in Welsh for the Welsh part of the eleven-plus. My family read a lot and I read library books, children's classics and my father's books by Sir Walter Scott.</p> <p>I looked forward to my brother and sister's visits home. They loved country walking and the area was extremely beautiful. They were kind and responsive to me and we enjoyed each other company. My sister taught me about wild flowers.</p>	<p>My parents were constantly rowing. My father, normally always mild and smiling would swear violently about my mother under his breath, when he thought no one was listening. He would say "That bloody woman!" "What is the matter with her?" They would both complain about and criticise the other to me. I would lie in bed at night and wonder what would happen to me if one of them left. I could hear them shouting until late at night.</p>
<p>July 1958 I wrote a poem about our local mountain and my sister showed it to a teacher where she taught in the Midlands. This English teacher was very impressed and asked to see more of my work.</p>	<p>When I sent him a more childish effort he said he thought I must have copied the first poem and it wasn't really my work.</p>
<p>My mother sometimes bought me expensive clothes especially coats and hats to wear at</p>	<p>She always made derogatory remarks in shops about my 'big bones, slippy hair that wouldn't</p>

church.	curl and big feet, big bottom and stomach although I was not overweight. I mostly disliked my clothes. The more I disliked something the more likely my mother was to buy it. I learned to hide my true feelings.
I was given a main speaking part in the end-of-year school show before the whole school.	I had to perform it without the costume my mother had promised me. I was the only actor without a costume. I was aged 11 and my parents did not come to it.
My sister arranged for me to go away without her with her school to Belgium for a week. I found myself accepted and liked by the teachers and the other children.	
I passed the eleven-plus and went to grammar school.	I was still a loner, but was not bullied so much because I started retaliating verbally.
I was offered a place in the Welsh speaking part of the school, but I was not told this	My father turned down the place at Welsh grammar school. My two girlfriends, older and younger than me went to the secondary modern school and I never saw them again.
My mother was frequently ill and I was often off school to look after her. When I was 13 I overheard the doctor telling my father that my mother was neurotic and I should not be off school looking after her.	My father said there was nothing he could do to improve the situation.
I complained to my father about my mother.	I was shocked when he slapped my face and said, "You are talking about the woman I love!"
I loved drawing and painting	My art teacher did not like my work and was surprised when I passed my exams. My mother was amazed by how good my work was.
I used to go on a Saturday with a neighbour's daughter to do pony trekking, which I very much enjoyed. I made friends with a girl who was also bullied and isolated	.
I loved doing Art and won one or two competitions in the annual school Eisteddfod. My English teacher found me intelligent but reluctant to answer questions in class. She praised my essays, though I always did poorly in exams. My history teacher loved the illustrations I did in my history book.	My low achievement levels constantly disappointed teachers at school. I continued to be laughed at for poor performances in maths and sport. My maths teacher could not understand why I got high marks in algebra and low marks in arithmetic and geometry. My father was disappointed that I did poorly in Science and languages. My parents never spoke to my teachers.
I achieved only 4 'O' and 1 'A' level	My mother was often depressed and lonely and I frequently stayed off school to look after her, when she was unwell.
When I was 16 I went on a pupil exchange to France staying with a family in Paris and the South of France. I made the journey back on my own through a youth travel agency. This experience was very enjoyable and educational.	
I went to the local further education college for a two-year pre-diploma foundation art course. I enjoyed it and made friends with my fellow students.	This course was comprehensive and quite rigorous, but lacking any final assessment (apart from a pass), advice about my work and encouragement to go to Art School, I opted to do teacher training.
For my state assisted teacher training I went in 1967 on a two-year course to a 'student-centred' arts college called Dartington Hall School in Devon and a one-year course at Exmouth teacher training college. I appreciated the	My mother was distraught and angry at the prospect of my going away even though I was now twenty. My courses were not demanding enough in academic structure and intellectual stimulus. In

beautiful environments and social life. I met my future husband. I discovered I loved teaching.	some ways in life experience I was immature for my age.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

## 2.5 Emotional landmarks and schemas established as I grew up - some personal feelings and possible conclusions 1947-1967 (written in 2006)

(My emotional blocks to learning and possible meaningful, 'unworded' thought sequences/non-language thinking due to critical events in my life - emotional landmarks in my learning progress.)

**Age 3-5** - My father is vague and distant. My mother talks to me as if I was an adult. She tells me how her family don't care about her, she hates her mother and my father isn't interested in sex. She sits about crying for hours over my brother leaving home. I am frightened at her anger and tears. I feel sorry for her but I am fed up. When I pack my little suitcase and walk out she does nothing so I come back. **It is up to me to be the sensible one and work things out.**

**Age 4** - I start school and am thrilled to see all the toys to play with, but as soon as the teacher realises I can read and write, I am set to work and I never get to play with them.

**Age 5** - My family drive off and leave me on a seaside trip because my mother has lost her watch. Even when asked if they have lost a little girl while in the police station, they do not realise immediately. I feel frightened by this. **I am not important.** My brother and sister go away from home to work and college. When they are home they seem unnaturally quiet and nervous and unusually sensible for teenagers.

**Age 6** - I report that I am being bullied on the way to and from school. I now have to walk the whole 2 miles on my own. Every Sunday I go to church and am taught that I must 'turn the other cheek' and that it is un-Christian to get angry with other people. I come home from school very pleased and recite a Welsh prayer. My normally placid father is annoyed and says this is a waste of time. I am frightened by this unexpected reaction. I am frightened of standing up in class to recite my times tables. My parents do not help me to learn them and I cannot cope with mental arithmetic which we are required to answer out loud in class. Occasionally my father tries to help me with maths but becomes very annoyed when I can't grasp his old fashioned methods and I become even more confused. **I am no good at maths.**

**Aged 7** - I continue to be bullied on the way to and from school. I am 'ambushed', physically hit and my glasses, hats and pens stolen. My parents do not respond. They tell me off for 'losing' things. **My feelings are not important.** My mother loses me on a shopping expedition, when she disappears into a shop without warning. She tells me off when I am found at the police station. **I am always in the wrong.**

**Aged 8 to 10** - I notice that if I ever ask directly for something my mother always refuses it and so I learn never to ask. Instead I develop a good technique of pointing out desirable things or things other children have and she generally takes the bait. I also learn to look surprised when she gets them. **I must not ask directly for things.**

**Age 10** - I vaguely realise that my parents have problems of some kind, particularly my mother. We go to church two or three times on Sunday. My mother dislikes all the neighbours and distrusts the local shopkeepers. She suspects the nice cleaning lady of stealing things. She locks the door when I go out to play, so I have trouble getting back in. She won't allow other children in the house. I look forward to my brother and sister coming home when I get some attention, but they are not home often. **I am the sensible one.** I feel like an outsider in the family. **I am alone.**

**Age 11** - Before leaving primary school I get a part in the school 'end of year' play. My mother promises to get me a costume, but forgets. My parents don't attend the play. I am humiliated in front of the whole school. I am the only one without a costume. **I don't matter. It's not my mother's fault, she can't cope.**

I write a poem and a colleague of my sister's, an English teacher says it is brilliant. **I can be good at poetry.** I send him another one and he says it is childish and no good – now he doesn't believe I wrote the first one. **My feelings are not important.** No-one keeps a copy of the poem and he never returns it. I have been taking Welsh lessons to get through the 11+ exam and I pass for Grammar school. I have made two Welsh speaking girl friends. My parents seem quite pleased, but don't say much. I continue to be bullied at Grammar School.

**Age 12** - At home, I seem to have to be responsible for keeping things 'normal' a lot of the time. I go out sketching a lot in the beautiful Welsh countryside near my home. **I appreciate and am moved by nature.** I learn to keep a low profile to avoid my mother's scornful and disparaging comments. My parents ignore me a lot, don't seem to notice when I'm not there. They are too busy waging a war. My mother calls my father a coward and slams the food on the table every mealtime. She says he is hopeless with money, he is a fool and nobody likes him. He hides behind his newspaper and ignores her. My father deals with my mother by studiously ignoring her to her face, responding mildly, sarcastically or humorously and swearing about her under his breath, when she is out of earshot. He calls her the "bloody woman", says she is fatheaded and asks himself what's the matter with her. One day I make an angry remark about my mother. He slaps my face and says "You're talking about the woman I love!" I am shocked as I have never seen him get really angry before. **I am not important.**

**Age 13** - There is some kind of financial crisis when my father goes in the red. My parents are fighting. I sort out my father's bank statements for him. It isn't difficult as he earns a good salary. He accepts my help without comment. **I am the sensible one. I can work things out, but don't associate this with maths at school.**

**Age 14** - I am frequently off school nursing my mother, who often takes to her bed. **My mother's needs come first.** I join the junior Red Cross and learn about first aid. **I am accepted in the group, but they are younger.** My English teacher, Miss Davies, likes my English essays. She often asks me questions when no one else can answer them. **I can be good at English.** I am terrified of Maths and PE. The teacher humiliates me in Maths because I put % instead of degrees. He is sarcastic, he rants and raves, "How is it I can get 75% in Algebra and 14% and 12% in geometry and Arithmetic?" The teacher shouts at me in PE. I am uncoordinated, slow, I have poor eyesight and I don't understand any of the rules. On sports days the whole school jeers and laughs at me. **I am helpless, everybody hates me.** I am popular as a Sunday school teacher with younger children. **I like teaching.**

**Age 15** - My father is very disappointed I am no good at his two favourite subjects German and Science. **I am a failure because I show low ability at something in which I am not interested.**

**Age 16** - I do badly in my GCE 'o' level exams; I cannot concentrate or focus. I only pass English, History and Art. At home my parents shout at each other all the time. I go on a French exchange and my French family find me very grown up for my age. I travel back on my own and cope quite well.

**Age 17** - I take 'o' level French again and pass. I take Art and English 'A' levels. I only pass Art

**Age 18 - 20** - A tutor on my foundation art course tells me he can't pin me down, I seem a very 'fey' person. I wonder what he means. **I am a failure.** My father tells me that I could have gone to the Welsh part of the Grammar School with my friends as I did so well at the Welsh 11+, but he did not tell me as he did not want me to. **My feelings do not matter. I feel betrayed.** I go and look at Liverpool and Manchester art schools, but I decide that I do not like the way a whole class of paintings looks the same. I anticipate I will have problems, having my originality and personality squashed all over again and I do not feel strong enough to cope.

**Age 20** - I apply for teacher training college. At the interview I am asked my name and my mind goes blank. I find this a very frightening experience. Even after being told my name, I feel strangely disturbed and unconnected with myself. **A part of me does not know who I am.** My mother buys me clothes if she feels like it, when I am home, but I do not get the allowance the education authority says I should get. She will not post me anything or write or ring me. She is not interested in my progress. **I do not matter.**

## 2.6 Courses, conferences and workshops attended (2008)

Certificate in Counselling Skills in the Faculty of Education (1999-2000) British Association for Counselling approved: University of Manchester - Pass

Registered on Masters by research at Manchester Metropolitan University (September 2001) Attended various lectures in Educational Psychology, Psychological Perspectives on Counselling and Psychology and Culture and Identity with Carolyn Kagan and Carol Tindall, Cath Knowles, Rebecca Lawthom, Erica Burman and Ian Parker.

Employed as a home tutor by Halton Borough Council (September 2000-June 2004)

Presented: *'The Muddle Model'* (2002) 'Psychological Perspectives on Counselling Psychology' unit, Elizabeth Gaskell Campus: Manchester Metropolitan University

Presented: *'What value narrative research?'* (2003) Postgraduate University research group: Manchester Metropolitan University

Undertook and completed 'Psychological Perspectives on Counselling Psychology' unit (2001) Manchester Metropolitan University - Pass

Attended *'Children at risk'* workshop (29 May 2002) for home tutors with Halton Borough Council.

Attended two creative practitioner workshops: *'Running a creative writing and poetry workshop'* (13 January 2004) and *'Running creative workshops for the disabled'* (23 March 2004), Halton Borough Council.

Attended Presentation Skills Course (9 March 2004) Manchester Metropolitan University

Transfer from Masters to Mphil (24 March 2004) at Manchester Metropolitan University

Presented: *'Are emotions logical: if so should we change out teaching attitude?'* (26-28 July 2004) PsyPAG National Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Completed 'Personal development' unit (2004) Manchester Metropolitan University - Pass

First contract as a mentor to action researchers on the government funded educational action research programme with CPMS (Creative Partnerships Manchester Salford) (November 2004-2006). Involvement in various development, training and networking meetings with researchers and other mentors over the period.

Attended Action Researchers' induction residential in mentoring capacity (11-13 November 2004) Cressbrook Hall, Derbyshire: CPMS

Attended *'Skills for researchers'* (24 November 2004) at All Saints, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Attended *'Ethics workshop'* (2 December 2004) at Elizabeth Gaskell, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Attended *'Introduction to Endnote'* (26 January 2005) All Saints, Manchester Metropolitan University

Devised and lead a workshop: *'What is creativity?'* (4 July 2005) at CPMS Networking Day: Lowry Theatre.

Presented: *'Emotional Blocks - what can they tell us about the process of thinking?'* (7 July 2005) Annual Research Conference, Research Institute for Health and Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Presented: '*Emotional Blocks - what can they tell us about the process of thinking?*' (20 July 2005) Social Change and Well Being Research Day: Research Institute for Health and Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Transfer from Mphil to Phd (19 October 2005) at Manchester Metropolitan University

Attended conference: '*Mental health and the Student Experience*' (4 November 2005), Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Attended: '*Introduction to Ethical Issues*' (28 November 2005) at Elizabeth Gaskell, Manchester Metropolitan University

Attended: '*Writing your thesis and oral examination workshop*' (28 November 2005) at Elizabeth Gaskell, Manchester Metropolitan University

Contracted by CPMS (Creative Partnerships Manchester Salford) to undertake an independent educational evaluation of the Lowry Primary School Creativity Festival (March - July 2006). This involved liaising with and collecting data from artists, creative practitioners and pupils by visiting six schools and participating in the festival week in July 2006.

Presentations: '*Introducing a narrative network approach to evaluation*' and '*The Lowry Creativity Festival*' at an introductory session to primary school teachers involved in the project. (9 March 2006) CPMS

Devised and lead a workshop: '*Engaging Young People in Evaluation*' (31 March 2006) The North West Evaluation Network Annual Conference, Preston, Lancaster University  
(The Power-point for this can be accessed at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/NW-EVAL-NET.html>)

Leading an educational evaluation session - midway evaluation meeting with teachers and creative practitioners (24 May 2006) CPMS

Joint presentation with Erinma Ochu: '*Creativity in an Action Research Framework*' (12 June 2006) at symposium for stakeholders in the Creative Partnerships Manchester Salford Action Researcher Programme: Didsbury Campus, Manchester Metropolitan University

Attended a lecture by Anna Craft about '*Creative learning*' (22 June 2006) Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester, CPMS

Attended primary school festival collecting data for an independent educational evaluation for CPMS of the The Lowry Creativity Festival, Salford Quays (3-7 July 2006)

Final evaluation workshop with teachers and artists (12 July 2006) CPMS

Presentation: '*Practitioner research: using professional and personal experience to research, raise awareness and make meanings with others in an educational context*' (13-14 July 2006) at an educational practitioner conference for BERA (British Educational Research Association) entitled '*Practitioner Research: Living Theory or Empty Rhetoric*': St Mary's College, Twickenham

Written report finished for Creative Partnerships on the 'Lowry Creativity Festival 2006' (September 2006) CPMS

Second contract as a mentor to action researchers on the government funded educational action research programme with Creative Partnerships Manchester Salford (November 2007-8)

Attended the '*European and international research symposium: evaluating the impact of arts and cultural education*' (10,11 & 12 January 2007) at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, ([www.centrepompidou.fr/symposium.educart.paris2007/](http://www.centrepompidou.fr/symposium.educart.paris2007/))

Attended Windmills career support workshop on the SCWB (Social Change and Well Being) group residential (12-14 February 2007) from Manchester Metropolitan University

Attended a lecture by Susan Greenfield, neuro-cognitive psychologist and President of the Royal society (23 May 2007) *'Tomorrow's People: what will they need to learn?'* (The Priestley lecture attended) Birmingham: Educational Review

Attended a lecture by Mick Waters, Director of the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (16 June 2007) *'Designing better learning'* (keynote presentation at The Centre for Urban Education, Manchester conference) *Engaging Urban Learners* Manchester Metropolitan University: Manchester

Overall academic research poster prize *'Emotional issues in education: reframing learning theory through participatory action research'* and participation in a visual art exhibition entitled *'Tapping into Visual Worlds'*: a series of paintings entitled *"Emotional Blocks to Learning"* (4 July 2007). RIHSC (Research Institute for Health and Social Change) Annual Conference 2007: Manchester Metropolitan University.

Presentation: *'Emotional issues in education: reframing learning theory through participatory action research'* (5 September 2007) BERA Annual Conference (Student Section) (British Educational Research Association) at the Institute of Education at the University of London

Presentation: *'Reframing learning theory through a participatory and mentoring approach to researching.'* (16 November 2007) Teacher education - Mentoring and Coaching for CPD seminar day at the University of Bath Life Long learning Division, Carpenter-House, Bath

Attended: *'A seminar on creativity'* (8 April 2008) ESCalate (Education Subject Centre Advanced learning and Teaching in Education) Milton Keynes: Open University

Poster presented gaining 1<sup>st</sup>. prize: *'Emotional issues in education: reframing learning theory through participatory action research'* (16 May 2008) at conference *"Innovation and Development in Initial Teacher Education"* Carlisle: ESCalate (Education Subject Centre Advanced learning and Teaching in Education)

Attended: *'Mini-Conference on Medical Education, Learning Theories and Technology'* with Etienne Wenger (19 May 2008) The Medical Education Research Group: Manchester Medical School and The Socio-cultural Theory Interest Group (ScTIG): School of Education, University of Manchester

Poster presented gaining 1<sup>st</sup>. prize: *'Emotional issues in education: reframing learning theory through participatory action research'* (2-6 September 2008) British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference (Student Section) at Edinburgh University

## **2.7 Researcher's presentations (email: [jenhawk62@02.co.uk](mailto:jenhawk62@02.co.uk))**



J.A.Hawkins – PhD by research  
Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6BG, UK



## Emotional issues in education: reframing learning theory through participatory action research

Bright idea – J.A.H.

Connections – J.A.H.

### Lay summary

U. K. government initiatives (Every Child Matters 2006) state that the emotional well-being of children strongly influences their learning at school. This research records teenage school refusers' (strand 1), my own learning history (strand2), the feelings of teachers about teaching (strand 3) and primary pupils' feelings about creative learning (strand 4).

### Researcher profile

A former secondary main and special needs teacher living in the U.K., I set out to improve my understanding of how feelings affect learning. I used my experience as an English and Art teacher researching from 2000 to 2007. I found out about my own problems and strengths as well as supporting other people.

### Ethics

Discussing people's feelings may reveal vulnerability and requires careful thought. The emotional well-being of participants was considered throughout. Cooperation was openly elicited. Feedback was recorded and given through joint reflection upon the process. All names were changed.

### Consent

University Ethics Committee - Written consent from volunteer teachers - Verbal agreement of Local Education Authority - Verbal feedback and cooperation by children and parents in the teaching process - Written consent (with conditions) by commissioner of report.

### Data Collection

Pupils' written feeling responses on work records – field notes & reports – observations - retrospective summaries - critical points lists & models - Researcher's autobiographical diary - Mentoring notes - teachers' spontaneous symbolic models - teachers' autobiographies & summaries - Educational evaluation records and notes, project models, questionnaires and photographs

### Methodology – Participatory Action Research (Kagan 2005)



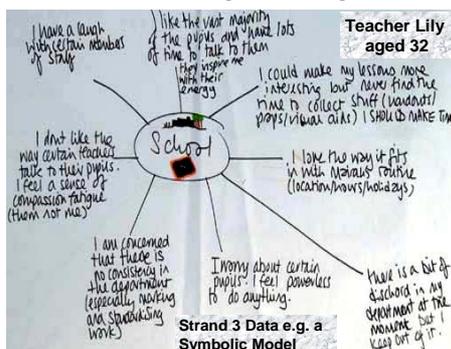
### Theoretical domains

- grounded theory (Charmaz 1995)
- phenomenology (Bruzina 2004)
- narrative research (Clough 2002)
- ethnographic research (Main & George 1985)
- action research (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen 2003)
- auto-ethnography (Freeman 1993)
- communities of practice (Wenger 1998)

### Phase 2 - mentoring 8 teachers aged 25 - 55

#### Phase 1 - tutoring 12 school refusers aged 15 –16

"I just got frustrated at school... and I couldn't go in 'cos I just used to sit there and have all these books thrown at me... I used to have a special needs class I went to. I used to do loads of art and sit in there for an hour, but when I went to the other school I got held up... Dad noticed it and said like to my teacher, "She's not learning properly!" And my teacher said, "Yes, she can do it! She's just not trying!" School refuser Tania aged 16 – **Strand 1**



Teacher Lily aged 32

"There should be room on school reports and in the school curriculum to focus on people as human beings as it is a person's inner qualities that make them a decent (and therefore successful in my view) individual...the emotional / psychological damage caused by negative (not bad) teaching / managing is underestimated." Teacher Diana aged 34 – **Strand 3**

#### Phase 3 - evaluating an arts festival project with 6 city primary schools

- "Less talking more doing in the lessons."
- "I loved everything I hated nothing ...I enjoyed it so much."
- "I think the Theatre is awesome."
- "I liked doing workshop"
- "It was fun doing picture and then writing on it."
- "I liked painting."
- "I learnt to dance like a professional."
- "I enjoyed it soooooooooooooo... much!" (14 o's!)
- "I enjoyed doing the play on stage."
- "Important because it develops their mind." Parent – **Strand 4**

### Findings

- School refusers were affected by unacknowledged environmental problems
- Primary school pupils gained skills and confidence through exploring their feelings.
- Teachers were concerned about fair assessment, paperwork overload and unsympathetic management.

### Conclusions

- Feedback about learners feelings informs teaching
- Working with feelings develops awareness in teachers and pupils.
- Being heard matters and helps overcome problems.
- Doing activities we like makes us feel good about learning.
- Feelings inform and are part of the logical thinking process.

**References:** Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; Claxton, G. (2002) *Building Learning Power: helping young people become better learners*. Bristol: TLO; Department for Education and Skills (DfES) 2006 *Good Practice: The National Healthy Schools Standard* [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/si/StCC/goodpractice/nhss/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/si/StCC/goodpractice/nhss/) (accessed 09.06.06); Gilbert, I. (2002) *Essential motivation in the Classroom*. London: Routledge Farmer; Greenfield, S. (2000) *Brain Story*. London: BBC Worldwide Rogers, C. & Freiberg, H.J. (1983 rev. ed.) *Freedom to Learn*. London: Prentice Hall International; Vygotsky, L. S. (1896-1934) *Collected Works - volume 1*. Ed. Rieber, R.W. & Carton, A.S. (1987). New York: Plenum;

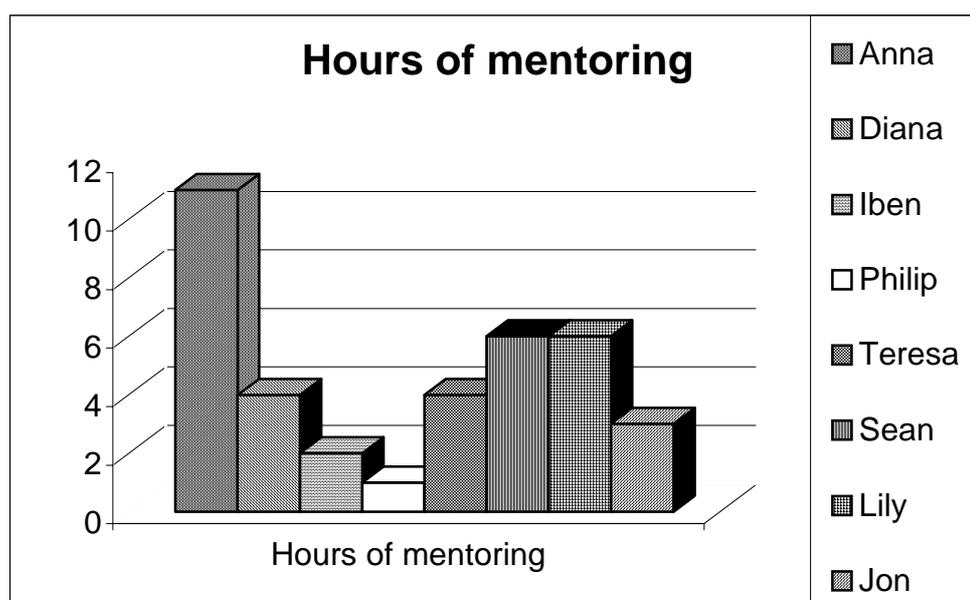
**Author's Academic Poster – 1<sup>st</sup> prize in poster competition at British Educational Research Association annual conference in Edinburgh, 2007 (updated 2010 version)**

### STRAND 3 - MENTORING 8 TEACHERS AS LEARNERS (CHAPTER 6)

**3.1 Table 1 - Hours of mentoring and data collected & Table 2: Graph of mentoring hours per teacher**

Name	Date	Hourly Sessions	Mentees' & Researcher's Summaries- No. of words	Symbolic Models	Researcher's Research Summary – No. of words
Anna	2004 - 2006	11	3881	6	889
Diana	2005 - 2006	4	2241	2	663
Emma	2005 - 2006	2	1279	2	609
Philip	2005	1	542		385
Teresa	2005 - 2007	4	1654	1	775
Sean	2005 - 2006	6	1369	1	695
Lily	2004 - 2005	6	2048	5	455
Jon	2004-2005	3	1645		866

**3.1 Table 1: Data spreadsheet - mentoring 8 teachers**



**3.1 Table 2: 8 teachers - hours of mentoring**

### 3.2 Cases data file - Author's narrative summaries, mentoring records and summaries

**Anna (2004 - 2006), Diana (2005 - 2006), Iben (2005 - 2006), Philip (2005), Teresa (2005 - 2007), Sean (2005 - 2006), Lily (2004 - 2005), Jon (2004-2005) \***

In reading the following summaries it should be borne in mind that each is based on the limited information available to the author and by her interpretations of it.

#### **Anna**

**(11 hours in total - 11 sessions - July (2), August, September (2) and November 2004, January, February, April, November 2005, and February 2006)**

Anna was a fellow PhD student in her twenties who volunteered to do a pilot for my teacher mentoring method. In the first two sessions I tape-recorded our conversation, but soon abandoned this method. We agreed that our search for meaning both within and between sessions was better expressed in our notes and summaries and we were also aware that taping had an inhibitive effect on our discussions. After the first six sessions, in each of which she produced a large picture, she wrote a retrospective reflexive summary of each of the sessions, which explained her views and feelings. In the first session she made a list of personal issues and talked about her feelings and realised, *"that other factors in my life were important and not just the PhD"*

The spontaneous creative art expressions she made were always verbalised in retrospect after reflection, often in the next session. She seemed to enjoy the challenge of producing the pictures without experiencing stress even though there were sometimes 'problems' represented by them. It was possible to see her raising her awareness of issues in her life and watch her making adjustments towards them. Anna was coming to terms with some ethical issues she perceived going on around her. Her loyalty and belief in her university was affected when she suspected some staff misused their power over students. Other students frequently turned to her for advice. She was sometimes disappointed by other peoples' behaviour. She was realising her own values and priorities in life, resolving her own work problems and gaining confidence.

In sessions four and five she was in the process of sorting out her feelings about her boyfriend and found herself confused and uncomfortable, because he was not entirely happy (as she was not herself) about her going away on a work trip. She was worried about how others might label her. This illustrates how personal emotional dilemmas can impact on work. I found myself responding by being receptive but not intrusive, I realised that I needed to be sensitive and allow her to keep many of her thoughts private. It is interesting that I did not need to know all the facts or even understand all the implications in order to be helpful. I responded by talking generally about possessive relationships and how we are all 'victims' to some extent of how others view us. I did not ask for specific details. I hoped this would give her subjective thoughts an arena for resolution and this appears to have been the case. The forgetful aspect, avoidance and confusion evidenced in her summary seem to me to illustrate a normal human response to painful unresolved feelings and emotions. For example she wrote:

*"Was there a session where I didn't do any artwork? I can vaguely remember there was a session where I didn't do anything and we just talked. I remember talking a bit more about the relationship, and generally feeling a lot better."*

Anna

It seems that sometimes simply referring to, voicing or facing a problem, which has painful connections helps towards some kind of inner resolution. I still know virtually nothing about her relationship. What was important was that she was happy with her own solution at the time.

---

\* All names are pseudonyms

Session six was interesting because Anna felt it was one of the most successful. The yoga technique of clearing the mind seemed to work in spite of Anna's initial reluctance to engage with it. It illustrates how one's conscious mind can get in the way of deeper levels of thinking. The freedom to move around an arena of subjective thought in any direction by using metaphorical images attaching additional sheets of paper seemed to be effective. This technique is one I had learned and adapted derived from my experience of David Groves' symbolic modelling therapy work and my 'prompting' was based, to some extent on his 'clean language' technique. I inquired if pictures could be extended; listened, encouraged, but kept my own comments open and general (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000). The drawings often went on as a parallel and/or interspersed process with the conversation. This demonstrates that different levels or types of thinking can operate simultaneously. Anna was very much a co-researcher in the sessions due to her interest in psychology. She also found the sessions helpful in supporting her PhD. Anna's interpretations of her pictures are in chapter 6. Subconscious thoughts emerging as worded and unworded thought are evidenced by the following comment.

*"It has enabled me to bring to the surface and make certain issues concrete! I feel a lot happier now and a lot more determined about myself career wise! I am feeling quite passionate about my ambitions right now!! The drawing was very much cathartic. I do wish however my words were more ... (?) However, at the time I expressed my emotions more using colours than words."*

Anna

**COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Anna These are included in full in Chapter 6 of the thesis and are therefore omitted here. Symbolic models by teachers other than Anna as in the appendix**

## Diana

**(4 hours in total - 3 sessions in August and December 2005 and April 2006)**

Diana was in her thirties and currently the deputy head of English at a large comprehensive school near London. She had worked in the same department as me about ten years ago and we had kept in touch. Diana produced several drawings in these sessions as she talked to me. She was intense and concentrated in offloading her teaching frustrations and resentments through her drawings, verbal and written summaries, which were very expressive of this. As she drew she spoke slowly and clearly and I was able to copy down her exact words in most of my notes. In her last school she was angry about the school management approach, where the head's priority was fulfilling government targets. She felt the regime inhumane to pupils and found her work unappreciated. Her feelings had eventually resulted in her moving to another school. In our first session she took the opportunity to tell me about this and explain how this affected her and why she was happier in her present school. I got the impression that Diana was expressing a backlog of feelings and frustrations about her job, which had been building up for some time.

In the second session Diana talked about her mentoring of student teachers through her local university. She had found talking to their college tutor had improved her self-esteem and confidence. It had changed her attitude to her job and made her value her own skills. *"Whereas school's demands can make me feel pressured, The University makes me feel empowered. As a result, I happily do **more** than is expected of me without feeling stressed about it."* Discussing issues with mentees helped her to recognise her strengths and limitations. The process had helped her as much as it helped them. For example in mentoring a trainee under her care Diana discovered *"One person I have mentored has achieved a lot personally and has also helped me. The mentoring has been mutually beneficial... It takes the pressure off to be able to admit one's difficulties and to experience professional trust of other teachers"*

As a teacher of GCSE English Diana expressed a lot of strong feelings about her work. Her feelings affected her motivations\_ in doing her job. She was extremely frustrated by not being given a realistic choice of texts for her pupils to read and the removal of texts from the syllabus for which she and other teachers had developed comprehensive resources. She felt that she was being prevented from engendering an enthusiasm for reading in her pupils. She pointed out that even though they might pass the exam, they were being turned off reading for life. Over the mentoring period Diana appeared to

have organised her thoughts about her current experience of the English education system. She produced a coherent and heart-felt summary of how she feels attitudes to learning need to change. Here is an extract:

*"The government / education needs to look at the human qualities and characteristics that help us (and make us want) to learn and address the underlying issues here. Qualities that make us receptive human beings and help us work together. Valuable assets that create decent well-rounded human beings are for example: confidence, self-awareness, empathy, kindness, honesty, self-reliance and compassion. Instead of nurturing these traits in people, schools only seem to step in to deal with punishing negative qualities when they distract from the learning (e.g. dishonesty, racism, laziness). In my experience rewarding the positives (which can sometimes mean having to deliberately give children opportunities to shine) is much more effective than constantly punishing the negatives... the emotional and psychological damage caused by negative (not bad) teaching and managing is underestimated"*

Diana

### **COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Diana**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

#### **27.08.05**

**MENTOR RECORD:** Jenny's notes/record of Diana's words/points while chatting - and end summary

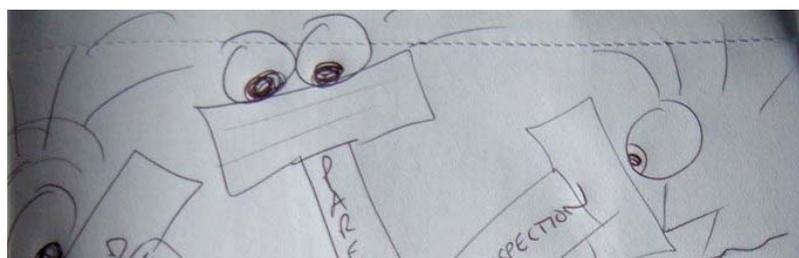
"You've got your own integrity (*motivation in teaching?*). I wanted to be a teacher because my teachers' were not very caring and I wanted to be more supportive. There's a conflict between ticking boxes and doing everything I would want to do e.g. staying after school *and* designing worksheets I know would work. Adapting work works well and pupils are more successful, but it requires a lot of work. You have to do what the government, Head of Department asks you because that's what you're paid to do, but it is a balancing act with what my own judgement says is needed for the pupils. I am judged by the results regardless of pupils' problems over which I have no control. Just because pupils can jump through a hoop doesn't mean they will continue to be academic afterwards.

My old Head said, "The perception from above is all important." I think league tables hide a lot of things. If she came in and saw my class doing drama - running around - she would take a superficial view and conclude they are learning nothing, when in fact I know they are really learning. It was annoying when my judgement of the learning process was not trusted, when I know I was doing a good job. In my present job I am trusted because I get results my way.

I am now mentoring other people and I am able to do that really well. Trainee teachers are full of energy and enthusiasm and I think it's important to support them to work in their own way. "

*Diana is obviously a happy and successful teacher, who is trying hard to balance outside pressures to meet performance criteria, which she feels are superficial to some extent. She feels that some of these miss out deeper more complicated issues about motivating pupils to lasting effect.*

Jenny



**27.08.05**

**MENTEE RECORD:** Diana's own written end summary

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Diana**

There's a conflict between what is expected and what is physically, humanly possible to achieve. To cut the corner, to make the impossible possible I've been told in the past, that 'perceptions' (*appearances?*) are all that matter - i.e. if it looks good on paper it's good enough.

Good enough for what? Not good enough for my conscience or for my students. Who am I educating these people for? Surely it should be for them - not OFSTED / PARENTS / HEADTEACHER'S 'perceptions'

BUT - There isn't really time / money / staff to do any better under the current system.....unless we all stay up all night and sacrifice our sleep, our lives and our sanity.

Diana

**29.12.05**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Diana's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

"I am mentoring student teachers through a local University. They make me feel wanted for my skills and valued, I feel supported by the college tutor. This is the opposite of my normal school pressures where I feel under pressure to perform. This pressure can cause me to close down for several days and resist work. I get a lot of return satisfaction and a positive experience from supporting students successfully. I find I'm doing extra work for this because I want to. I think it's like this for children when they are under pressure to produce course work - they stop when they're made to work. If you can remove the pressure of having to do work - and replace it with wanting to do - then that's half the battle. Most of it is in your head - psychological barriers - wanting to do it is motivation - if you can

change your perception from having to - to wanting to. That's where good teachers succeed - by empowering pupils. We get school refusers and you can see why they are, because every time they come into school they get into trouble. It's the same for pupils as it is for me. We feel constricted by having to do the GCSE syllabus sometimes.

There's lots of ways to do the national curriculum at key stage 3 but at GCSE level they've privatised it (*resources?*). Exam boards are not thinking about the children. They've put difficult texts on like 'The old man and the sea' instead on 'Of mice and men'. We can't get any materials on it. The exam boards want to sell us the texts, but there are less teacher resources from other teachers (*tried and tested resources?*). The exam board resources are not as good as the old resources we had built up. They are changing the texts deliberately so we are reliant on them. It creates more work for me and the choices are not great and the texts are inappropriate. They are changing all five texts instead of one so we are back to square one and have to start again (*every year?*). If all the old classics are on the list the teacher has more choice - we are choosing the best of a bad bunch - instead of the ones we feel well able to teach. We have to almost damage the work we've done by giving them these boring texts/novels. It would be interesting to know why we have had to change - ask the exam boards - I feel depressed when I think about it. Children should be able to choose from one of the top ten contemporary books as well as the classics. The exam is the final nail in the coffin of creating 'readers for life', which is what we're supposed to be doing. I used to like the exam - it covered a broad spectrum - it is only recently it has changed and I think it is because of money. I feel sorry for the pupils, because if I were allowed to teach them, as I want to teach them they'd have a much better experience. A lot of the enjoyment has gone out of it. What difference does it make to the exam boards, except that (*they want us to be?*) we are reliant on them for materials? However it makes a lot of difference to the pupils and to the actual exam results."

*I found this all very interesting (being an English teacher myself!) and I think Diana's pupils are very lucky to have such a thoughtful teacher! (Next time Diana would like to look at pupils' learning process - getting to the castle on the hill!) Jenny*

**29.12.05**

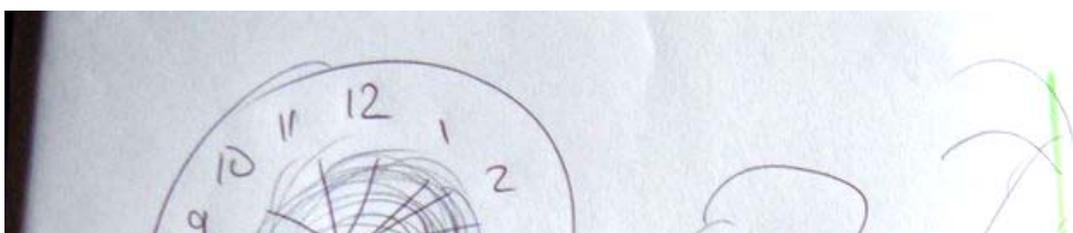
**MENTEE RECORD: Diana's own written end summary**

Feeling empowered - like you can and want to do something - is far better than feeling pressured - like you have to do something - even when that 'something' is the same in each case.

Whereas school's demands can make me feel pressured, The university makes me feel empowered. As a result, I happily do more than is expected of me without feeling stressed about it.

This is also the key with pupils / the learning experience. Getting pupils to want to do something - to feel confident and able - rather than making them feel they have to do it. Sadly, however, there are far too many times in school life when pupils (and teachers) simply do just HAVE to do it. The new GCSE syllabus is an example: Rather than enthusing students about books they may enjoy, teachers are stuck with a very poor choice.

Diana



**19.04.06**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Diana's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

*Diana is mentoring two student teachers who are Turkish Cypriots for a Local University. One has much more confidence than the other, but has benefited from being mentored and so has made more improvement.*

"I'm not sure if it's these mentoring sessions, but I feel more relaxed, more time for my own thoughts, less stressed. I think it has helped doing these sessions with you. I am prioritising more - nobody helps you prioritise in teaching.

One person I have mentored has achieved a lot personally and has also helped me. The mentoring has been mutually beneficial. It has not been a problem marking them and they have not taken advantage of

the relationship. It takes the pressure off to be able to admit one's difficulties and to experience professional trust of other teachers."

*One teacher who never admits his problems is not very well liked and Diana has tried to help him but it is difficult without some kind of organisational/management support, because he denies his need for help. She is becoming interested in managing and helping other teachers and is considering two future job avenues - one in the university and the other a promotion within her school.*

"My previous head teacher undermined my confidence and it is only now I realise how important support from colleagues is to teachers. It is not weak to ask for help, to be loved and respected by colleagues as a friend. It shields you from the bad stuff even though the job is just as difficult, but it is easier to cope when you have emotional support. People respect me and if I burst into tears, I know they will not think badly of me. A negative head teacher has an undermining effect on staff and a negative teacher undermines pupils. The solution is psychological not practical - attitudes to education have got to change. Talking to parents and discussing problems realistically helps. Some parents are negative and refuse to accept their children's success. This has a drastic effect on pupil confidence. One pupil has really gone down hill since his mother rejected my praise."

Diana's Thoughts- " Teachers are trying to do their job in spite of the system rather than with the support of the system. It's not the day-to-day work it's the magic that happens through an amalgamation of little things – the things that happen in between which add up to a pupils' achievement. It's more than the sum of the parts. Child confident, does own research, brings a load of stuff to you because they've flown with an idea. The exam boards have started producing uninspiring texts because of commercialism. Schools are reliant on resources exam boards provide. No time to make resources because syllabus texts constantly changing. They seem to be chosen to be deliberately obscure, inappropriate, not the obviously enjoyable choice for pupils. Not classics with lots of resources. People who want to make money are dictating the education of our children. To be a good teacher you need to be enthusiastic and the government is beating that out of us by reform after reform"  
*Diana's comments recorded by Jenny*

**29.12.05**

**MENTEE RECORD: Diana's own written end summary**

The government / education tends to think about learning skills in terms of literacy, numeracy, communication etc. If a child can do so and so, then they have met such and such a target....in fact this approach is fairly superficial - it helps a child to gain skills but does not help them to grow and develop emotionally and psychologically. The government / education needs to look at the human qualities and characteristics that help us (and make us want) to learn and address the underlying issues here. Qualities that make us receptive human beings and help us work together: e.g.

Valuable assets that create decent well-rounded human beings:

- Confidence
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Self-reliance
- Compassion

Instead of nurturing these traits in people, schools only seem to step in to deal with punishing negative qualities when they distract from the learning (e.g. dishonesty, racism, laziness)

In my experience rewarding the positives (which can sometimes mean having to deliberately give children opportunities to shine) is much more effective than constantly punishing the negatives.

There should be room on school reports and in the school curriculum to focus on people as human beings as it is a person's inner qualities that make them a decent (and therefore successful in my view) individual.

In addition, the emotional / psychological damage caused by negative (**not** bad) teaching / managing is underestimated.

Diana

**Iben**

**(2 hours in total - 2 sessions in November 2005 and February 2006)**

Iben was around thirty and worked with me as a colleague for Creative partnerships. She was a research fellow at a local university. She produced films for educational purposes, working with children and adults. She had high qualifications (a science doctorate), but I did not discover this until we had finished our mentoring sessions. Teaching people ways to produce their films had been one of her jobs as well as advising and lecturing on research methods. In 2006 she did an educational action research project, developing the Science curriculum in a large state secondary school. This involved interacting with and teaching both staff and pupils. Iben drew several pictures during and between sessions. She appeared to be quite surprised and interested by the discovery of some aspects of her own subjective thinking processes that this revealed, which she had not considered before. Ethical considerations regarding her film production job were important to her and resulted in her leaving it for a while.

*"It was a very high-pressure job. I stepped away from it because there was no time to reflect and learn. It was worthwhile doing for a time, but now I am able to establish boundaries and I have earned more respect through being true to my own instincts."*

Iben

This 'bottom line' decision earned her respect and increased her confidence in herself. When her contribution was eventually appreciated she was re-employed under better conditions.

Iben enjoyed and saw benefits in facilitating others. She uses her own feelings about researching to help her to support others. Iben believed in encouraging people (teachers, writers and film makers) to take ownership of their project. Her experience was that *"discovering something for yourself in the project is more joyous and profound."* Iben had strong feelings about how people should be managed and the benefits of 'open-minded' interactions for her own work. She saw the benefits of accepting other people's feelings as valid for them. Her comments are also relevant to management in school, because teachers (along with other workers) need encouragement to find creative solutions.

*"Time and money invested in people's training is inefficient if you lose them so their interest/engagement/feelings are important. People need to be with you in order to be creative - firing on all cylinders. From all these experiences of working with people I get inspiration for my writing (poetry and for film). They are kind of three-dimensional interactions. I am a catalyst."*

Iben

In her second session Iben produced a drawing she had done. I tried to prompt her by describing what I saw, but her responses were partial and not all of it could be explicitly explained in words. Her comments about needing time for reflection seem relevant here. *"I find that people need time to formulate a response... It was a very high-pressure job. I stepped away from it because there was no time to reflect and learn."* This last statement resonates with me as being true also of many high-pressure teaching jobs. The fact that a year later she sent me a thoughtful email about why she is no longer a traditional scientist also supports these views. *"Part of the reason I fell out of interest in science was that it lacked the human dimension"*

Iben

**COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Iben****IBEN 09.11.05**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Iben's words/points while chatting - and end summary.**

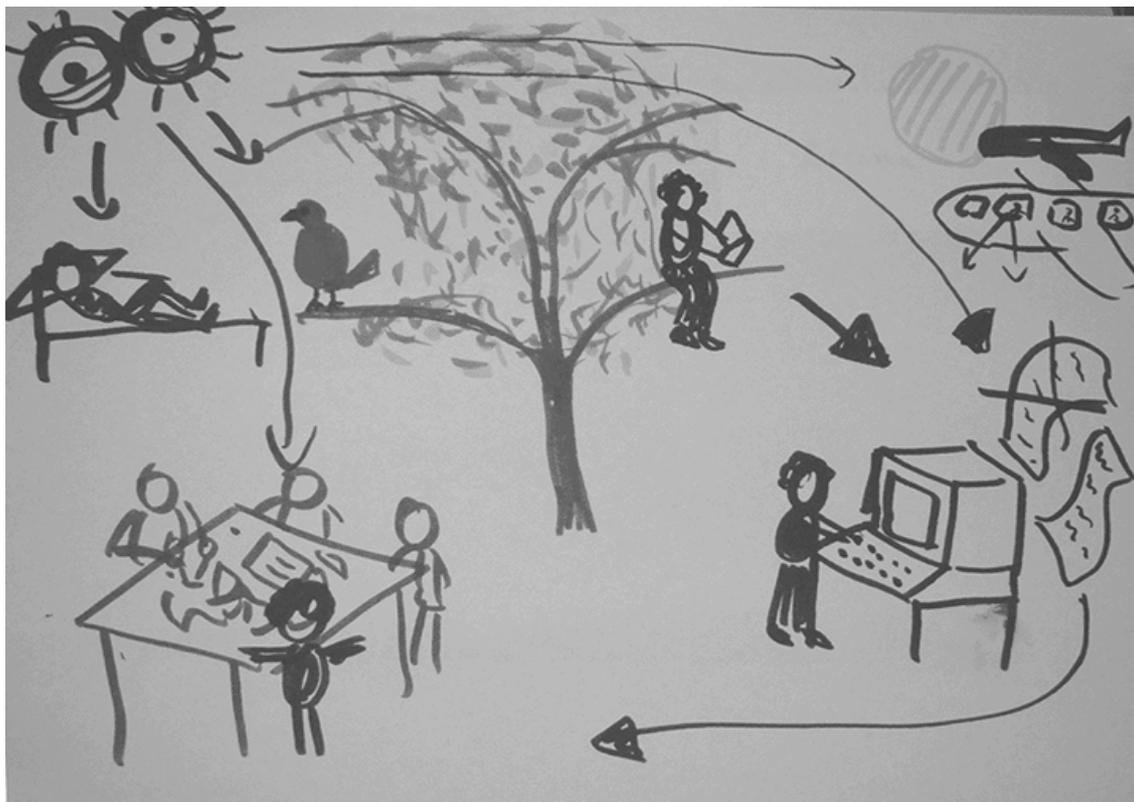
**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Iben and Jenny**

Iben believes in encouraging people (teachers, writers and film makers) to take ownership of their project. Her experience is that **"discovering something for your self in the project is more joyous and profound."**

"I help people to set their own aims and develop a process. At the moment I am helping a colleague/employer (a science communicator) become more involved in developing her own ideas. You use people's creative fire and challenge and lead, support, nurture them until they gain confidence to go forward. I've been through that process of being a technician on other people's ideas. It's keeping people and not losing them (*by allowing them to express/develop ideas?*). Time and money invested in people (*'s training?*) is inefficient if you lose them so their interest/ engagement/feelings are important. People need to be **with** you in order to be creative - firing on all cylinders. From all these experiences of working with people I get inspiration for my writing (*poetry and for film*). They are kind of three-dimensional interactions. I am a catalyst.

I find that people need time to formulate a response. How do you allow for that reflective time? January 2004 to August 2005 I managed an arts media agency (for artists and film makers) managing professional development and facilitating them in producing a piece of work. I was an executive producer and developing a programme of learning with them at the same time. I was forced by my boss to make some really harsh decisions. It was a very high-pressure job. I stepped away from it because there was no time to reflect and learn. It was worthwhile doing for a time, but now I am able to establish boundaries and I have earned more respect through being true to my own instincts. This was against my upbringing of trying to please others / deliver what people want / do my best. I've found my bottom line. My old boss now has more respect for me and is offering me work."

*There was a lot of interesting stuff in here, which I could not capture. I find Iben an interesting, deep thinking and articulate person. Jenny*



**09.11.05**

**MENTEE RECORD: Iben's own written end summary**

A lot of what's been discussed has helped make concrete - draw together the process by which I am approaching, reflecting on and formulating the way in which I work with, mentor, facilitate people (artists, writers, teachers) in what creatively they wish to achieve. I realised yesterday the value in how I'm working - talking to a creative organisation that funds individuals in their professional development, but doesn't quite know yet how to turn that investment into productivity and profit for business and education i.e. to get a return on their investment. Potentially this 'method' or 'process' will be gold.

Iben

**10.02.06****MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Iben's words/points while chatting - and end summary.**

Iben and I had a chat about tax and mothers! She sounds very organised in her work to me. I like her picture she brought along, which is unfinished. It looks like a building with a three-week calendar on the side and no weekends! There are two knives slicing, which may be significant. A person climbing stairs/ladder, a sunny day, a tele-day, a friendly/lovely day, a (?) day, a decorating day. There's a little person in a tunnel (?) with two-way arrows and a bright lamp, 5 letters and 7 pictures, a written page with a picture on it. She tells me this was done on the 5th February. The 'tunnel' is creative, 'underground', 'in secret.' She is torn between two projects - one with letters and one with photos. Monday is a chill out day in her week. I found this all very interesting.

Jenny

**10.02.06****MENTEE RECORD: Iben's own written end summary**

Gone back to work for London Company and the entire balance of the relationship has changed, which is great. I feel they are using my strengths and I am doing the work that I enjoy - plus I am getting paid more. As a result it's a lot easier in terms of communication between me and the creative director. If I say no, they realise I mean it (!) where before they would try to convince me otherwise.

We work well as a team and I feel my contribution is valued and rewarded. It was a big step to renegotiate this situation and it has given me confidence to apply elsewhere.

I recently went on a script development course, which gave me more analytical skills for working with writers and has shown me that there is, or that I need, a more precise method to build on my intuitive skills. I have since adapted what I learned on the workshop and applied it to working with writers for the London Company, which was useful.

Iben

**EMAIL****20.05.07**

Hi,

Thanks for the CP article you sent.

Am attaching an article on a mentor-mentee relationship, which I found quite interesting.

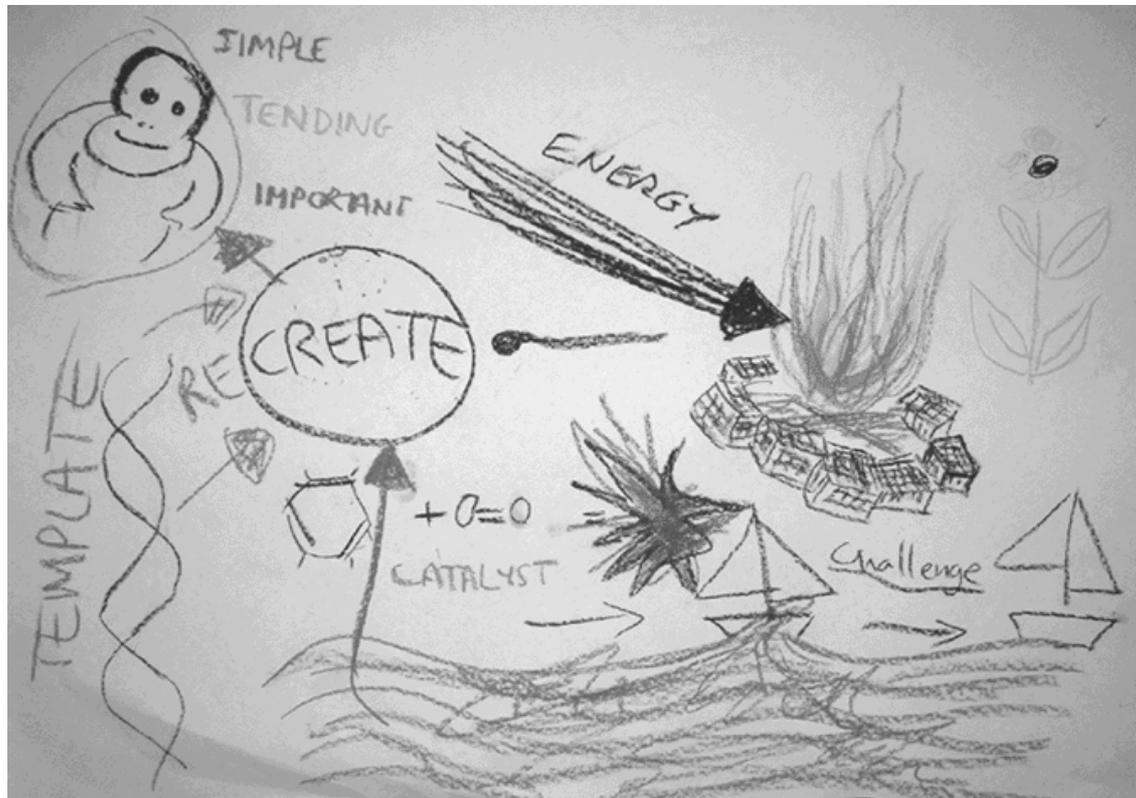
Part of the reason I fell out of interest in science was that it lacked the human dimension - that we are people with wants and needs and desires - and what does that say about us doing research and killing animals - when I read 'the unbearable lightness' of being as a young researcher there was a paragraph in there that disarmed me - the true test of human morality is in our treatment of those who have no power - for example in how we treat animals - I do think that as interesting as science is we don't have this debate about animal research - I don't doubt that animal research has done good but ultimately that's not what all science is about - its about gaining power over nature and intervening? In the natural order of things - why do we need to know and know and know? It's about control and defying nature and death, which is inevitable. I think art is the same in a sense except no one dies. Art and culture remove us from nature too, attempt to immortalise us through traditions, culture that persists after we are gone?

I could be wrong but sometimes it helps me to realise my own insignificance in the grand scheme of things - it means you have to focus on being present and in the joy of the small things that make an immediate difference to you and those around you.

Bit deep for a Sunday afternoon but the aim for me is simplicity. I read an article by a woman who lost both her legs in the London bombings of 7/7. Her perspective on life now was that she had a second chance to make a difference to people's lives - she quit her job as director of the design council after returning to work 6 months after the bombing. She came across a folder in her office marked 'urgent' and obviously nothing had been so urgent - everything in her office was the same as it was 6 months before. She threw the folder in the bin and quit her job to work for an organisation promoting peace

between different cultures. I do wonder that some of the endeavours I embark on and subsequently lose interest in are distractions from what really might make a difference.

All best,  
Iben



## Philip

(1 hour mentoring session September 2005)

Philip was an old friend from my college days (Appendix - Strand 3 - 3.2 Cases data file - Philip 2005). He was educated at public school and two state universities. He worked for many years at a London university specialising in business and has been semi-retired for two or three years. He told me that he left this, his last full time job, because he was being asked to lower his standards in passing students who he felt were not deserving. He thought that this was probably part of the university marketing strategy to attract lucrative fees from foreign students. It is evident from his relation of his story that he had his own standard of ethics/principles, which he was not happy about compromising even to the point where he left his job before retirement age and did not yet receive a pension. This in spite of his comment, *"I was always in demand and I enjoyed my job"* seemed to indicate, that he had a strong ethical conscience. He was currently working as a freelance advisor and examiner.

This session, from my perspective, was more of a listening than a mentoring session, since Philip seemed quite decided about the facts of his life and did not appear to be questioning or seeking answers. In retrospect it seems that his comment, *"I think in patterns - I am an analytical structured thinker - I follow a rational/logical-thinking model - not emotional/practical"*, revealed an overt (perhaps 'conditioned?') respect for traditional 'academic logic'. Although Philip did not seem to value 'emotional thinking' at work, it seems that he still sought satisfaction and left jobs, which left him intellectually unstimulated. I wonder if this intellectual stimulation and satisfaction could have been gained through more 'practical', 'hands-on' experience during his industrial management training. His statement that he could *"see a pattern in what at first appears random"* might be seen as indicating quite sophisticated subjective thinking skills of which in common with most of us, he appeared to be

only partially aware. In spite of his 'rational' approach his life choices indicate that his feelings were ultimately very important to him.

### **COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Philip**

#### **PHILIP**

**05.09.05**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Philip's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

Becoming a teacher (*university lecturer*) was an evolution/gradual process for me. As far as I can recall it was the result of working in a bank and clothing company because I got intellectually bored. Although I was busy and active, the same problems came round again and I was not allowed to deal with them even though I saw solutions. I looked for other solutions than working by the book. I was creative not institutionalised. A director of the bank told me I would go to the top but always be frustrated. Out of twelve graduates eleven had left already so others must have had problems too.

I then did a masters at Lancaster in 'marketing.' A senior bank official said this was unethical, but I knew there were fiddles going on in banking also. I was headhunted by a large clothing manufacturer as the managing director's personal assistant, which meant I was imposed on him against his wishes. This situation had a huge potential for friction, but it worked quite well for three years. After 3 months my appointer left and with that my promise of becoming marketing manager after 6-12 months.

I was good at my job of increasing sales, but I was not promoted officially because of the MD's attitude and ego problems. There were stimulating problems but although you could solve them, there was a distant management agenda, which subverted my aims. I had intellectual abilities to think strategically but was working with people only thinking of short-term tactics (behaving like headless chickens/fire fighting). It became clear to me that this was not going to change. There was no future in the job because restructuring was planned with no place for me. I looked for other jobs in commercial/education fields. I had a feeling education would offer more intellectual challenge than just dealing with the minutiae of admin and details of implementation.

University taught me to think at a senior level. I was offered five academic jobs and also got short-listed for two commercial posts. I got a job teaching practicing managers and found I was learning as well as teaching (consultancy, training and masters degrees). I did not want to teach undergraduates. Managers were surprised at my analytical skills and insight into their businesses. I think in patterns - I am an analytical structured thinker - I follow a rational/logical-thinking model - not emotional/practical. I can see a pattern in what at first appears random. I was always in demand and I enjoyed my job.

Philip

I find all this helpful and thought provoking. I think it will be very useful data! Thanks a lot.

Jenny

**05.09.05**

**MENTEE RECORD: Philip's own written end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Philip**

When I went into lecturing, it was not from a sense of vocation but more from a hope that the environment would offer more intellectual stimulation and allow a focus on strategic rather than tactical issues in management. Philip

**Teresa**

**(4 hours in total - 4 sessions in March 2005 and three in January 2007)**

Teresa was in her forties, an extended family member, though not a blood relative. I had known her for 14 years as we often met on family occasions. She and her husband had taken over her father's business, when he retired. She had a successful business career, happy marriage and enjoyed being a mother, when she had decided to go back to education. She had three daughters, the eldest a graduate, the second at university and the youngest still at primary school. She had always been very artistic and produced a very high quality and variety of craft items while bringing up her family. Teresa had done an access course to university with the aim of becoming a primary school teacher and her tutor had been so impressed with her she said Teresa was an inspiration. In spite of this Teresa was feeling insecure and worried.

Teresa was in her second year of a combined teacher-training and degree course. She had achieved top marks throughout and the work I saw was of an exceptionally high standard. She was having problems due to the overly demanding amount of lesson planning expected from her teaching placement school. There was a lack of coordination between her teacher training and degree departments. It was a serious problem particularly because she felt a compulsion to fulfil every detailed requirement. This was causing work overload, affecting her health. In spite of her record of 'A's, receiving a 'B' had upset her. Teresa thought she was *'too much of a perfectionist.'* She worried about being good enough and *'being self-indulgent at the expense of others'*. She felt this even though her husband was very supportive and encouraging, taking over household tasks to ease her workload.

In spite of problems in trusting her own capabilities, Teresa seemed to others very able to succeed. She was disappointed by her college course and felt the current educational system was somehow failing to engage her enthusiasm. She was disappointed to discover that, as a teacher, she would not enjoy the level of choice, control and autonomy, which she felt she needed to enjoy doing the job. She wanted to follow the National Curriculum using her own presentation methods and ideas. If she couldn't do this, she was not sure if she still wanted to teach. She was a talented writer in Psychology and English literature, having high standards in critical literature studies, psychology and art. She was trying to resolve these abilities with her goal of becoming a primary school teacher.

In the first session and while we were chatting Teresa produced a picture. This picture shows the sunrise at the top, representing her hopes and achievements; a complicated middle section with interlocking pieces of her life and a swirl beneath of unconscious worries representing her unconscious. The meanings of each layer are written at the side. These are the comments on the picture:

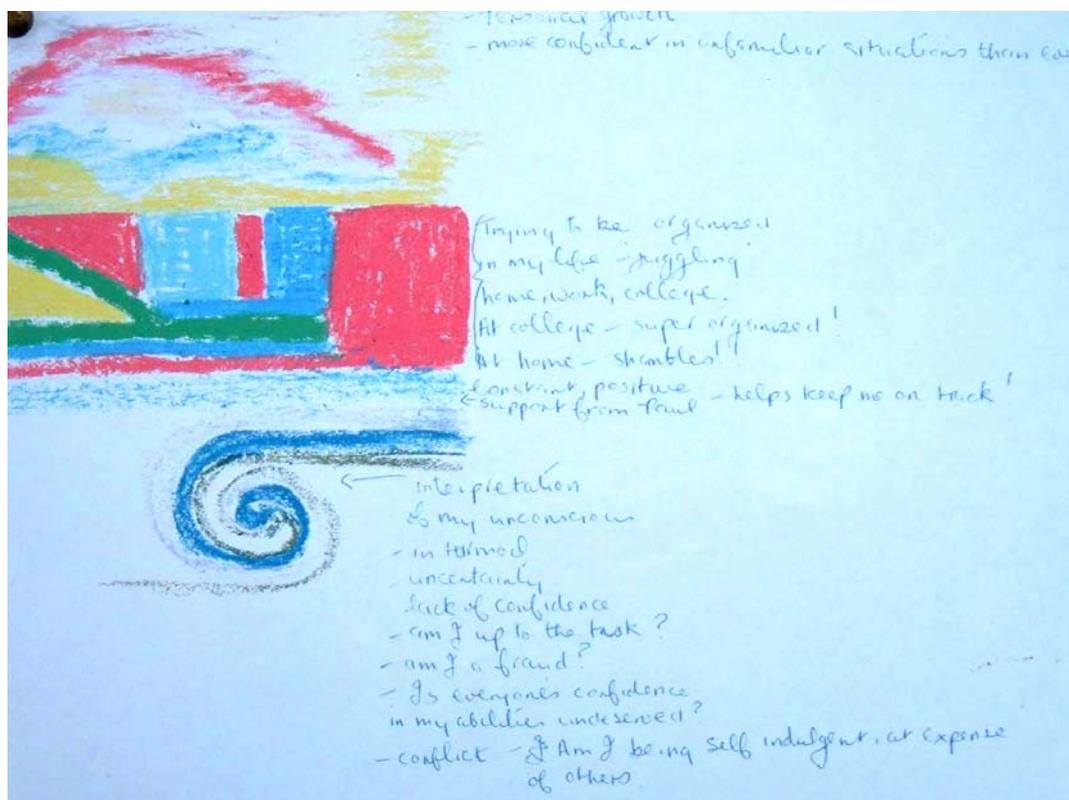
*"Personal growth, More confident in unfamiliar situations than ever before, Trying to be organised in my life-'juggling', At college - super organised! At home - shambles! Constant positive support from my husband - keeps me on track! Interpretation of my unconscious: In turmoil, Uncertainty, Lack of confidence, Am I up to the task? Am I a fraud? Is everyone's confidence in my abilities undeserved? Conflict - am I being self-indulgent at expense of others? Useful. Nice to unburden oneself!"*

Teresa

When I stopped mentoring Teresa she was temporarily off college with depression and was carefully considering her future options. Teresa had a history, which included failing to get her expected grades in 'o' and 'A' level exams. She told me that as a teenager she had assumed that she would succeed without effort, because she had always found school easy. This was a perfectly logical conclusion for her to make at the time, since the work did not stretch her at school. She was also unready to take on academic life at that point. However, the shock of 'failing' in her ambitions by getting lower grades than expected of her, seemed to have left her with some unresolved feelings, which led to her later overwork and anxiety. These feelings were affecting her and restricting her progress, a long time afterwards, even though she knew her life had moved on. Eventually after a period of rest and reflection she planned to return to university the following year. She appeared to be an example of a person with emotional blocks to learning, which were complex and presumably difficult for her tutors to understand in view of her age and current successes.

**COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Teresa****16.03.05****MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Teresa's words/points while chatting - and end summary****Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

Teresa told me about jobs she must do over the Easter holidays. These were: a six hundred word assignment on the Tripartite system, a thousand word assignment on a teaching subject of particular interest. She thought she might do this on the importance of reading in the primary setting. She talked about the difficulties of giving attention to her youngest daughter and felt guilty that she cannot be a full time mother now she has so much college work. We discussed these problems and compared notes. (I had done my education degree while doing a job and looking after my own family) We decided that it is OK to do your own thing - other people respect you for it (eventually!). This seemed to be the nub of our long chat about this and that. I really enjoyed it - thanks for listening to my bits and helping me too. Jenny

**16.03.05****MENTEE RECORD: Teresa's own written end summary****Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Teresa**

(While we were chatting Teresa produced a picture. This picture shows the sunrise at the top, representing her hopes and achievements; a complicated middle section with interlocking pieces of her life and a swirl beneath of unconscious worries representing her unconscious. The meanings of each layer are written at the side.)

These are the comments as they appear at the side of the picture:

Personal growth

More confident in unfamiliar situations than ever before

Trying to be organised in my life-'juggling'  
 At college - super organised!  
 At home - shambles!  
 Constant positive support from my husband - keeps me on track!

Interpretation of my unconscious

- In turmoil
- Uncertainty
- Lack of confidence
- Am I up to the task?
- Am I a fraud?
- Is everyone's confidence in my abilities undeserved?
- Conflict - am I being self-indulgent at expense of others?

Useful. Nice to unburden oneself! Teresa

#### **07.01.07**

##### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record after talking to Teresa**

Teresa was very stressed and had not slept for some nights when I called to ask if we could resume mentoring. She was very tired and felt overwhelmed by the workload of the combined degree and teacher-training course. She admitted that this was partly because she was such a perfectionist and wanted all her work to be perfect with top marks. I stayed for about an hour and she explained her difficulties. These were that the proformas for her lesson plans for her next long School Based Experience slot were impractical and difficult to fill in. Moreover the school based mentor wanted her to produce all five weeks of detailed lesson planning prior to the start of her teaching practice. This was her first experience of planning for Key Stage one children and she felt unsupported by the school based mentor. Her planning in her previous placement had been praised for its comprehensiveness and creativity, but this time she found that her plans were often returned for revision. Teresa felt she was being suppressed from using creative ideas she had produced for art, although they met the national curriculum learning objectives she was required to cover. Her plans were rejected on the grounds that they did not follow the Qualifications Curriculum Agency scheme, which gives guidance and examples of specific lessons for illustration but which in fact are not intended to be used ad hoc in all schools.

Her English Literature department at university, with whom she was doing a simultaneous degree, were not co-ordinating with the teacher training department and she was being asked to hand in work at particular times, which clashed with her periods of work experience in school. They did not appear to be fully acknowledging the additional work being done on the parallel course. She was expecting to find her coming long teaching practice difficult because renovation to the buildings at the school meant that her classroom might be used for assembly during her work experience. All of her work in her first year was marked as A or A\*, but it was frustrating that this would not count in her final assessment and she had recently received a B which had upset her record.

Jenny

#### **08.01.07**

##### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record after talking to Teresa**

I called again the following day and found Teresa looking a lot better. She said she had had her first proper sleep for several days but had still been up until 2 a.m. doing her work. She thought that unburdening herself to someone who understood had probably helped. Her husband who is very supportive of her said he was glad I had called by.

Jenny

#### **24.01.07**

##### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record after talking to Teresa**

I called round to see Teresa to show her my write up of her data. She was looking brighter and more relaxed. Teresa had in fact, unknown to me, now been off university resting for nearly two weeks. She had been given a doctor's note to say that she was suffering from stress and needed complete rest. She had realised during the weekend when I went round that she could not face her teaching practice in school even though she was all prepared. She had been to see her school based mentor, who had previously not been particularly helpful, and had been hard to please. She suddenly became much more sympathetic and helpful. On realising that Teresa was serious about abandoning her teacher training

course, she unexpectedly offered her a wealth of commercially and teacher planned resources and lesson plans. If she had known of them these would have eased Teresa's workload considerably and would have given her ideas she could have adapted if she had had access to them. She was now even prepared to accept Teresa's existing lesson preparation, which she had previously thought might be improved. Although Teresa was tempted to just leave because she could not cope, she was now hanging fire while she considered her options. She was relieved that she had called a halt because she believed, due to her previous experience of depression, that continuing would have put her at serious risk of having a nervous breakdown possibly ending up going to the doctor. She had realised that she was becoming overwhelmed.

At the age of 23 and recently married, she and her family were devastated by the sudden death of her mother at the premature age of 44. Within a year Teresa gave birth to her first child. Teresa said that up to this point she had suppressed her grief by putting all her thoughts into planning for the arrival of the baby. However, once her daughter was born, her grief overflowed and she suffered a severe bout of post-natal depression. This was a very bad experience, which she wants to avoid happening again, although she feels the present situation is completely different. Apart from the confusion she experienced in planning for the teaching practice described above, she listed some other reasons for her current problems

- She felt that the pressure of work and paperwork required by the courses, given her high standards of working was beyond her to physically complete to her own satisfaction.
- She was disappointed to discover that, as a teacher in the current climate, she would not enjoy the level choice, control and autonomy, which she felt necessary to enjoy doing the job. She was not sure now if she still wanted to teach.
- She would delay her decision, go to the doctor and gain more time off while the other students finished their teaching practice. She could do hers in the summer term after lectures finished if necessary. Meanwhile she could get some work done for the English Literature degree ahead of time.
- In the mean time she had decided to go and see another tutor who knew her and her work better and ask her advice.

When I showed Teresa my first analysis it turned out that my assumptions about her father's influence, because of some of his anti-feminist attitudes I had witnessed, were not of great significance to her. She felt that this might have applied more to her younger sister, Frances, who she thought had been more affected by their father's adoration of their younger brother when he came along. She thought that Frances also seemed to have received less parental encouragement than Teresa to further her education. Frances was just as intelligent but was more sport orientated and physically talented. There was a more important combination of factors, which seem to have affected Teresa's decision not to go to university after school. These were that:

- She had found her 'O' level exams at 16 very easy and passed all 8 of them without much effort or revision. These had not included Art, even though she wanted to do it. This was because the school only allowed pupils to take 8 'o' levels and Teresa was encouraged by school and family to take more academic subjects. There had been very high expectations of her at school. She had been shocked when the headmaster asked her if she was disappointed at the results, even though she had achieved A's, B's and C's.
- Looking back she realised that everyone had always had very high expectations of her educationally during her childhood. She had been a precocious learner from a young age and had been able to read when she started school. Perhaps if she had worked harder at her exams she would have done much better.
- She took 5 'A' levels, insisting on doing Art this time as this was a major interest. The first year of the course there were several art teachers in charge and teaching was not of a very high standard. In the final year a teacher took over, who was very good, saying that the previous work was not what was required for the exam. He thought Teresa was an exceptionally talented pupil.
- Her father and mother were willing to help her through Art school if she got in although her father thought the law would make a better career.
- Teresa went for an interview to do a Foundation Art course. She had been warned that notification would only be by post, when all applicants had been considered. However, when the tutor saw her folder of work, she was instantly accepted.

- Teresa had worked hard for her Art 'A' level and was shocked when she failed the exam, which meant she could not take up the college place. Her teacher thought she should appeal, but she had refused. She thinks now, with hindsight, that she should have taken the exam again, but if this was suggested, she did not listen.
- She realises now that she was not very open to advice at that time, being stubborn and strong willed and convinced that the art exam result proved she had no talent for the subject.
- Because Teresa had taken 5 'A' levels, she was disappointed to only gain two.
- She gained a well-paid job with the post office and at the time this seemed a good option.
- She had met and fallen in love with her future husband and was unsure if their relationship would survive the separation if she went away to university.

Teresa and Jenny together reading and amending in retrospect

#### **07.01.07, 08.01.07 and 24.01.07**

**MENTEE RECORD: Teresa's own written end summary:** this were not asked for as Teresa was not in the right frame of mind. However the notes above were considerably added to by Teresa in 2010, a year after she had passed her course with flying colours gaining a first. These amendments give a much more informative and balanced view of her situation as she considers it in retrospect than it was possible for her to give at the time.

Jenny

## **Sean**

### **(6 hours in total - 3 sessions in August and December 2005 and April 2006)**

Sean was in his forties and an acquaintance, who had become a friend. When I first mentored him he was in the process of deciding upon his next career move having resigned from his most recent job as assistant head of a large Catholic comprehensive near London. He was in the process of reconciling himself to his decision to leave a well-paid job because of his principles. Taking the standard promotion route, he had taken up an assistant head post and head of year post at the school, but left after one year because he was exasperated by the head teacher's management style and methods. He drew a very explosive picture describing his feelings about this recent experience, which had made him very angry indeed. His resignation was causing some emotional dilemmas as he adjusted his thoughts. He felt strongly about this head teacher's lack of humanity, which was in conflict with his own views.

*"Empathy is very important in teaching: the ability to be sensitive and to be aware of the fact that there is always something we can learn - especially from the people whom we teach!"*

Sean

Sean had worked in a variety of schools of all age groups, both Protestant and Catholic during his first years of teaching. More recently he worked in two Church of England secondary schools near London. He settled in the second one for a long period and worked his way up to head of year. In the second session he told me about his childhood and in the third session that he had returned to his former school and was readjusting to life as a supply teacher and considering further career possibilities. It seemed possible that Sean's unique experience, ability and personality could take him into further productive directions to benefit him self and others. As well as teaching he had journalistic, philosophical, writing and political knowledge and skills to offer and a strong appreciation of human values.

He was born and brought up in Belfast within a middle class Catholic family. In 1970, when 'The Troubles' affected his area, it changed very quickly from a middle class area with a mixture of Catholics and Protestants into a Catholic ghetto when poor Catholics moved in. These people were ignorant, bitter and violent and Sean found his world turned upside down. He witnessed some frightening events.

*"August 1970 One year after the beginning of "The Troubles", the area in north Belfast where I had been born and brought up, completely changed - because the protestant residents moved out and, almost immediately, Catholic - but (lawless) - residents moved in. The area degenerated. Graffiti and IRA vigilante-ism became very prominent while my parents tried to protect me from this. I was very traumatised by this in as much as I lost good friends and neighbours overnight. A ghetto-ised war zone became the norm"*

Sean

His father was a peaceful man, who believed in education and refused to allow Sean to be indoctrinated by the IRA. He stuck to his own peaceful view in spite of the disruption to his family neighbourhood. Although Sean is grateful for his parents support in his life, he is puzzled why they didn't move away. Sadly, they died prematurely when Sean was in his twenties and so he cannot now ask them. Sean's own views, perspective and critical conclusions about events, since he was a highly intelligent person, had also contributed to his growing up with strong values and beliefs in favour of cross sectarian religious education, peace and respect for individuals and communities. He appreciated and believed in law and order and said he would never take it for granted. Sean took a degree in politics and journalism and then chose to do his postgraduate year of teacher training at a Protestant college. The influences of his environment during his upbringing affecting his logical choices are easy to perceive.

Jenny

### **COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Sean**

**27.08.05**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Sean's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

"In 1979 at 18 I had an option to do a B.Ed or a higher history degree in politics. I was interested in teaching from an early age and felt I could do it reasonably well. Between the ages of 18 and 23 I also considered journalism and the civil service. I started a postgraduate law course but didn't take to it. I decided to teach and chose to go to a Protestant college although I was a Catholic. I was 24 when my PGCE finished. In 1985 and 1986 I did supply teaching in both Catholic and Protestant secondary and junior schools. This was like being a locum and I had no permanent contract. It was good experience but frustrating because I was not teaching history or politics on a serious basis. Between 1987 and 1989 I moved to a London suburb and taught both subjects in a Church of England secondary school (ages 11-18). This was a challenging school serving both sexes and having a racial mix of pupils. This was a baptism of fire - I completed my probationary year.

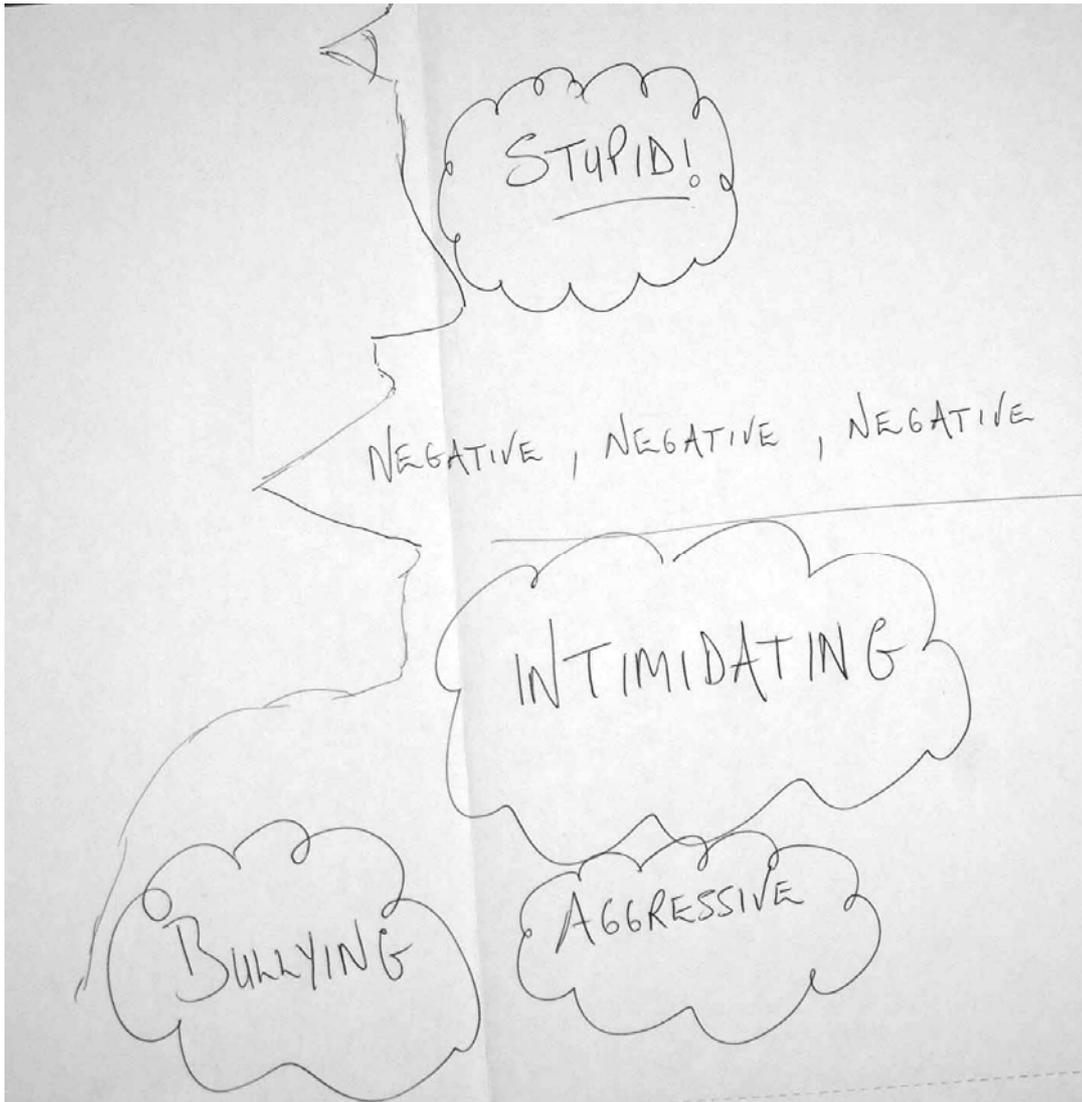
In 1990 I got a post in another London borough in a Grammar school. This was a very English, very white and very middle class protestant school. I stayed 14 years until 2004. During that time I settled well and was accepted and promoted internally to Head of Lower School History, then Head of Year. This school was, in spite of its name, a boys' comprehensive state school. It had the ethos and traditions of a middle England grammar school with high Anglican Christian Church traditions (WASPISH). As an Irish Catholic I was accepted and comfortable.

In 2004 I started work at an all girls, racially mixed Catholic Comprehensive School in another London borough. It was a very challenging and very tough school. My reasons for leaving were nothing to do with the pupils but mostly because of the head teacher. My post was as an assistant head teacher and head of year. My remit was to observe all departments with reference to OFSTED guidelines. From September to December 2004 - 66% of lessons for key stage 3 good or very good or excellent; 30% satisfactory and 4% failed. My job was to improve teaching and learning. I was also given a challenging year 8 to deal with as well as teaching two year 7 classes, two year 8 classes, 2 year 9 classes, 1 year 10 class and 1 year 12 class (2 week timetable = 23 periods of 1 hour)

My teaching has been informed by my own personal experiences and enriched by that. I am still learning. I believe respect is earned - not given. Actions speak louder than words. You can earn respect through your actions. I think I am a good teacher, but I would never take it for granted. I had a problem in supporting someone I did not respect. My principles were compromised as a thinking Catholic. I am also a person who knows a lot about living in a divided community and I have thought about the issues. I have a realistic, heuristic perspective. There is a two dimensional aspect in literature which is not the same as real three dimensional living. I am a very empathic person."

Sean

I found this all fascinating stuff and will email the book details I promised. Jenny



27.08.05

**MENTEE RECORD: Sean's own written end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Sean**

Empathy is very important in teaching: the ability to be sensitive and to be aware of the fact that there is always something we can learn - especially from the people whom we teach!

Respecting others - but we can only do this if we respect ourselves. Respect has to be earned; and we have to learn to respect ourselves also by an appropriate and cognisant (self-reflecting) code of conduct.

Sean

29.12.05

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Sean's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

Critical points

1. August 1969 was a critical point for me when the troubles started. A gun battle was going on outside our front door and I was shaking like a leaf. I thought, "If I ever get out of this I will not bring my children up like this." I was 8 years old. I believe I got over it and there's no deep psychoanalytic

conclusion to be gained from this for me. I believe it has helped me to understand history and appreciate normality and peace.

2. In 1970 I lived in a middle class area with a mixture of Catholics and Protestants. In August 1970 people moved into ghettos. My area became a Catholic ghetto with poor Catholics moving in. To me they were Catholic working class scum - rude, aggressive and very IRA. My father was for church, education and anti-violence. This example was a great advantage to me. I loathe graffiti because our area became covered in it. I appreciate law and order and will never take it for granted.

3. In August 1971 I was aged 10 - one Saturday night/Sunday morning at 1 to 2 a.m. I remember being outside. Three hundred yards away from where I stood in a crowd of nervous Catholic people were a group of Protestants threatening us. Six English soldiers stood between us and I remember thinking we were going to be attacked. I remember it as in silence and on my own. I don't know how I came to be in that situation. I realise that my parents were overtaken by events, but I wonder why we didn't move away."

Notes of Sean speaking recorded by Jenny

### 29.12.05

#### **MENTEE RECORD: Sean's own written end summary**

August 1970 One year after the beginning of "The Troubles", the area in north Belfast where I had been born and brought up, completely changed - because the protestant residents moved out and, almost immediately, Catholic - but (lawless) - residents moved in. The area degenerated. Graffiti and IRA vigilante-ism became very prominent while my parents tried to protect me from this.

I was very traumatised by this in as much as I lost good friends and neighbours overnight. A ghettoised war zone became the norm - 1970 - 1979. I left this milieu for university but I would always now positively relish normality whenever I would subsequently experience it.

Sean

### 19.04.06

#### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Sean's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

A teacher has to earn respect, be intelligently confrontational and keep any good will by attempting to teach thoroughly (e.g. marking) and continue to gain respect. You reap what you sow - including (when dealing with) very hard schools and pupils. Pupils are very canny even when not academic. They are socially aware from a young age and can play politics between siblings and parents. They know whether people care about them or not. I don't believe you get respect just for your status as a teacher. Unless you work to maintain that you deserve to lose it and are foolish - setting yourself up for a fall. I have been supply teaching at my old school and I was nervous. It has worked out very well because I took nothing for granted. I think that was a good approach and I've learned from the experience. I'm surprised how well I've coped with such an unpredictable day to day life - extremely well actually. Senior staff have said I'm a more rounded individual, which is interesting. I don't have to be confrontational as a supply teacher. I'm experiencing and using different skills. I'm sometimes used as a duty manager - a compliment to me - dealing with miscreants. I have tried different approaches more successfully. I realise that promotion for status is not for me."

Notes of Sean speaking recorded by Jenny

### 19.04.06

#### **MENTEE RECORD: Sean's own written end summary**

I lost this as I gave both copies to Sean in error. Jenny

## **Lily**

**(6 hours in total - 6 sessions in August, September, October and November 2004, January, and April 2005)**

Lily was my daughter's friend. She was in her thirties. At the time of mentoring she was on a Registered Teacher Practitioner course and also teaching Drama in a large mixed state secondary

comprehensive school. She was married with a young daughter at primary school. Many of her mentoring sessions dealt with her concerns about her pupils. They tended to tell her their problems and she was gaining experience in ways to respond to them. The pressure of work from school and college was heavy, but she had great enthusiasm for her work and was conscientiously reflecting on her practice. She was glad of an opportunity to be mentored as she was missing this support at school and at college at the time and had a lot of day-to-day teaching issues, which were bothering her.

*I was really surprised at how easy I found talking. I started to talk about all kinds of positive and negative aspects to my work in a way that I haven't before. I found it really useful to talk like this because I rarely get the opportunity. I think that this is because I find it difficult to speak like this to people in the profession and I feel that people outside teaching don't understand some of the issues raised.*

Lily

She was concerned about the way in which some staff dealt with pupils' problems as discipline issues, as though pupils were deliberately trying to upset other people rather than being genuinely distressed and in need of help.

*I worry about certain pupils. I feel powerless to do anything. I am concerned that there is no consistency in the department (especially marking and standardising work). I don't like the way certain teachers talk to their pupils. I feel a sense of compassion fatigue (them not me).*

Lily

She found that in some cases staff attitudes caused the problems to become hidden further away rather than being dealt with sensitively and solutions found. This resulted in pupils having nowhere to go for real help. She was in an awkward (and vulnerable) position as a trainee teacher whom the children trusted. She was sometimes in need of guidance and support, but because she was perceived as a very competent teacher, there was none available. She was finding that Drama improvisation was very productive in helping underachievers to consider their own and other people's difficulties and was doing a college project around developing 'emotional intelligence'.

#### **COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Lily**

##### **11.08.04**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

*(In this first session Lily talked rapidly almost non-stop about her degree, her teacher training course and her teaching work. It was all very interesting and I took on board what she told me, but I found it impossible to keep up with her in writing notes.)*

Lily comes over as a really intelligent teacher who cares about her students. She has also been very successful in motivating students. Jenny

##### **11.08.04**

**MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Lily**

I was really surprised at how easy I found talking. I started to talk about all kinds of positive and negative aspects to my work in a way that I haven't before. I found it really useful to talk like this because I rarely get the opportunity. I think that this is because I find it difficult to speak like this to people in the profession and I feel that people outside teaching don't understand some of the issues raised.

Lily

**16.09.04****MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

*(While she was talking she drew a small colourful picture of a woman (herself?) standing with five differently shaped trees and an orange cat)*

Lily explained her disadvantages in being the first to do a registered teacher course in her school:

- No opportunity to observe because she takes classes
- Given lots of outside activities to do as a teacher already.

Lily worries about reporting pupils' welfare issues to other teachers in case they are insensitive to pupils. She has had one or two bad experiences where this has happened. One of these caused her to feel acute concern for a pupil. This pupil was reported to Lily by other pupils for self-harming and on being challenged started to confide in Lily. However, when Lily had asked for advice from a member of senior staff, the pupil was summoned very publicly from class and the problem referred to openly in front of other pupils as a matter of discipline. This humiliation and insensitivity caused the pupil to stop talking to Lily about the problems and its cause and all progress was lost. She still feels annoyed and upset by the way this was handled.

Next week Lily starts college - Wednesday morning and Thursday afternoon and wonders how this split routine will work. Subjects studied will be editing a classical text and an independent study project. Lily's general chatting about teaching reveals her as an enthusiastic, inspirational teacher. She is good at being fair and balanced with students.

Jenny

**16.09.04****MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary**

I found tonight's session really interesting and was surprised again at how quickly the time went! I felt that I got a couple of things off my chest and also resolved a problem about my training (observing lessons to gain an idea of good practice) I am really enjoying my time spent here.

Lily

**07.10.04****MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

*(While she was talking she drew a small colourful picture of a woman (herself?) standing with a birthday cake on a table under a chandelier)*

Lily goes to a teacher training college and university in a nearby city on day release from her job as a Drama teacher in a large mixed comprehensive secondary school. Lily is helping to produce a community performance in a nearby town. She does drama with a youth group on Saturday mornings. She is living in a steady relationship with her intended husband and has a young daughter (*from a previous relationship*) who is at primary school. Lily is having some problems relating to other students at college because due to her family commitments, she has such a different lifestyle. She is on a Registered Teacher Programme (*having started out as a teaching assistant*) and is doing a Drama degree as a top up to her Higher National Diploma. She thinks that her picture from last time may be herself in an overwhelming forest at the start of college.

Lily talked about school and has resolved a problem with a pupil who wanted help regarding a controlling aggressive father. She has decided that listening and support for this pupil is sufficient. She does not think more drastic action is necessary. Lily is obviously very respectful of her students' feelings (*and they come to her with their problems because she is sympathetic*). This often causes her ethical dilemmas about what to do. (*Lily talked briefly about her childhood and the fact that her parents are divorced and leading separate lives.*) Her parents sound like interesting and very individual people.

Jenny



**07.10.04**

**MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary**

I enjoyed this session. It felt like an informal chat. I feel that I have resolved some issues that were playing on my mind:

- College
- A pupil I am concerned about

I was able to talk about them. We ended by talking about my family, which was nice because I'm certain that their influence plays a big part in my life/career.

Lily

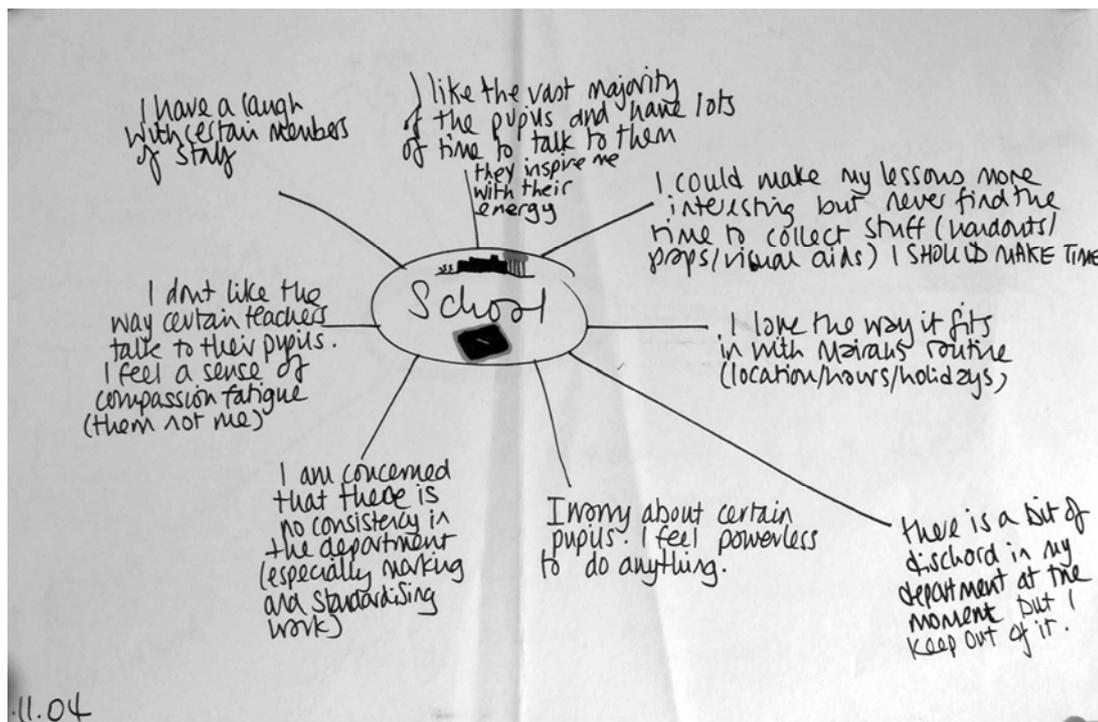
**25.11.04**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

Lily did a very rapid map of her life! She homed in on her portfolio and Saturday Club, which sounds as if she is running it very professionally and confidently. She is a bit concerned that she and her husband work too hard. . Lily was impressed by an inset day by Peter hook about motivating students and preventing bad behaviour in the classroom. Lily was concerned about a pupil who was complaining about problems with an oppressive father - another teacher (Lily asked advice of) told the head of year and Lily feels this has not been dealt with sensitively enough. The pupil asked Lily if she had told anyone and now she has stopped talking about her problems. Another girl is anorexic and has

an aggressive father. She is now self-harming according to her friends - burning and cutting herself. She has gone to Lily's Saturday Drama Club since the age of nine and is in charge of younger children. Lily feels it is good for her as she may have control issues. Lily is really worried about this pupil and feels better for talking about it. Some senior teachers are unsympathetic, but one of them is very understanding and experienced. Lily thinks she may go to her for support. I observed that to be such a successful motivating drama teacher is to be sensitive, empathic and highly intelligent. It is understandable that Lily gets upset and concerned about pupils with difficulties and other staff who are unsympathetic.

Jenny



25.11.04

#### MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary

Lily produced a spider map with her name at the centre - the following points were made around it in no particular order:

- My family - Mum in Denmark, Dad and his partner.
- Computer, T.V. and music (I can relax and not think about work stuff)
- Registered Teaching Practitioner course - meeting standards - getting my portfolio together.
- Saturday drama club - I love it - takes no effort.
- Mum to my daughter! (Decorated by a circle of stars and hearts)
- Schoolteacher - resources (remember to bring them!) - staff relationships - fun lessons (hopefully) - assessment (getting my head round it - it seems a bit inconsistent) - pastoral (worrying about kids a lot!) - planning - rapport with students.
- Husband is cool - works too hard.
- College - lots of reading, referencing and bibliographies!! - presentation - play (Midsummer night's Dream) - essay - new modules after Christmas.

Lily produced a 2nd spider map with school at the centre. The following points surrounded this map:

- I like the majority of the pupils and have lots of time to talk to them - they inspire me with their energy.
- I could make my lessons more interesting but never find the time to collect stuff (handouts/props/visual aids). I SHOULD MAKE TIME.

- I love the way (my job) fits in with my daughter's routine (location/hours/holidays)
- There is a bit of discord in my department at the moment but I keep out of it.
- I worry about certain pupils. I feel powerless to do anything.
- I am concerned that there is no consistency in the department (especially marking and standardising work).
- I don't like the way certain teachers talk to their pupils. I feel a sense of compassion fatigue (them not me).
- I have a laugh with certain members of staff.

I found this session really useful. I drew a spider graph of my life and a more detailed one of school. This provoked me to talk about issues that are concerning me at the moment. It will be interesting to look back on it and see whether my attitudes, priorities and concerns remain the same or have changed.

Lily

#### 26.01.05

#### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

(Lily drew a small picture of herself and her cat.)

Lily's pupil who was a self-harmer is now in foster care and much happier. Lily is finding it hard to tell if this other girl is exaggerating or really in trouble. Lily is really pleased that an expert advisor praised one of her lessons. Well done, Lily!!!! Lily is planning to make a documentary (with her pupils), which is also to be used as a study project for college. This will involve creative writing and documentary on a subject to be chosen by the pupils.

Lily is trying to cope with all of the information requirements of her college course - she says she is suffering from overload. My advice is to do something totally different every now and then and your mind will sort it out! I love your self-portrait of you and Simon the cat!

Jenny

#### 26.01.05

#### **MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary**

I feel as though a lot was covered in this session. I started to understand more about why I think I should be helping pupils and a lot was discussed about how the control is not with me and that I can't solve (all) pupils' problems.

I spoke about my documentary project, which enthused me and received a lot of suggestions and good advice about how I could go about making it.

Lily

#### 14.04.05

#### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Lily's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

(Lily had decided to pick the theme of underachievement and find out how a group of her pupils would respond to it. This work had just been completed when she came to see me.)

6th Session - Project - 3000 word research paper on under achievement - "Usefulness of Drama to explore issues of under-achievement" - briefing with 3 boys - National Breakthrough Strategy for underachievers.

#### Conclusions

Pupils were aware of complex environmental and social problems, which can affect learning.

#### Project Aims

1. To discuss issues of underachievement.
2. Produce a play devised and acted by pupils
3. Evaluate

#### Research Aims

1. What do pupils perceive as barriers to learning?
2. Find out if these issues could be explored without directly focussing on pupils' own problems.

"It's only now I'm in a job and at university that I realise how much my brain can cope with. When I was a single mum, I did a psychology 'A' level to occupy myself, but I didn't realise my full potential."

Lily

Fascinating - it seems my work on emotional blocks with teenagers has a parallel significance with Lily's work with underachievers.

Jenny

#### 14.04.05

#### **MENTEE RECORD: Lily's own written end summary**

By examining issues of under achievement - by doing this in a short time scale, with limited resources and little teacher guidance (but supported), the pupils achieved a high quality piece of work thus learning and raising (their own) achievement.

This is how I felt when I completed the delivery of the project today. I have been talking about this in tonight's session and I feel much clearer about my aims and where I want to go. I feel quite proud of my achievement with the project and with my teaching. I've discovered that I'm a really good communicator. This session has been really valuable.

Lily

#### **Jon**

#### **(3 hours in total - 2 sessions in December 2004 and March 2005)**

Jon was an ex-colleague in his fifties. I had worked with him in Drama lessons and knew him to be an inspiring teacher. Jon explained that his current work was in vocational education at his local further education college and supply teaching in local schools. Jon was a talented writer and some years previously had written a children's play about bullying, broadcast by BBC radio. Over the years he had worked on various productions with two talented teachers in his school's music department. The school had won a national BBC competition 'Song for Christmas' for 4 or 5 years. When I met up with him again, Jon was awaiting publication of an academic book, advising teachers about truanting, for which he had done research in the local young offenders' prison. He was also writing a cantata with school children in a nearby city through an Arts Council grant.

Jon worked at the same large, state comprehensive school as me for over twenty years and when I left in 1997 was Head of Sixth Form. In our first session he told me how he had given up his job the previous year because he was disillusioned with management decisions. Coincidentally, at about that time, the school failed an OFSTED inspection and was in special measures for several years. A major reason for Jon leaving was that the vocational course for school leavers, he had developed with a colleague, was scrapped. This course involved working with disaffected underachievers, giving them lessons in maths and English at school and day release work experience away from school. He has strong socialist and humanitarian values and understands disaffected teenagers points of view. He is able to communicate very well with them, inspiring discipline and respect. He became disaffected himself when his work was not valued. Jon had also spent the last four years of his full time post teaching Drama in a mobile classroom taken from an old site and already condemned. The performing Arts budget was cut by £40,000. All of these reasons contributed to his giving up a well-paid job before pensionable age.

His understanding of pupils was based in his upbringing, which had been culturally rich, but poor materially.

*"Dad was into Science, Mum more into Arts - poetry and literature. At school she had loved to be in plays. My family were poor. Money was often short, but there was always money for books. Mum and Dad were avid readers and passed this on to all three of their children. They were also determined that their children would have an education."*

Jon

Jon had encountered prejudice against himself by some teachers in his own school days. This had helped to make him particularly sympathetic to poorer children. It is easy to see how his life experiences have helped him to communicate well with disaffected teenagers.

*"I never really liked school. I felt poor and less valued by some teachers. In juniors, the head, wouldn't let me attempt the scholarship exams for the top two high schools even though I was an A student and came second in the class. I felt the same at Grammar School. I didn't enjoy the academic, but I was in all the plays. I was good with words and could lead others. I became head boy but was confused about my ambitions."*

Jon

Eventually Jon had gone to teacher training college and done a degree. He said he sometimes still encountered people's prejudice and inaccurate judgements of him. For example the person at the building society who on hearing he worked for the local authority assumed he was a labourer. He is a 'larger than life' character, with a rugby player's physical build and he is very outspoken, linguistically gifted and with a dry sense of humour, which is not always appreciated by those in authority. His parents would have liked to be teachers and in some ways he has fulfilled their ambitions. Jon had very strong views about education being open to all and felt his subject had a great deal to offer pupils, which was not sufficiently appreciated. Drama had helped him at school and he has helped others. Now a gifted writer, developing his career on a freelance basis as a creative educator with Creative Partnerships, he found that:

*"Drama helped to facilitate all other subjects - group work, problem solving, negotiating solutions and social interactions and was not valued by management. I believe children should enjoy their experiences of school... Education should be about enriching people's lives. We don't give enough choices. Life is not a formula. I don't believe government genuinely cares about education. I have become convinced that most politicians are ego driven and pragmatic - driven by their careers. Politicians are the chief stakeholders and want people to do their will. Education is (currently) not true education, it is training."*

Jon

### **COMPLETED MENTORING RECORDS: Jon**

**JON**

**13.12.04**

**MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Jon's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

**Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jenny**

"My mum was 36 and dad 29 when I was born. Mum and my uncle were brought up by her mother and her grandparents. Great Granddad was strict Welsh Chapel. Mum was born in 1916 and Great Granddad in the 1850's. Gran couldn't afford uniform for my mum even though she passed to go to Grammar school and was very bright. Dad's mum was a widow and he had three sisters. He had to support the family and joined the forces, the Fleet Air Arm. He was also very bright and worked in electronics eventually on supermarket check out tills and microwaves. They were very keen on us children getting a good education. We were hard up but there was money for books if not clothes. Dad was good with words and was asked to stay in the forces after the war to train as an officer. He had got to Chief Petty Officer and fought in the Pacific and was on Atlantic and Russian convoys. He was keen on science, whereas Mum was into poetry and literature. I felt a bit of a misfit at school, particularly because the head of my junior school told me I could not apply for a scholarship to the two top high schools. It seemed like discrimination because I was an A student and second in the top class. I was head boy at my state grammar school but messed up on 'A' levels. I wanted to be a mechanic and had developed an interest in drama." *(This had been started by being encouraged and chosen by a favourite primary teacher for a main part in a religious play)*

Jon

Options for a career in Drama

1. University - reading literature instead of books (needed another 'A' level)
2. Drama school - grants discretionary by LEA and none available in my city area.

3. Teacher training college to do Drama - grant available - I applied in 1972 to college (*in the town where he now lives*).

Before starting college Jon worked for 18 months on building sites and he believes this made him realise that many working class people were intelligent but had been deprived of education by poverty and upbringing. His college studies were upgraded to degree status. Jon is a passionate socialist. He believes in non-violence, is gifted linguistically and is a sensitive empathic person. He is discriminating with strong opinions, self-critical and dislikes and fears failure.

Jenny

### 13.12.04

#### **MENTEE RECORD: Jon's own written end summary**

#### **Agreement: We intend to use all information exchanged with respect for each other's confidentiality and agreement. Jon**

Today we have talked about my background and upbringing and the baggage that I have carried. In particular we have explored the ways in which people make judgements about others and in doing so perhaps restrict their perception of that person and that person's opportunities. On a personal level I feel that the way in which others thought of me and the way in which I saw myself prevented me from exploring my own creativity. Whilst this remains the case to some degree, I have appreciated the situation. I have begun to realise some of my ambitions and am growing in confidence as I continue to write and develop.

Jon

#### Jon's written notes/and recollections dated 13. 12. 2004

Mum (Edna) was 36 when I was born and Dad (Bill) was 29. Both were products of single parent families. Mum because she was illegitimate, Dad because his father had died when he was young.

Mum was brought up in Manchester by her mum and grandparents. Mum (Edna) was born in 1916. Her granddad - my great granddad was born in the 1850's. He was strict Welsh chapel and left Edna with a keen sense of what is right. This remains with me. Edna was very bright (I have seen her school reports), but family finances meant that despite passing a scholarship, she couldn't go to the grammar school. Her mum could not afford the uniform.

My dad was brought up with 3 sisters, in Glasgow by a widowed mother, He too was bright, but was forced to leave school to help support the family. He fought in World War Two in the Fleet Air Arm. He was in Atlantic and Russian Convoys and later in the Pacific War. Dad was good with words. He became a Chief Petty Officer and was asked to stay in at the end of the war and become an officer. He declined. On return home work was hard to find. He returned to his old job with Stevenson's, a firm who made and repaired cash registers (tills for shops). Through them he was transferred to where the work was - Newcastle, Nottingham and finally Manchester where he met Edna. Edna was employed by Stevenson's as a short hand typist. Dad worked in this industry till his death at fifty.

Dad was into science, Mum more into arts - poetry and literature. At school she had loved to be in plays. My family were poor. Money was often short, but there was always money for books. Mum and Dad were avid readers and passed this on to all three of their children. They were also determined that their children would have an education.

I never really liked school. I felt poor and less valued by some teachers. In juniors, Mr. Wardle, the head, wouldn't let me attempt the scholarship exams for the top two high schools even though I was an A student and came second in the class. I felt the same at Grammar School. I didn't enjoy the academic, but I was in all the plays. I was good with words and could lead others. I became head boy but was confused about my ambitions. I wanted to be a mechanic but the school said no.

I studied English literature, history and French to A level but messed them up. I still speak good French. In the end I decided I wanted to do drama. Options were limited. University offered a very academic literature type course with no practical and I needed another 'A' level. Drama School - no grants available (they were discretionary and Trafford didn't award them). My parents had no money to

support me. Also there was a feeling, born out of the family's lack of money, that it was better to get a 'secure' job.

Teaching. In 1972 I went to teacher training college. There was a grant available, excellent TV studios and Drama facilities. So I trained to be a teacher (even though I didn't like school) and found out I was quite good at it. Despite my lack of 'A' levels, I upgraded to a degree course.

Prior to college I worked 18 months on building sites. I met many intelligent working class people who had been deprived of education through background/poverty.

My upbringing and experience have made me a passionate socialist. I am non-violent, good with language, sensitive and empathic. I try to be discriminating and self-critical. I dislike and fear failure.

Jon

#### 09.03.05

#### **MENTOR RECORD: Jenny's notes/record of Jon's words/points while chatting - and end summary**

Jon explained that his work at present is in vocational education at his local further education college and supply teaching in local schools. He had left his job at his previous secondary school, where he worked for around twenty years due to several differences of opinion with the management. He had a well developed sense of humour. He had been promoted to Head of Sixth form and was much respected by colleagues and pupils. He had often expressed controversial views and challenged some ideas imposed by the school management. However, a major reason for his resignation was that the vocational course he had developed with a colleague was scrapped. This course involved working with disaffected underachievers, giving them lessons in maths and English at school and day release work experience away from school. Jon believed that properly educated people would be more adaptable to change and there would therefore be less likelihood of a 'skills famine.'

Jon said that throughout his life, perhaps because of his appearance (he has a burly stature and had been a keen rugby player) people had been inclined to label him as unintelligent. He described an incident when he went to request a mortgage and the building society clerk jumped to the conclusion that because he said he worked for the council he was a manual worker! In fact he is a published academic author and has written a cantata performed to music on stage. He is a very skilled teacher and has a reputation for inspiring pupils who are difficult to motivate.

Jenny

"The greatest compliment I received was when a pupil said "You're not really like a teacher, are you, sir?" An English teacher, Miss Radcliffe, got me in the first school play and gave me the bug for being on stage. Pete at secondary (working class background) got me into Drama. Some teachers disapproved of me. I found it easy to teach and I think teachers are born not made.

I spent the last four years of my full time teaching career teaching Drama in a mobile classroom taken from an old site and already condemned ('Tales from a pink shed'). Over the years I worked on productions with talented teachers in the music department and the school had won the national BBC competition 'Song for Christmas' for 4 or 5 years. I wrote a play about bullying. There were two BBC programmes about it and it was broadcast. However, the performing Arts budget at my former school was cut by £40,000. These experiences gave me lucidity about my job and made me realise that I had different aims to those of my management.

Drama helped to facilitate all other subjects - group work, problem solving, negotiating solutions and social interactions and was not valued by management. I believe children should enjoy their experiences of school. I think management is manipulative and systems like accountability are a lie. Teachers are abused by the system. I went into teaching to 'get a steady job' and carried on for the pleasure of seeing kids develop through drama, exploring skills, ideas and issues. I enjoyed it, but people do not value it in the outside world. Education should be about enriching people's lives. We don't give enough choices. Life is not a formula. I don't believe government genuinely cares about education. I have become convinced that most politicians are ego driven and pragmatic - driven by their careers. Politicians are the chief stakeholders and want people to do their will. Education is (currently) not true education it is training."

Jon

## **STRAND 4: THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CREATIVITY FESTIVAL EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION DATA (See CHAPTER 7)**

### **4.1 Table 1 Breakdown of contents of the school creativity festival report.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>The School Creativity Festival Report</b>	<b>No. of words</b>
February - July 2006	Evaluation context, brief and process	3,150
	Primary school 1 (data & educational evidence)	3,708
	Primary school 2 (data & educational evidence)	2,823
	Primary school 3 (data & educational evidence)	5,496
	Primary school 4 (data & educational evidence)	4,221
	Primary school 5 (data & educational evidence)	3,508
	Primary school 6 (data & educational evidence)	2,118
3-7 July 2006	The Creativity Festival week at the theatre (data & educational evidence)	9,620
	Issues and significant points arising, data summary in relation to aims and objectives, conclusions and recommendations.	3,742
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>38,731</b>

### **4.2 Evaluation context and completed data - school creativity festival 2006 \***

#### **No. 1 Primary School – Data collected**

##### **School's original project brief**

##### **Project Aim:**

**To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme of District children dreaming**

##### **Objectives:**

- To stimulate, enhance and extend boys literacy, especially creative writing, through drama and the visual arts.
- To disseminate learning from the project in order to improve the standards of teaching and learning of writing.
- To develop CPD opportunities for two newly qualified teachers
- To work alongside a professional artist.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

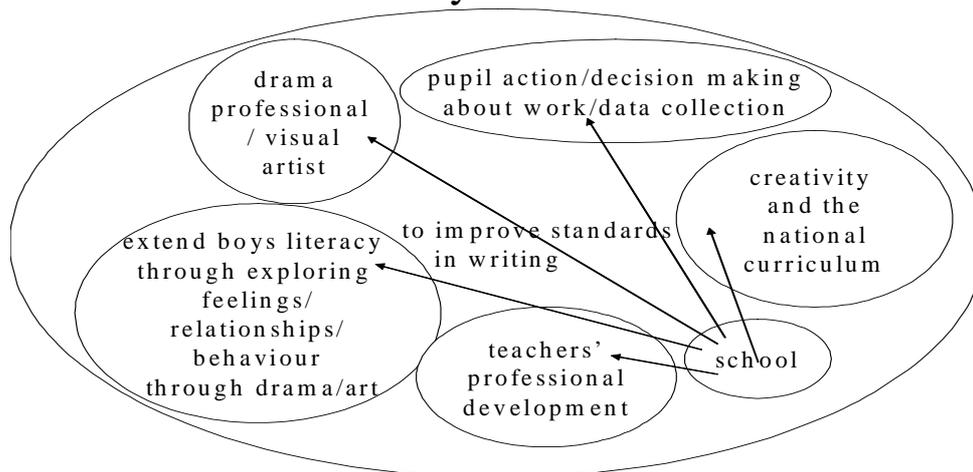
##### **Outcomes:**

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\* Pseudonyms have been applied throughout

- Improved standards in teaching and learning of creative writing
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:
  - Communication skills
  - Show ability to:
    - Apply learning across contexts
    - Identify problems and ask unusual questions
    - Make connections and see relationships
    - Explore and generate new ideas
    - Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams
    - Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

## Primary school 1.



**School visits were made on 23 March, 19 May, 20 June by the evaluator - Jenny Hawkins** Notes were taken in discussion with the teacher, Ken, relevant parts of which have contributed to this report.

### **Description of the final project by the creative practitioner - Tommy**

"Using the World Cup as a backdrop, the aim of this project was to get the pupils to creatively write by thinking outside of their own lives and experiences, using art and design as a tool and to present the writing as part of a large artwork by the end of six days. I looked at the African nations taking part because the continent and its cultures are so contrasting to our own and an African nation hadn't won the World Cup (and I hoped this was the year). I chose Ghana as my Mum had lived there for three years prior to my birth and I therefore had her stories and experiences to introduce the theme, albeit second-hand to the class. But I really wanted the children to hear and be able to meet somebody with first-hand knowledge of their own country so after some searching, the Ghanaian Union of City put me in touch with the fantastic Mrs. Akba who came to the school for whole of the second day with her teacher friend.

They bought foods, textiles, clothing, jewellery etc and had all of us speaking Ghanaian by the end of the day...it was the perfect way for the children to embrace a their culture. Having all found out their equivalent Ghanaian name, I asked the pupils to start writing a short monologue/diary imagining their lives as a Ghanaian child and their hopes and dreams for the future. We started work on the artwork you see here today and the class wrote their pieces and attached them into personalised boxes/journals together with several other creatively presented pieces of written work. We did individual drawings, flags and poly prints, and more research and added these to the papier-mache 'heart' of the map of Ghana. We also worked on a loosely improvised piece of music using some of the language we had learnt. Along side all of this, we were able to excitedly follow the 'Black Stars' brilliant progression through the tournament. The class, teachers and school were an absolute pleasure to work and huge thanks to Mrs. Akba and her friend without whom this project would not have had the life breathed into it."

### **Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Tommy**

"With this particular project there have been so many positives for me, it is hard to pick out a best bit...I was really chuffed with how the finished piece turned out, so pleased with how positively the class embraced the theme and so happy to have met Mrs. Akba and her friend who I shall stay in touch with for a long time...I think I'm most pleased by the way the lowest ability pupils in the class were the most enthusiastic, asked the most questions and excelled in the written work beyond expectation...especially one pupil who has quite severe learning and coordination difficulties and with very little one to one help produced some fantastic art and written work. I really can't think of anything that I haven't enjoyed or any stumbling blocks along the way but the class were particularly responsive and No. 1 is a great school. From a professional development point of view it gave me a greater confidence in tackling a musical part of a project, which I shall expand upon in future projects, and a topic, which I could write up as an ongoing project for the future. Without getting in Mrs. Akba and her friend for the day, it would not have worked nearly so well and if I did it again we would build on this visit and include many more ideas (something we have already discussed between the three of us). I could use this same structure to work on any country.

The school and staff were all extremely supportive of the project and everyone showed an interest as it developed and I look forward to working with them again next year, which we have already talked about. They may even twin up with a Ghanaian school on the back of this project which I hope happens. With regard to national curriculum targets/subject areas etc, this project covered looking at a different country and its culture, touched on a new language and its delivery, got the children to start having a wider worldview and to use art and design to encourage creative writing. The children tackled diary type writing in a character format and monologues, which they performed to the rest of the class and some at the Theatre. The class made the choice to do a piece of music and to perform their stories and would have done more such was their enthusiasm for the topic. As stated earlier, the lower ability pupils stood out for me the most but other pupils I shall remember from the project particularly are Adam for his enthusiastic approach, questions, musical prowess and humour and great artwork, Aisha and Afua who work so quietly and beautifully that they often miss out on praise because they just get on (and who were really chuffed to be picked to story-read and who's voices suddenly rose fifty decibels at the Theatre!) Alice and Amy again for their bubbly enthusiasm (Alice made her own Ghana shirt at home), other Jane for the high standard of all her work, David and Henry for the same reason...I could go on and on...

Creative methods used during the project include IT skills, painting, printmaking, writing, literacy, story telling, performing music, drawing and colouring, learning a new language etc. I have learned an immense amount about a fantastic nation who once lived a near perfect existence until we interfered and how the west has and still is ruining such a beautiful continent...I have been really shocked by a lot of what I have personally find out and it has made me want to do something however small to make a difference....I am planning to go to Ghana on Mrs. Akba's invitation to see first hand her culture...

Can't think of any way to improve upon the way this whole project was set up and managed by the Theatre and CP...been one of the best projects I've been involved with by a long chalk...just get more schools involved...get more schools and staff etc to see the final presentations....and I always think that more publicity should be given to these things in general...get as many people as possible to see the positive things that go on in schools and not the negative all the time...get it in the press and on telly...not for the creative sake but for the pupils.

How would I describe the Festival?...a fantastic opportunity for all of us...a celebration of what can happen when artists, kids, schools and staff work together utilising everybody's strong points and skills to produce something that can be proudly shown to, viewed by and enjoyed by others."

### **Evaluation by the teacher - Ken**

#### **District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

**Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along (with the pupils' forms) to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

Teachers' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.

1. **What has been the best part for you?** Very creative and flexible artist - whole project was a big success.
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?** This point could be argued both ways but children often need an example of how to write first (teacher model or class shared write) before they attempt a piece themselves - thrown a little in at the deep end.
3. **What new things have you learnt towards your own continuing professional development?** Art skills.
4. **Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?** Absolutely.
5. **How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?** Valuable local display - children have a PURPOSE to produce their work.
6. **Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?** Geography - village; Literacy - cultural stories; Music; Art; ICT; History.  
More specific - English-1, 2, 3, 4, 8; En2-1, 5; En3-1, 2, 5b ;  
Geography 2-3c, 3d, e, f, g.
7. **Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?** Confidence, teamwork, Art, world knowledge, imaginations have improved.
8. **Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?**  
One statemented child produced huge volumes of work and became more talkative during the project.  
A very quiet girl - read her work out loud at the festival.
9. **Would you be interested in future partnerships with creative professionals and in what areas?** Yes - Art or Drama.
10. **What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?**  
Earlier contact with the artist whether email or a quick phone call - This could not be helped, however, on either side.

**Evaluation on behalf of the pupils by the teacher - Ken**

**District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

**Data Collection-**

**Dear Teacher, Please get pupils to respond after the festival (amending if necessary as, when and where appropriate to your class) and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

Children's responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.

1. **What has been the best part for you?**
  - Meeting the Ghanaian ladies (third of class)
  - Workshops (especially painting/drawing/writing on the wall)
  - Artist was great
  - Watching performances at The Theatre
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?**
  - Ghanaian ladies - went on too long - half a day or 1 lesson better.
  - Needed an example by the artist in writing a story to help with structure. Shared write/model.
  - Writing dragged at the end - final day.
3. **What new things have you learnt?**
  - Didn't know anything about Ghana before
  - More confident
  - Improved art skills, attention to detail

4. **Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?** 100% yes
5. **How would you describe The Theatre?** Big on the outside, small on the inside! Loved seeing work displayed at a venue such as The Theatre rather than the school hall.
6. **What is your performance / artwork about?** Ghana - dreaming you are a Ghanaian child.

#### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival. (**Teacher and head teacher worked on this - the Creative practitioner was not able to be present - see his separate evaluation above**)

Guidelines - adapted from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements

1. **In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?**  
They wanted to read their writing at the festival and perform (music) Art ongoing - see pupil forms.
2. **What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** See work attached from pupils.
3. **How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** Discussion (kids very opinionated), use of imagination. Teacher wanted to focus on World Cup theme and cover NC topics related to Lit/Geog
4. **What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?** A variety of cross-curricular topics/skills e.g. Art/Literacy/Geography/Music/History/Drama
5. **Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?** Definitely - freedom to write - different pens; write in different colours; styles e.g. upside down, spirals
6. **What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?** Art skills especially, contact Ghanaian embassy; learnt a lot about the country.
7. **How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?** All parents came to the VIP show (Wednesday) Community - Ghanaian women visited the school for a day. Class were involved in a separate project: child in year 3 studying Ghana joined the class.

#### **Summary of data by evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives**

**To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

The project successfully fulfilled this objective. Ken, the teacher worked with his year 4 class. He originally suggested choosing an African country, because he wanted to widen the pupils' horizons outside their own neighbourhood. He also wanted them to understand that third world countries are not necessarily 'backward' because they have a different culture to the west. He suggested the World Cup because it was a current high topic of interest to the pupils. During the project the pupils followed the Ghanaian football team in the competition. Tommy took all Ken's suggestions on board, looking at what might work for these pupils and, with the help of the Ghanaian ladies, produced an innovative and inspiring unit of work.

**To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

The pupils engaged in a holistic learning experience through the socially interactive environment created by Tommy. They were introduced to a different country and culture within their own classroom. Ken, the teacher, gave considerable thought to possible ways to refocus the project to suit

the situation, interests and needs of his class at the end of term. Tommy used his experience to work out a programme of tasks, which might prove motivating. Their joint assessment, cross-curricular collaboration and expertise appear to have worked towards the project's success.

The teacher was able to identify that the project enabled work in line with the following National Curriculum guidelines. "Geography - village; Literacy - cultural stories; Music; Art; ICT; History. More specific - English-1, 2, 3, 4, 8; En2-1, 5; En3-1, 2, 5b ; Geography 2-3c, 3d, e, f, g." The artist identified the following creative methods and knowledge areas " IT skills, painting, print making, writing, literacy, story-telling, performing music, drawing and colouring, learning a new language etc." Pupils collaborated to present "their writing as part of a large artwork by the end of six days." The creative practitioner asked the pupils to write a short monologue/diary imagining their lives as a Ghanaian child and their hopes and dreams for the future. They produced a papier-mâché map of Ghana and the class attached their pieces of writing in personalised boxes/journals with individual drawings, flags, poly prints and research. They also worked on a loosely improvised piece of music using some of the language they had learnt.

**To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

The project engaged the pupils on an affective level. They were interested and enthusiastic at the festival. Many of them displayed a strong affection for the ladies when they met again at the festival e.g. hugging them. They experienced and learned from social interaction with people from another culture. This was in the form of musical and dramatic monologue performance and discussion with the Ghanaian ladies and each other. They used their imaginations, as evidenced by their stories, to produce narratives as if they were themselves from Ghana.

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff, with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

Ken, the teacher writes that he developed his Art skills 'especially', made contact with the Ghanaian embassy and learnt a lot about the country. Tommy found that from a professional development point of view the project gave him "a greater confidence in tackling a musical part of a project which I shall expand upon in future projects and a topic which I could write up as an ongoing project for the future." It is evident that this unit, as Tommy suggests, could be used as a cross-curricular model combining Geography, PHSE and English in other school contexts, choosing a different country as appropriate.

The project gave the teacher (and the evaluator) some food for thought regarding the acquisition of English language skills. Ken's own experience in teaching writing to this age group (he was a journalist) make his constructive criticisms about the final written work needing more structure, a relevant consideration for future work. However, he noted that the writing, though not as structured as the pupils' usual work, was rich in factual information and pointed out that this is a 'moot point' for argument. As an English language teacher, I agree. It is possible to produce technically advanced work that lacks individual enthusiasm. In my opinion, the twelve pupils who normally produce writing two years ahead of their age will have benefited from this language experience. It is likely to contribute to the development of individual, innovative work in the future. These pupils may have needed longer to redraft their work into polished pieces, but this might reduce the enjoyable spontaneity of the work. Other language skills than structured writing were being learned e.g. interactive verbalising, brain storming, discussing, questioning, performing to an audience, researching and manipulating words imaginatively and artistically. These skills and experiences are all necessary foundation literacy skills, which need practising across all levels of ability and at all ages. The teacher's slight reservations about the quality of the writing (possibly affected by it being end of term and pupils involvement in another writing project) in no way reduced his enthusiasm for this project.

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

All parents came to the VIP show at The Theatre on the Wednesday of the festival. The wider community were involved through the Ghanaian women visiting the school for a day. The work will be displayed in the school next year and there is a possibility of twinning with a school in Ghana.

## Conclusions

The school's objectives and possible outcomes as given at the start of the following appendix were fulfilled in most respects. Creative Partnerships overall objectives were also successfully achieved. In this project pupils explored and extended imaginative aspects and uses of language on an immediate level using visual art and cross cultural experiences. The teacher and the artist collaborated extremely well and developed new insight and skills. Both the creative practitioner and the teacher noted the feedback comments and behaviour of pupils. The teacher chose work for the evaluation, which showed a range of written work across abilities, backing up his critical comments. He identified that the project covered six subject areas and fifteen specific targets within the National Curriculum.

It is significant that pupils with special needs engaged particularly successfully with this project. The creative practitioner, Tommy's evaluation reveals that individual pupils responded very positively. He says, " I think I'm most pleased by the way the lowest ability pupils in the class were the most enthusiastic, asked the most questions and excelled in the written work beyond expectation...especially (a pupil) who has quite severe learning and coordination difficulties and with very little one to one help produced some fantastic art and written work" and one pupil also "made her own Ghana shirt at home". The teacher, Ken also mentions that a " 'statemented' child - produced huge volumes of work and became more talkative during the project" and that " a very quiet girl - read her work out loud at the festival." He noted that the pupils used imagination, were very opinionated in discussion, definitely developed a positive attitude to learning and enjoyed the freedom to write in different ways and styles.

It is likely that the children's attitudes to language in the future will benefit from experiencing the free, spontaneous approach to language experienced in the project. The pupils own concerns and input did influence the work individually as evidenced by their desire to read their writing at the festival and perform the song. However, with extra pre-planning, they might have been more involved as researchers themselves by recording their discussions and feelings about contrasts between Britain and Ghana in different way, s e.g. advantages and disadvantages of both ways of life. Pupil led research might also be done into made up/appropriate/new words and simple ways to write and framework the process as Ken suggests. Possible ways to do this would have to be explored beforehand by the artist and teacher, used and developed, as they both deemed appropriate and might be tried out in the future (especially with this particular 'team'). In any case, this was a very successful project as it stood. There was a very productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, to the benefit of pupils. The present unit of work developed by the artist and the teacher would be a useful one to be used in other schools and could provide an example of good practice. It might also merit further development.

## No. 2 Primary School – Data collected

### School's original project brief

#### **Project Aim:**

**To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme of District children dreaming**

#### **Objectives:**

- To explore the local area and encourage debate around regeneration.
- To work alongside a professional artist.
- To use a variety of visual art materials to aid learning.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Improved standards in teaching and learning of creative writing
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:

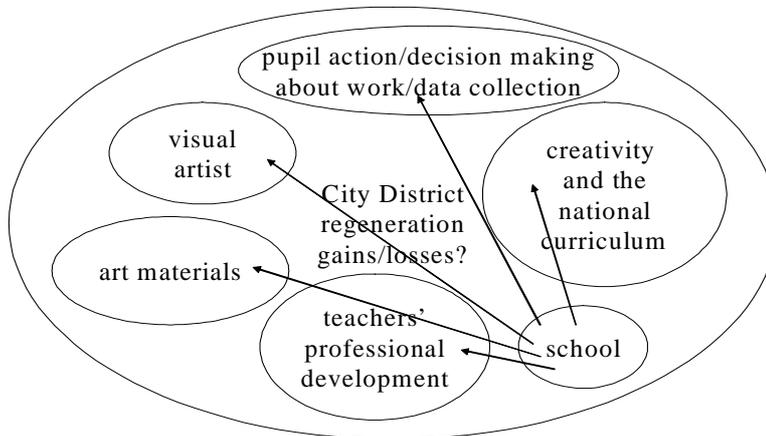
Communication skills

Show ability to:

Apply learning across contexts

Identify problems and ask unusual questions  
 Make connections and see relationships  
 Explore and generate new ideas  
 Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams  
 Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

## Primary School 2.



**School visits were made on 15 March, 26 April, 14 June by the evaluator - Jenny Hawkins** Notes were taken in discussion with the teacher, Diane and artist, Jane, relevant parts of which have contributed to this report.

### **Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Jane**

District Schools Creativity Festival-2006

Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins

**Responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

1. **What has been the best part for you?** Building a relationship with the children, helping children to make artwork that they are proud of.
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?** (This was left blank)
3. **What new things have you learned towards your own continuing professional development?** It has made me realise that it is essential that teachers are involved in the planning process for a successful project. Learned about using new materials.
4. **Did you enjoy working with the schools?** The school had great resources and a fantastic art area.
5. **How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?** A project that is led by creativity of children.
6. **Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?** History -maps etc., geography - regeneration, science - life cycle of a butterfly, art - drawing, designing, using creative decision making and selection, many practical skills - collage, clay work, plaster casting, textiles, use of a wide range of materials.
7. **Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?** Working with a professional artist who gives much encouragement and praise. Producing work that they are

proud of. Kudos of having work displayed in Theatre. Engaged children who don't always excel at academic work.

**8. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?** Worked with children who I am told would often sulk, be aggressive or angry who produced outstanding work and were very well behaved.

**9. Would you be interested in future work in the field of education and in what areas?** Already do much work in galleries and schools.

**10. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?** After having conversations with Mat, who also worked with year 3 felt that maybe they are too young for such an involved project. It is a project which has a certain amount of pressure on the activities knowing that the work will be exhibited/performed at The Theatre and we both felt that we had to change our style of delivery and break down ideas a lot and also that they are not as forthcoming with ideas as older groups are. A planning meeting after the INSET should be an essential part of the project.

### **Evaluation by the teacher - Diane**

#### **District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

**Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along (with the pupils' forms) to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

**Teachers' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

- 1. What has been the best part for you?**
  - Working with a professional artist - ideas, approach, opportunity for variety, part of big project.
  - Seeing what other schools have produced/seeing what my children are capable of.
  - Opportunity to take children to The Theatre.
- Is there anything that you haven't liked?**
- Organisation of children at Theatre - too much happening.
- Children not really aware of purpose of what they are doing.
- Not enough time spent on each activity to produce standard of work children are capable of.
- Photographer disrupted the drama session.
- 2. What new things have you learnt towards your own continuing professional development?** Expanding a subject - seeing different approaches/developing ideas.
- 3. Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?** Yes, especially Jane - very enthusiastic/creative and I enjoyed the drama workshop with Chloe - lots of good fun ideas to support speaking, listening, confidence building.
- 4. How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?**
  - Opportunity for children to see and use The Theatre
  - Chance to see work of other children.
- 5. Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?**
  - Geography - environment
  - Citizenship - responsibility/impact of individuals/value of individuals.
- 6. Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?**
  - Working together in small and larger groups
  - Satisfaction of producing displays for Theatre and to be used in school. Visit to Theatre - opportunity for visit with parents.
  - All children can feel part of project
  - Working with professional artist.

**7. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?** A couple of boys in particular became more involved and interested than they would normally have been. They derived satisfaction for their efforts. All the children worked well over the 6 days and produced lovely work at the end of it. They put in lots of effort/ thought about designs and ideas.

**8. Would you be interested in future partnerships with creative professionals and in what areas?** Yes - drama workshops

**9. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?**

- More quality time to discuss and plan with artist.
- Year 3 children found it difficult to focus all day - they worked really well and with effort but needed a break - perhaps work with 2 separate classes e.g. Year 3/4 on same theme? More 'child friendly' title for project.

### **Pupil Group Oral Evaluation - No. 2 staff member**

#### **PUPILS' FORM - District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

##### **Data Collection-**

**Dear Teacher, Please get pupils to respond after the festival (amending if necessary as, when and where appropriate to your class) and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

#### **Children's responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

- 1. What has been the best part for you?**
  - Watching other people's performances (Hayley)
  - Workshops at the Theatre (Chloe)
  - Working with Jane (Artist) -butterfly wings-caterpillar (Nathan)
  - Working with other children in workshops-taking photographs (Sian)
  - Working with different and new materials
- 2. Is there anything that you haven't liked?** Getting messy (drawing on walls and in some workshops) (Susan and Brandan)
- 3. What new things have you learnt?**
  - (Hayley) - new art skills - drawing with both hands/no looking
  - (Sian) -learning about new artists - their styles
  - (Keenan) - working with each other and creating new ideas
- 4. Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?**
  - Yes we did (all children)
  - Jane put in a lot of effort (all children)
  - She gave the children lots of ideas (Jade)
- 5. How would you describe The Theatre?**
  - tall (Leah)
  - interesting building/not boring (Chloe)
  - lots of different shapes (Demi)
  - very colourful (Dylan)
  - surprised by the size (Lucy)
- 6. What is your performance / artwork about?**
  - It was about regeneration (Jodie)
  - Making things better (Chloe)
  - Making District a nicer place (Leah)
  - For the community (Chloe)

- We used butterflies because they also change to become beautiful (Leah)

### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

**An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival.** (Creative practitioner and CP co-ordinator - Jane and a different teacher - Diane was not able to be present - see her separate evaluation above)

#### **Guidelines - adapted from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements**

- 1. In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?** Children's knowledge of the area and what's happening in it. Children selecting images and making creative decisions.
- 2. What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** Billy said to Jane - "I liked art, I even liked you." She got letters from pupils saying which parts of the project they enjoyed and drawings on the back of letters.
- 3. How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** Younger age group meant I was generating more ideas myself, but the children's drawings inspired the butterfly theme etc. Diane informed me about what was possible and would work.
- 4. What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?** Artist using new materials - clay etc. Looking at work of other artists e.g. Hunderwasser
- 5. Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?** Teamwork, discussion, listening, new approaches and positive role model.
- 6. What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?** Classroom management, younger age group, teacher learnt new techniques.
- 7. How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?** Visited the Theatre for the private viewing and festival. INSET for teachers. Parents - impact of seeing work at school.

### **Summary of data by evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives**

#### **To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

The project successfully fulfilled this objective. The children's initial work looked at aspects of their environment around the theme of regeneration. Several pupils' first work included spontaneous drawings of butterflies. Jane realised that this would provide an ideal metaphor for regeneration and built on this theme. As well as art work, spin off work from this included studying the life cycle of the butterfly (natural science) and looking at an imaginative piece of writing about a caterpillar dreaming about becoming a butterfly (Annenburg Media), which she researched on the internet (English). This fitted remarkably well with the festival theme - 'District children dreaming....' The beautiful large final textile collage produced by the children of a sleeping caterpillar brought the whole imaginative project to a very successful conclusion.

#### **To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

Jane, the artist, brought in historic maps to show how the area had changed and examples of work by the artist Hunderwasser showing 'decorated' buildings. Diane was able to identify National Curriculum subject areas and guidelines covered by the project e.g. geography, history, and citizenship, art and design and English collaborative work (writing, speaking and listening). Jane also identified these areas, adding science (life cycle of a butterfly). Within her own specialist area she covered the following: - "Art - drawing, designing, using creative decision making and selection, many practical skills - collage, clay work, plaster casting, textiles, use of a wide range of materials." In doing the clay

reliefs of buildings the teachers and pupils experienced a new medium and produced some magnificent permanent wall decorations. Pupils explored textures through this medium and also through their collage work, both in producing the caterpillar and their butterfly models mounted on boxes. Jane pointed out that the pupil's sketchbooks showed evidence of progression and also their spider maps and art work.

**To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

Diane pointed out that the project helped to give the pupils' a pride in their school and area. It showed them that their opinions are important and that it is possible to make an impact and change things. Diane noted that pupils' all felt they were part of the project, and benefited by working with a professional artist - collaborating in groups. They gained satisfaction from producing displays for the Theatre, visiting them with parents and seeing them used later in school.

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

Jane undertook INSET with the staff in which she discussed her techniques and ways to generate ideas. They discussed brainstorming, time lining, windows, laminating and papermaking. She used different materials and techniques to those she had used last year and so extended staff knowledge. She said that she herself learnt about using new materials during the project. All of the work was very professionally mounted and displayed by Jane, which, apart from increasing the final impact, demonstrated how this might be done.

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

Diane thought that parents must have been made aware of their children's work through conversations at home. She thought families might be more likely to visit the Theatre in the future and other museums and art galleries. She noted that the project encouraged inclusion, giving pupils (and through them their families) a voice in cultural aspects of society.

**Conclusions**

The School's objectives and possible outcomes as given at the start of the following appendix were fulfilled in most respects. Creative Partnerships overall objectives were also successfully achieved. In this project pupils explored regeneration in their neighbourhood of District through the visual arts. The teacher, Diane and the artist, Jane collaborated and developed new insight and skills. The teacher noted that, "All the children worked well over the 6 days and produced lovely work at the end of it. They put in lots of effort/ thought about designs and ideas." She identified that the project covered six subject areas within the National Curriculum.

The artist learned how to deal with the challenge of working with younger pupils. She found ways to elicit ideas from them and was able to respond so that the work was "led by the creativity of children." It is very much to her credit that she managed to combine all the requirements of the project theme and brief and still had the flexibility to follow the pupils' ideas. They appreciated her approach and hard work and she received drawings and letters of thanks. In the whole group feedback all the children say they enjoyed working with her - particularly because she put in a lot of effort and Jade points out that she gave them lots of ideas. It is evident that the creative approach worked well with 'problem' pupils. The teacher remarked that two boys in particular became more involved and interested than they would normally have been, deriving satisfaction for their efforts. The artist noted that the work "Engaged children who don't always excel at academic work." and that she worked with children who she was told "would often sulk, be aggressive or angry who produced outstanding work and were very well behaved."

There is no doubt that this was a very successful project. However, there could have been more opportunity for the pupils to express and record opinions as part of the project process. This needs to be an appropriate part of the creative process (and might possibly even help to make the artist's work in determining the direction easier). The artist would have to pre-plan feedback points, with the teacher's

help after the INSET session and before the project starts, when she suggests a planning meeting should take place. Jane says that the project has made her "realise that it is essential that teachers are involved in the planning process for a successful project." Diane agrees and says (with hindsight) that she would like "more quality time to discuss and plan with artist." This would also have enabled them to work together to vary the day for her Year 3 children, who "found it difficult to focus all day." She says, "They worked really well and with effort but needed a break." The unit of work developed by the artist would be a useful one to be used in other schools and could provide an example of best practice.

### **No. 3 Primary School – Data collected**

#### **School's original project brief**

##### **Project Aim:**

**To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme of District children dreaming**

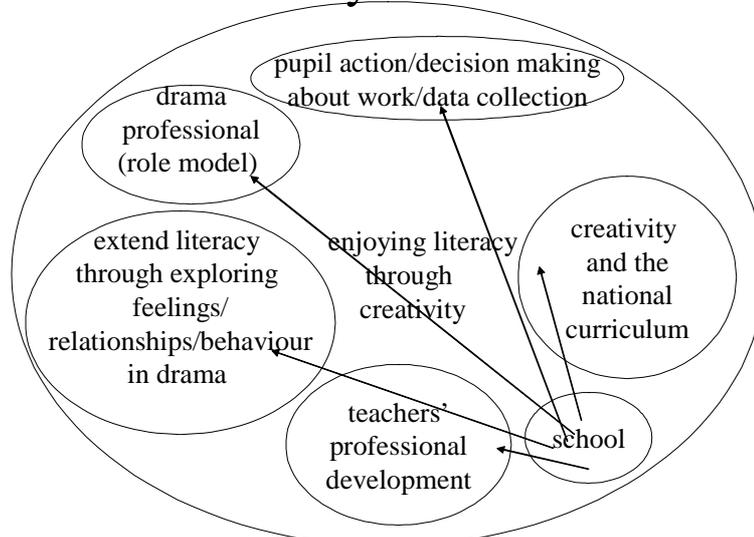
##### **Objectives:**

- To use drama as the medium to approaching issues in literacy and communication.
- To develop boys enjoyment of literacy by encouraging them to be more creative thinkers and writers.
- To provide pupils with positive role models by working with creative practitioners.
- Drama used as a creative model of good practice to be disseminated across the curriculum.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum.
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

##### **Outcomes:**

- Improved standards in teaching and learning of creative writing
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:
  - Communication skills
  - Show ability to:
    - Apply learning across contexts
    - Identify problems and ask unusual questions
    - Make connections and see relationships
    - Explore and generate new ideas
    - Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams
    - Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

### **Primary School 3.**



**Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Chloe (not completed due to pressure of work) Please refer to notes below**

**School visits were made on 5 April, 16 May, 27 June by the evaluator - Jenny Hawkins** Notes were taken in discussion with the teacher, Carol and the artist Chloe.

**5 April** - Carol is the school's Creative Partnerships coordinator for the second year running. She and the staff already have high creativity skills and a very creative approach to teaching, working to themes/projects across the school. They very much appreciate the extra financial input of CP, which has enabled and enhanced more work. As a year 6 teacher, and also as a flexible and creative teacher, she works exceptionally hard to fulfil her roles to her own high standards. This involves teaching to the SATS syllabus and making it accessible to her mixed ability class as well as coordinating arts projects throughout the school. She agrees that, "Differentiation between years is in the outcome." As well as completing SATS tests with year 6 she has just experienced an OFSTED inspection in which she impressed the inspectors with her outstanding literacy teaching. The school has been given a very high rating for creativity by OFSTED, has an Art Smart silver award and is also a leading CP school.

**16 May** - Drama with Chloe - This was an early session in which the pupils were improvising/acting out various already chosen words in groups. Each group had their own set of words Some words had been chosen to describe their home neighbourhood and some arose in the process of acting, e.g. 'scruffy', 'smelly', 'predictable', 'nagging', 'exhausting', 'raining', 'regeneration', 'bullying', 'demolishing', 'building', 'weather', 'homework', 'litter', 'chores', 'moving house', 'trees', 'dogs', 'relocation.' Carol pointed out that this was a lesson in which the 'special needs' pupils were indistinguishable from the rest of the class. It was evident that the work engaged the pupils' attention in whole body, active learning in which feelings were expressed and purposeful thinking developed. Concentration and effort were evident. They were learning to control themselves within a loosely controlled environment, which encouraged self-expression. I asked a group during a break if they liked doing this. A girl replied, "We like it 'cos we get out of class!" and a boy (who had been reluctant at the start) said, "It's exciting as well!" At break the teacher and artist worked hard together sorting out the groups; mixing pupils up so that they were working with suitable group partners, mixing different abilities to facilitate learning in different ways. They exchanged their observations and knowledge of individual children to do this.

**27 June** - This was a final performance rehearsal, in which a great deal of development was evident, both of the pupils and the project. At the start a group of three boys started to practice spontaneously in a corner, while Chloe organised some other pupils. There were five main and several minor scene changes and the children maintained sustained quiet concentration over a long period even when they themselves were not performing. They were focussed, motivated and working very hard. Chloe extended their concentration by telling them they were learning professional acting skills and by addressing all of them by name.

Language skills in evidence were sequencing a story, composing narrative dialogue, memorising a script and projecting the voice, involving intonation and expression (pre-writing thinking skills and listening and speaking). Physical skills involved body control, movement and spatial awareness. The progress made since my last visit was impressive. It was evident that the work was involving some complicated thinking on the part of Chloe and the pupils as she made adjustments to the piece. Chloe had to coordinate positions of the actors, decide on the detailed sequencing of the performance and make it appropriate to the theme/story. It was evident that the improvisations I had seen previously had been incorporated into a script using the children's ideas. Chloe consulted the children on various points, cueing changes with the music and checking that they were happy with their parts. Carol was editing the sound track during the break. Carol showed me some beautiful jungle collages some of the pupils were finishing and told me about an empty classroom which has been decorated by the children as an inspirational 'Jungle' themed reading room at the school.

**Evaluation by the teacher - Carol**

**District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

**Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along (with the pupils' forms) to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

Teachers' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.

1. **What has been the best part for you?** Seeing the children perform on stage at the Theatre, after all their hard work.
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?** Paperwork! Writing numerous letters to parents.
3. **What new things have you learnt towards your own continuing professional development?** I have learnt skills now to be able to do this on my own.
4. **Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?** Definitely, this is the second year. Chloe knows about our children and the area our school is in. She has been able to use this background knowledge to help formulate work with the children, using their ideas.
5. **How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?** Fantastic opportunity for young people.
6. **Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?** Everything - Literacy (writing, reading, speaking and listening, performance) - History - PSHE - Dance - Music
7. **Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?**
  - Giving the children a once in a lifetime opportunity.
  - Working with a creative practitioner.
  - Performing at the Theatre.
  - Developing a play script using their ideas.
  - Sense of ownership.
  - Learning new skills.
  - Improving literacy.
  - Performance skills.
  - Building confidence.
8. **Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?** All of them.
9. **Would you be interested in future partnerships with creative professionals and in what areas?** We are now a lead creative school and have planned a programme for the next couple of years focussing on music, science, ICT.
10. **What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?** (None were given)

### **Evaluations by 24 pupils**

PUPILS' WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRES - District Schools Creativity Festival-2006 - Data Collection  
 Dear Teacher, Please get pupils to respond after the festival (amending if necessary as, when and where appropriate to your class) and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins  
 Children's responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.

#### **1. What has been the best part for you?**

(Such as other peoples' performances, workshops, performing to an audience, showing your artwork, learning new skills, finding out new things)

- I have enjoyed working on the performance. I also enjoyed workshops, rehearsing the play as we learn many things, learning new skills and many more. Also I enjoyed painting imaginary characters. (Bethany)
- Performing to an audience, because I am always shy and since we performed I am not that shy. Chloe made me more confidence. (Ashley)
- My best part was performing in front of my parents and even children from other schools. (Anon)
- The best part for me was to be able to perform to such a big audience in the Theatre. I was able to work in a workshop with Jane to make a butterfly mask, which I have taken home with me and am going to keep it for a long time. (Emma)

- Performing to the audience because now I feel more confident on performing. The right volume of your voice. (Conrad)
- Learning not to be shy and be myself and performing for my parents. Learning how to project my voice more because I am quiet. The lighting it made me feel important. Drawing on a huge wall that looked amazing after it was finished. (Chloe)
- Learning new skills in drama. How to project my voice. (Leighton)
- Being a mother - shouting and refusing to move and to perform in front of them without being shy. (Georgia)
- Acting with Clair and doing the pro for mums. The art was good to. (Jordan)
- I enjoyed doing all the things we did but I enjoyed performing at the Theatre the best. (Nicole)
- Being proud of myself at the end of the performance to parents, VIPS and other schools. Doing something fun on stage in the Theatre instead of a school hall. Looking amazing, so did the others who took part. (Faye)
- Learning new skills and finding out new things, and performing to other schools. (Denham)
- I enjoyed performing the 'Robot Dance' in front of an audience. (Kyle)
- (I've got 3 things) Performing to an audience - learning new skills - finding out new things. (Mark)
- Doing the robot dance in front of an audience and learning new skills and finding out new things. (Prateek)
- Performing in front of an audience And learning new skills. (Andrew)
- Performing at the Theatre because all my friends were there and nothing went wrong. I like drawing my finest creation on the wall of the Theatre. (Anon)
- Doing the acting and performing to an audience. (Sam)
- Learning new acting skills. (Anon)
- Performing in front of an audience - Drawing on the wall. (Kirstie)
- Doing the robot dance. And I like the moneyworld scene. (Shaun)
- Doing the play with the school - Doing it with my mates. (Jack)
- Performing to an audience - learning how to project my voice, drawing on the wall, I like the views. Getting a free bag. (Anon)
- Performing in front of lots of people, on a proper stage with lightening. (Rebecca)

## 2. Is there anything that you haven't liked?

- No, I enjoyed everything about this performance. (Bethany)
- I did not like that we had to keep practicing but it was all worth it in the end. (Ashley)
- I didn't like my costume. It was quite uncomfortable. (Anon)
- Waiting for my turn to go on stage while we were doing a technical rehearsal. We waited for our turn for over half an hour. (Emma)
- Waiting for everything to be done: everything perfect, like the lights and positions. (Conrad)
- Waiting for my turn to come onto the stage cause I was so excited but I liked every else. (Chloe)
- When we all ways half to stop and wait to add other bits that make it more complicated. (Leighton)
- No, it all bin great Everyone worked hard and worked as a Team. (Georgia)
- Performing in front of the schools and awer mum's, because it was scary. (Jordan)
- I liked everything. (Nicole)
- After my scene, when I went backstage, there was people talking and laughing so loud, I thought the audience will hear because Clair said if we were too loud the audience will hear, but I asked and luckily they didn't hear. (Faye)
- Nope, I liked everything, apart from when Chloe didn't come in. (Denham)
- When we was waiting to go in the Theatre. (Kyle)
- No, waiting backstage getting eager to go on stage. (Mark)
- Waiting for our scene 2. (Prateek)
- Waiting for my turn. (Andrew)
- The rehearsing got really boring. (Anon)
- No, not at all. All of it was great. (Sam)
- There was nothing wrong with it. (Anon)

- Waiting outside for hours because it was Boring and we had to be quiet for a long time. (Kirstie)
- No I liked everything at the Theatre. (Shaun)
- Very hot Backstage and my mum seeing me on front row. (Jack)
- No it was all good and really fun. (Anon)
- What I didn't like so much was having to wait outside for my turn to go on stage and having to be really quiet. (Rebecca)

### 3. What new things have you learnt?

(Such as performance skills, art skills, concentrating, confidence, working in a team, about other people's ideas)

- I have learnt many things - to be confident, to work as a team, performance skills and to listen to other people's ideas. I noticed that my literacy skills have increased since we have started working on the play. (Bethany)
- Working in a team, because if we all didn't like each other then the play would not go well. Good job we like each other. HA HA (Ashley)
- I've learned to work as a team with my classmates. I also learned to become more confident. (Anon)
- I have learnt to be more confident in myself and to be able to have my own say. I have learnt to be more patient. (Emma)
- New skills in acting and art, such as looking to the audience when speaking, not to look at the person who talked to you, how to work as a team. (Conrad)
- I have learnt not to be shy, to be myself, work as a team, be confident - also I have been better in my art skills. (Chloe)
- How to work with other people who I have never worked with. (Leighton)
- To be brave while People are watching and to be Patient and To listening. (Georgia)
- How to acting and how to make mascs. (Jordan)
- Confidence because I had to modle and working as a team - not just on my own but together. (Nicole)
- Communicating in life today and imaging other futures (being creaaive in my dreams and other worlds) (Faye)
- Art skills and how to dance as a robot. (Denham)
- How to performace in front of a gared (?) and working in a group. (Kyle)
- Concentrating, confidence and Performance skills. (Mark)
- I am more confidence than before and we can work more as a team. (Prateek)
- Working as a team - Art skills and confidence. (Andrew)
- I have learnt to be more confident and work better in a group! (Anon)
- Team work and confident. Knowing how to listen to other people Ideas. (Sam)
- How to perform beter on stage with a big ordenes in front of you it can make you nerves. (Anon)
- Working in a team - art skills - about other people's ideas. (Kirstie)
- To be confordent in front of loweds of people. Working with uther poeple insted of just myself. (Shaun)
- How to do it as a team - to do it as a school. (Jack)
- Working as a team. I learnt how to be confident. (Anon)
- How to be confident by performing in front of loads of people and not being shy. (Rebecca)

### 4. Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?

- Yes, as we have had lots of fun, but also have learnt at the same time. (Bethany)
- Yes because it shows how good you are when you think you can not do art. (Ashley)
- Yes I enjoyed it. The artists were great to work with. (Anon)
- Yes, Chloe was very kind and let us have our own choices and not have her choosing everything we do and say. We chose the things we wanted to happen in each scene. (Emma)
- Yes, because she taught me new skills and how to express myself. (Conrad)
- Yes, because it has made me and my art skills better in dramer and my convodence. (Chloe)
- Yes, because she knows what she is doing because if something goes rong she can sort it out. (Leighton)

- Yeah, because shes shown us How to be a Team and that we got a lovely free Back (?) for good work. (Georgia)
- Yes, Fey was strict But good at acting. (Jordan)
- Yes, i enjoyed working with the artist because they have helped me learn more skills. (Nicole)
- Yes, because you can really count and rely on them and they really understand you. (Faye)
- Yes, always, It was great, I learnt new skills, In art and drama. (Denham)
- I enjoyed working with the Artist when we made masks in the Art room and pratising are performance. (Kyle)
- Yes - a lot, it was great Learning new games, new exercises and change voice tones for exspression. (Mark)
- Yes i did I enjoy working with Artist And we made maskes. (Prateek)
- Yes, it was fantastic learning new skills and learning to act better than before. (Andrew)
- Yeah, they were funny an helpful and let us work on our own stuff. They taught us to work together and how to look good on stage. (Anon)
- Certainly it was fab. They learnt us new skills on how to act. (Sam)
- I enjoyed working with the artist we made buterfly maks - we drort on the wall. (Anon)
- Yes Because we could share our ideas and hear other ideas. (Kirstie)
- Yes because I got to learn about different thing. Like making butterfly and praties the robot dance. (Shaun)
- Yes - they told me a lot about acting. (Jack)
- Yes it was realy fun learning how to act. (Anon)
- Yes. The best part was working with Chloe who created the play and she was really fun and kind. I also liked working with Jane, we made butterfly masks with her. (Rebecca)

##### 5. How would you describe The Theatre?

- I'd describe The Theatre as colourful, exciting, peaceful (being near the water) and a great place to have fun and learn at the same time. (Bethany)
- Posh because it is clean, huge and everyone that works there has done a good job. (Ashley)
- I would say it's a massive building and it's nice and cool. Especially I liked The windows because you could see everything, the quays, the gigantic building and not forgetting the museum. (Anon)
- The Theatre is a great place for helping to improve children's education. The gallery helps children to be more confident in art and to show their work rather than to keep it secret. The stage is a great place to do plays and has helped me to be more confident in literacy. The Theatre had a bright room and they let us all add our own creation on their art wall. (Emma)
- Building: huge space by a lovely view, really tall, peaceful, toilets. Stage: large, cool lights, clean, warm and cool. (Conrad)
- The center is very clean and tidy. People look after the Lowery, posh, relaxing, peaceful and a very large space. I love the views and it is near the water. (Chloe)
- Big, posh, cool for when its a hot day - a great view to the quays (Leighton)
- Big posh and cool for when its hot outside. (Georgia)
- Posh, hot, and cold. It was fun to. (Jordan)
- Creative, big - I like the Theatre because it near the water and the views are great. (Nicole)
- Colourful, imagnative and cheerful. A Place to be when you want to cheer up. When you are feeling down. (Faye)
- Big, colourful and the best Art place in District. I liked the theatre because of the cool lights and the way the seats are set. (Denham)
- It is clean like no litter and when you go to the red ceminer (?).(Kyle)
- I think it's prbaly the best artistic place in City. (Mark)
- I like the Theatre becuase it is near the water. (Prateek)
- A beautiful place to visit. The thertae is cool and the lights are brilliant. (Andrew)
- I think the Theatre is a place you either like or don't! i like the idea the shopping centres there. (Anon)
- The best place for children to learn and to be artistic. (Sam)
- The lowy is cool a big place it is kind of posh - the stage is big - there were to entrense onto the stage. (Anon)
- Cool, educational, Posh. (Kirstie)

- It's enomas, it has loweds of rooms, a 2 cafes, 4 thires, 6 tolets, lots of galaris, classrooms and lots of steios. (studios?) (Shaun)
- A Big friendly place were you can Do art and acting and place to prefrom. (Jack)
- Brilliant, cool, posh. Open spaced huge colourful. Light, black, cool slanted, Plain. (Anon)
- It is huge. There are lots of rooms and stairs. Most of the Theatre has different level floors. All the rooms are big, but the of the building is beautifully decorated. It also has great views. (Rebecca)

#### **6. What is your performance / artwork about?**

- Our performance was about 'Regeneration' and how the pupils in our school would like District to be like in the future. (Bethany)
- It is about Regeneration because are the streets good/bad. It's all about your dreams for the future. (Ashley)
- Regeneration and we imagined what it would be like in a world with as much money as you would like. (Anon)
- It is about Regeneration. They helped us to think about this as a caterpillar going into a cocoon, then coming out as a butterfly. They said the world in some parts are horrible and the world is being improved and being made into a better place to live. (Emma)
- Regeneration, about the future good/bad! Once in a lifetime opportunity! (Conrad)
- Regeneration - my dreams for the futer - good dreams/bad dreams and what it has changed over the years and how it could change over the years. (Chloe)
- It was about life in District and our dreams. (Leighton)
- Performance about or dreams for the futur and District today. (Georgia)
- Difrant wold's there was, a many (?) wold, robot wold, and Solferd to day. (Jordan)
- How diffrent worlds can live together and live happily. (Nicole)
- Regeneration. Your dreams or imagination for the future. What lifes like in good or bad examples. (Faye)
- Regeneration and other types of worlds. (Denham)
- It is about Regeneration like all the bared up houses. (Kyle)
- Regeneration, about our dreams. (Mark)
- Regeneration like All the boreded up houses they are going to chage and make it all nice. (Prateek)
- Regeneration and dreaming the future. (Andrew)
- I think its about how we feel about District, all the things we like and don't, how we think there are better worlds but know there are worse! (Anon)
- Regeneration of District and all of our dreams stook together. (Sam)
- Regeneration - my dreams for the future - They can be good or bad dreams. (Anon)
- It is about regeneration, our play has 3 worlds - the first world was called District today - the second world was called future world - the third world was called the money world. (Kirstie)
- There were three worlds. Norma rainey District is about reiowction, robot world and the money world. (Shaun)
- 3 Worlds - one of rain misery and relocation - one of nuclear war. (Jack)
- dreams, regeneration dreams in the future good/bad. (Anon)
- It is about Regeneration. Our play had 3 worlds. The first world is about District today, how it is always raining and boring. In the second world, there has been a nuclear war, the world is clinical. The third world is about a money tree. People take it for granted and don't deserve it. (Rebecca)

#### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival. (**Teacher and Creative practitioner - Carol and Chloe worked on this together**)

Guidelines - adapted from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements

1. **In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?**  
They felt their ideas mattered - "Chloe was kind and made us decide what happened in the scene - she didn't choose everything." (Emma, pupils' questionnaire, question 4)

2. **What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** As we went through our development and rehearsal process, myself and Carol noticed (an) increase in confidence, team work, cooperation, listening and performing skills.
3. **How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** Collaborating was done through - improvisation in Drama sessions - this then developed with children and teacher in classroom through literacy. This then helped to constantly restructure the piece.
4. **What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?** Thinking, listening, dance improvisation, characterisation ..... these all came from the teacher/pupil/artist relationship.
5. **Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?** Yes, for example growth in confidence as all volunteered to read their poems in assembly - also reading to groups of reception children - using performance skills to bring the stories alive.
6. **What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?** Teacher<--->Artist have embedded skills previously developed. For example - teacher feels confident rehearsing on own and artist feels rehearsing will be done to a great standard.
7. **How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?** Yes - Artist feels there is now a strong sense of community and understanding of the Arts due to staff and Creative Partnerships.

### **Summary of data by the evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives**

#### **To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

This project developed a drama piece, which focussed on the theme of District children dreaming. It involved depicting District now and in the future and the ideas were improvised and developed into a complex five-scene play. The finished piece was created by the children themselves under the direction of the creative practitioner with the teacher's support. The two professionals mixed pupils up so that they were working with suitable group partners, mixing different abilities to facilitate learning in different ways. They exchanged their observations and shared knowledge of individual children to do this. One of the children, Emma explains on her evaluation sheet how the pupils were able to use their own imaginations. She states that, "Chloe was very kind and let us have our own choices and not have her choosing everything we do and say. We chose the things we wanted to happen in each scene."

#### **To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

The teacher identified the following National Curriculum areas covered through the project "Literacy (writing, reading, speaking and listening, performance) - History - PSHE - Dance - Music" As evaluator and an English teaching specialist myself I noted that "language skills in evidence were sequencing a story, composing narrative dialogue, memorising a script and projecting the voice, involving intonation and expression (pre-writing thinking skills and listening and speaking). Physical skills involved body control, movement and spatial awareness."

#### **To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

The project engaged the pupils on an affective level. They were interested and enthusiastic at the festival and their questionnaire responses in the appendix show that they found the work enjoyable and motivating. For example they were prepared to endure hard work and exercise self-discipline in performing the work for their parents and others. As evaluator I observed that the work engaged the pupils' attention in whole body, active learning in which feelings were expressed and purposeful

thinking developed, concentration and effort were evident and pupils were learning to control themselves within a loosely controlled environment, which encouraged self-expression. For example I noted that one boy, who had been reluctant at the start found the work 'exciting!'

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

The school has a very creative approach and find that the extra input by CP has enabled and enhanced their work giving additional skills and opportunities. The teacher and artist worked together last year and find that this year they "have embedded skills previously developed. For example - teacher feels confident rehearsing on own and artist feels rehearsing will be done to a great standard." The teacher and artist have worked hard together to use their expertise to benefit not only the project group, but also the rest of the school, through INSET and example.

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

Performing to their parents was a great incentive - it is hard to choose from all the enthusiastic comments (see appendix below). One example - "Being proud of myself at the end of the performance to parents, VIPS and other schools. Doing something fun on stage in the Theatre instead of a school hall. Looking amazing, so did the others who took part." (Faye)

**Conclusion**

The school's objectives and possible outcomes as given at the start of the following appendix were fulfilled in most respects. The work fulfilled many National Curriculum requirements across a number of subject areas very successfully, especially the core subject English. It is significant that pupils with special needs engaged particularly successfully with this project. The teacher pointed out that this was a lesson in which the 'special needs' pupils were indistinguishable from the rest of the class. They were able to develop and learn without embarrassment. The large number of enthusiastic comments volunteered by the children in their questionnaires is significant. Even though they received a pilot questionnaire, which included some suggestions from the evaluator on some questions there were enough spontaneous comments to make it clear that the pupils found the work very enjoyable and worthwhile. The teacher and the creative practitioner agree with the pupils in this in their own final evaluation. This unit of work developed by the artist and the teacher would be a useful one to be used in other schools and could provide an example of best practice. This was a particularly productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, which benefited the pupils.

The festival at The Theatre, a high prestige venue certainly motivated the pupils and provided an inspiring environment in itself for the festival week. They enjoyed taking part in the workshops and seeing other children's work as well as performing their own. Their teacher's comment that the festival provides a "fantastic opportunity for young people" is born out by their own comments in their questionnaires. Comments range from Jack's "A Big friendly place were you can Do art and acting and place to prefrom" to Emma's " The Theatre is a great place for helping to improve children's education. The gallery helps children to be more confident in art and to show their work rather than to keep it secret. The stage is a great place to do plays and has helped me to be more confident in literacy. The Theatre had a bright room and they let us all add our own creation on their art wall." The children's performance was exceptional and very entertaining. The audiences showed that they very much appreciated it. I personally found it quite moving to see young people by their own choice considering difficult aspects of their everyday life in such a disciplined and philosophical way.

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## No. 4 Primary School – Data collected

### School's original project brief

#### Project Aim:

To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme of District children dreaming

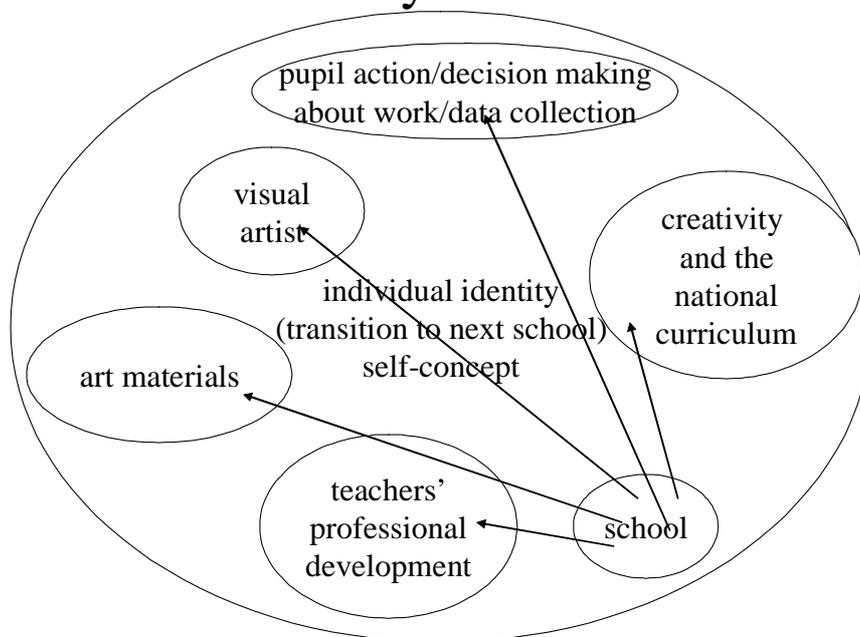
#### Objectives:

- To use visual arts to explore the theme of 'individual identity' in preparation for the children's transition between primary and secondary schools.
- To disseminate learning from the project and suggest ways that the creative ideas generated in the project could be adapted for different year groups and curriculum areas.
- To work alongside a professional artist.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

#### Outcomes:

- Improved standards in teaching and learning of creative writing
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:  
Communication skills  
Show ability to:  
Apply learning across contexts  
Identify problems and ask unusual questions  
Make connections and see relationships  
Explore and generate new ideas  
Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams  
Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

## Primary School 4.



## **Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Sanjay**

District Schools Creativity Festival-2006

Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins

**Creatives' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

### **What has been the best part for you?**

Having a healthy budget so that each pupil was not limited in the use of materials. Also having a full six days (in my case two together chunks of three days) gave us ample time to experiment, expand and really get into the work. The ample planning time was very useful too.

### **Is there anything that you haven't liked?**

Not at all. A very enjoyable, successful project, in my humble opinion.

### **What new things have you learned towards your own continuing professional development?**

Lessons in organisation - better to be well prepared in advance of the days. Organisation of time - some activities were omitted to give time to the more important aspects of the project (eg, the final painting of canvases and making of sculptures ran over). That said it was probably better to have too much prepared than too little.

### **Did you enjoy working with the schools?**

Very much so. Excellent resources and support from Susan made it a pleasure to teach artwork. Susan helped immensely in maintaining order and clarifying the more difficult exercises.

### **How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?**

For those that were displaying their work, it was an excellent time and space to present their work to everyone. For those that had finished their projects, (such as my group) it was a celebration of all the hard work that had gone in. It was a real pleasure for my group to have the preview night. They felt really proud of their work which looked very professional. Not bad to have one's first exhibition at the Theatre.....

Also the workshops gave all schools a taster of what the other groups had been working on, and experience with the different artists.

### **Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?**

We covered lots of drawing and sculptural exercises, perhaps more fitting for GCSE students, which the group handled more than fine. Also one morning I presented a lecture looking at Art History. We looked at important Sculptors and Painters of the last 400 years.

In terms of educational aims, I tried to encourage the group to ask 'unusual questions' and to respond creatively.

### **Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?**

The drawing and sculptural exercise (how to draw figures/faces/letterforms, etc) were really well received and I think the whole group learnt loads about various Fine Art techniques.

Generally they benefited by being able to focus on one piece of art for an extended time, the time to enjoy making art, and the experience of putting together a professional show.

**Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?**

All the students made exceptional progress in their work. By the end they were all accomplished and able drawers and sculptors. All the students were busy practising the art exercises in their sketchbooks in their free time! Alice, Rebecca and Josh seemed to me to show particular focus and dedication to learning the skills.

**Would you be interested in future work in the field of education and in what areas?**

Yes, any creative area that I have experience in - illustration, painting, sculpture, digital art, animation, graffiti, etc.

**What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?**

I thought the project was a total success. From the quality of materials available due to aforementioned time and budget, to the support from the Theatre and the school, there is little I can think of to improve the project from my perspective. The only slight recommendation is for the artist to be present when the work is installed for Fine Art projects. This would erase the possibility of little glitches such as painting being hung the wrong way round and paintings that 'looked unfinished, but weren't, being omitted.

**Evaluation by the Teacher Susan- (from interview notes made by evaluator)**

**17.03.06** - Susan hopes to learn about using and teaching textiles/clay/ICT/design/ sketching/art. She wants the project to facilitate the Yr 6 pupils in their transition to secondary school. She suggests the project should focus on promoting the children's sense of identity in their environment. This will stand them in good stead when they undertake work planned in year 7 at high school involving producing an autobiographical collage. She was interested by an 'Emotional Intelligence' INSET day with Trevor Hawes. She suggests the artist uses themes around images/feelings/personality/identity. National Curriculum programmes of study for Art and Design - Knowledge, skills and understanding, 1; Exploring and developing ideas, a, b, c, 2; Investigating and making art, craft and design a, b, c, 3; Evaluating and developing work a, b, 4; Knowledge and understanding a, b, c, (e.g. possibly interviewing artist). Susan made the very important point that cross curricular project work through Art enables differentiation for individual pupils, evidenced by outcome.

**18.05.06 - Interview after the artist's INSET staff meeting****1. How is it possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination?****What ideas/work are the teacher and artist each contributing?**

Teacher - original objectives and theme; speaking and listening skills; evaluating; criticism; being in touch with feelings; communication; empathy with other characters; comprehension; discussion; inferring and deducing.

National Curriculum PHSE

Artist - INSET - staff training - 6 whole days with pupils - children will create a character, which may have some of their own characteristics/emotions - drawing exercises, portraiture, cartoons, sculpture, looks, personality, character traits. Start with a character made by a group (to avoid embarrassment) - modify focus, symbolise, reason, justify choices, improve, add details.

"The QCA guidelines were like a straight jacket - impossible to fit in 'real issues' like moving schools." *(It should be pointed out, however, that these guidelines are not statutory and that teachers need the confidence to make the curriculum their own. Retrospective comment).* Through this project pupils can deal in abstracts using animals and aliens. They can have a scared character that is not 'themselves' and use their imagination to try out and problem solve. They can make preferences, evaluate, build up opinions, explore self-image and make individual choices.

**2. What different creative methods are being integrated?****What different ideas/elements/skills are being combined creatively?**

History of art - portraiture - Picasso/modern painters and graffiti artists

Painting on individual canvases, sketching, composition/ colour/ mood/ media. Sculpting characters in clay - making a mini set/room/landscape/vehicle. Photography - creative story telling/pulling strands together.

### **3. How are the creative skills being learned developing positive attitudes to learning?**

Staff were very enthusiastic about the INSET, volunteering to join workshops - loved INSET, sculpture, creative writing. Want to do more if possible next year. (INSET?) Programme has improved and evaluation has improved, drama, poetry and bringing books alive.

### **4. What have you learned so far? (inter-sector skills, information, understanding?)**

Watching children go on to make decisions - seeing children taking their work from an artist's perspective - not school - part of life. Exhibiting in the Theatre makes 'Fine Art' accessible - impact on community - taking away 'mystique'? "As a teacher I can see it's possible to give children and parents life experiences they would not have normally."

### **5. How are the parents, teachers and wider community likely to be/being involved?**

As above.

### **How are you able to involve the children in evaluating? How can what they think be recorded?**

Children will make an artist's statement - expressing individuality. As a teacher linking curriculum naturally and creatively (through a themed 'project') allows work to be child led within an educational structure. It gives choices and allows pupils to make decisions and find relevance for themselves. Also - problem solving / acknowledging their feelings in an imaginative, non-conventional way. Exploration of ideas / other people's points of view / shows them there is often more than one answer / life isn't cut and dried.

## **Pupil Questionnaire devised by Susan (teacher)**

### **DISTRICT DREAMING - THEATRE ARTS FESTIVAL**

#### **Mid Project Evaluation**

#### **What have you been doing for the Theatre festival?**

- Clay and plastercine and self portraits (Darryl)
- We have been using clay to do self-portraits. We also done fast drawing and some scetching. (Rheia)
- Painting, plasercine, clay and drawing (Sam)
- Modelling Clay and plastercine. Drawing and painting. (Lauren)
- Modelling clay and plastercine Drawing and painting (Terri)
- We have been working with clay and icrilic Paints. And we have been doing self Portraits and designing our own characters. (Josie)
- Making models, Painting anearse. (?) (Joe)
- We have been painting pictures of were are charters are going and self portrates (Heather)
- Painting, plastercine, also clay and drawing. (Anon)
- Drawing self portrate - clay modelling. (Lee)
- Y6 have been making clay sculptures and Fast drawing and the most challangeing self portrates. (Kyle)
- Modelling and painting our own charactors and drawing self portraits (Thomas)
- Doing art, massing with clay and macking stuwiys. (James)
- Making are charicitrs out of clay. (Nishath)
- Makeing loose (lots?) of Pichers. (Beekie)

#### **What was your favourite part of the project so far? (explain why)**

- Clay because we made our chareahter. (Darryl)
- When we designed our own characters because we could make them our own. (Rheia)
- Drawing because you can make charecters (Sam)
- Doing the canvices, because I really enjoy using paint pens, also playing around mixing different coulours of paint. (Lauren)
- Drawing are self portrait because I couldn't do it then it turned out right. (Terri)
- Working with clay because you get all messy and it is really fun. (Josie)

- Making models of monsters out of plastercine. (Joe)
- Where we painted Pictures of are charchers leaving home because Sanjay showed us how to shade and make it look realistik. (Heather)
- Painting on canves. (Anon)
- Learning how to Moddel clay (Lee)
- Drawing on canveses because I have never used a canves and I have never used acrillic paints and pens. (Kyle)
- Painting on the cantherses (Thomas)
- Macking starth with clay because I lacke massing with clay. (James)
- Pahting are charicires on chanves. (Nishath)
- When we made the skulcher of are self. (Beekie)

#### **Why are you enjoying the project?**

- Because it's getting me into art. (Darryl)
- Because I like getting messy and it is really fun. (Rheia)
- It is great fun (Sam)
- It is really fun. (Lauren)
- Mixing coulors and painting with pens. (Terri)
- Because I have never done some of the things and they are fun. (Josie)
- It is very messy. (Joe)
- Because Sanjay makes it fun to do. (Heather)
- Because i love painting. (Anon)
- It is fun learning to draw. An doing self portate and doing graffite writing. (Lee)
- Because I have never used so many resourses and I have learnt lots of new skills. (Kyle)
- Because its something different and also I love art (Thomas)
- I lacke art and massing with clay. (James)
- Because it is Art and I rilly rilly enjoy Art. (Nishath)
- Because of the degin (design?) what he has made like the skulchers of the self (Beekie)

#### **What new skills have you learnt?**

- How to make shadows on my charechters. (Darryl)
- How to make plastercine moddles stand up. (Rheia)
- How to draw people (Sam)
- How toright are names in grafitie and how to do faces right. (Lauren)
- Do my name in graphitte writing. (Terri)
- How to draw a proper head instead of a circle and how to draw Proper people. (Josie)
- How to mold better. (Joe)
- How to shade diffrent coulors of paint. (Heather)
- How to make shadows. (Anon)
- How to model clay and working ona canvas with acrilic paint (Lee)
- How to shade and how to draw charters realistic. (Kyle)
- Painting canverses and doing my amazing charactor (Thomas)
- Wating in grafritiy. (James)
- How to draw a head from Sanjay top tricks and tips. (Nishath)
- Paiting loose of stuff and making loose of New stuff so I can draw Pichersors. (Beekie)

#### **Are there any parts of the project you have not enjoyed?**

- Writing the story. (Darryl)
- No, I think it is all great fun. (Rheia)
- No (Sam)
- First part because we dint do any painting or fun things. (Lauren)
- When we had to write a story it was boring. (Terri)
- No, I enjoyed them all. (Josie)
- Painting because it doesnt come out of your close. (?)(Joe)
- Writeing the story for our charchers. (Heather)
- Working with clay, because it gets all over. (Anon)
- No it has all been great and lots of fun. (Lee)

- No (Kyle)
- Whel there was more taking (talking?) than doing at some points. (Thomas)
- No because all offit was good. (James)
- Right a story because I thort it wastout (about?) Art but Lrtresy. (not literacy?) (Nishath)
- Yes because at first time I did not understand. (Beekie)

#### **How could we make the project better?**

- By doing more painting and much more clay work. (Rheia)
- More drawing (Sam)
- More days and no writing (Lauren)
- More days and no writing. (Terri)
- Have more days of art lessons instead of Just b. (Josie)
- More clay (Joe)
- By using more of clay. (Heather)
- Not using as much clay. (Anon)
- Having more days to do the project. (Lee)
- Do more graffitti (Kyle)
- Less talking more doing in the lessons (Thomas)
- I do not now. (James)
- By doing a lot more Art. (Nishath)
- Making more days like Every Teusday or like that till the sweek goes. (Beekie)

#### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

**An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival. (Creative practitioner and teacher - Sanjay and Susan produced this)**

#### **Guidelines - adapted from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements**

- 1. In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?**  
Pupils decided on (their own) project title (Focus on 30 individual creative directions - they decided and developed their own directions for each painting and sculpture)
- 2. What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** Quality of resources -----> Quality work - Questionnaires - "Top tips and tricks from Sanjay" - "Excellent equipment" - "I've never used so much clay"
- 3. How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** Yr 6 project - Much needed "light relief" after SATS. Exceeded expectations on every level - pupils motivated and excited by whole experience.
- 4. What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?**
  - a. New ways of organising classroom for some of Sanjay's tasks - desks facing out.
  - b. Expressing feelings, hopes, dreams, fears in a visual way. Made talking about transition easier because alter ego used.
  - c. Art led to some of best creative writing pupils have done.
  - d. Drawing and sculpture exercises backed by worksheets - a resource they could take away and practice.
- 5. Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?**
  - Pupils were in school working on sculptures at 8.30 am - Real Buzz in classroom.
  - Outside school drawing - pupils bringing in sketchbooks, sharing work they've done at home.
  - Sketchbooks used at break and lunch and home.
  - Art work for History project of much higher quality - drawing people X (across?) project skills.
  - Drawing - sculping skills developed. Pupils' confidence increased with skills exercises.
  - Increase in critical evaluation of each others work, feedback and encouragement.

**6. What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?** True X (cross) curricular planning - PHSE, Art, Literacy, group-cooperation. Picked up ideas for other projects. Drama workshop at festival gave great warm up ideas.

**7. How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?**

- Teachers "dropped in" to see work progress.
- Sanjay's staff meeting ideas have been used - Yr 3, Yr 5
- Festival workshops involved lower KS2 (pupils)
- Mural on container in playground has left a legacy
- All characters (artwork will be) displayed permanently inside (school)
- Pupils really, really excited by exhibiting work at "The Theatre"
- More parent involvement needed

### **Summary of data by evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives**

**To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

The teacher set the focus for the project. She wanted the project to facilitate the Yr 6 pupils in their transition to high school. She suggested the project should focus on promoting the children's 'sense of identity' in their environment. She hopes it will stand them in good stead when they undertake work planned in year 7 at high school involving producing an autobiographical collage. She and the artist agreed that the children would "create a character, which may have some of their own characteristics / emotions - using drawing exercises, portraiture, cartoons, sculpture, looks, personality, character traits." She explained that the artist intended to start with a character made by a group (to avoid embarrassment). Although it was not stressed this work fitted in well with the overall Festival theme of 'District children dreaming...', showing that the title allows for a range of different work. The artist, Sanjay appreciated the teacher's input into the project - "Excellent resources and support from Susan made it a pleasure to teach artwork. Susan helped immensely in maintaining order and clarifying the more difficult exercises."

**To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

At the start, the teacher Susan made the very important point that cross curricular project work through Art enables differentiation for individual pupils, evidenced by outcome. She identified the following National Curriculum requirements in Art and Design - Knowledge, skills and understanding, 1; Exploring and developing ideas, a, b, c, 2; Investigating and making art, craft and design a, b, c, 3; Evaluating and developing work a, b, 4; Knowledge and understanding a, b, c, e.g. (possibly interviewing artist). She also pointed out that some areas were covered within the PSHE and English (speaking, listening and writing) curricula. Later as the project got under way, she displayed a detailed understanding of the educational opportunities and benefits the project offered such as -"evaluating; criticising; being in touch with feelings; communicating; empathising with other characters; comprehension; discussion; inferring and deducing.

**To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

The artist, Sanjay outlined the following areas in his evaluation - "We covered lots of drawing and sculptural exercises, perhaps more fitting for GCSE students, which the group handled more than fine. Also one morning I presented a lecture looking at Art History. We looked at important sculptors and painters of the last 400 years. In terms of educational aims, I tried to encourage the group to ask 'unusual questions' and to respond creatively." The teacher showed that she understood how the project might facilitate higher order thinking - to enable pupils to - modify focus, symbolise, reason, justify choices, improve and add details. The artist noted that "by the end they were all accomplished and able drawers and sculptors. All the students were busy practising the art exercises in their sketchbooks in their free time!" and " All the students made exceptional progress in their work." This is supported by the teacher's comments.

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

The staff at the school were very enthusiastic and appreciative of Sanjay's INSET session, suggested that there should be a permanent artist in residence and are hoping to be included in any future schemes. The artist pointed out that "the (Festival) workshops gave all schools a taster of what the other groups had been working on, and experience with the different artists." Susan created her own pupil questionnaire, which showed that pupils really enjoyed learning in this way. The fact that quite a few pupils disliked writing by comparison with the artwork deserves some consideration. It may be that they simply preferred art or it may be that there could have been improved planning to integrate English into the project in a more enjoyable way.

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

The project was very much appreciated by teachers. They "dropped in" to see work progress and some of the artist's ideas were tried in Yr 3 and Yr 5. The large mural on the container in playground and the artwork to be displayed permanently, have left a legacy in the school. The Festival workshops involved lower KS2 pupils. Pupils created their own artist statements and were "really, really excited by exhibiting work at The Theatre." However, the artist and the teacher agreed that more parent involvement was needed.

**Conclusions**

The school's objectives and possible outcomes as given at the start of the following appendix were fulfilled in most respects. The artist's work had a major impact on the teachers in this school, who appreciated the value of a creative approach and have asked for more of the same kind of work. The artist and teacher worked very well together, using their individual professional expertise for the pupils' benefit. The pupils developed their artistic and literacy skills through the project and found it very enjoyable. Many areas of the National curriculum were covered, which were integrated within the project over the study period. The teacher achieved her object of creating an enjoyable opportunity to improve pupil confidence in their own learning. Her questionnaire (see appendix below) shows that pupils, including some who need to develop further in literacy, took an intelligent and enthusiastic interest in the work. It is evident that they loved working with the artist, particularly in clay. They felt able to express their views freely - a sign of real confidence in their teacher. Some of their criticisms give real food for thought e.g. "Less talking - more doing in the lessons." (Thomas) However, the work produced and the children's enthusiasm, show that there was a particularly productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, which benefited the pupils.

The evidencing of the pupils' own actual opinions in discussing feelings around their characters and 'transition' might have been improved. This needs to be an appropriate part of the creative process (and might possibly have involved Sanjay in reducing and adjusting the content to focus more on recording the 'feelings' agenda). He would have had to pre-plan feedback points, with Susan's help after the INSET session and before the project started. The teacher stated that the written work from the project was very good (artist's statements and character stories) e.g. "Art led to some of the best creative writing pupils have done." It seems likely to have been well worth including this work more prominently in the Festival and the evaluation. Perhaps this explains some children's lack of enthusiasm for the written work - perhaps they did not view all of it as part of their work for the Festival. The problem of how to involve parents is a factor here, which deserves consideration for the future. The unit of work developed by the artist and teacher would be a useful one to be used in other schools and could provide an example of best practice. There is a potential for developing additional work using this artist's expertise in further ways in future projects, e.g. cartoon and animation. This would involve working out suitable presentation/screening opportunities at the Festival.

## No. 5 Primary School – Data collected

### School's original project brief

#### Project Aim:

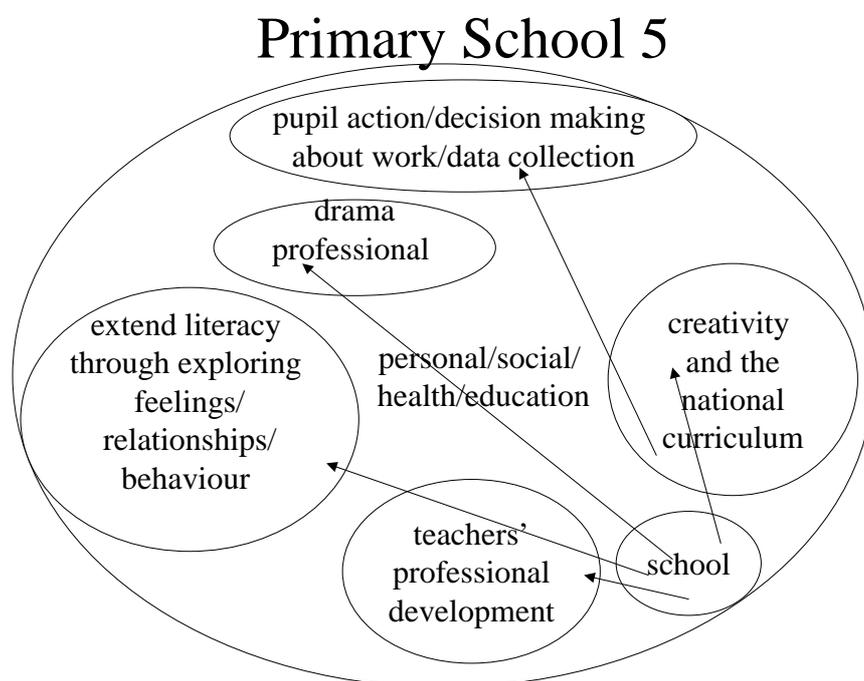
**To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme of District children dreaming**

#### Objectives:

- To use drama as the medium to explore the PSHE curriculum and literacy.
- To look at, in particular, the notion of relationships, feelings and behaviour.
- To work alongside a professional artist.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

#### Outcomes:

- The confidence to express themselves creatively.
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:  
Communication skills  
Show ability to:  
Apply learning across contexts  
Identify problems and ask unusual questions  
Make connections and see relationships  
Explore and generate new ideas  
Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams  
Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes



**School visits were made on 15 March, 23 May, 29 June by the evaluator - Jenny Hawkins** Notes were taken in discussion with the teacher, Julie and the artist, Mat relevant parts of which have contributed to this report.

**29 June** - Mat and Julie were working together with the children on the final performance of the play. This was a final performance rehearsal, in which a great deal of development was evidently still going on, both of the pupils and the project. The teacher was adapting/ writing parts of the script with the

artist after 'trying out' / consulting with the pupils. The children's written work / stories had created the story line of the script. The artist knew all the pupils' names and praised every contribution made as he went along. His calm approach and sensitive attention to pupils' comments was impressive. Even when one little boy interrupted him several times, he listened patiently to him and thanked him. He used sound beats to cue the actors for scene shifts. The sequencing of the story through several scene shifts was quite complicated for this age group, but was evidently well within their capabilities, because they were fully engaged in the work. They worked for two hours in a hot room with toilet and drink breaks as required. The teacher helped to focus individual pupils, prompting and checking behaviour as necessary, but generally keeping a low profile.

Mat had previously used coordination games and exercises, which promote self-control and concentration and body movement control (spatial awareness). At one point he asked the group to generate sentences by finishing the line "If I won the jackpot....." The children all shouted their 'endings' together - extending their language skills, self-expression, confidence without embarrassment. He chose a line from a previous exercise, discussing it with the 'author' and showing how it needed simplifying to fit the play so that he could remember it, when he came to speak it. The teacher was an arbiter in the discussion and typed up the agreed script as they went along. Auditioning for parts took place as required, and roles were shared out, so that those who had no lines and wanted to take a role, were given them.

### **Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Mat**

District Schools Creativity Festival-2006

Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins

#### **Creatives' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances**

1. **What has been the best part for you?** Seeing Year 3 get through their show (twice!) on July 6th without any major blunders. Seeing how much they'd enjoyed the experience after their performances.
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?** The transition between the freedom and play of the first 3 sessions in school into knuckling down, repeating earlier found moments, building the play and it's narrative up in the later sessions is always tricky. I don't like having to turn down a child's creative and imaginative input because we simply don't have time to do their ideas justice. But after a certain point you have to get on with "pulling" the show together.
3. **What new things have you learned towards your own continuing professional development?** To try to relax more. To trust the creative process more. I have learnt how to communicate my ideas / exercises / experience and knowledge in a plainer (less artsy-fartsy) and more direct manner.
4. **Did you enjoy working with the schools?** Yes. On the whole I found Year 3 to be a kind, thoughtful, hard working and very funny bunch of children. Julie was brilliant to work alongside. I felt we complimented each other's skills and teaching styles very well. Julie is super-organised and computer literate.... I'm all scraps of paper with bits of story or script all mixed up in my bag of notebooks.
5. **How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?** Giving children a space and time to experiment - to risk, to fail with joyful energy and without fear of being marked badly or judged. To create a place where we are all encouraged to break the rules safely (drawing beautifully on the walls) is such a fantastic gift. For a lot of children to take the focus away from SATS - Key Stage this and that is a wonderful liberation.
6. **Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?** Year 3 were expected to read and learn their script so this must have helped their literacy skills. They looked a lot at building stories (beginnings, middles and ends) so I would hope this will help with their structure of their own English compositions.

- 7. Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?** Confidence and communication skills boosted. Their ability to work as a team and take on other people's ideas improved over the process. Spatial awareness and physical memory used and improved. I think they found the experience of being on stage with lights, sound and an audience there to watch them, an exciting and stimulating one.
- 8. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?** Mathew really opened up and blossomed during the project. He was always two steps ahead of me in terms of what came next and why we were doing what we were doing. It was lovely to see him really getting into the telling of the story. Michael and Katie were constant hard workers and held the piece together with their Nanna and 'our lad' scenes.
- 9. Would you be interested in future work in the field of education and in what areas?** The project made me realise how incredibly hard a primary school teacher's job is. It's great to be able to drop in to do a devised project..... there is no way I could do Julie's job.
- 10. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?** Take the focus away from A BIG PERFORMANCE for ones so young as Year 3. I think they got a lot out of doing their show but my feeling is they may have benefited more from a more informal 'showing' of their work. (Less pressure on them!)

### **Evaluation by the teacher - Julie**

#### **District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along (with the pupils' forms) to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this. Jenny Hawkins

#### **Teachers' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

- 11. What has been the best part for you?** The most significant moment for me was watching the children perform independently in a well rehearsed and moving production. This was followed by their immense excitement at their achievement.
- 12. Is there anything that you haven't liked?** No
- 13. What new things have you learnt towards your own continuing professional development?** How to put on, produce, write, direct and create a drama production that went from a blank piece of paper to a 17 minute production. (smiley face drawing!)
- 14. Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?** Very much, we made a good team. Mat was most enthusiastic and encouraging - the children responded well to him.
- 15. How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?** 30 children aged 7 or 8 years stood on a public stage and in front of an audience, enthusiastically gave a fabulous performance (X2) that they had been involved with from start to finish. Each child took away an experience of a lifetime that they will never forget.
- 16. Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?**
- English - Speaking and Listening (and writing)
  - PHSE - sharing / working together
  - History / Geography - our local area
  - Drama - acting / writing a show
  - Music - singing rhythmic songs
- 17. Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?**
- Pupils have enjoyed being part of a project that has such an enormous outcome
  - They all mentioned how great it was that everyone had a part to play.
  - Some quiet children found new skills through this project and took on major roles.

18. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points? All brilliant
19. Would you be interested in future partnerships with creative professionals and in what areas? Yes, Other cultures.
20. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme? I would not like to have taken on such a large project at another time of the school year - Summer 2 was ideal.

### **Evaluation by a group of pupils**

#### **District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

Data Collection- Dear Teacher, Please get pupils to respond after the festival (amending if necessary as, when and where appropriate to your class) and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins

**Children's responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances.**

1. **What has been the best part for you?**
  - When i was asleep near the end of the Play was my Faverowt part. Because I got a rest from the over work (Michael)
  - The best part was the proformance because of Owen's Monster Behind the sheet, it was funny (Hannah)
  - The best part for Me Was When it Will be the dream of the future. (Megen)
  - Acting in the play (Ethan)
  - Inside the crown theatre (Matthew)
2. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?**
  - Not really (Michael)
  - No (Hannah)
  - I loved everything i hated nothing (Megen)
  - No (Ethan)
  - No (Matthew)
3. **What new things have you learnt?**
  - I learnt to keep thim like they are because of the memories (Michael)
  - I have learnt new songs, new games & linese for the play. (Hannah)
  - I have kearnt that every thre I sit down that ellevy actor or actress Will be Working as hard as they can. (Megen)
  - New games and exersius that Mat taught us We play them in the playground. (Ethan)
  - DrAmA ACTiNG (Matthew)
4. **Did you enjoy working with the artist/s?**
  - I realy enjoyed working with Mat because he gave me a lead part. (Michael)
  - I reley enjoyed work-ing with Mat because he is fun to be with. (Hannah)
  - I enjoyed it so much. (Megen)
  - Yes because he was nice kind and he new things in a fun way. (Ethan)
  - YES (Matthew)
5. **How would you describe The Theatre?**
  - It was a big place there was artwork every where. (Michael)
  - It was exitinge extremly big. (Hannah)
  - Big long fantastic (Megen)
  - It is bigger than I thought because I'd never been to that part of the Theatre. (Ethan)
  - BIG, CHAllenging. (Matthew)
6. **What is your performance / artwork about?**
  - It was called District breaming and it was about a boy without dreams. (Michael)

- Our performance was About a boy who could not dream and then he went in to the crown theater and tired a red Pillow. He took the Pillow home and dreamt. (Hannah)
- It is called District Dreaming And it is all about a boy Who can't Dream. (Megen)
- A boy who couldn't dream found a magic pillow and then has lots of dreams. (Ethan)
- A boy who can't Dream (Matthew)

### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival. (Creative practitioner and Teacher - Mat and Julie produced this together)

**Guidelines - adapted from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements**

- 1. In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?**  
There was great ownership of the material in the play... It all came from early games and exercises.
- 2. What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** Written feedback in class. Lots of discussion and photographs.
- 3. How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** We would always try and take our lead and direction from what the children came up with.
- 4. What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?** Drama / speech & listening / interviewing / music / poetry / story telling / acting skills / team work / expressive use of their bodies.
- 5. Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?** Yes. Physical / visual memory developed. Hopefully opening up new learning pathways in their heads.
- 6. What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?** Mat - to be clearer in my delivery.
- 7. How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?** Mat - I felt like the school was very supportive and "on-board"

### **Summary of data by evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives**

**To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

This project developed a drama piece, which focussed on the theme of District children dreaming. The teacher describes the project as follows: "30 children aged 7 or 8 years stood on a public stage and in front of an audience, enthusiastically gave a fabulous performance (X2) that they had been involved with from start to finish. Each child took away an experience of a lifetime that they will never forget." The teacher and artist cooperated together so that the pupils had ownership of the material in the play, which was derived from early drama games and exercises. One of the children, Hannah describes the story as being about "a boy who could not dream and then he went in to the crown theater and tired a red Pillow. He took the Pillow home and dreamt." The discussion about whether or not to demolish or renovate the old building uses the pupils' imagination to envisage the past and future in 'dreams.' It touches on human feelings and needs of their own community e.g. respect for the elderly and young people, valuing history, marriage and possible views of the future.

**To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

The teacher listed a wide range of cross curricular National Curriculum areas involved in the project as follows: English - Speaking and Listening (and writing); PHSE - sharing / working together; history / geography - our local area; drama - acting / writing a show; music - singing rhythmic songs. The artist pointed out that Year 3 were expected to read and learn their script, which involved literacy skills. They also looked a lot at building stories (beginnings, middles and ends), which was likely to help them structure their own English compositions. In the joint final evaluation artist and teacher identified the following additional elements "interviewing / poetry / story telling / acting skills / team work / expressive use of their bodies."

**To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

The artist noted that during the project pupils' confidence and communication skills were boosted; children's ability to work as a team and take on other people's ideas improved over the process; spatial awareness and physical memory improved. He believed that the young people found the experience of being on stage with lights, sound and an audience there to watch them, an exciting and stimulating one. The teacher felt pupils benefited because they enjoyed being part of a project with such an enormous outcome. They appeared to appreciate that everyone had a part to play and "some quiet children found new skills through this project and took on major roles." The most significant moment for her was watching the children perform independently in a well-rehearsed and moving production. She was also delighted to note their immense excitement at their achievement.

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

The artist found the teacher was "brilliant to work alongside" and felt they complimented each other's skills and teaching styles. The teacher agreed that they made a good team. She was delighted to have learned "how to put on, produce, write, direct and create a drama production that went from a blank piece of paper to a 17 minute production." During the collaboration the artist felt he had learned from the teacher's 'organised' approach and learned to be clearer in his delivery. He appreciated her teaching role saying, "there is no way I could do Julie's job."

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

The play was very well received by other schools and by parents and family of the pupils, most of who attended and applauded loudly. The artist appreciated working in a school that was "very supportive and "on-board." The teacher would like to take part in a future project and now feels able to use the skills she has learnt in school. The teacher and artist worked hard together to use their expertise to benefit not only the project group, but also the rest of the school, through INSET and example.

**Conclusions**

The school's objectives and possible outcomes as given at the start of the following appendix were fulfilled in most respects. The work fulfilled many National Curriculum requirements across a number of subject areas. This was a particularly productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, which benefited the pupils. The project engaged the pupils on an affective level. They were interested and enthusiastic at the festival and their questionnaire responses in the appendix show that they found the work enjoyable and motivating. For example they were prepared to endure hard work and exercise self-discipline in performing the work for their parents and others. The final performance was a triumph for all concerned and surprisingly professional for such young performers. When I asked her if she was tired after all the hard work, teacher Julie Joynes made the heartfelt comment, "I don't know about that but I feel proud!"

The unit of work developed by the artist and the teacher would be a useful one to be used in other schools and could provide an example of best practice. They constantly used the children's feedback and ideas through "written feedback, lots of discussion and photographs" in class. They always tried and took their "lead and direction from what the children came up with." (I saw this in action - see appendix - evaluator's visit below) The creative methods, skills and ideas did develop positive attitudes to learning e.g. physical / visual memory skills. The artist and teacher hoped this might "open up new

learning pathways in their heads." This is confirmed by some of the children's comments: "I loved everything i hated nothing" (Megen); "New games and exersius that Mat taught us We play them in the playground." (Ethan) Mat's reservations about doing a big performance with year 3 pupils, deserves consideration. It is possible that some of the pupils found this a strain. For example "When i was asleep near the end of the Play was my Faverowt part. Because I got a rest from the over work" (Michael) However, the thoughtful consideration given to the pupils by both Mat and Julie indicates that this could be ironed out in future projects, e.g. rest, play, active periods, breaks and perhaps as Mat suggests "a more informal 'showing' of their work."

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## **No. 6 Primary School – Data collected**

### **Appendix of data from No. 6 Primary School**

#### **School's original project brief**

##### **Project Aim:**

**To develop opportunities for young people to explore and express their creativity using the theme if District children dreaming**

##### **Objectives:**

- To use dance as a stimulus for writing.
- To develop children's knowledge of different forms of dance and their importance in different cultures.
- To work alongside a professional artist.
- To take part in teacher CPD sessions to develop knowledge of creative delivery of the national curriculum
- To use a model of evaluation that includes the active participation of the young people.

##### **Outcomes:**

- The confidence to express themselves creatively
- The ability to work individually and collaboratively
- Creative Learning Skills - impact upon:

Communication skills

Show ability to:

Apply learning across contexts

Identify problems and ask unusual questions

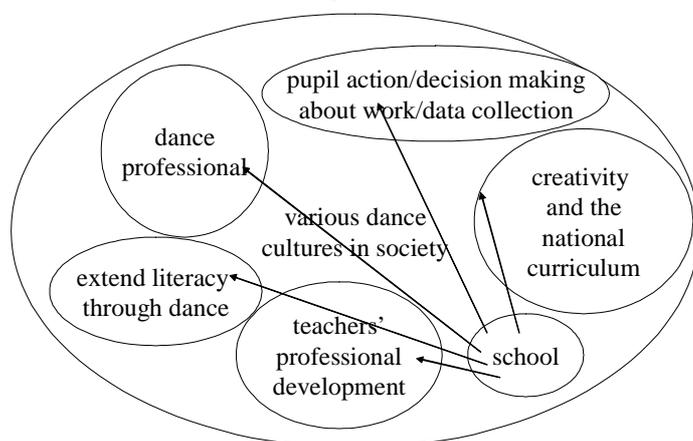
Make connections and see relationships

Explore and generate new ideas

Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams

Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

## **Primary School 6.**



### **School visits were made on 13 March, 22 June by the evaluator - Jenny Hawkins**

Notes were taken in discussion with the original teacher, Dana and the class teacher Tamsin relevant parts of which have contributed to this report.

**13 March** - The first meeting I had with Dana was quite detailed. She had lots of ideas about where the project might go and produced a detailed series of notes on the project model to develop the work in class around other cultures and dance. She suggested that pupils might use blank masks to hide their faces and communicate feelings and emotions through physical movement. This is potentially a very exciting and creative idea. She identified National Curriculum targets for the summer term for Year 5 - in reading comprehension: 1. Investigating a range of texts from different cultures; considering patterns of relationships; social customs; attitudes and beliefs (consider and evaluate these features in relation to their own experience) and in writing composition 7. To write from another character's point of view e.g. retelling an incident in letter form. She said that what she hoped the children would get stimulus for writing through using real life experience as a:

- source / stimulus - use of senses (music / shape / form)
- way to stimulate different modes of learning - kinaesthetic approach
- method of lifting writing attainment / quality

I made two more appointments with Dana, which she was unable to keep.

**22 June** - Dana was away ill and the creative practitioner was not in school. I explained to one of the staff why I had come and discovered that Dana was no longer doing the project. I was able to have a brief word with the class teacher (Yr6), Tamsin, during her lunch break. She described the dance project as follows:

Theme: A celebration of the school's 50th anniversary

Benefits to pupils:

- Memorising sequence of movement using mind and body
- Whole body learning / learning in the round
- Generating imaginative work within a framework
- Cooperating with each other
- Good ones demonstrate ability / less good ones find good physical aspects of expression e.g. boys are participating more (due to 2 years of CP and 4 years of dance input)
- Good for pupils with low self-esteem - discover non-academic area of learning e.g. one hyperactive child has made tremendous progress, developed concentration - one particular aspect of dance has given him self-esteem and motivation/ self discipline - spill over into other school work

I asked her if she could come to the final evaluation meeting, subsequently emailing her the evaluation questionnaires.

### **Evaluation by the Creative Practitioner - Tina**

#### **District Schools Creativity Festival-2006**

**Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself and bring along to the final evaluation session at 4pm on Wednesday 12 July at the Theatre. Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins**

#### **Creatives' responses to the arts workshops and festival exhibitions and performances**

11. **What has been the best part for you?** That confidence was built, fun was had... all the young people completed the project. They were proud and felt positive about what they had achieved.
12. **Is there anything that you haven't liked?** Needed more time / support on video. Maybe it would have been beneficial to get young people out of school to rehearse?
13. **What new things have you learned towards your own continuing professional development?** Patience, Do I expect too much!! Skill base is crucial...
14. **Did you enjoy working with the schools?** Yes

- 15. How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?**
- A vessel to express oneself...
  - Opportunity...
  - Fun...
  - Learning...
- 16. Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?**
- Responsibility...sharing & contributing ideas.
  - Listening...making choices / decision making
  - History...50 years at St. Philips!
  - Team building...counting (music / beats)
- 17. Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited? Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?**
- Confidence...
  - Movement - dance skills.
  - Physical health / stamina
  - Discipline
  - How to create a dance piece / develop material
- 18. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points? ALL big or small they all have been given an amazing opportunity.**
- 19. Would you be interested in future work in the field of education and in what areas?**  
Yes...Dance, physical theatre.
- 20. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?**
- Half of session take place out of school to do x - arts project...
  - Teachers have more of creative role.

### **12 July 2006 Final Evaluation by staff**

**An opportunity for feedback/observations to each other on the work of the festival.** (Creative practitioner, Tina and teacher Dana - the project teacher was not present.)

**Guidelines - taken from Creative Partnerships' current evidencing requirements**

- 8. In what way have the pupils own concerns/input influenced the direction of the project?**  
Children manipulated the content from initial input given from artist - stimulus theme was the children's.
- 9. What form has feedback from pupils taken? Any examples - e.g. types/quality of work, comments?** Oral / verbal feedback with artist and children.
- 10. How has it been possible to collaborate to use the children's imagination - e.g. input/ideas/work from teacher and artist (and any others)?** Creative process was undertaken collaboratively during the session with creative - prior discussion with teacher and artist.
- 11. What different methods/skills/ideas have been used?**
- Dance skills
- Movement and vocabulary
  - Creative process
  - Improve on their work - move to progress and refine
  - Contact movement (lifts)
  - Sharing ideas
  - Developing

## Dance methods

- Artist modelled initial input / idea - children then took this and extended / created and developed their own ideas.

**12. Have the creative skills learned developed positive attitudes to learning? Any examples?**

Skills created interest:

- Enthusiasm
- Ambition
- Drive
- Determination
- Desire to achieve

**13. What have you learned - e.g. inter- sector skills, information, understanding?**

Teacher - improved confidence and ability to contribute ideas and understanding of the art form.

Artist

- Surprised at children's retention inconsistency - could remember one week but forget the next
- Ability - as a whole class much better than previous years.
- Maturity - very immature therefore this had an adverse effect.

**14. How have parents, teachers and wider community been/or likely to be involved?**

Parents

- Acted as audience
- Financial support
- Emotional support - discussing the processes - highs and lows of the performance

Teachers

- All staff very supportive
- Discussion in staff room with artist made her feel very welcome.
- Staff - accommodating - sharing hall timetable
- Good communication between artist and staff

Wider Community

- Parish - dance used again in District LEA - performance outside at Swinton Park Hall
- Other children - younger children learn and are inspired by performance

**Summary of data by evaluator in relation to Creative Partnerships' Objectives****To commission and produce new work with each school which draws on the imagination of children and is facilitated through collaboration between professional artists and teachers**

This project got off to a good start with the first teacher. She is a dance specialist herself and could see the potential to extend literacy through the work. After this, the school without CPCD or the evaluator being informed changed the project theme and teacher. The new theme had potential for spin off work in English, History, Geography and PHSE around the project. However full collaboration / active participation with the artist in the work does not appear to have taken place. At least, no evidence of this was forthcoming to the evaluation, although the artist was supported in other ways. However, the artist did produce some excellent and valuable work to the pupils' benefit (as the teachers both observed - see appendix below).

**To develop high quality learning environments in participating schools that integrates a wide variety of creative elements.**

The history of the school was researched as evidenced by the shots in the video and some of the children presented their school very well, but there is no evidence that this was integrated into the development of the dance to any degree. There is also no evidence of the whole group's written or visual work around the theme. This would have required the active participation of the teacher in the sessions, managing the project outside them and relating information / exchanging ideas with the artist and the children. As far as I know the artist appears to have been mostly working on her own.

**To develop positive attitudes and commitment to learning of young people by enabling them to acquire a wide range of creative skills**

The school's first two outcomes for the pupils were met in that the children gained confidence to express themselves creatively in dance and developed the ability to work individually and collaboratively. The benefits were very much in evidence in the pupils' exuberant and marvellous performance. As the artist says "confidence was built, fun was had... all the young people completed the project. They were proud and felt positive about what they had achieved." The creative skills outcomes were also evident to some degree, but were not developed to the full extent possible (with cross-curricular input from the teacher). Also I have been given no evidence to suggest that any of the school's initial objectives have been met.

**To develop a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding.**

Both the teachers show that they appreciate the value of Dance, but do not appear to have had the opportunity to extend their own skills. The artist, although she is an inspiring educator has also missed out on the opportunity to extend her skills by engaging with the school curriculum through working with a teacher. This lack may be one reason why she recommends that, "teachers have more of a creative role." She was also "surprised at children's retainment inconsistency - could remember one week but forget the next." In my opinion this would probably have been less of a problem if the teacher had been more involved e.g. through more spin off and back up work done in class.

**To encourage parents, teachers and wider community to visit the performances and events and develop their understanding of creativity in learning**

The performance has been an extremely successful aspect of the project in this regard.

**Conclusions**

The final dance performance resulting from this project was of an extremely high quality and the young people involved undoubtedly benefited by the experience. In this way Creative Partnerships objectives and learning outcomes were to some extent fulfilled. However, although the school declares that it is committed to the Arts, there appears to have been a lack of full appreciation of the Continuing Professional Development and Curriculum development opportunities this project offered to staff. There were opportunities to link creativity to the school curriculum, which were overlooked. The lack of take-up of these aspects is difficult to understand as Creative Partnerships' requirements were fully outlined and agreed with the school before the start of the project. Even taking into account the fact that little information was given for the evaluation, it appears the school failed to meet its own objectives for the project. Although both the teachers were well able to produce innovative work, it seems that, for reasons of their own, the school did not take full advantage of the opportunities given.

**The Theatre Creativity Festival – Data collected 3-7 July 2006**

**Introduction**

The Theatre Creativity Festival took place during the week of 3 - 7 July 2006. The first day was a presentation day for action researchers exploring educational issues and creativity in educating children. The second day was a careers and enterprise day for secondary pupils. The third, fourth and fifth days were showcase and workshop events for six primary schools as the culmination of their individual creative projects, carried out over the previous months.

**Day 1 - (3 July) - Action Researcher Day**

**Keynote Address – Anna Craft**

09.45

Anna Craft

Theatre Space

**6 Action Researcher Presentations**

10.15

Action

See

<b>Impact report – Embedding the work in school</b> Programme coordinator a Head teacher		Researchers	presentation schedule Theatre Space
<b>Launch of Action Research Programme Posters</b>	12.45		Theatre Space
<b>Lunch</b>	13.00		Education Suite Foyer
<b>6 Action Researcher Presentations</b>	13.45	Action Researchers	See presentation schedule
<b>Conclusions</b>	15.30	L	Theatre Space

### Presentations, Researchers, Creative Partners and Research Questions

**Action researcher 1**, (Infant teacher) - Infant school and a Drama specialist

#### **Research Question**

*'Do innovative teaching methods in science improve children's attitudes and attainment in science?'*

**Themes: Science, Drama, Whole-school approach, Staff Development**

**POSTER:** "I liked being part of the machine because we made lots of noises. I felt really excited."

**Action researcher 2**, (Drama teacher) - High School For Boys and a Theatre Company

#### **Research Question**

*'Can Key Stage 2 and 3 boys access emotional literacy as a tool for expression during a drama project?'*

**Themes: Emotional Literacy, Boys' capability, Drama and Role-play, Cross-phase work**

**POSTER:** "I enjoyed being treated as though what I had to say was important." Pupil

**Action researcher 3**, (Art gallery education officer) - Two primary schools and Art gallery

#### **Research Question**

*'How do Key Stage 2 children perceive the concept of reflective spaces?'*

*'Do different learning environments have an impact on children's ability to evaluate and think creatively?'*

**Themes: Museum work, Creative and reflective environments, Visual arts**

**POSTER:** "I really like the gallery. I can think here, it was big, calm and there was no noise. The artworks on the wall helped me think of how to make my own work better." Year 5 pupil

**Action researcher 4**, (Creative educator in science) - High School and City Museum

#### **Research Question**

*'What is the role of Alternative Creative Science Learning Environments in motivating underachieving Year 8 Pupils at Key Stage 3?'*

**Themes: Science, Museum work, Under-achieving pupils, Information and Communication**

**POSTER:** "I was impressed by quite a few of the pupils who normally do not share their thoughts readily in class but were enthusiastic about their photos and were able to explain why they had taken them." Year 8 Science Teacher

**Action researcher 5, (Teacher) - Primary School and dance specialist and poet**

**Research Question**

*'To determine what impact exposure to a disassociating effect has on a child's acceptance of the positive aspects of unfamiliar experiences'.*

**Themes: Robots, Unfamiliar spaces, Dance and Poetry**

**POSTER:** "The best thing was when we turned the robot on in assembly when Rachel was talking and all the nursery thought it was real...Can we do it again?"

**Action researcher 6, (Drama specialist) - Pupil Referral Unit and Drama specialist and actors**

**Research Question**

*'Can creativity impact on levels of engagement amongst pupils attending a pupil referral unit?'*

**Themes: Pupil Referral Units, Drama and participation, Behaviour and Attainment, Cross-curriculum**

**POSTER:** "We got to chill on the set and talk to the actors, it was well cool."

**Action researcher 7, (Primary school teacher) - Primary School, City Art Gallery and Visual Artist**

**Research Question**

*'Can we encourage children's writing through creative teaching and cross curricular planning?'*

**Themes: Story-telling, Cross-curriculum, Puppets and animation, Gallery work, Whole-school approach**

**POSTER:** "Brandon loved it... He has spoken about nothing else and has loved coming to school." Reception parent

**Action researcher 8, (Special school teacher) - Special school and Music specialist**

**Research Question**

*Can singing help young people who have communication difficulties \*, use, understand, develop and enjoy the power of their own voices? Can young people with additional SEN be supported in directly addressing their difficulties directly, rather than compensating for them?*

\* Hearing Impairment, Selective Mutism, Profound and multiple Learning

**Themes: Singing, Special Educational Needs**

**POSTER:** "Within 30 minutes of working together the group recognised each other's problems and were very supportive of each other. It was as if they were hungry for the project, as if they had been waiting for it for years." Teacher

**Action researcher 9, (Primary school teacher) - Primary School and Story teller and Poet and Drama specialist.**

**Research Question**

*'How can the storytelling traditions of a diverse culture impact on the creative writing abilities of boys who are currently underachieving in year 4?'*

**Themes: Cultural diversity, Story-telling and Poetry, Boys' capabilities, Performance**

**POSTER:** "I have really enjoyed the whole project. I didn't know any of this stuff about my family at the beginning. I will always remember my poem it's stuck in my brain. I think I will still be able to perform it when I'm fourteen!" Year 4 boy

**Action researcher 10**, (Primary school teacher) - Primary school and Drama specialist,

**Research Question**

*'What is the value of integrating drama into the primary curriculum in cross-curricular, science, history, geography, maths & kinaesthetic learning?'*

**Themes: Drama, Cross-curriculum, Teaching Resources, Whole-school approach**

**POSTER:** "Drama helps you not to be shy, to come in and feel free. You feel free to say anything but it has to be in character." Year 5 child

**Action researcher 11**, (Teacher) - High school and Drama specialists, Musicians, Visual artists, Dancers, and Fashion designers with a Commercial Education Arts Company.)

**Research Question**

*'Can creative projects improve the language and literacy skills of our pupils?'*

**Themes: Cross-curriculum, Language and literacy, Secondary School, Street Arts, Performance**

**POSTER:** "It is much better to learn in this way...it is not boring and better than copying out of a book."

**Action researcher 12**, (Primary school teacher) - Primary School and Story teller and Book illustrator

**Research Question**

*'How can children's spoken language be developed through creative storytelling approaches which promote collaboration and interaction?'*

**Themes: Story-telling and Visual arts, Teaching resources, Language and image, Kinaesthetic approaches to learning and teaching**

**POSTER:** "...a great way to teach children how to use their imagination and make up their own stories." Parent

**Day 2 - (4 July) - Creativity Careers and Enterprise day**

**Evaluation by The CP programmer - Creative Programmer (organiser representing Creative Partnerships City District)**

On July 4th, a creative careers and enterprise day was staged in the Education suite of the Theatre. Around 180 Year 9 and Year 10 pupils from five local secondary schools. During the first half of the day, a pupil cohort from each school attended two workshop sessions each. In these a number of creative professionals- drawn from a wide range of subsectors (i.e. Events Promotion; Filmmaking; Photography; Fashion; Theatrical and Film Set Design; Book Making) and displaying a great deal of variety in the trajectory of their careers to date (e.g. working up from being a glass collector; degree-educated)- offered case studies and an insight into their day-to-day working lives before offering a practical activity related to their particular discipline.

In the afternoon, all schools participated in a 'Dragon's Den'-style event, devising their own response to the brief of 'creating an exciting new space for young people'. Each school voted on which idea they

wanted to put forward, before a group of spokespeople (spokespupils?) pitched this to a panel of creative professional, who offered feedback and scores out of ten. One High school won this section of the day with an idea that included 3-D films projected onto the floor of a swimming pool and an outside hovercraft race track.

The day formed part of a wider Creative Partnerships City District project developed with the commercial education arts company, exploring how best creativity and the creative and cultural industries can engage with enterprise, careers adviser and work-related structures in secondary schools. My role had been liaising closely with the commercial education arts company on how careers and enterprise days might usefully be structured and supporting them in making the best use of the opportunity of a day during the wider festival to try out some responses to school needs in this area.

My own thoughts were that the day was very successful- many teachers commented positively as sessions were happening. I feel the Dragon's Den model worked exceptionally well and is one that would reward further roll-out. I was also greatly impressed by the calibre of the creative professionals presenting- they were drawn from vibrant, youthful companies and had direct appeal to the young people and their interests, thus encouraging greater engagement by return.

### **Evaluation report by a High school pupil**

Recently, I was invited to a Creative Careers Event, at The Theatre, in District Quays. Along with my fellow students, who also chose a Creative Arts subject to study for Key Stage 4.

Firstly, when we arrived, we were all organised into small groups. Shortly after we were given a brief talk on the events of the day. Then my group was escorted to a graphic designer, who works with a well known brand 'Bench'. He explained to us the effects of words used on advertisement designs. Also, he showed us some interesting examples. We were then set a task / competition, to produce effective words or phrases for the background of the 'Bench' design. In the end, we were all given a prize for our ideas. Which, in fact, we were all thrilled as we received each, a 'Bench' T-shirt.

Next, we were ushered on to a DJ, who gave us all an engaging talk on his career, and other careers in Music. For a task, we were asked to plan out a music festival. Which was fun to do, as music is said to be a necessity to a teenage life. He then presented our work, which was quite an amusement, as someone created a pie festival. Fortunately, after we were given a chance to see how to mix music on a turntable. Which was interesting and fun to see plus do.

In the afternoon, we were told to compose a presentation, on a place for a certain age group. This was a very entertaining activity, as we all produced mad building and crazy chaos. one school, thought of a hover craft course. Unbelievably, my group got through to present again, to a panel of truthful judges. As we strolled up, it was like an audition for the 'X-Factor' with the cameras, audience and judges staring. But, unlucky for us, another group won the massive bag of goodies worth £150.

Overall, it was a fantastic event, and it was great to be involved. It has encouraged me and others to consider taking a career in creative Arts.

### **Days 3, 4 and 5 (5, 6 and 7 July) - Schools' Showcase Days** **Organisation by The Theatre education officer and The CP programmer**

The Theatre education officer and the CP creative programmer collaborated very effectively in organising the festival. They were unobtrusive and efficient in their work meeting up regularly to update on each other's progress. The CP creative programmer, Chloe negotiated the preparatory briefs for the Creative Partnerships projects with each school. These were based on the schools' own objectives and outcomes, but also incorporated Creative Partnerships' own. (See each school's appendix of data) The Theatre education officer, Zoe met and found artists suitable for the purpose in each case. Both these roles require a high level of diplomacy and practical skill. These two worked out ideas together about how they could make the festival bigger and better, what the launch would involve and what the workshops and chill out room would be like. Zoe did the timetabling and contracting with artists and teachers, Chloe sorted video artist and photographer. Between them they scheduled the festival days, technical rehearsals and staff needed, e.g. Stage Manager; Private View / VIP Launch; Final Evaluation Meeting and sorted out Image Consent Forms, VIP lists from artists and teachers,

ticket allocation, workshop class numbers, coaches and refreshments. Chloe organised the evaluation with me and went into the schools to check on progress of residencies.

### **Evaluator's educational evidencing of the workshops and performances**

The following notes were taken in order to evidence the educational methods used and their observable/likely effects upon the participants. In this task I have drawn on my own teaching experience and educational researcher perspective.

#### **Workshops and technical rehearsals for performances**

##### **Dance with Tina**

I walked over to the South Room with a class of children (aged about ten) and watched one of Tina's workshops. On the way I heard two boys remark that there was no way they were going to do dancing! The South Room is a large, light purpose built studio. Tina quickly gained the pupils attention by challenging them to repeat their names quickly and clearly around the circle "like electricity." She asked each pupil to make a move (resulting in and illustrating differentiation by ability/outcome). Having allowed able pupils to show what they could do, she moved on into an exercise which involved copying each other's moves. In order to avoid accident and embarrassment, she banned cartwheels and handstands during this exercise. She challenged all the pupils' to work speedily and the pupils' attention became fully engaged in the task. She went round and modelled moves with pupils.

The next exercise involved working in groups to form the first letters of their names using their bodies. I observed the following skills being developed within the session: confidence e.g. self-awareness/self concept development, performing to an audience; physical skills, e.g. stretching, balancing, holding a position, body control; improvisation/creativity/invention, e.g. imagination, solving problems, making moves more interesting, self-discipline/self-control; communication/social skills, e.g. /constructively criticising, helping/thanking each other, team building; and language skills, e.g. speaking and listening. Higher order/complex/conceptual words used were 'transition' and 'choreography.' The deputy head, was watching the session with me. She observed that the pupils had ended up in groups they would not normally mix with. One pupil with low academic ability was excelling in dance and another boy, who was on Ritalin and attending a special behaviour unit, was very much engaged. He had been distracted at the start. All the pupils appeared to me to be enjoying the workshop and there were some enthusiastic comments about dance on the pupil comment wall (see appendix below: 73). Those who started reluctantly rapidly became engaged and appeared engaged throughout.

##### **Drama with Mat**

I went into a workshop with Mat and a Year 3 class. These eight year olds were learning a sailor/pirate game. He taught them a variety of different actions to perform to keywords/cues e.g. "Scrub the deck!" - "Crocodiles!" - "Captain's coming!" - "Sailor's hornpipe!" - "Pirates wife!" Another exercise involved looking for 1st, 2nd and 3rd things out of the window (number skills). Mat asked the pupils to arrange themselves from tallest to shortest in a "height line" comparing themselves to others and later to form a circle. These are physical ways to teach mathematical concepts. The children then performed an exercise in which Mat made them aware of their peripheral vision. He asked them to exercise self-control in keeping still and quiet/freezing.' The pupils were then asked to imagine a dream job or place to go to and act out a suitable pose e.g. relaxing, hang-gliding, ski jumping. He then asked them to exaggerate by stretching out in time and space. Pupils certainly appeared to be enjoying the session. This is evidenced by the many comments on the comments wall (see appendix below: 73).

I asked the class teacher for his observations. He noted that a low 'academic' ability pupil was responding and following directions in a way that surprised him. He thought that the boys were not as self-conscious as they would have been in school. He observed that the session was aiding pupils' awareness, focussing and memory skills. He also said the exercises he had learned from Mat would be very useful in class to break up the school day. He found it instructive and interesting to watch the class working with Mat. I observed the following skills being developed within the session: confidence e.g. self-awareness/self concept development, performing to an audience; physical skills e.g. stretching, balancing, holding a position, body control; improvisation/creativity/invention e.g. imagination, solving problems, making moves more interesting, self-discipline/self-control; communication/social

skills e.g. working with each other, team building; language skills e.g. listening and understanding. Again differentiation by outcome (each child working at their own ability level) was very much in evidence.

I had a chat with Mat during the festival in which he discussed his project with the school. He had just been doing a technical rehearsal in the Studio 1 theatre. He agreed with me that Drama offered a multi-modal way of learning by enabling mind and body to make connections on different levels and in different ways. We discussed how creative work involves using 'emotional' thinking and exercising the mind subjectively. Mat said he had experienced this in working with a musical friend on the sound track for the children's performance. They had worked on merging different pieces of music together. He had found that the 'right' music brought the whole piece together for him on an emotional level. It had made him appreciate the power of music to contribute mood and to support his and the pupils' work. This is an area he is keen to develop in future projects. Mat ended by speculating about whether or not eight year olds are nervous about performing. It struck me that this would make an interesting research question.

### **Poetry/literacy with Tommy**

Studio 3 is a large airy studio with two large windowed walls overlooking the water and District Quays. Three creative practitioners were able to work comfortably within the room. Tommy was positioned in the corner of the two window walls with a bird's eye view of the modern buildings outside and the footbridge over the water. There were art materials and cushions for pupils to sit on while they worked. Tommy asked them to look out of the window and create a collage of one part of the scene. This meant that they had to concentrate hard, visually appraise and consider the view. Presumably to give time for reflection, Tommy asked them to create the picture first and then write on suitable words. They cut and ripped coloured paper and glued it down. While they worked they talked about suitable words to describe what they saw. With unobtrusive guidance from Tommy they focussed on: building shapes and parts, e.g. the arch of the bridge, the big chimneys, rectangles and blocks; colours, e.g. water blues and sky blues and textures, e.g. shiny buildings and water reflections/ripples.

The work consisted of brainstorming descriptive words and involved determining/discussing meanings and sounds of words. As a teacher of literacy myself I was able to appreciate the value of the work being done. I thought it gave children the freedom to explore and enjoy language idiosyncratically/in their own way. Yet again differentiation by outcome (each child working at their own ability level) was very much in evidence. The children engaged enthusiastically in the task, concentrating and speaking quietly to each other. They appeared to be enjoying the work and this is evidenced by the many comments on the comments wall). One boy who was working near me produced a collage of the bridge with a "huge, tall, monumental, gigantic" building behind it. He appeared very pleased with his work. The collages were displayed on the 'wall' and taken home later in the day.

### **Art with Sanjay**

This workshop also in Studio 3 (using the back walls) had tremendous excitement value for the festival children and quite a few of the adults! The idea and freedom of painting on the wall appealed to and was much appreciated by all the participants. This is evidenced by the many comments on the comments wall (see appendix below: 73). Sanjay gave each group a short introduction explaining that they needed to design a character on paper before being given the go-ahead to paint on the wall with 'graffiti' pens. The resulting colourful mural was a triumph for Sanjay. All the characters were appropriate, well conceived and carefully executed. The children showed respect in response to being 'trusted' to do something, which is often associated with rebellion and vandalism. It seems to me that they were quite aware of the privilege given to them and enjoyed the novelty value of the task. Differentiation by outcome was very much in evidence again. In the process of carrying out the work each young artist explored and enjoyed the freedom to design his/her own unique character using a range of art and design skills e.g. looking at colour, shape, style and suitability for purpose/space available. They also had to cooperate so that they did not restrict each other/get in each other's way in doing their work. There was much advice, constructive criticism, support, and appreciation for each other's work, humorous comment and encouragement given between them. It is evident therefore that social and communication skills and working as a team, were also factors in the workshop. This type of work could be linked to the PSHE curriculum and also to other art areas such as set design for dance, drama and music.

### **Art with Amanda**

The young people in Amanda's workshop were given the opportunity to make themselves a pair of collage wings. This took place on the floor in the middle of Studio 3 and appeared to very much appeal to all those who took part - both boys and girls. Amanda had brought and laid out a wide and rich quantity of varied collage materials. She had also prepared/cut out variously coloured wing shapes in a suitably robust material. The children very quickly understood what to do in this workshop and rapidly got 'stuck in' to the work. It appeared to be an absorbing, relaxing and engaging activity, which could not 'fail' because of the decorative quality of the materials on offer. There was support, and appreciation for each other's work, communication and cooperation in sharing the space and materials. Again it was an activity, which elicited differentiation by outcome. In doing this work pupils used a range of art and design skills e.g. looking at colour, shape, style and suitability for purpose. The children enjoyed making their wings, coming to collect them at the end of the day; many of them were wearing them home. Their approval and imaginative understanding of the metaphorical and symbolic 'function' of the wings is evidenced by the many comments on the comments wall about 'flying.' (See appendix below: 73) In my opinion this evidences the importance of obtaining children's feedback comments, especially with regard to visual artwork. For example although I am an experienced art teacher and observed their absorption in the task, I would not have understood how much this idea had 'fired the participants' imaginations without this extra information. It also illustrates the potential of a creative project to motivate/enhance/support work in other areas of the curriculum - particularly English and Natural Science (butterflies-insects-environment), but also into other art forms, e.g. music, drama, dance (costume) and other forms of visual art.

### **Art with Jane**

Jane was working in Classroom 2 (Art). She showed the children how to make a pair of 'opera glasses' in the shape of a butterfly. This work appeared to appeal equally to the boys and girls who took part. Jane had prepared variously shaped stencils and demonstrated how to use these to make a shape. The children then decorated their masks with a colourful variety of collage materials. When completed they were fixed to sticks to make an elegant disguise. The resulting artwork was very detailed and decorative and the children were very much engrossed in the task. They used their imaginations and a range of art and design skills (cutting, gluing and drawing), e.g. looking at colour, shape, style and suitability for purpose. They took their work home at the end of the day. There was support, and appreciation for each other's work, communication and cooperation in sharing the space and materials. It was an activity, which elicited differentiation by outcome. Yet again this workshop illustrates the potential of a creative project to motivate/enhance/support work in other areas of the curriculum - particularly English and Natural Science (butterflies-insects-environment), but also other art forms e.g. music, drama (costume), dance and other forms of visual art. The children very much enjoyed the session and this is evidenced by the enthusiastic comments on the pupil comment wall (see appendix below: 73).

### **Drama with Chloe**

I went into a technical rehearsal for the performance by year 6 from No. 3 primary school. Chloe was the creative professional who had been resident in the school working alongside the teacher. She had gradually taken on the task of bringing the production to the stage as director. As I had previously noted on witnessing rehearsals at school, language skills were very much in evidence (sequencing a story, composing narrative dialogue, memorising a script and projecting the voice, involving intonation and expression. These all involve the National Curriculum requirements for English involving listening, speaking and memorising and also support reading and writing. Physical skills being developed involved body control, movement and spatial awareness. The progress made since my last visit was impressive. It was evident that the work was involving some complicated thinking on the part of Chloe and the pupils as she made adjustments to the piece. Chloe had to coordinate positions of the actors, decide on the detailed sequencing of the performance and make it appropriate to the theme/story. It was evident that the improvisations I had seen previously had been incorporated into a script using the children's ideas. Chloe consulted the children on various points, cueing changes with the music and checking that they were happy with their parts. Again it was noticeable that as the teacher had previously pointed out the 'special needs' pupils were indistinguishable from the rest of the class. They were able to take part without embarrassment.

Chloe's direction of the final production involved liaising with the set designer Amy and working out technical cues, positions and moves with Steve, the stage manager. There were also sequencing and effects decisions to be made with the lighting and sound technician, Duncan. If one adds to this the organisation of a class of active primary school children, even with the help of their teacher and one can quite see why she felt she was "doing five things at once!" The action had to involve easy, simple, safe, quick changes which were well within the children's capabilities in order to minimise nervousness and mistakes. Steve was efficiently and unobtrusively tremendously hard working and supportive in facilitating the whole process: Managing the smooth running of all the children's moves around on and off stage to Chloe's direction. Amy had produced a very effective tree, which fitted Chloe's requirements and the sound and Duncan, the lighting technician worked out the effects she wanted and rehearsed them with the whole 'company.' It must have been a memorable experience for the children, as their teacher said in evaluation: it was giving them "a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Some children made comments in the No. 3 pupil questionnaires about the difficulties for them of keeping quiet and the boredom of waiting for their turn. Although some of these periods cannot be avoided, perhaps more preparation for them might help pupils to cope. Long periods of waiting are an organisational problem, which should be considered in future years e.g. breaks and entertainment. However, there were also many favourable comments made on the same questionnaires, which leads me to suppose that overall the children enjoyed the experience. This is also evidenced by various enthusiastic comments on the pupil comment wall (see appendix below: 73) As a fine artist (and not a drama specialist) it struck me that in some ways Chloe was taking a fine art role in organising, developing and coordinating her 'vision' for the production (based on the children's original work). It was a 'balancing act' I could very much appreciate and I was very impressed by her (and Mat's) achievements when I saw both their productions.

### **The Theatre education officer's 'comments' walls (including 70 Happy Faces!)**

#### **What did you learn?**

- How to dance
- I liked doing workshop
- It was fun doing picture and then writing on it with Jonny

#### **What did you enjoy?**

- Everything
- I enjoyed the songs and tunes that Mat shown us
- Everything
- Flying
- I liket flying with my butterfly
- I like flying
- I like to dance
- I learnt to dance like a perfessional
- I enjoeyd what I did ang working with Mat
- I liked painting our Ghanah boxes
- I think the Theatre was awesome. It was really cool working with Tommy and doing the Ghana project 2006
- I liked giu deos he is happy
- I enjoyed flying and making wings. I like the Theatre it was really fun
- I enjoyed everything
- It was really fun working with Jhoany
- I think the Theatre is the best
- I loved the play a lot
- Today I have enjoyed working with Mat
- I enjoyed working with Tommy on everything about Ghana
- I enjoyed the play
- I enjoyed it soooooooooooooo.....much! (14 o's!)
- I enjoyed painting on the walls upstairs
- I like acting on stayg and I could dviaft (?)
- I learnet about doing patterns and went to see our art work I like doing Art

- I think the Theatre is brilliant
- I like about doing the play
- I like workshops
- I enjoyed acting with Mat
- The tim I like school
- I enjoyed doing to butterfly
- I enjoyed doing the play on stage
- I like doing in the play was going on stage
- Meeting people
- I like Tommy
- I enjoyed doing the play and I think Theatre is brilliant
- I like working with Mat
- I think it was brilliant
- I enjoyed working Jhony
- I think the Theatre is awesome
- I think the Lowery is a very enjoyable place
- I think being in the Theatre is really great
- I think the Theatre is the best
- Love it
- Great!
- Today was amazing

#### What would you change?

- I would change the jumps
- I would change my name
- I would change some parts of the dance and the music of the second part
- It was wonderful today
- I like the play and Mat



## **The Theatre education officer's 'comments' walls (including 70 Happy Faces!)**

### **Results of parent questionnaire - created and collated by The CP programmer**

Creative Partnerships and The Theatre Creativity Festival – Schools Showcase

26 parents completed the questionnaire

#### **1. What do you feel your child has learnt from being involved in the festival?**

The majority of the parents thought that their child had learnt to be more confident and expressive as well as being able to work with others as part of a team.

Other parents thought that their child had learnt new skills or developed existing skills in the art form that was used within the school, especially dance and drama.

Other parents noted that their child had learnt to be independent while applying themselves to the project with dedication and commitment.

*'A sense that not all work done in school has to be recorded in books, a sense that their work can be appreciated in a form other than a book and it can be fun too'.*

Parent

*'Has built his confidence and has given him an idea of what is needed to work as a team to get things done. It also breaks down their natural inhibitions'*

Parent

*'Has learnt how to use her mind in a creative and exciting way'*

Parent

*'Has grown in confidence and feels she has been allowed to express herself'*

Parent

#### **2. We have used different art forms (dance, drama, visual arts) to teach your child in a creative way. Do you think it is important for your child's learning to use these art forms? Can you explain any reasons and give any examples?**

All of the parents agreed that it was important to teach in a creative way. The majority of parents said that this was because it allowed their child to express themselves.

Other parents said it was important because it developed their child's confidence.

Other parents remarked that it enabled their child to have a sense of achievement, allowed their child to try out different things and develop new ideas, developed their team working skills and allowed them to be more creative.

*'Important because it develops their mind'*

Parent

*'It gives different children a chance to achieve within the various areas, responding to their different abilities. Hopefully, this will help to develop their creativity in their other work, writing etc'*

Parent

*'It has been important to open up new ideas and develop skills that they may not use ordinarily'*

Parent

*'Very, there is so much pressure on pupils to achieve academic success that it is refreshing for them to be acknowledged for creative endeavour. Also, it creates a more fully rounded character and awakens interests which I would hope will stay with them throughout their lives'*

Parent

*'By learning different art forms it helps develop confidence and helps them gain a feeling of achievement. Children have a lot of pressure in schools today and it helps to balance their day and helps them to express themselves'*

Parent

### **3. Do you think that by being involved in the project your child has gained more interest and curiosity about learning in some areas? Please offer examples.**

The majority of the parents said that their child had taken more of an interest in learning more about the art form that they had participated in, none of the parents remarked about how the experience had increased their child's interest in learning in any other areas e.g.; the national curriculum.

*'Enjoyed performing on stage for people, first time done that'*

Parent

*'Theatre management and backstage support'*

Parent

*'Yes, my child already dances but has allowed to be more expressive'*

Parent

*'She has become more interested in drama, which will do wonders for her confidence'*

Parent

### **4. Has your child spoken about the project, what did they say?**

All of the parents said that their child had spoken about the project. The majority said that their child had expressed how excited they were to be taking part.

*'She has spoken every time she did the project at school (she loved it!).'*

Parent

*'Yes, enjoyed it and shown great enthusiasm towards what he has done'*

Parent

*'Yes, she has been able to use her own ideas and include them in the dance'*

Parent

*'He has never stopped, no negatives at all, fully enthusiastic, fantastic experience'*

## **Final Evaluation meeting - 12 July**

Two project class teachers were represented by colleagues and one creative practitioner sent his apologies due to another commitment. Each school 'team' reported back to the group from their written evaluations (See joint evaluations at the end of each school's summary of data and own appendix) Additional observations and comments about each school project were as follows:

### No. 1 primary school

It was felt the display at the Theatre had turned out very well and that the workshops had been very good.

### No. 2 primary school

Jane had found the work harder with younger children (year 3) and had found it helpful to chat to Mat who had had similar problems. She had noticed that younger pupils had a shorter concentration span and needed more direction and structure.

### No. 3 primary school

Carol, the teacher felt that this year they had been really able to embed drama into the school. There was a need for more days/artist time to rehearse and complete the work. Chloe would have liked help from Tina on the dance section. There were lots of special needs kids involved and they were now doing acting in their newly decorated 'jungle room.'

### No. 4 C. E. primary school

The work round the theme of transition had worked well and it will be done again with the top class next year in preparation for secondary school. Children's writing really "took off" and some pupils were arriving early for school to get on with their artwork!

### No. 5 R. C. primary school

Mat, the artist had had to go into school for extra days in order to finish the work. This had amounted to 10 days altogether. Mat wondered if the INSET day could have been more effective. It was mentioned that two special needs children had performed and been indistinguishable in the group, one who was a Downs child and another who was autistic. Everyone admired the work Mat and Julie had done with such a young group.

### No. 6 R. C. primary school

Tina, the creative dance specialist said that the pupils had built on existing dance skills in their project. She felt there should have been more time spent on the video as there was no time to edit it. Mat (a creative drama specialist) thought the performance was "absolutely fantastic - outstanding!"

### The Theatre Creativity Festival

Several creative practitioners expressed interest in learning from/working with each other e.g. dance and music in drama. Chloe wondered if there could be more time for technical rehearsals so that pupils did not miss other workshops. It was pointed out that Drama groups did not see each other's performances. It was felt that this year the impact on other staff in the schools was increased. It was thought that more artist days in school would improve take up of creative ideas. INSET days were seen as valuable training for staff.

Thought should be given to how to expand and advertise the festival. It was suggested that there could be workshops with parents. It was thought that the area for the VIP Preview launch was too small/cramped to do the festival justice. Jane suggested the Festival be called the Imagine Festival.

## **Evaluation by The CP programmer - Creative Programmer, Creative Partnerships City District**

### Theatre Creativity Festival-2006

Data Collection- please respond amending as, when and where appropriate to yourself Many thanks in advance for your help with this, Jenny Hawkins

#### **21. What has been the best part for you?**

- Working with The Theatre and being able to be expressive and experimental in our decision making for the festival week.
- Watching the performances, always brings a tear to my eye, you feel really proud of the children because they have worked really hard.

#### **22. Is there anything that you haven't liked?**

- Not having time to go and see the workshops happening in the schools
- 23. What new things have you learned towards your own continuing professional development?**
- Honed organisational skills
  - That taking risks is definitely worth doing !!
- 24. Did you enjoy working with the schools?**
- Yes, always enjoy working with the schools
- 25. How would you explain/describe/justify The Theatre Festival from your professional perspective?**
- District needs a creative arena that children and young people can access and feel proud of. The Creative Partnerships and Theatre Creativity Festival offers children and young people a platform with which to express themselves in an inclusive way without restraint or fear. It is not about offering the gifted and talented children the opportunity to shine further. It is about offering ALL children and young people the opportunity to shine together.
- 26. Please identify some national curriculum targets/subject areas/educational aims covered by your project?**
- Please see objectives for each school involved
- 27. Please describe any ways in which you believe pupils' have benefited?**
- Difficult to say as I have only observed a few sessions in the schools.
  - The teachers have commented that the children have benefited but it would be better to ask them directly.
  - My observations from the festival week was that the children were having lots of fun and enjoyed painting on the walls !
  - The evaluation wall at the festival seemed to indicate that the children enjoyed the experience but I haven't analysed the findings to be able to offer a definitive response.
- 28. Were there any particular pupils who deserve a mention/illustrate your points?**
- Cant comment
- 29. Would you be interested in future work in the field of education and in what areas?**
- N/A
- 30. What recommendations would you make for future improvements to the scheme?**
- Longer planning time
  - More consultation with the children and young people
  - More time as part of the planning process for teachers to evaluate the sessions
  - Bigger profile to attract more publicity and status
  - Funding from District Children's Services !!
- 

## **Evaluator's short summary of the festival**

### **Day 1 - (3 July) - Action Researcher Day**

This Creative Partnerships City District project has involved twelve education action researchers, nine classroom teachers and three creative practitioners. I have been involved for two years as a mentor. Although last year's 'presentations' day was well done, this year's work showed further development of the action researchers and their research. It seems to me that considerable development of all of the participants has taken place over the two-year period. For example on this day it was evident that all of the presenting researchers had achieved a high level of competence in the content, conceptual understanding and presentation of their work. I too find that my own understanding, as a teacher and educational researcher, has been greatly improved. I have come to appreciate the value of using creativity to action research and explore educational issues. (see appendix below - Day 1 - (3 July) - Action Researcher Day - Presentations, Researchers, Creative Partners and Research Questions: 63)

Teaching requirements, contexts and pupils change every year. This project proves that the dynamic, reflective action research process provides an excellent means to further Continuing Professional Development of teachers and creative practitioners. Even more importantly this work improves pupils learning environments and experiences, giving exciting opportunities to improve motivation to learn.

The opportunity to be involved in an 'open-minded' community of practice and enquiry is a valuable part of this. It is the financial support and practical framework for this that Creative Partnerships City District has provided. That the programme's effect is beneficial for pupils can be evidenced by each action researchers' project. Creativity is proved in every case to enhance and support learning making it motivating and enjoyable. In this way the Action Researcher Day complemented the Creative Enterprise and Careers Day and the Primary Showcase. The programme as a model for educational research and development has also attracted a great deal of interest and approval in the wider educational community e.g. presentations at national and international conferences.

### **Day 2 - (4 July) - Creativity Careers and Enterprise day**

This day formed part of a wider Creative Partnerships City District project developed with a commercial education arts company, exploring how the creative and cultural industries can engage with enterprise, careers advisers and work-related structures in secondary schools. Around 180 Year 9 and Year 10 pupils from five local secondary schools took part. During the morning, groups from each school attended workshop sessions given by creative professionals working in Events Promotion; Filmmaking; Photography; Fashion; Theatrical and Film Set Design and Book Making. I sat in on several of these sessions. It was evident that the presenters were successful in their careers and well prepared. Their work also had direct appeal to young people and their interests. They had interesting stories to tell about their own varied career paths (both conventional and unconventional), gave insights into their day-to-day working lives and led a practical activity related to their work. The CP programmer says he was "greatly impressed by the calibre of the creative professionals presenting" and I am in full agreement with him on this.

In the afternoon, imaginative ideas were presented by groups from each school in a 'Dragon's Den'-style event. They had been given 45 minutes to prepare their own responses to the brief of 'creating an exciting new space for young people.' Each school's chosen group presented back to a panel of experts before the whole group. I got the impression that the young people's interest was very much engaged in this event and that they enjoyed the excitement of competition with other schools. This is confirmed in an evaluation report by one high school pupil who says: "Overall, it was a fantastic event, and it was great to be involved. It has encouraged me and others to consider taking a career in creative Arts." (See appendix below - Day 2 - Creativity Careers and Enterprise Day) The Creativity Careers and Enterprise Day complemented the Primary Showcase Day. It illustrates the potential for creativity to lead to enterprise, industry, personal and economic well-being and therefore illustrates its importance to the school curriculum. As a teacher who has been involved in careers and work experience with teenagers at secondary level, I believe this programme also has potential as a model for careers presentation in schools.

### **Theatre Creativity Festival Day 3 - (5 July) - Schools' Showcase Preview**

This was a preview for the art displays and a 'taster' for the festival. The whole event was informal and music from pupils at a local high school, enhanced the occasion and was very much enjoyed. Pupils from No. 1 primary school read out their work and sang and pupils from No. 3 primary school performed part of their drama presentation. A good number of parents came. However, parents of some pupils who were not performing, but had artwork on display were less evident.

### **Theatre Creativity Festival Days 4 and 5 (6 and 7 July) - Schools' Showcase Days**

The workshops, rehearsals and performances of the festival provided rich educational evidence for the evaluation. I was able to give evidence of a great many valuable educational skills being taught and learned by the young people involved. I also recorded some valuable observations made by class teachers, who were universally enthusiastic. It was evident that the sessions gave teachers food for thought about how to improve learning through creative exercises, improvisation and expression. In particular other teachers (without prompting from me) pointed out that pupils who were not usually easy to engage, having special needs and/or behaviour problems, appeared to find the work motivating and interesting. One teacher felt he was learning new skills by watching the work. I felt that in evidencing the work I was also gaining an improved understanding of learning and teaching processes.

I observed the following skills being developed within drama and dance sessions: confidence e.g. self-awareness/self concept development, performing to an audience; physical skills e.g. stretching,

balancing, holding a position, body control; improvisation/creativity/invention e.g. imagination, solving problems, making moves more interesting, self-discipline/self-control; communication/social skills e.g. /constructively criticising, helping/thanking each other, team building and language skills e.g. speaking and listening. In poetry, language and art imagination was also much in evidence. I noted children focussing on: shapes and parts e.g. arches, cylinders, rectangles and blocks; colours e.g. water blues and sky blues, choosing pleasing colour combinations; textures e.g. shiny buildings and water reflections/ripples, collage materials; using media skills e.g. pens, collage, cutting and drawing.

As an art and literacy teacher myself I was able to appreciate the value of the work being done. I observed learning skills involving brainstorming, using descriptive words and listening, determining and discussing meanings and sounds of words. I thought it gave children the freedom to explore and enjoy language idiosyncratically/in their own way. They also had to cooperate so that they did not restrict each other/get in each other's way in doing their work. There was much advice, constructive criticism, support, and appreciation for each other's work, humorous comment and encouragement given between them. It is evident therefore that social and communication skills and working as a team, were also factors in the workshops. This type of work could be linked to the PSHE/Citizenship curriculum.

In all the work being done at the festival *differentiation by outcome* (each child working at their own ability level), was very much in evidence. The final performances (two each) by No. 4 No. 6 on Thursday 6th July and No. 3 on Friday 7th July took place - backed up by the expertise of the Theatre staff. They were impressive, professional and most enjoyable. They each received an enthusiastic response and wrapt attention both from peer groups and parents.

*There was a great deal of evidence of pupil engagement and enjoyment* as evidenced by the riveting comments on the pupils' comment wall e.g. 70 smiley faces. (See appendix – Theatre Education officer's comments walls: 73) The value to the young people is also recorded in The CP programmer' parent questionnaire. She says that, "the majority of the parents thought that their child had learnt to be more confident and expressive as well as being able to work with others as part of a team." Parents also thought the experience had enhanced learning e.g. "Has learnt how to use her mind in a creative and exciting way." (See appendix - The CP programmer's parent questionnaire: 74)

### Conclusion

The organisation of the festival was found to be excellent by all who participated. On Action Researcher day this was due to the CP coordinator and his team, with support from the Director of Creative Partnerships City District) and the admin officer. The creative careers and enterprise day was organised by the commercial education arts company and their lead staff, Creative Partnerships City District (represented by The CP programmer) and The Theatre staff. The Primary Schools Showcase, again supported by the CP director, was organised by The Theatre education officer and The CP programmer. Everyone collaborated very effectively, professionally and unobtrusively to make it all happen. All of the creative practitioners and teachers made appreciative comments about the festival and by inference its organisation. Most concerns expressed by them in their evaluations were regarding ways to fine tune activities, expand and advertise the festival now that a successful formula/model has been developed.

### **4.3 Researchers' narrative evaluative summary of a school creativity festival at a commercial theatre**

Creative Partnerships, a government funded agency in the UK, is the first nationally coordinated programme for creative learning supported by the Departments for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills. City & District was one of 36 such agencies operating nationally with the aim of enhancing the achievement, motivation, creative skills and employability of young people, helping them to respond to future life challenges and become active citizens. They were working with a big commercial theatre with the aim of developing and hosting a festival to celebrate the creativity of local primary school children. This cultural enrichment event for children in 'deprived' areas of the city was in its second year. Their goal was to make the festival regular and self-sustaining, with a programme of professional development and network events for teachers and artists, and special 'festival celebration' experiences for the young people involved. This weeklong festival took

place at the theatre in July 2006. The festival showcased work specifically created with six inner city primary schools over the previous five months. This event, and the planning, implementation and the educational processes in evidencing it, were the main focus of my evaluation report.

A summary of Creative Partnerships' objectives included drawing on children's imaginations through collaboration between professional artists and teachers; developing high quality creative learning environments; developing positive attitudes and learning commitment through a wide range of creative skills; developing a model of professional development, for artists and school staff; with a strong focus on inter-sector skills, information and understanding and encouraging parents, teachers and wider community to visit and develop their understanding of creativity in learning. The schools were also asked to set their own objectives and evaluate the outcomes, which would be discussed and reported at meetings with the evaluator. Schools objectives would focus upon areas such as how the project could contribute to, e.g. improvements in literacy, writing skills, support for transition and understanding of regeneration in the community.

Six artists or creative practitioners were selected to deliver the programme "in residence" as appropriate to the needs of each of the schools. These 'creative educators' from different specialisms (drama, dance, music and visual arts and ICT) were commissioned to create new pieces of work in each school around the 'open' theme of children dreaming. Teachers and artists were asked to plan a cross-curricula project setting out objectives, outcomes and means of evaluation that would evidence success. At the start some of them took part in a weeklong training programme of creative professional development at the theatre. The creative educators began their residencies by leading professional development sessions with the staff in each school. They then worked with one class teacher to plan a project. They then delivered the creative workshops together over the spring and summer terms. Pupils' work was displayed and/or developed at the theatre during the festival week. Other teachers and classes from the designated schools, though not directly involved in the residencies, came and took part in workshops and viewed the work during the festival. Parents, carers, family and friends came to see their children's work "in action."

### **Educational evidencing and justification**

Creative Partnerships wished to assess how far the project could contribute towards the development of the following educational outcomes for young people. These were all essentially about learning through meaningful and meaning making activities and all of these involved acknowledging and working with feelings on some level.

1. Impact on communication skills
2. Impact on ability to make connections and see relationships
3. Apply learning across contexts
4. Identify problems and ask unusual questions
5. Explore and generate new ideas
6. Consult, build on the ideas of others and work in teams
7. Reflect critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

In the event all of the above were included within each school's own project objectives and all could be said to some extent to have been successfully achieved on various levels by different pupils. The difficulty lay in analysis and measurement, since these outcomes do not translate easily into quantitative data in the creative learning context. Such a process might in any case be inappropriate and defeat the free flow and spontaneity of the learning. In order to do this, it might be necessary to pre-plan, research and develop in a more intensive, integral way with the creative partners. In this case it transpired this process, though it went on, was not sufficient for a full and formal educational evaluation. This was due to unforeseen incidents, financial, time and training constraints (for reasons given further below). There was also a general belief amongst the professionals involved, that creative work, in their experience, is valuable anyway and does not require justification. In any case, the wealth of positive data produced, via participant opinions and artistic productions, showed its value to individuals. It demonstrated many positive educational aspects of the work, for example the high standard of the various artistic 'products', impact on pupils' skills and confidence.

### **Issues of appraisal arising in the process**

My report data represented how the festival work and collaborations were judged by participants and observed and interpreted by me from my teacher's perspective. As explained in Chapter 5, I am an experienced secondary teacher, qualified at Primary and Secondary Level in Art, English language development and Special Needs teaching. These points together with my experience as a mentor to action researchers for Creative Partnerships for two years, my educational research at the university and the fact that I am also a Professional artist, have undoubtedly influenced my method, approaches and conclusions. My data collection involved taking field notes by interview and observation and noting significant points and comments arising. The narrative network evaluation model I designed to facilitate this process involved asking for the views, feelings and conclusions of all who participated, making meanings at every level. This produced a rich and meaningful wealth of data, but although themes and issues could be identified, it was difficult to determine a suitable structure against and within which to appraise the work.

My initial meeting in March was with a teacher from each of the six primary schools, but unfortunately the creative educators were not present. It transpired that some of these teachers were not the actual project teachers and this hindered communication of the evaluation process to the eventual teachers. I gave each teacher a project model based on his or her school's original proposal, which had already been worked out with the C. P. Programmer. I explained my overall evaluation model, which was based on a humanistic and democratic philosophy. I reminded the teachers of the Creative Partnerships objectives and suggested pupil outcomes and discussed how educational evidence might be collected from pupils. I suggested that this should include pupils, teachers, creative partners, families and friends, the C.P programmer, the evaluator and the Theatre education officer. I suggested that the foci for the evaluation should be: "Extending my world, expressing myself" and (on every level) "What does this work I am doing mean to me?" As an example of how producing a meaningful evaluation might contain a personal view, I made a statement explaining my own point of view regarding my role as evaluator.

By the time of the midway evaluation meeting with teachers, I had visited all but one school twice and had explored possible ways of evaluating outcomes with teachers. With the focus on evaluating I used a mentoring approach. We started by looking at how the project fitted in with various national curriculum guidelines in different subjects. Not all of the schools had yet had a discussion with their artist/creative practitioner and so it was difficult to pin down details or decide how pupils' own evaluations might be factored into the project. I took field notes, where possible, giving copies out in order to explain what I had learned, to aid reflection and elicit further comment at a later date. My note taking methods varied according to inclinations and situations, e.g. some teachers' 'brainstormed' ideas using their school model, others highlighted different national curriculum guidelines. Sometimes a formal interview was not appropriate (the teacher being involved in teaching) and my off the cuff observations too disorganised to be given in writing. For example, I eventually watched three long drama sessions, gave and received verbal feedback to the two drama professionals involved in order to check my assessments were correct. Towards the end and in order to elicit more feedback I created questionnaires for teachers, creative practitioners and pupils. In the final evaluation session I asked each teacher and creative educator dyad (if both present) to produce a project spider-map showing how their work had related to the Creative Partnership' objectives. This also asked in what way pupils own concerns/input had influenced the direction of the project and what form feedback from pupils had taken. At the conclusion I collected all the available data together and looked at issues and themes arising in order to produce the report.

As well as fulfilling Creative Partnerships objectives (see Appendix 4.2), schools were also asked to set their own objectives and evaluate the outcomes, which would be discussed and reported at meetings with the evaluator. Schools objectives would focus upon areas such as how the project could contribute to, e.g. improvements in literacy, writing skills, support for transition and understanding of regeneration in the community - a current issue for some of them. Six artists or creative practitioners were selected to deliver the programme "in residence" as appropriate to the needs of each of the schools. These 'creative educators' from different specialisms (drama, dance, music and visual arts and ICT) were commissioned to create new pieces of work in each school around the 'open' theme of children dreaming. Teachers and artists were asked to plan a cross-curricula project setting out objectives, outcomes and means of evaluation that would evidence success. At the start some of them took part in a weeklong training programme of creative professional development at the theatre. The creative educators began their residencies by leading professional development sessions with the staff in each school. They then worked with one class teacher to plan a project. They delivered the creative

workshops together over the spring and summer terms. Pupils' work was displayed and/or developed at the theatre during the festival week. Other teachers and classes from the designated schools, though not directly involved in the residencies, came and took part in workshops and viewed the work during the festival. Parents, carers, family and friends came to see their children's work "in action."

### **The evaluation**

My evaluation report data represented how the festival work and collaborations were judged by participants and observed and interpreted by me. Data collection involved taking field notes by interview and observation and noting significant points and comments arising. The narrative network evaluation model I designed to facilitate this process involved asking for the views, feelings and conclusions of all who participated, making meanings at every level. At the first evaluation meeting I gave each teacher a project model based on his or her school's original proposal already worked out with the C. P. Programmer. I explained my overall narrative network evaluation model, which was based on a humanistic and democratic philosophy. I reminded the teachers of the Creative Partnerships objectives and suggested pupil outcomes and discussed how educational evidence might be collected from pupils. I suggested that this should include pupils, teachers, creative partners, families and friends, the C.P programmer, the evaluator and the Theatre education officer. I suggested that the foci for the evaluation should be: "Extending my world, expressing myself" and (on every level) "What does this work I am doing mean to me?" As an example of how producing a meaningful evaluation might contain a personal view, I made a statement explaining my own point of view regarding my role as evaluator.

By the time of the midway evaluation meeting with teachers, I had visited all but one school twice and had explored possible ways of evaluating outcomes with teachers. With the focus on evaluating I used a mentoring approach. We started by looking at how the project fitted in with various national curriculum guidelines in different subjects. Not all of the schools had yet had a discussion with their artist/creative practitioner and so it was difficult to pin down details or decide how pupils' own evaluations might be factored into the project. I took field notes, where possible, giving copies out in order to explain what I had learned, to aid reflection and elicit further comment at a later date. My note taking methods varied according to inclinations and situations e.g. some teachers' 'brainstormed' ideas using their school model, others highlighted different national curriculum guidelines. Sometimes a formal interview was not appropriate (the teacher being involved in teaching) and my off the cuff observations too disorganised to be given in writing. For example, I eventually watched three long drama sessions, gave and received verbal feedback to the two drama professionals involved in order to check my assessments were correct. Towards the end and in order to elicit more feedback I created questionnaires for teachers, creative practitioners and pupils. In the final evaluation session I asked each teacher and creative educator dyad (if both present) to produce a project spider-map showing how their work had related to the Creative Partnership' objectives. This also asked in what way pupils own concerns/input had influenced the direction of the project and what form feedback from pupils had taken. At the conclusion I collected all the available data together and looked at issues and themes arising in order to produce the report.

### **A short summary of each of the six school projects and the festival**

In the next section I give a short description of each of the projects with each school. In order to fully appreciate participants' emotional involvement in the work, it is necessary to read through the report data for the six schools and the festival week (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data).

#### **Primary school 1**

Ken, the teacher was planning for the summer term for his eight to nine year old pupils (year 4). He gave considerable thought to possible ways to aim the project to fit the situation, interests and needs of his class at the end of term (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - Primary school 1). He suggested choosing an African country, because he wanted to widen the pupils' horizons outside their own neighbourhood, which was predominantly white. He felt the pupils were lacking in experience of other cultures. He also wanted them to understand that third world countries are not necessarily 'backward' because different to the West. He suggested the World Cup because it was a current high topic of interest to the pupils. During the project

the pupils followed the Ghanaian football team in the competition. Tommy, the creative educator took Ken's suggestions and looked at what might work for these pupils. He chose Ghana as a country he knew about and, with the help of two Ghanaian women he contacted, produced an innovative and inspiring unit of work. The pupils engaged in a holistic learning experience through the socially interactive environment created by Tommy. They were introduced to a different country and culture within their own classroom. Tommy used his experience to work out a programme of tasks, which might prove motivating.

Ken and Tommy's cross-curricular collaboration and own different professional expertise worked towards the project's success. The teacher was able to identify that the project enabled work in line with the following National Curriculum guidelines: Geography – village culture in Ghana; Literacy - cultural stories; Music; Art; ICT; History and English writing skills. The artist identified the following creative methods and knowledge areas: IT skills, painting, print making, writing, literacy, story-telling, performing music, drawing and colouring, learning a new language etc. They collaborated to present *"their writing as part of a large artwork by the end of six days."* Tommy asked the pupils to write a short monologue/diary imagining their lives as a Ghanaian child and their hopes and dreams for the future. They produced a papier-mâché map of Ghana and the class attached their pieces of writing in personalised boxes/journals with individual drawings, flags, poly prints and research. They also worked on a loosely improvised piece of music using some of the language they had learnt.

At the festival I saw that the project had engaged the pupils emotionally. They were interested and enthusiastic. Many of them displayed a strong affection for the Ghanaian ladies when they met again e.g. hugging them. Ken, the teacher writes that he developed his Art skills *'especially'*, made contact with the Ghanaian embassy and learnt a lot about the country. Tommy, the 'artist' found that from a professional development point of view this work gave him *"a greater confidence in tackling a musical part of a project which I shall expand upon in future projects and a topic which I could write up as an ongoing project for the future."* All the parents came to the VIP show at The Theatre. The school planned to display the work and there was talk of twinning with a school in Ghana.

## **Primary school 2**

The school wanted the project to help their children adjust to the changes happening in their neighbourhood due to the council's policy of regeneration (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - Primary school 2). Children's initial work looked at aspects of their environment and considering improvements and changes. Several pupils' work included drawings of butterflies. Jane, the professional artist realised that this would provide an ideal metaphor for regeneration and built on this theme. As well as art work, spin off work from this included studying the life cycle of the butterfly (natural science) and looking at an imaginative piece of writing about a caterpillar dreaming about becoming a butterfly, which she researched on the internet. This story fitted remarkably well with the festival theme - 'District children dreaming....' Jane brought in historic maps to show how the area had changed and examples of work by the artist Hunderwasser showing 'decoratively' enhanced buildings.

The teacher Diane was able to identify National Curriculum subject areas and guidelines covered by the project e.g. Geography, History, and Citizenship, Art and Design and English collaborative work (writing, speaking and listening). Jane also identified these areas, adding Natural Science (life cycle of a butterfly). Within her own specialist area she covered the following: Art - drawing, designing, using creative decision making and selection, many practical skills - collage, clay work, plaster casting, textiles, and use of a wide range of materials. In doing the clay reliefs of buildings the teachers and pupils experienced a new medium and produced some magnificent permanent wall decorations. Pupils explored textures through this medium and also through their collage work, both in producing the caterpillar and their butterfly models mounted on boxes. Jane pointed out that the pupil's sketchbooks showed evidence of progression and also their spider maps and art work. The beautiful large final textile collage produced by the children of a sleeping caterpillar brought the whole imaginative project to a very successful conclusion.

The artist found ways to elicit ideas from the seven – eight year old pupils (year 3) and was able to respond so that the work was "led by the creativity of children." It is very much to her credit that she managed to combine all the requirements of the project theme and brief and still had the flexibility to follow the pupils' ideas. The pupils' feedback showed that they appreciated Jane's approach and hard

work and she received drawings and letters of thanks. In the whole group feedback all the children said they enjoyed working with her - particularly because she put in a lot of effort and gave them lots of ideas. It is evident that the creative approach worked well with 'problem' pupils. The teacher remarked that two boys in particular became more involved and interested than they would normally have been, deriving satisfaction for their efforts. The artist noted that the work *"engaged children who don't always excel at academic work."* and that she worked with children who she was told *"would often sulk, be aggressive or angry who produced outstanding work and were very well behaved."* The teacher noted that, *"All the children worked well over the 6 days and produced lovely work at the end of it. They put in lots of effort/ thought about designs and ideas."*

### **Primary School 3**

This school was in the same district as School 2 in an area earmarked for council regeneration (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - Primary school 3). The school wanted to help the pupils adjust to the changes already underway, which would involve the school's closure and many of them and their families being moved to other parts of the city. A drama was developed, which focussed on the festival theme of District children dreaming and depicted District now and in the future. Ideas were improvised and developed into a complex five-scene play. The piece was created by the children themselves under the direction of the creative drama practitioner with the teacher's support. The project engaged the ten and eleven year old pupils (year 6) on an affective level. As evaluator I observed that the work engaged the pupils' attention in whole body, active learning in which feelings were expressed and purposeful thinking developed, concentration and effort were evident and pupils were learning to control themselves within a flexibly managed environment, which encouraged self-expression. For example when I asked a boy who had refused to join in at the start what he thought once he was involved he beamed at me and said he found the work *"Exciting!"*

The teacher, Carol identified the following National Curriculum areas covered through the project: Literacy (writing, reading, speaking and listening, performance) - History - PSHE - Dance - Music. As an English language specialist myself I noted that *"language skills in evidence were sequencing a story, composing narrative dialogue, memorising a script and projecting the voice, involving intonation and expression (pre-writing thinking skills and listening and speaking). Physical skills involved body control, movement and spatial awareness."* Carol and the 'artist' Chloe worked hard together to use their expertise to benefit not only the project group, but also the rest of the school, through in service training sessions and example. It was significant that pupils with special needs engaged particularly successfully with this project. Carol pointed out that this was a lesson in which the 'special needs' pupils were indistinguishable from the rest of the class. They were able to develop and learn without embarrassment.

Performing to their parents was a great incentive for pupils. The children in their questionnaires volunteered a large number of enthusiastic, spontaneous comments. Even though several found waiting around between rehearsals boring, they found the work very enjoyable and worth the sacrifice. It was hard to choose from all the enthusiastic comments. For example: - *"Being proud of myself at the end of the performance to parents, VIPS and other schools. Doing something fun on stage in the Theatre instead of a school hall. Looking amazing, so did the others who took part"* (Faye). I personally found the final piece very moving especially when pupils 'acted' council relocation officers coming and knocking on doors to give orders to move. The final message was uplifting and critical of the materialistic and wealthy in society. It appealed to adults to sort out problems. Although they accepted that it was inevitable at this stage, the children themselves expressed their opinions about what was being done in their neighbourhood and it evidently meant a lot to them.

### **Primary School 4**

Susan, the teacher set the focus for the project. She wanted the project to facilitate her ten and eleven year old pupils (year 6) in their transition to Secondary school (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data p.). She suggested the project should focus on promoting the children's 'sense of identity' in their environment. She hoped it would stand them in good stead when they undertook work planned in year 7 at High school involving producing an autobiographical collage. She and the artist agreed that the children would *"create a character, which might have some of their own characteristics / emotions - using drawing exercises, portraiture,*

*cartoons, sculpture, looks, personality, and character traits.*" She explained that the artist intended to start with a character made by a group (to avoid embarrassment). Although it was not stressed this work fitted in well with the overall Festival theme of 'District children dreaming...', showing that the title allowed for a range of different work. At the start the teacher, Susan made the very important point that cross curricular project work through Art enables differentiation for individual pupils, evidenced by outcome. Pupils created their own artist statements and were *"really, really excited by exhibiting work at The Theatre."*

Susan identified the following National Curriculum requirements in Art and Design - Knowledge, skills and understanding: 1 Exploring and developing ideas, 2 Investigating and making art, craft and design, 3 Evaluating and developing work, 4 Knowledge and understanding (e.g. possibly interviewing artist). She also pointed out that some areas were covered within the PHSE (Personal, Health and Social Education) and English (speaking, listening and writing) curricula. Later as the project got under way, she displayed a detailed understanding of the educational opportunities and benefits the project offered such as *"evaluating; criticising; being in touch with feelings; communicating; empathising with other characters; comprehension; discussion; inferring and deducing."* The artist, Sanjay outlined the following areas in his evaluation - *"We covered lots of drawing and sculptural exercises, perhaps more fitting for GCSE students, which the group handled more than fine. In terms of educational aims, I tried to encourage the group to ask 'unusual questions' and to respond creatively."* The teacher showed that she understood how the project might facilitate higher order thinking finding that it enabled pupils to - *"modify focus, symbolise, reason, justify choices, improve and add details."*

The artist noted that by the end pupils *"were all accomplished and able drawers and sculptors... All the students were busy practising the art exercises in their sketchbooks in their free time!"* and *"All the students made exceptional progress in their work."* This is supported by the teacher's comments. She stated that the written work from the project was very good (artist's statements and character stories) e.g. *"Art led to some of best creative writing pupils have done."* Her questionnaire shows that pupils, including some who needed to develop further in literacy, took an intelligent and enthusiastic interest in the work. It is evident that they loved working with the artist, particularly in clay. In their questionnaires they felt able to express their views freely - a sign of real confidence in their teacher. The teacher achieved her object of creating an enjoyable opportunity to improve pupil confidence in their learning. The work produced and the children's enthusiasm, showed that this was a particularly productive and mutually beneficial collaboration between the teacher and the creative practitioner, which benefited the pupils.

### **Primary School 5**

This school undertook a drama project involving class 3 pupils (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - Primary school 5). The teacher described the project as follows, *"30 children aged 7 or 8 years stood on a public stage and in front of an audience, enthusiastically gave a fabulous performance (times two) that they had been involved with from start to finish. Each child took away an experience of a lifetime that they will never forget."* This drama piece, fitted very well into the festival theme of District children dreaming, which was based on a local derelict theatre. The story was about a boy who could not dream until he put his head on an old theatre cushion and went to sleep. His dreams, acted out by the pupils, about the theatre's past and future, make up the play. The discussion about whether or not to demolish or renovate the old building used the pupils' imaginations to envisage the past and future in 'dreams.' The 'research' for this involved human feelings and the needs of their own community e.g. respect for the elderly and young people, valuing history, family life and possible views of the future.

The teacher listed a wide range of National Curriculum areas involved in the project as follows: English - Speaking and Listening (and writing); PHSE (Personal, Health and Social Education) - sharing / working together; History / Geography - our local area; Drama - acting / writing a show; Music - singing rhythmic songs. The artist pointed out that Year 3 was expected to read and learn their script, which involved literacy skills. They also looked a lot at building stories (beginnings, middles and ends), which was likely to help them structure their own English compositions. In the joint final evaluation artist and teacher identified the following additional elements *"interviewing / poetry / story telling / acting skills / team work / expressive use of their bodies."* The artist noted that during the project pupils' confidence and communication skills were boosted; children's ability to work as a team

and take on other people's ideas improved over the process and spatial awareness and physical memory improved.

The teacher and artist cooperated together so that the pupils had ownership of the material in the play, which was derived from early drama games and exercises. I watched one rehearsal where Julie wrote the script down on the computer while the pupils were asked to try out and adjust lines. They constantly used the children's feedback and ideas, which had been developed between rehearsals through *"written feedback, lots of discussion and photographs"* in class. They always tried and took their *"lead and direction from what the children came up with"* in rehearsal. Creative methods, skills and ideas used developed positive attitudes to learning. This is confirmed by some of the children's comments: *"I loved everything i hated nothing"* (Megen); *"New games and exersius that Mat taught us We play them in the playground"* (Ethan). The artist and teacher hoped this work might *"open up new learning pathways in their heads."*

The project engaged the pupils on an affective level. They were interested and enthusiastic at the festival and their questionnaire responses showed that they found the work enjoyable and motivating. For example they were prepared to endure hard work and exercise self-discipline in performing the work for their parents. The final performance was a triumph for all concerned and surprisingly professional for such young performers. The play was very well received by other schools and by parents and family of the pupils, most of who attended and applauded loudly. When I asked her if she was tired after all the hard work, teacher Julie made the heartfelt comment, "I don't know about that but I feel proud!"

### **Primary School 6**

This project started off with a teacher who was a dance specialist herself and had innovative ideas about extending literacy through the work (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - Primary school 6). After this, the school without informing Creative Partnerships or the evaluator changed the project theme and teacher. The new theme had potential for spin off work in English, History, Geography and PHSE around the project. However, full collaboration and active participation by the teacher with the artist in the work did not take place. At least, no evidence of this was forthcoming to the evaluation, although the artist was supported in other ways. The artist did produce some excellent and valuable work to the pupils' benefit (as the two teachers interviewed both observed). A dance was produced by ten-eleven year olds (class 6) to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school. The history of the school was researched as evidenced by the shots shown in the video introduction and some of the children presented their school on it. However, the artist appeared to have been mostly working by herself without the participation of teachers in the sessions.

The children gained confidence to express their feelings creatively in dance and developed the ability to work individually and collaboratively. The benefits were very much in evidence in the pupils' exuberant and marvellous performance. As the artist says *"confidence was built, fun was had... all the young people completed the project. They were proud and felt positive about what they had achieved."* The creative skills outcomes were evident, but the project was not exploited for the full educational value possible had there been more cross-curricular input from the teacher. Both the teachers showed that they appreciated the cross curricular value of Dance, but did not have the opportunity to extend their own skills. The artist, an inspiring educator would also have benefited by a closer working relationship with the teacher using the school curriculum. This lack may be one reason why she recommends that, *"teachers have more of a creative role."* She was also *"surprised at children's retainment inconsistency - could remember one week but forget the next."* In my opinion this would probably have been less of a problem if the teacher had been more involved e.g. through more spin off and back up work done in class. The final dance performance resulting from this project was of an extremely high quality and the young people involved undoubtedly benefited by the experience. I did not receive any pupil feedback from the school. Although both the teachers were well able to produce innovative work, it seems that, for reasons of their own, the school did not take full advantage of the professional development opportunities given

### **The festival week**

The Theatre Creativity Festival took place during the week of 3 - 7 July 2006. The first day was a presentation day for action researchers exploring educational issues and creativity in educating children (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival). This Creative Partnerships City District project had involved twelve education action researchers, nine classroom teachers and three creative practitioners. I had been involved in it for two years as a mentor. Although last year's 'presentations' day was well done, this year's work showed further development of the action researchers and their research. It seemed to me that considerable development of all of the participants had taken place over the two-year period. For example on this day it was evident that all of the presenting researchers had achieved a high level of competence in the content, conceptual understanding and presentation of their work. They and their creative partners were rightly proud of their work. I too found that my own understanding, as a teacher and educational researcher, had been improved. It helped me appreciate the full value and wide ranging possibilities of using action research in teaching to explore educational issues, working with intuitions and hunches in practice.

Day two of the festival was a Creativity Careers and Enterprise day for 180 fourteen and fifteen year olds (years 9-10) from five local high schools (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival). Groups from each school attended workshop sessions given by creative professionals working in Events Promotion; Filmmaking; Photography; Fashion; Theatrical and Film Set Design and Book Making. I sat in on several sessions. The presenters were successful in their careers and well prepared. Their work had direct appeal to young people and their interests. They had interesting life stories to tell about their own varied career paths (both conventional and unconventional), gave insights into their day-to-day working lives and led a practical activity related to their work. The CP programmer said he was "*greatly impressed by the calibre of the creative professionals presenting*" and I am in full agreement. In the afternoon, imaginative ideas were presented by groups from each school in a 'Dragon's Den'-style event. Each school group presented to a panel of experts before the whole group. The young people's interest was very much engaged and they enjoyed the excitement of competition with other schools. This is confirmed in an evaluation report by one pupil who says: "*Overall, it was a fantastic event, and it was great to be involved. It has encouraged me and others to consider taking a career in creative Arts.*" The work illustrated the potential for engaging young people on an emotional level relating education to their interests and helping them set goals. As a teacher who has been involved in careers and work experience with teenagers at secondary level, I believe this programme also has potential as a model for other types of careers and their presentation in schools.

Day three was a preview for the art displays and a 'taster' for the festival (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival). The whole event was informal and music from pupils at a local high school enhanced the occasion and was very much enjoyed. Pupils from No. 1 primary school read out their work and sang and pupils from No. 3 primary school performed part of their drama presentation. A good number of parents came. Days five and six of the festival were 'Schools Showcase' days. The workshops, rehearsals and performances of the festival provided rich educational evidence for the evaluation (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival). I was able to give evidence of a great many valuable educational skills being taught and learned by the young people involved. I also recorded some valuable observations made by class teachers, who were universally enthusiastic. It was evident that the sessions gave teachers food for thought about how to improve learning through creative exercises, improvisation and expression. All of this work involved working with feelings. Other teachers (without prompting from me) pointed out those pupils who were not usually easy to engage, having special needs and/or behaviour problems, appeared to find the work motivating and interesting. One teacher felt he was learning new skills by watching the work. I felt that in evidencing the work I was also gaining an improved understanding of learning and teaching processes.

In all the work being done at the festival, *differentiation by outcome* (each child working at their own ability level), was very much in evidence. The final drama performances took place - backed up by the expertise of the Theatre staff (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data Primary schools 3 & 5). They were impressive, professional and most enjoyable. They each received an enthusiastic response and wrapt attention both from peer groups and parents. Other classes came in over the three days and took part in workshops. There was a great deal of evidence of pupil engagement and enjoyment as evidenced by the riveting comments on the pupils'

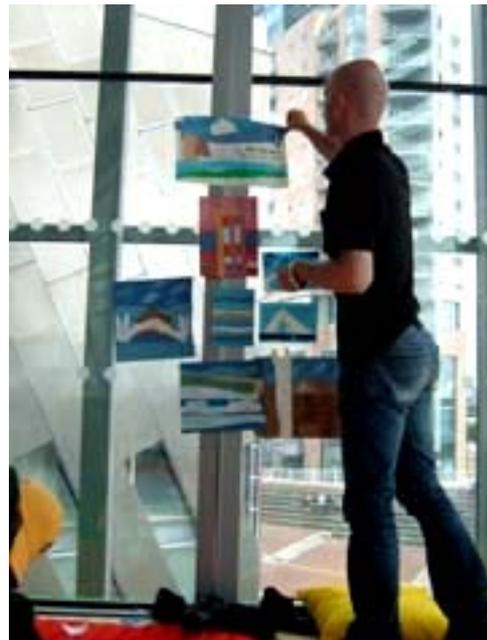
comment wall e.g. 70 smiley faces (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival).

The value to the young people is also recorded in the CP programmer's parent questionnaire (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data). She says that, *"the majority of the parents thought that their child had learnt to be more confident and expressive as well as being able to work with others as part of a team."* Parents wrote that the experience had enhanced their child's learning e.g. *"Has learnt how to use her mind in a creative and exciting way."* The organisation of the festival was found to be excellent by all who participated. Everyone collaborated very effectively, professionally and unobtrusively to make it all happen. The creative practitioners and teachers made many appreciative comments in their own evaluations about the festival (See Appendix, Phase 3 - 4 Primary schools creativity festival 2006: evaluation report data - The festival). Most concerns expressed by them in their evaluations were regarding ways to fine tune activities, expand and advertise the festival now that a successful model had been developed.

### Photographs taken at the festival



Primary school 1: story collage map of Ghana



Poetry workshop



Primary school 2: dreaming caterpillar



Butterfly workshop



Primary school 4



Cartoon character workshop



4.4 Creativity festival 2006 - full anon. report-J. A. Hawkins (email: [jenhawk62@02.co.uk](mailto:jenhawk62@02.co.uk))