Acting like teachers: re-thinking educational identities in the Lifelong Learning Sector

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late brother, Norman – the quickest, wittiest, razor-sharp mind I ever came across. He would have hated it.

Abstract

This thesis is a story and the research that underpins it is intended as a significant contribution to an under-researched body of knowledge concerned with the pedagogical encounters of trainee teachers in the English Lifelong Learning Sector.

The research emerged from my interest in the values and individual dispositions that trainee mature teachers bring with them to the teaching role from myriad lived and vocational experiences, why those values are held and how they are embodied in pedagogical acts in the sector. Yet the particular nuances of the sector, imbued as it is with governmentally and institutionally-inscribed politics, tensions and contestations axiomatic of the neo-liberal agenda that drives the sector, surface in trainees' sites of practice and threaten to expunge their values from them. Therefore, as an Initial Teacher Educator in the sector, I have an emancipatory interest in attempting to make sense of these sites of political struggle in order to better prepare future generations of teachers for the sector.

Data collection included questionnaire responses from 156 second year trainee teachers, 81 of whom were observed teaching and subsequently engaged in dialogue in order to examine what occurs in the transaction between dialogue and pedagogy in relation to their sites of teaching practice as a critically reflexive emancipatory endeavour. Here, the political and critical theoretical works of Jacques Rancière were central in attempting to interpret how trainees' perceived values and discourses sit alongside the realities and sites of pedagogical practice as concepts that can be worked with, rather than simply identified.

The findings of the research amount to a plethora of shifting individual identities, localised political acts and the emergence of new political subjectivities which sometimes work in powerful ways to both unsettle reified sectoral norms and occasionally allow the voice of otherness to be heard. In doing so, the thesis builds on much of the available literature and research in the sector and offers teacher educators tangible ways in which they can engage and work with trainees' potential for personal and pedagogic skill growth.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

In summarising one of the central theories of this thesis, that of Rancière's axiom (Rancière, 1991), Bingham & Biesta (2010: 152) make clear that:

> The point here is quite simply that Rancière's educational work is not a recipe for any kind of pedagogy. It is a story. It is not a method. It waits not for implementation. It waits instead for another story to be told in return.

This thesis is intended as one other story – a provisional offertory given in return with a view to complementing the current body of knowledge on emancipatory education in the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS).

Central functions of my role as a teacher educator are: to develop trainees' pedagogy through informed guidance following observation of them teaching; to model best practice in teaching and learning; to involve my learners in research; and to encourage trainee teachers to challenge "givens", for example learning styles inventories and "One size fits all" education policy. I will argue in the thesis that this is an uneasy positioning since I am not a "knower" of pedagogy, despite what trainee teachers in my charge believe, expect or envisage.

The focus of this doctoral thesis aims to go some way towards responding to the questions, "What do trainee teachers perceive to be educationally desirable in their subject specialist contexts and how can teacher educators work with that?" The study began as an earnest endeavour in seeking to narrow the gap between the pedagogic theory and practice of trainee in-service teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS), formerly Further Education (FE), in England with a view to improving the preparedness of trainee teachers during their enculturation into the sector as Maxwell (2004), Butcher (2005), Challon (2005) and Gutherson & Pickard (2005) exhort. Initially, the project seemed to sit well with the Frierean notion of emancipatory education and, equally, seemed to call for a critical theory approach to data collection and analysis. At the time of writing-up, the thesis amounts to a particular storying of the constantly shifting landscape of the study and where theories work as tools to offer both an appraisal of trainee teachers' lives within that landscape and a critical, forward-thinking hope for an educational sector in constant flux and tension.

Initially, data collection comprised an introductory questionnaire and subsequent professional discussions following observations of trainees' teaching practice where Freirean questioning was used to unpick their impressions of how theory co-exists with practice in the pursuit of what they believe is educationally desirable in their context. The intention was that they would have a safe place to legitimate their practice at that time and place against what they believe are the ways things should be and where they could explore a collective of socio-cultural semiotics momentarily free of the ideologies that ordinarily bind the teacher, as opposed to the often standard post-observation feedback diet of a provocative analysis. I envisaged that this praxis-oriented approach to unconstrained communication would avoid the educational structures that are often the norm of those being observed and would promote a hermeneutical, interpretive approach to data analysis that could be inherently liberating for both researcher and sample. Within such a space I was comfortable in considering theories simply as a set of ideas that invited enquiry; where perceived truths could be replaced with other ideas; where assumptions, being understandings of how our world or the ambiguous zone of teaching practice works, were a moveable feast; and where multiple voices and perspectives were free to lend expression to an emerging, interpretive and relativist concept of teaching and learning that valued cultural dispositions over prescription. In short, I was trying to be emancipatory, as I understood the term both within the democratic educational ideology and within this study and context.

Specifically, I was concerned with both developing trainee teacher potential and providing a small and secure space in which they could explore the world that they were entering, an approach which sits uneasily with the prevailing neo-liberal ideology handed down by Government fiat (Rushton, 2009a) (Appendix A), as I will discuss in Chapter 2. Within the literature concerned with such an approach, I was being welcomed into a swampy world that could be variously perceived as: counter-hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971); emancipatory (Freire, 1970); liberatory (Burbules, 2000); critical (Bailin & Siegel, 2003) and even revolutionary (Trifonas, 2000). Here, I was encouraged by Fine (1994: 30) who urged that (educational research should) '...challenge what is, incite what could be, and imagine a world that is not yet imagined'. In my role as a teacher trainer, I wanted to be a teacher educator yet was an actor in a dilemmatic site of tension

where, I thought then and still do, there was a difference between ITT (Initial Teacher Training) and ITE (Initial Teacher Education) as Lawson (1979: 86) illuminates: 'They [educators] are more than trainers and instructors in that they are concerned with the validity of ends as well as means and to engage in education is also to engage in debate about values'. Here, trainee teachers are required to conform to a set of instrumental competences in line with the over-arching professional standards (LLUK, 2005; Ofsted, 2009). If they are "good enough", they pass, but I had, and still have, difficulty subscribing to the notion that demonstrating a set of instrumental and prescriptive competences is "good enough" for a teacher in a diverse LLS. I suggest that to be "good enough" trainees should also endeavour to think and question within their confines, if not beyond them.

From this outset, we are immediately concerned with the old underlying question, "What is the purpose of education?" and which echoes the historic sentiments of many from Lester-Smith (1957), through the Black Papers (Cox & Dyson, 1971) and the Great Debate (Callaghan, 1976) to Coffield (2010) et al. and Pring (2004). Such a literature does not invoke a nostalgia whereby education was previously somehow better than now, but repeats the same unanswered question which Biesta (2007: 20) usefully and linguistically turned into, 'Education professionals need to make decisions about what is educationally desirable'. I doubt that Biesta confined this belief to teacher educators and this thesis is primarily concerned with how trainee teachers explore their practice when given a space, albeit a very small space, to consider pedagogical potentiality to pursue that which is educationally desirable in their subject specialisms and contexts.

Whilst this is fraught with difficulty, as the thesis will explore, my own reflexive stance is less concerned with questioning the way education is or supposed to be in the LLS, but more in advancing a critical notion of how initial teacher education in the sector could be. Put another way, the thesis is intended as a developmental narrative that is both timely and generally absent in current thought in the sector where what emerges from the interface between pedagogy, dialogue and values is, I suggest, a significant contribution to the small, scant body of knowledge in the LLS. Therefore, the thesis will explore some of the resultant troubling dualisms between theory and practice that teacher educators and trainee teachers work with in the troubled and forgotten "Cinderella Service"

(Gleeson, et al., 2005; Avis & Bathmaker, 2007) that is the LLS. Likewise, the thesis is not intended to reside in the theoretical domain as an existentialist inquiry but to focus on the enculturation of trainee teachers into the sector, an enculturation that is imbued with prevailing ideologies that are institutionally inscribed. Yet within the thesis there will be engagement with my own reflective stance as I further grapple with the thorny issues of my own pejorative language and place in the power relations. It is salient to mention at this point that the doctoral journey has raised the spectre of a polymorphous self where I seem to have moved from initially being an "uncertain interpretivist" to currently seeing myself as something of a "cautious critical theorist" for which watery metaphors seem to come easily. For this reason, I will dovetail my own reflexive stance with the emerging discussions throughout the thesis since I am also searching for myself.

In short, I am interested in what new entrants bring to the teaching table, where they get it from and how they use it in their teaching so that I can be more effective in my role of preparing the next generation of teachers in the sector.

In Chapter two I will lay a contextual foundation to the thesis where, as with most stories, characters (identities) and setting (context) provide a fundamental role in locating the storyline.

In Chapter three I will critically discuss the methodological approach to the study and the place of critical theories in interpretive research. Here, the chapter explores my choices for examining the particular nuances of trainee teachers' social actions within a highly politicised and impoverished sector of education where their goods and values are, seemingly, received in paradoxical ways.

Chapter four is concerned with a number of problematic concepts in the research in terms of the extent to which, and limitations of, theoretical perspectives engage with the data. Here, notions of emancipation, politics, language, self and other are positioned and theoretically explored within the shifting political landscape of trainees' sites and spaces.

In Chapter five I will offer an analysis of the empirical data and a critical discussion of the findings of the study. In this lengthy section, which I suggest is well worth the wait, a wealth of rich data from 156 trainee teachers in the LLS enlivens their identities as political subjectivities, often in profound ways. Even on its own, I suggest that the data makes a significant contribution to the paucity

of existing knowledge and theories of this type, particularly the tensions between individual agency and pedagogic social action in the LLS.

In Chapter six I will offer the teacher educator's story in an attempt to give a sense of my own demons and shifts during the doctoral journey.

In Chapter seven I will conclude the research findings and the thesis and endeavour to respond to the initial questions which initiated the journey in the first place.

In summary, I began the doctorate by invoking an eclectic research approach in pursuit of a truth of the classroom (Rushton, 2009b; 2010a; 2010b) whilst harbouring unease in advancing an epistemology that could in any way be an adequate understanding of what is educationally desirable in professional teaching practice in the sector. I will argue that such an absolute truth does not exist and, at the writing-up stage, I am less concerned with whether my thesis findings will be correct or true, since no one view of the classroom is more reliable than another, but that I should give a clear, accurate account of them in the right terms and, for this purpose, I will next lay these underpinning foundations for the reader.

Chapter 2: Context

This chapter will position several essential layers to the thesis: trainee teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector; the performative nature and impact of the LLS; and a notion of emancipation in LLS education.

Trainee teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS)

Firstly, it is important at the outset to make clear the diverse and unique nature of the trainee teachers (the sample in the study) and the English Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS) as an essential underpinning and contextualisation for the discussions which follow in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

The major literature concerned with new entrants to the teaching profession tends to story the majority of them (NCTL, 2013) as newly qualified graduates who top-up their degree with a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and go straight into primary or secondary teaching. Here, 54% of new entrants are under 25 years of age; 12% are over 37; and none are over the age of 55. Exceptions include those under the Troops to Teachers initiative (DoE, 2013) who the Government concede, '...possess the skills that are both relevant and transferable to the classroom' (DoE, 2013: no page) and which implies that skills and expertise in non-academic backgrounds have some value when teaching.

In contrast, and at an average age of 37 years (Fazaeli, 2010), new In-Service entrants to the LLS enjoy a very different career trajectory (Finlay, 2008) with only the occasional trainee in each year cohort being a newly qualified graduate and around a third not holding a degree in any subject. Overwhelmingly, those training to become qualified teachers in the LLS have a detailed and proven track record in other spheres and contexts associated with their subject specialisms. For example, recent cohorts in the sample included three ex-paratroopers, 28 Police officers approaching retirement, former construction workers and practicing nurses. Indeed, the 2012-3 group was the first cohort of trainee teachers I have ever taught where I, currently at 58 years, was the oldest person in the room. Whilst noting ages positions people in certain, often unfavourable, ways it also lends a sense of individual dispositions and drives. Specifically, according to data from the sample, more people in their 60's embark on a teaching career in the LLS than do newly qualified graduates in their early twenties, although current commentary seems to carefully side-step the question of whether age or generation are dimensions of interest. Yet such a profile hints

that trainees bring many things to the sector from a myriad of occupational and vocational backgrounds: social and cultural dispositions, habitus, vocational baggage, ways of thinking and inherited language and knowledge that they believe equips them to teach their subject specialism within the sector – artefacts of a relativist ontology that are worthy of investigation (Rushton, 2008) and which Trifonas (2000: 253) posits as,

> Education, however, activates and is activated by the vestigial remains of symbolical forms of expression and interaction, communication and interpretation grafted from the traces of cultural memory existing within us.

However, experience as a teacher educator (Rushton, 2008) persuaded me that this was, and remains, something of a troublesome brew. In particular, I continue to harbour unease at some trainees' observed teaching practice which I suspect are inauthentic displays designed to "tick all the boxes". Indeed: they may echo Hanley's (2007) notion of trainees fancifully balancing different pedagogical models to suit particular audiences; or Atkinson's (2004) detailed Lacanian suggestion that trainees rely on imagination because they cannot reflect on subjective features of their craft, others or self; or Cribbs' (2005) notion of principled infidelity, meaning an ethical drift or loss of one's moral compass, as trainee teachers make pedagogical decisions; or Elbaz's (1983) study, cited by Hopkins (2002: 57), who suggested that:

> (1) there is often incongruence between a teacher's publicly declared philosophy or beliefs about education and how he or she behaves in the classroom; (2)...and the way the lesson is actually taught.

As with the Government and the Troops to Teachers initiative, employers in the LLS embrace the many dispositions, knowledge and experience that trainees bring to the table as they offer them paid teaching positions then require them to pursue an In-Service teaching qualification (Colley, 2006). But here is the rub: employers immediately require them to fit the institutional mould, a mould fashioned after spurious "Professional" competences (LLUK, 2005; Ofsted, 2009), institutional norms and shifting Governmental agendas which make up major components of the neo-liberal, performative blueprint or template for the

sector, not unlike Procruste's bed. Throughout Phase A of the doctorate I made the case that government education policy and Taylorist rhetoric marginalise teachers in both education design and evaluation (Thompson & Robinson, 2008), where they are denied '...permission to think' (Brown et al., 2008: 11) and where they are expected to pay homage to a dominant business model that portrays education as a commodity and learners as consumers – a tokenistic ideology singularly at odds with the purposes of education in the sector, I suggest.

Within the bulk of this literature, which is primarily concerned with discussing the notion of professionalism, there is a more valuable body of work which explores trainees' reactions to the performative demands of the sector which, in contrast to Primary and Secondary teaching, is particularly market-driven. Reading throughout Phase B seemed to bolster the political arguments that the dominant discourses from education policymakers in the LLS place a premium on the drive for teacher excellence (as evidenced in target achievements and Ofsted grades) and a drive to re-professionalise (sic) teachers in the sector through a rhetoric of "official descriptions" of work (Harkin, 2005; Orr, 2008; Lucas, et al., 2012), although these are still couched in terms of "professionalism". The overlay between the various discussions in current literature is where some research accounts begin to reveal a glimpse of trainees' agency and values starting to emerge through vignettes and case studies, here foregrounded with the most frequently occurring terminology that is used to articulate them.

Firstly, habitus is formed and reformed from diverse and rhizomatous influences: personal values and dispositions, biographical and schooling identities and vocational background, each influence being shaped and informed by other components crucially underpinned by the trainees' own lived experiences and which seems to permeate many discussions of personal values or dispositions.

Secondly, the literature offers a junction where the myriad threads of individual habitus come together with Colley (ibid.: 17) suggesting that social capital, whilst formed in the family setting, is re-formed in the occupational field through careful nurturing of emotional care. This is an interesting and frequently recurring theme in the literature regarding trainees' emotional labour with Hochschild's (1983) discourse being generally accepted as:

[Emotional labour] ...requires one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward appearance that produces the proper state of mind in others.

(Hochschild, 1983: 6 – 7, cited in Colley, 2006: 16)

Whilst their study focused heavily on care occupations, later work by Avis & Bathmaker (2004, 2006) used the same notion to make sense of trainee teachers' dispositions, values and identities. For example, Avis & Bathmaker (2004: 308) identified an 'emancipatory' belief in trainees which their learners rejected whilst the 2006 study found one trainee who felt that his own learner-centred ethos of care was allied to the '...caring and supportive teachers...' (p. 178) he had experienced as a Further Education (FE) student but which met with learner indifference when he began teaching. These occasional glimpses suggest that some trainees in the LLS exhibit what amounts to a pastoral duty towards the learners in their charge, an ethos of care which seems to be a part of their identity and the product of experiences from different sources.

Thirdly, vocational habitus (Avis & Bathmaker, 2006) is a highly contextualised and specific set of dispositions comprising the product of both vocational culture and previous vocational and learning experiences and which collectively conspire to shape a trainee's identity. Vocational background is developed by Colley, et al. (2003: 487) who concur that vocational habitus is clearly formed in the context of trainees' vocational fields or '...particular occupations', a point reinforced in her later work (Colley, 2006) and which supports the sector's premium placed on trainee experience and the expectation that new staff bring with them a wealthy track record of vocationally-specific up-to-date experience. Such a vocational identity, formed by enculturation into a vocational community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), is variously revealed as workers having been conditioned for particular roles (Avis & Bathmaker, 2006) and a '...positional good...' within industry (Colley, 2003: 486). Furthermore, vocational identity is seen almost as a badge, brand or professional symbol embedded as a '...piece of the person' (Richardson, 1990, no page, cited in Pickering, 2003: 4) yet was thought by Richardson as being of little use in the transformation to trainee teacher.

This is where the literature again seems to step around a possible identity component insofar as the influence of trainees' ages appears unexplored, although Bathmaker & Avis' (2006) hint at trainees' generational perspectives. Part of me ponders whether reluctance to attempt difficult analyses of ages or generations is prudent, sensitive and cautionary, or whether it is a slippery political concept whose name we dare not speak because it positions people in unfavourable ways.

Fourthly, cultural capital (Hall & Raffo, 2003) and social capital (ibid) amount to an armoury of unique dispositions, developed from many influences, that trainees offer to contribute to the field and site. Hall & Raffo (2003: 3) believe that cultural capital produces a certain kind of trainee, conducive to ITT, who enjoy the benefits of, '...particular forms of academic education and have connections with the teaching professions through their family background and other social networks'. Such an assumption sits well with Avis, et al.'s (2002: 3) understandings of, '...the lived experience of educative processes...' and are claimed to have influenced not only trainees' reasons for wanting to become teachers (Verloop, et al., 2001; Maxwell, 2004; and Bathmaker & Avis, 2005) but also their values and beliefs. Here a thin vein of literature works hard in discussing how beliefs and values are formed during trainees' lived experiences as learners but within which the various researchers meet with mixed success when trying to analyse it. A part of me suspects that we might not have a language for adequately articulating the intricacies of our, and others', value systems. Here, the various works of Avis and Bathmaker et al. (passim) highlight the mixed school experiences of trainees, both good and bad, from which trainees embrace isolated nuggets of inspirational teaching as a spur for their own teaching values and identities which in turn informed their preconceptions of the learners they expected to be working with. Likewise, the works of Hall & Raffo (2003) and Maxwell (2004) found trainees' cultural capital to have been significantly developed by their experiences as school learners whilst Rice (2004) comments on the extent to which such experiences were used as a benchmark by trainees to propagate an individualism they wished their own students to perceive in them, thus suggesting that they anticipated some value-laden common ground with their learners. Yet throughout the literature regarding trainees' values, the findings appear tentative and inconclusive.

In a similar vein, Maxwell (2004) developed the work of Parsons et al. (2001) to suggest that distinctions between trainees' habitus are grounded both in the greater social and cultural capital enjoyed by in-service trainees, a dimension which may have its roots in Avis & Bathmaker's (2006) generational processes, and their argument that younger pre-service trainees do not make allowances for curriculum constraints since they have had less exposure to them. Again, there is the question of whether age or generation is a feature here.

The literature seems to story trainee in-service LLS teachers as "strangers in a strange land" and who are generally cautious and uncertain when making decisions during their enculturation into their teaching roles and communities where they join communities of experienced (qualified) teachers. Here, the performative nature of the LLS also affects experienced teachers although Bathmaker and Avis found in their 2005 study that trainees accept change in ways that experienced teachers do not:

> Whilst such conditions [performativity and funding] were shared by experienced lecturers and trainees alike, the trainees did not find this a basis of affinity with existing communities of practice. Rather, they told stories which attempted to contrast and distance themselves from experienced lecturers.
> (Bathmaker & Avis, 2005: 56)

Further, Wallace (2002: 86) found that trainees, in their attempts to comply with experienced teachers' norms and expectations and thus to move towards the centres of their new communities of practice, felt compelled to, '...play the game...' and adopt pedagogical practices and instrumental attitudes which they neither anticipated nor preferred.

Whilst Colley, et al. (2007: 73) found an exodus of experienced teachers from the sector seemingly driven out by, '...a political context which privileges economic goals and targets at every level', LLS organisations work hard to coax experienced vocational staff from industry to take up the slack and satisfy the staffing vacuum. Yet these individualised sets of value systems (Halliday, 2002) appear to be immediately under threat when the occupational or vocational professional steps into the teaching context. So whilst much of the literature seems to focus on either experienced teachers' or trainees' atrocity stories,

entertaining though some of them are, I find that they are also in many ways representative of the reality and lived experiences of the sector as I witness and understand them.

The performative nature and impact of the LLS

Whilst it is important to consider the many facets that inform trainees' habitus and individual dispositions at this introductory stage, it is equally important to consider the performative nature of the sector as a necessary contextualisation of the particular field of study, distinct as it is from those of Primary and Secondary contexts. The LLS has moved up the political agenda over the last 20 years (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Lucas, et al., 2012), with subsequent accountability for competitive and economic effectiveness and performance, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the skills agenda is the Government's response to youth unemployment and the perceived poor standing of the UK in the global marketplace whilst echoing the neoliberal refrain of aspiration and hard work. Here, a plethora of government green and white papers have pursued a hegemonic transformation of the LLS from, traditionally, centres of learning and personal development to '...the engine room for skills and social justice in this country' (LSC, 2005: 1). Here, the literature seems to story the sectoral changes as the product of the insidious influence (Allman, et al., 2003) of government policy, both educational and social, in conspiring to impose strategic compliance (Gleeson & Shain, 1999; Edward, et al., 2005) under the umbrella of social justice (Avis & Bathmaker, 2005) and public choice on the sector. Yet there is a growing body of commentators who suggest such 'Policy hysteria' (Keep, 2006: 59), hard on the heels of previous failed efforts, are merely successive stages in a cycle of intervention which inevitably breeds further failure (Keep, 2006; Allen & Ainley, 2007; Coffield, 2008, et al.). The cyclical routine is not unknown to employers, heralded within policy discourse as customers seeking value for money as the LLS assuages the thirst for 21st Century skills, who have been in a needy place at the centre of both business and educational initiatives for 25 years. For employers and industry, their role in each successive initiative seems relegated to that of a subservient recipient of a Government scheme provided for their benefit, whether they like it or not, and in which they will play at best no more than a cameo role (Huddleston, et al., 2005) despite research suggesting that such

interventions are unwanted: 'The state ascribes a centrality to upskilling that is not shared by other actors, particularly employers' (Keep, 2006: 52). Put bluntly, LSS education policy appears to have been subsumed into social and economic policies (although it could be seen equally clearly the other way round) where the LLS is clearly notified of the part it is required to play (DIUS, 2008; Appendix A).

Secondly, this shift in LLS policy focus was made possible following "Incorporation" as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act in 1992 which put in place the managerialist functions, and resultant tensions, that the bulk of the literature contests (Shain & Gleeson, 1999; Allman, et al., 2003; Smith, 2007; Orr, 2008). At a stroke, FE colleges were removed from Local Education Authority (LEA) control and "Incorporated" (became independent yet accountable) and Private Training Organisations were introduced for the purpose of invigorating contestability in a market-driven fight for reduced education funding. The ensuing neoliberal agenda over the last 20 years has become characterised by a Darwinian battle for survival, college mergers, the disestablishment of teaching posts, an ethos of "more for less" by teaching staff and a general spiral of decline axiomatic of '...survivor syndrome...' (Childs, 2001: 295). Orr (2008: 100) refers to the current situation (as policymakers perceive it) as '"TINA", There is no alternative' and this appears to be the view of qualified or experienced teachers in the sector at this time – nowhere do I read or hear of anyone having the stomach to invoke change and it seems that neoliberalism is alive, breathing and doing quite nicely in the LLS, as I will discuss in Chapters 4 and 5. Yet, whilst the literature is primarily concerned with various notions of professionalism, managerialism, neoliberalism and the hegemony of central control (Gleeson, et al., 2005; Orr, 2005, 2008; Hillier, 2006; Colley, 2007), there is also a well-documented discourse of resultant tensions between qualified teachers and the LLS organisation in the current performative climate (Allen & Ainley, 2007; Coffield, 2007; James & Biesta, 2007, et al.), but which stop short of calls for change. Nonetheless, Ball (2003: 215) summarises this field of literature well as:

> Performativity, it is argued, is a new mode of state regulation which makes it possible to govern in an 'advanced liberal' way. It requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to

targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation. The new performative worker is a promiscuous self, an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence.

Further, Olsen (1996: 340) confirms that:

The state will see to it that each one makes a "continual enterprise of ourselves"...in what seems to be a process of "governing without governing".

Here, according to Apple (2000) neo-liberalist rhetoric must not be mistaken for the reality of the sector where worker autonomy is reduced inversely proportional, I suggest, to the increased surveillance and performative demands and measures of the evaluative state.

Thirdly, a further component of the neoliberal agenda is the political focus on teacher qualification, certification (though these are not to be taken as the same) and competence. Here, the literature abounds with commentary concerning the inadequacies of the competency-based re-professionalisation of ITE (Rice, 2004; Lucas, et al., 2012) (currently being reviewed and reformed, again, at the time of writing-up) and the government's apparently fragile grasp of teacher professionalism (Coffield, 2007) which also appear in the literature as central tensions between individual agency and organisational structures. Whilst several commentators, for example Colley, et al. (2003), Wallace (2004) and Rice (2004) make clear the inappropriateness of a behavioural model of teacher effectiveness, which Rice (2004) claims to affect trainees' perceptions of professionalism, they are contested, for example, Lucas, et al. (2012) and Atkinson's (2004: 380) suggestion that they are an '...idealisation of teaching'. From a Vygotskyian (1996) perspective, teaching and learning activities are complex social activities which do not sit well with the Government's reliance on capturing them through the behavioural, prescriptive, competence statements in the professional standards for the sector. This dissonance or tension can be seen as a steadily widening gap at the interface between educational philosophy and practice which Murphy, et. al. (2009: 8) perceive as, '...the academic content of teacher education began to be reduced in favour of training focused on classroom and teaching techniques', thereby suggesting that whilst Peter (the philosophy of education) has been robbed, at least Paul (pedagogy by prescription) has been

paid. Collectively, the literature representing the performative influences in both the sector at the macro level, and institutionally at the micro level, present a robust commentary of the forces acting in and on the teaching and learning cultures prevalent in the LLS. Again, the reality of the teacher, whether qualified or trainee, in the sector as I understand it is that the professional standards still do not capture what it is like to teach although Government neoliberal tinkering continues unabated.

A notion of emancipation in LLS education

Traditionally, emancipation has been generally considered as promoting some form of freedom. Currently, there is a recent literature which suggests that emancipatory education has some resonance with equality – not the grand narratives of Equality & Diversity (E&D) policy, widening participation or taking up the case for the marginalised but, initially in this study, listening to the voices of trainee teachers. Surely, as experts in their fields readily embraced by colleges and other "providers" for that precise reason, they have something to say?   The data over the last five years has suggested, as I will discuss in Chapters 4 and 5, that trainee teachers are alive to the tensions (see: politics) between what they think they should be doing and what they are required to do – yet appear not to dare to speak its name. It is important to note here that I do not intend to portray or story trainees in a reluctant way but to acknowledge that they have uncertainties and unknowns that are new to them as Freire (2005: 129) declares:

> Let's repeat, then, that the educator is a politician. In consequence, it is absolutely necessary that educators act in a way consistent with their choice – which is political – and furthermore that educators be ever more scientifically competent, which teaches them how important it is to know the concrete world in which their students live, the culture in which their students' language, syntax, semantics, and action are found in action, in which certain habits, likes, beliefs, fears, desires are formed that are not necessarily easily accepted in the teachers' own worlds.

This notion of emancipation is what initially attracted me to Freire's work although it was so fraught with tension that I found it difficult to hold onto as I will discuss in Chapter 4. At this contextual stage, I can say that I agree with the importance of striving to know the trainees' different worlds – yet I cannot know

the trainee. I cannot know the other any more than I can subscribe to Ofsted's claim that (the practice of good teachers) '...accommodates the particular needs of all their students whose strengths and weaknesses they know intimately' (Ofsted, 2004: 9). I suggest that it is neither possible nor ethical to know a student or learner intimately as Higgins (2003: 151) puts forward, '...one should not live vicariously through one's students'. Therefore, my understanding of emancipatory dialogue is limited to "an unconditional and professional discussion that explores potential", which is hardly new, and the various works of Freire, Trifonas and Rancière offer particular and critical lenses through which to examine current education in the sector in critically conscious ways.

It was here, working with the first emerging data early in the EdD, that Freire's emancipatory project and questioning approach seemed to fall short and Rancière's work (1991; 2003; 2007; 2010) offered to move my thinking forward, albeit tentatively since I am also pursuing ideas for how I can move my practice forward as a teacher educator whilst simultaneously working on a number of fronts. At the same time I harbour unease in advancing an epistemology that could in any way be an adequate understanding of what is educationally desirable in professional teaching practice and teacher education in the current sectoral landscape, imbued throughout as it is with the politics and hegemony of neoliberalism.

In short, at this contextual stage, I acknowledge a literature that suggests that emancipation and critical theory share one common theme – they cannot be "done" from outside – I, as the researcher, needed to engage with both and "do" both in order to explore what they are, how they do or do not work and what they offer to teacher educators' use of them as tools for moving ITE practice forward in the sector. As Deranty (2010: 183) suggests:

> For Rancière a true theory of emancipation not only takes political emancipation as its object of study but aims to participate practically in emancipation. Such a theory must rely on this axiom of equality.

My own reflexive stance

In Rushton (2008) I made the case that trainees mediate conflicting divergent forces emanating from their organisational and cultural structures to promote and enhance learning. Yet they are also quick to apologise, for example for

deviating from a session plan or intervening in some way, during post-teaching observation feedback because they believe that they have breached a practical rule or fallen foul of a theory. There is a politics and a hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) here which, I argued, the trainees could challenge in the safety and sanctuary of the feedback dialogue if only to acknowledge life at the margins of everyday practice but which ostensibly gives them openings to accredit their choices and consider alternative possibilities in pursuing that which they perceive to be educationally desirable in both their subject specialism and context. One of the ingredients of this troublesome brew is my own positionality where the only subject specialism I know with any authority is that of road transport engineering whilst having never been employed in any of the organisations represented in the sample. Therefore, I am also a stranger in a strange land whenever I observe any trainee teaching and there are consequential demons of my own that I have to face when doing so, as I will discuss in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. A further thorn in my swimming cap is my realisation that no matter how progressive, emancipatory or alternative I think I am, I am still compliant, compliant in the respect that I still want all "my" trainees to achieve their teaching qualification through meeting all the learning outcomes of their university awards.

Having briefly drawn the characters and the landscape in which the story is set, I will next discuss the empirical component of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology and critical theory.

Having laid the contextual foundations of the doctoral study in Chapter 2, this chapter takes two foci in turn: firstly, there is a rationale and discussion regarding the methodological approach to data collection and analysis in the research; and secondly, there is a critical discussion of critical theory as the central theory in the data collection and analysis. The data in this thesis, and the troubling dualisms that come from it, will be further examined from a theoretical perspective in Chapters 4 and 5 where my reflexive stance can also be better examined.

Methodology

Reading for the doctorate has brought an awareness that I am alive to the contested, almost ghostly, nature of the educational and philosophical swamp in which I reside where there is a trainee teacher complexity (as contextualised in Chapter 2) that is alien to the policymaker. Yet this is a world of meaning where gaps appear between how trainees are expected to conduct their craft and how they and others believe they should be – a political mismatch and tension between standards of professional action devised by policymakers (Orr, 2008; Lucas, et al., 2012) and the artistry and craft of teaching that cannot be captured by any amount of competency statements and which are indicative of '...the crisis of representing teaching and learning' (Pitt & Britzman, 2003: 757).

Enquiring into the gaps in this field calls for a qualitative approach, as urged by Harkin (2005) and Tapola (2011) and which Wallace (2002: 81) articulates well as:

> It can be argued that qualitative research is, to some extent, always grounded in biography (Campbell, 1988) in that research seeks to understand the lived experience of its participants (Sherman & Webb, 1988).

Because the research is primarily concerned with an emancipatory interest, it is concerned with a "dirty" or "messy" (Cook, 2009) endeavour, the mess coming from the realisation that qualitative data is something of a slippery concept and which Pitt and Britzman (2003: 757) ponder as, '…what counts as data and what data counts as', and is symptomatic of narrative-based critical studies of this type. In pursuing an articulation of the messiness and tensions which pervade

trainees' professional roles, and unearthing ways in which I can scrutinise the assumptions and structures that they and their learners labour under whilst challenging the "taken-for-grantedness" of educational theory-in-practice as the participants understand them, calls for the critical approach presented here.

Moon (2008: 59) argues that critical inquiry is '...multi-logical...' therefore, at the end of Phase A, I baulked at adopting a simplistic methodological approach and advanced one that is more akin to a mosaic, a nomadic (O'Grady, 2009) interpretivist approach within an overarching ethos of reflexive critical thinking. I suggest that such an approach offers a valid, but reliably limited, approach to data collection and analysis in the field; where the messiness of narrative and discourse provides an optic through which to examine both trainees' and my own reflexive scrutinies; where tensions in the power relations could at least be acknowledged; and where theory, practice and different types of knowledge in a particular subject specialism and context could be articulated in a safe and non-threatening environment for the participants.

Here, I have been working with a sample in a field where both are fluid and dynamic and where there would be only limited value, I feel, in subscribing to one particular over-riding theoretical perspective. I have chosen to embrace critical theories (including Burbules, 2000; Trifonas, 2000; Brookflield 2001, 2005; Brown, 2005; and Kemmis, et al., 2013) and some post-structuralism (Gur-Zev, 2001, 2005; and Rancière, passim) and Freire's (passim) humanism because they offer particular lenses through which to examine discursive data, despite feeling that I have had to work harder than I might. Such is the lot of the story writer, particularly where there are tensions and difficulties in writing about oneself, and more so when attempting to write about others because language is socially constructed and constantly in play and movement. Yet whilst these theoretical standpoints or philosophical perspectives have their separate traditions, there is a recent literature (Burbules, 2000; Blumenfeld-Jones, 2004; Gur Ze'ev, 2005; et al.) which suggests they share a good deal of common ground, a commonality which, I suggest, might be embraced in order to advance a counter-hegemonic structure for teacher educators and trainee teachers in the sector which offers something by way of useful knowledge and praxis for the future.

Moving into Phase B I retained a trust in Frierean questioning to better understand trainees' perceptions of how what they perceive to be educationally desirable is employed as a driver in their taught sessions. Likewise, I also adopted a non-common sense approach to data collection and analysis and will later argue, in this chapter, its rightful place in the project as an inherently liberating pedagogy (Burbules, 2000). Yet throughout Phase B I found that I had difficulty holding onto Freire, as I will explain in Chapter 4, and relied more heavily on Rancière's axiom. Despite the appropriateness of this methodological approach, there are inherent difficulties and shortcomings in it which I will discuss in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Critical theory

The central thrust of the project may be seen to conform with theories from, or after, those of the Chicago and Frankfurt schools where Mead's (1934) seminal work seems to have been the spur for symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) that focuses on either role structures and social systems or role behaviour and social action, the latter being more relevant to the study, and which emphasised strong empirical research relating to how one thinks about oneself and society. Mead's work helps to consider the trainees' teaching insofar as he uses the metaphor of acting to suggest that such social interaction is in a state of flux since we have no self to portray other than that required of us, not unlike trainees acting in an inauthentic way for the observer or other interested stakeholder, or even for their learners. Whilst symbolic interactionism has drawn criticism for being vague and weak on theory (Craib, 1992), it provides a particular lens for capturing the sophistication and subtlety of trainee craft, the authenticity of which emerges in the post-observation dialogue where individual trainees related their pedagogy, knowledge and practice to their notions of educational desirability and further potential.

Mead's work also sits close to that of Garfinkel (1984) who suggests an almost mischievous linguistic turn to question the way we conform to supposedly common sense structures and social interactions. Like Bourdieu's (1970) and Pring's (2004) post-Marxist versions of critical theories, Garfinkel legitimates challenging the education policymakers' common sense orthodoxy by advocating abstract, theoretical thinking and reflection that offers to release the trainee from the Government-imposed structures, and me from the norm judge position, in

order to liberate some of the mess – a highly charged political process that I will critically discuss in Chapters 4 & 5. Thus, theories of social constructionism seem to suggest that common sense knowledge is unstable in that it is created anew in each encounter, is clearly enculturated and is out of kilter with the rhizomatous personal and pedagogic needs that learners bring to the post-14 classroom. While I suggest that common sense knowledge enjoys no more than a cameo role in the reality of the classroom, because I see little evidence of common sense's efficacy in the lived experiences of the LLS, de Botton (2000: 9) believes that to question common sense conventions, '...would seem bizarre, even aggressive'.

This small family of theories appears to suggest that common sense offers only "safe", repetitive and ostensibly pedestrian pedagogic solutions for the future and promises little else other than to vulgarise trainee teachers' potential to be innovative and creative and to moderate their aspirations towards the way in which things could be. Encouragingly, Pring (2004: 84) argues that:

> In developing a non-common sense attitude to one's beliefs one is at the beginning of the disciplined, critical and reflective thinking that is the mark of educational research.

Likewise, Rancière (2004: 5) argues:

> Deducing the existence of a common political world from the comprehension of language can never be natural when that world presupposes a quarrel over what is common.

Nevertheless, Nastasi & Schensul's (2005: 6) suggestion that, 'The limitations of existing research is [due to] the lack of attention to cultural and contextual issues...' is understandable given that teaching and learning are awash with individual and multiple identities, perceptions, dispositions, culture, context and specialism – and learners, trainee teachers and the lesson observer each have their own. Moreover, LLS organisations and institutions have spent the last 20 years in a Darwinian fight for survival as they have fought to balance shifting Governmental agendas, hyper-accountability, contestability and an invidious "re-professionalisation" of teachers within a highly contested marketplace – each doing so their own way. Further, the current LLS is a worrying collage of what a

climate of educational uncertainty can look like. As Rollinson, et al. (1998: 564) succinctly summarise:

> Culture provides a code of conduct that tells people the expected and appropriate ways to behave, whereas climate tends to result in a set of conditions to which people react.

This has been a useful touchstone for considering the ways in which some trainees may feel they are expected to teach, or not. In my ten years as a teacher educator I have no recollection of working with any trainee who appeared to come into teaching for anything other than altruistic reasons, yet many have suggested in the sanctuary of the reflective journal that LLS culture and climate have knocked such altruism out of them by the end of their training. Throughout Phase B I have, therefore, been uncomfortable passing round the "hand-in" box for reflective journals to mark - another nail in the 'Physician heal yourself' (Luke 4:23) reflexive coffin where I am, again, part of the problem. Yet Giroux's (2003: 5) suggestion that, 'Any critical theory both defines and is defined by the problems posed by the contexts it seeks to address' and further persuades for the place of critical theories in the study.

Despite the fragility of the classroom, critical approaches offer a praxis-oriented approach to data collection and analysis that harness reflexivity as another form of knowledge. Whilst being allegedly structuralist, Bourdieu's (1970) notion of reflexivity sits well with critical theory's reliance on thinking that facilitates judgement and synthesis to offer a new "whole" or nugget of new knowledge from the data typified by Brown and Roberts' (2000: 11) interpretation of post-Marxian Habermasian thinking as, '...creating a better world, as conceptualised from specific interpretations of the present'.

In the same way that Brown & Roberts' work helps to mediate an appreciation of the differing perspectives of Habermas and Gadamer, so Davis (2005) and Osberg (2005) helps to understand the Habermasian concept of emergence as data is revealed. Here, a critical approach that views the cultural, contextual and specialist dimensions of the classroom (Ollin, 2008) through a non-common sense lens liberates both observer and trainee from the "right" solutions and opens dialogue to potentially untouchable avenues of what is possible. Thus, critical theories seem to advocate a research focus that centres on interests that

shape my understanding of what counts as knowledge, in particular a practical interest where reality is socially constructed, and an emancipatory interest which seeks to encourage trainees' voices in determining what constitutes worthwhile knowledge and which could inform their future teaching careers and sense of professionalism.

Whilst a reading of Habermas threatened the research with an almost egalitarian, Post-Marxist sense of enquiry, and was therefore declined as the central theory in the thesis, his ideas bear more than a passing resemblance to a wider literature of critical theories that seeks a rational search for the truth of the classroom through discursive practice. But I doubt that such an absolute truth exists. Yet, O'Grady's (2009) three key concepts of interpretive enquiry comprising representation, interpretation and reflexivity, described as: 'A hermeneutical relationship would emerge between our theory and practice, our understanding of pedagogy continually reconstructed in the light of experience' (ibid.: 121) seems to support critical approaches in pursuing elusive truths of the classroom – perhaps we can go so far, but no farther. Apparently influenced by Gadamer, such a community of enquiry-based research approach further points to critical theories as offering a productive partnership between tutor and trainees in the research as a questioning community or, as Pring (2004: 78) posits, 'Theory is the articulation of what is implicit in practice'.

In a similar way, Trifonas (2009: 301) gives Derrida's post-structuralism a linguistic turn in advocating '...discourses of knowing...' among research participants but which accommodate differences of perception in a hermeneutic, subjective form of knowing. Whilst Trifonas (ibid.: 302) acknowledges the quantitative researchers' criticism of such an approach as, 'Science equates interpretation with idiosyncratic irrationalism' he also cautions that a new academic responsibility, and here I offer the thesis to the mix, must rely on the consistency of researcher bias and reflexivity, another stretch of particularly thin ice that I am also alive to. It is here that Rancière seems to come to the fore in advocating critical theories which serve to examine what occurs at, or could emerge from, the interface between educational concerns, points of potential, individualism, culture, emancipation and otherness.

Here, Kemmis, et al. (2013: 30) develop Schatzki's (1996) '...theorizing of practice...' work as a praxis-oriented, post-Marxian way of examining

educational activity as, '*educational* action that is morally committed' (original emphasis) (ibid.: 26) and suggesting that 'sayings, doings and relatings' (ibid.: 30) are separate ways of conceptualising teachers' practices. Yet, I suggest that this also offers a particular and useful lens through which to consider the ways in which trainee teachers in the LLS relate their individual notions of goods and values against the politics of their sites and spaces, particularly through relatings. Notwithstanding the surface appeal of critical theories, there is a literature that persuades a certain caution that critical theories, if we conceive of them as being inherent in critical dialogue, can take us only so far. For example, Burbules (2000: 271) is quick to point out that, 'Critical dialogue...[and similar approaches)]...encounter a limit to their capacities to be self reflexive and self problematising' and Wallerstein (1983: 196) suggesting that, whilst problem-posing is '...a tool for developing critical thinking', teachers and researchers must guard against imposing their own world view. Indeed, Thayer-Bacon (1998: 125) argues further and at length the ways in which critical theories are laid open the multiple bias claims, '...because people, as constructors of knowledge, are fallible, flawed, limited human beings' whilst Gur-Zev (2001: 279) claims that in critical theory, 'Nowhere is there hermeneutic depth'.

Again, Habermas' (op. cit.) postulations for an ideology critique are maintained by Brookfield (2009) who adds weight to the messiness of such hegemonic landscapes and which he sees as unmasking power relations where the observer is perceived as a judge of normality and the trainee and institution are under scrutiny. Yet Brookfield's (2005) critical perspective argues that trainees are also agents of power and I think that he persuades educators to make use of the sort of spaces and opportunities I advocate here in developing a dialectical relationship between critical theories and pedagogical practice, especially when adopting the non-common sense approach. Thus, stepping out of the structures of common sense and into a discourse of abstract, theoretical thinking and reflection offered to liberate some of the mess with the implications that it carries for constructing educational knowledge within the project.

Similarly, Atkinson (2004), working with a similar, but Pre-service, sample from a different context, suggests that reflective and discursive perspectives are useful interrogatory tools for beginning to examine emancipatory projects against the

idealised rhetoric of the professional standards which drive trainee teacher competence in the English LLS.

At the planning stage, I imagined that it is here that the research would be at its most fragile, where I am offering trainees a way forward to find their own liminality and thresholds (Meyer and Land, 2003), to explore how things are, how they could be and to grow into their next space since there would be a reliance on leading them into intelligent thinking – a version of autonomy that sectoral systems and powers have worked hard and efficiently to deny entrants to the profession. Yet, Friere (1970, 1992) encouraged subversion that seeks to educate and improve despite the boundaries imposed on trainees from their organisations and I think he would advocate the ethos of the study. Rancière reflects this in his hermeneutical, post-structuralist strand of critical enquiry (although it could be equally seen as a critical strand of enquiry derived from post-structuralism, I feel) where discourses and actions speak for themselves in order for meanings and contradictions to emerge, rather than being teased out by theory. Deranty (2010: 186) suggests that, 'In general terms, it [critical inquiry] has focused the interest on the agency of the actors, and undercut the disempowering effect of grand narratives'. At the writing-up stage, I am convinced that there are no easy reconciliations here, as I will discuss in Chapters 4 and 5.

Method

Although the project pursues only individual dispositions and perspectives, thereby avoiding unsettling the host university's (my employer) expectations for teaching, learning and assessment in the second year of the ITE course, I initially gained institutional clearance in 2010 from the School's Director of Research as a necessary ethical procedure.

Initially, data collection comprised two methods. Firstly, a three-page questionnaire where: page 1 was the respondent briefing/consent form clearly outlining the ethical principles and respondents' rights to withdraw, etcetera; page 2 gathered biographical data (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982) (for example, gender, age range, highest qualification and subject specialism and schooling, etcetera) with a view to capturing a sense of social capital; and page 3 provided open responses and prompts to the three core questions of:

1. What do you consider to be educationally desirable in your subject specialism and/or context?

2. What makes you think so? (e.g. where did you get your opinions from; is there anything in your background that steers such thinking; what are the past/historical issues that influence you in that way? Etc.

3. In what ways do you try to embed such thinking in your teaching? What are the issues that constrain or help such efforts?

The second year of the ITE course consists of 30 three-hour evening sessions with a parallel group (mostly Police and prison trainers) attending for 10 full Saturdays. At the first session I include my biographical profile, evidence that I might be less academic than they anticipate and my educational philosophy which seeks to relieve the pressure of "observations" – a common and frequent source of concern to many trainee teachers, in my experience. Here, I make clear my approach to "observed sessions" where, in my belief, ticking all the boxes does not imply outstanding teaching but that trainees maintaining core altruistic values of teaching and learning, as a guide to being pragmatic about what they can achieve, are essential components of a framework which they were at will to push around within their structures and constraints. With the first cohort (2009 – 10) I took this opportunity to share the aims and rationale of my doctoral pursuit and invited any who were interested to form the sample. At this point I also made clear that the project would be conducted in line with the BERA (2004) Ethical Guidelines and the Data Protection Act (ICO, 1998) to guarantee that participation was voluntary; that participants could withdraw from the research at any time and without giving a reason; that all data would remain confidential with real names changed; that employers and mentors would not have access to any data; that questionnaires and transcripts would be destroyed immediately after analysis; that those involved would be included in participant validation of their data; and how the findings would be disseminated.

The second data collection method was dialogic exchange, or professional discussion, during post-teaching observation feedback to elicit trainees' perceptions of how their notions of educational desirability surface in their taught sessions.

In addition to "my" trainee teachers, I also had access to trainees from across the Consortium (28 partner LLS institutions delivering the same course as an award of the university throughout the North of England) attending the university for two days in their second year to present their work at the annual "Specialist Conference". Here, I invited small groups (around 12), for example, medical trainers and engineering lecturers, to complete the questionnaire although I never had opportunities to observe any of them teach in their host organisations or contexts. Some of these trainees consented to participating in the questionnaire, and were briefed accordingly beforehand, and which accounts for the disparity between 156 completed questionnaires and 81 who had been observed teaching and engaged in subsequent dialogue.

Whilst initially flat and mechanistic, this ethical perspective becomes particularly thorny when value judgements are considered as an ethical imperative (Denscombe, 1998; Silverman, 2001; Ollin, 2008; Atkins & Wallace, 2012) since, when collecting data, my reflexive stance is positioned in multiple political structures and power differentials: as invited guest of the trainee's host institution; as an ambassador (sic) of the university; as a teacher educator; as the trainee's personal tutor; and as a researcher. Paradoxically, wearing the researcher's hat seems to cause the fewest tensions in the context but is laden with interpretive dilemmas when attempting to analyse what I observe and hear, to invigorate discussions concerning trainees' actions and thoughts, and in analysing ensuing dialogic exchange where, as Kemmis, et al. (2013: 29) suggest: '...the languages and specialist discourses that shape the ways we interpret the world' are at work. Again, working with trainees' questionnaire responses is fraught with a range of possibilities when interpretation, value judgements and researcher reflexivity are enmeshed, fragile and often blurred as I will discuss in Chapter 5.

Following evaluation of data from the first cohort, I realised that there were problems with both of these early methods. Firstly, the questionnaires from the specialist groups often left tantalising responses which deserved further enquiry (see chapter 5) although the respondents were no longer accessible to me. I decided to amend the consent form for subsequent cohorts at the Specialist Conference by inviting them to leave a contact telephone number and consenting signature if they were happy for me to contact them at a later date for further

clarification or discussion. Secondly, the post-observation dialogue relied on Freirean questioning (which I will critically discuss in Chapter 4) but there was rarely an opportunity to invigorate discussion using such an approach because it seemed that trainees just wanted to be told about their teaching, rather than be led into intelligent thinking about it. This is not meant to story them in a reluctant way but, to be frank, I am a feature of the politics and tensions in their small spaces and I think they just wanted me out of the classroom. Time was also a prohibiting factor when either trainees needed to dash to their next class or their learners were due back from break. Here, I made the pivotal decision to avoid rushed and ineffective dialogue immediately following observation and instead opted to leave up to three "points of potential" questions on the TP2 (observation feedback form). My rationale was that they could reflect on the questions and respond to them two weeks later, if they wished, on form TP3 (their reflective account of the observed session).

With the second cohort (2010-11) I found that, whilst the revised consent form on the questionnaire worked well, capturing dialogic data on form TP3 was something of a mixed blessing. For each TP3 that included responses to the "points of potential" questions, I had to ask permission from each respondent on each occasion to use it as data because "I found it interesting". This seemed to immediately make the trainees defensive yet it equally quickly opened a dialogue which I could later transcribe and return for their approval. I was encouraged that some trainees referred to these transcripts and "points of potential" in other work that they produced for their portfolio of evidence for the teaching qualification, for example: when self-grading; when evidencing their progress in their teaching skills; and during critical discussion of their individual perspectives and philosophies in the Professional Issues Assignment (PIA).

As a result, for the third cohort (2011-12), I made a further refinement to the consent form on the front of the questionnaire for "my" trainees by inviting them to consent to me using naturally-occurring evidence elsewhere, including reflective accounts, TP3 forms and the PIA. This gave two years of rich data as I will discuss in chapter 5.

When initially formulating my research plan, I was hopeful that the logics of contingency and emergence would help to formulate emerging data that builds on the initial questionnaire, and where post-observation hermeneutic listening (being

inherently contingent, not static) would leave open a small space for the difference of a particular trainee's context and practice to emerge as a notion of "otherness". Within such a space for dialogue I envisaged that unconstrained communication might give opportunities for trainees to consider a collective of socio-cultural semiotics that negates both the traditional provocative analysis of teaching craft and the ideologies that currently bind trainees. I was equally persuaded that Freire's ideology, which only has meaning when it engages with communities and actors in struggle, was an appropriate method of questioning as Goulet (2010: xii) maintains:

> The mark of a successful educator is not skill in persuasion – which is but an invidious form of propaganda – but the ability to dialogue with educates in a mode of reciprocity.

Aside from difficulties arising from the methodological approach, there were also general difficulties in the reliability and validity of the methods of data collection and analysis.

Firstly, the three open questions in the questionnaire are, I feel, technically bad because they can be interpreted in different ways (Denscombe, 1998; Willis, 2005; Cohen, et al., 2007) as the empirical data will show in chapter 5. Here, the validity of the questions seems weak since approximately half of the respondents were subsequently inaccessible afterwards and researcher interpretation could not be checked. However technically poor they are, they nevertheless generate particular data which is both rich and offers valuable insights into individual dispositions, I suggest. Therefore, the questionnaire is reliable for its purpose but significantly weak for around half of the respondents (or is this just me sliding into scientific-speak?)

Secondly, the nature and context of dialogic exchanges following observed teaching by trainees is fraught with difficulties, as I critically discussed earlier in this chapter with regard to critical theories and which I will further critique in Chapter 4. Such discourses are fluid, dynamic, partly abstract and often contingent and are reliable only at that particular point in time – a snapshot of two people's thinking concerning a unique event or set of actions. Thus, reliability was particularly weak with the first cohort but improved, I suggest, when it became up to three "points of potential" questions which they could

reflect on for two weeks before responding. Likewise, validity improved when I began providing transcripts by involving individual trainees in checking my accounts of what they said, and which Lincoln & Guba (1985: 314) urge as, '...the most crucial technique for establishing credibility', whilst giving them the opportunity to refine their thoughts in the light of their reflections. In similar ways, validity increased when discourse was conducted and captured in TP2 and 3 because these were used by both trainees and I as preparation for their next observed session when the dialogue continued, in most cases.

Thirdly, capturing other data from trainees' portfolios and PIA provided a useful form of triangulation to *attempt* (emphasis intended) to measure both discourse and trainees' own sense of development as I will also discuss in chapter 5.

Still, I am mindful that the reliability and validity of data, regardless of the extent of trainee involvement in its analysis and interpretation, is highly fragile and leaves the status of knowledge questionable, particularly so when the "Other" or "Otherness" surfaces against dominant discourses. Here, "Otherness" is defined by Cole (2008: 22) as that which:

> ...doesn't fit with what was being framed in the first place; in education the normative concerns are the normative forms of conformity, regulation and control that exclude otherness.

In conclusion, this chapter began by outlining the methodological framework for data collection and analysis, briefly considered what the central theoretical framework of critical theories offers to the study and concluded with a somewhat pedestrian discussion regarding the chosen research methods. Yet throughout the first three chapters there has been an unmistakable miasma of politics which pervades the swamp, as I will critically discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Problematics

Before examining the "gritty" data fragments that pass for empirical data, they must be carefully contextualised against and within the landscape in which they were offered as I will discuss in this chapter.

Whilst it is difficult enough to offer even the most tentative interpretation of what the empirical data might suggest, the neo-liberal agenda that drives the LLS at full speed in the wrong direction (Coffield, 2007) owns a hegemony that pervades every niche and small space of the sector. Here, there is precious little wriggle room, no space to duck and dive (Smith, 2007) and the overseer of the landscape is the evaluative state. In consequence, I have often asked myself during Phase B, "Where is emancipation in this?" Apple (2000: 225) suggests that, '...the language of possibility substitutes for a tactical analysis of what the balance of forces actually is and what is necessary to change it'. Like most other commentators operating in this landscape, I have no stomach either for radicalism nor for a battle that might bring about change – that is not my remit. This thesis is concerned with an emancipatory endeavour where, as beings of praxis, trainee teachers have simply (sic) been encouraged to consider what becomes possible in their teaching practice and context when their personal dispositions and values are acknowledged. Yet this is immediately highly charged as Freire (2010: 21) puts forward: 'Dialogue requires social and political responsibility'.

This chapter seeks to examine the tensions, dualisms and politics that such an endeavour raises in the landscape of the LLS although it is not intended to be rhetorical. The unique and diverse nature of the sector demands, I suggested in Chapter 3, the multi-logical application of critical theories where small spaces and tentative claims can be examined through multiple lenses. I argue the rightful place of a theoretical chapter here because the neo-liberal fuel cell running the sector is intangible and unseen; where trainee teachers in the LLS witness those around them responding to the privileged demands of faceless managerialist and regulatory machines, regardless of whatever professional goods or values they hold – because neo-liberalism seems not to even recognise, let alone accommodate, individual values; and where they cannot "see" how the politics of their concrete pedagogical spaces work – yet the politics hum away

relentlessly and assuredly somewhere in the background nonetheless. For his part, Rancière (2010: 20) goes so far as to suggest that in this political space, '...teachers and their unions condemn neoliberal policies because such policies disable teachers from doing their jobs properly'. So, this chapter is concerned with examining how politics, and the problematics that they unearth, sit with the trainees' stories. I believe that this is the nexus of the thesis.

The rhizomatous reach of neo-liberalism in trainees' small spaces is not unlike rising floodwater that has got under the door – it goes, we seem to claim, everywhere and quickly becomes "the flood" rather than: the first ingress of water; the water in the kitchen; the water at the lowest point; the water that seems not to move; and so on – whatever boundaries there might be are blurred and subsumed into each other. It seems that the neo-liberalist impact on trainee teachers' practice and lived experience in the sector is similar but I will attempt to examine them separately in this chapter, with the caveat that inevitable blurred boundaries and overlaps are acknowledged from the outset.

This chapter will therefore examine a number of tensions and dualisms in the order of: emancipation – ideal or reality?; politics and the political; self and other; and language.

Emancipation: ideal or reality?

Emancipation has its roots in Roman law (Biesta, 2010) and referred to giving away ownership of something, traditionally in the process of a child becoming an adult. Both Freire and Rancière hold fast to the belief that emancipation is one of the central purposes of education in oppressive societies and that those who are concerned with emancipation are linked to both politics and equality and are engaged in a humanist endeavour, although there is both some resonance and dissonance between their approaches. I began Phase B in the belief that I was persuaded by Freire's emancipatory project and, in Chapter 2, promised to explain here why I felt unable to continue clinging to it as I will discuss next.

Essentially, Freire was working with an emancipatory project and critical theory in and from an earlier time where both were less cautious, pragmatic and refined than they are now. In the 1960s and 1970s the development of critical theory was thought to be in its second generation (Gur-Ze'ev, no date) and allegations of it being overly utopian in its pursuit of truth claims at that time are conceded here. Still, the Zeitgeist of Freire's emancipatory approach seemed as embryonic

as it was radical at the time as he sought to liberate illiterate Brazilian peasants from the yoke of oppression, and being exiled for his troubles, before repeating the project in North America with similar marginalised groups. Yet time and hindsight are marvellous tools to feed the reflective process and there is a growing body of literature which casts his agenda as overly-utopian. I will signpost some of these as I explain, for my own reasons, why I was unable to cling to his methods.

Firstly, given that Freire was primarily concerned with social transformation (Souto-Manning, 2009), emancipation in his terms is built on the central planks of '...love, trust and hope' (Galloway, 2012: 167) and which sits close to St. Paul's belief that, 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love...' (1 Corinthians, 13: 13). We cannot know the extent to which Freire's Catholic faith informed his beliefs and everyday practice (Webb, 2013) but it would be understandable if they bumped against a secular world where grand narratives could substitute for societal goods or gods, for example, in the lead up to an election where narrative from the hustings, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget speech, (identified by Rancière, 1995: 31 as,' ...electoral jiggery-pokery') seem to focus on "This will be good for you". I suggest that this is neither an aside nor a distraction – like all of us, Freire had his own set of values and agency and his Catholicism probably had its humanist place as he developed his emancipatory approaches. Here, there are two commonalities: firstly, *love*, (however we dare try to articulate the term) which I argue is notable in the LLS by its absence so we can take it out of the equation at a stroke; secondly, *hope* which one could examine endlessly (as indeed Webb, 2013 has), as "teacher hopefulness" (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011) and even as Academic Optimism (Woolfolk-Hoy, 2012), for example: hope for a better future; hope that working conditions will improve; hope that education policy will encourage something other than a one-size-fits-all mantle; hope that Ofsted will not make the 'phone call next Thursday; and hope that control of the refectory will change hands soon, etcetera, without ever reaching anything particularly tangible because of the politics of the space. Whilst Bullough & Hall-Kenyon (2011) found no relationship between teachers' calling and teacher hopefulness, for Freire, the concept of hope underpins human nature to the extent that, '...it is impossible to exist without it' (Freire, 1994: 72) and may have been a bridge too far for those

teachers Colley et al. (2007) spotted heading for the doors in the wrong direction. Webb (2010: 327) describes it as a '...complex hope...' because both hope and education, for Freire, share the same ontological search for development or completion. Whilst I do not intend to shrink from difficult analyses, I suggest that Freire works with a vagueness that is not helping very much here as Alfred (1984) found. The slightly misaligned ones are *faith* and *trust*, although against the landscape of the LLS these are aspirational at best, and which sit uneasily with the current neo-liberal refrain of hard work and aspiration which Littler (2013: 68) locates as, 'To lack either is a moral failure'. However, *faith* has multiple meanings and the time and context in which Paul used it has little resonance with the English LLS, so offers little here. *Trust*, on the other hand, is similarly loaded with multiple interpretations but we can only speculate about where, and in what, trainee teachers in the LLS place their trust. Having pondered long on this component I feel that, whilst it is particularly slippery, it is a unique creature living a particular life in the swamp nonetheless. Freire witnessed this throughout his emancipatory work when he found that those he was seeking to emancipate did not trust him, specifically because they perceived him to hold some unfathomable reins of power that were beyond their comprehension. He therefore encountered reluctance, suspicion and a selective mutism because those in his field of study did not know what could or could not be said, by whom or when (see: thirdly, later).

Secondly, and slightly removed from the previous meandering, Freire's project is based on the notion that human nature resists oppression and suppression, thereby suggesting a default position where it might be natural to rise up against inequalities. I suggest that this is a huge assumption and one that sits uneasily with the thrust of his posthumous work (notes put together by his publisher and others, see: Freire, 2005, 2007 & 2010) where he exhorts educators to lead the oppressed to freedom. This, I argue, is not emancipation but is a case of having emancipation done to them – a fabulous example of oppression by the liberator (who is seen as the one who can demystify the inequality) and not unlike the researcher owning a cannibal desire to know the other. I will argue later in this chapter, drawing on evidence from the empirical data, that I have also been doing this, it seems. Indeed, the process of writing-up has made me more alive to a

range of tensions as I labour with different lenses to scrutinise my reflexive positioning.

Thirdly, one of the central planks of Freire's praxis-oriented approach is reliance on dialogue to invigorate reflective practice yet he met with selective mutism because of what he perceived as their mistrust of emancipation that was based on socio-cultural '...latifundist...' (Freire 2010: 17) structures and perceived power relations which he articulated as:

> It is understandable that they prefer not to engage in dialogue, that after fifteen or twenty minutes of active participation, they say to the educator: "Excuse us, sir, we who don't know should keep quiet and listen to you who do know".
> (ibid.,: 109)

Indeed, I gave up at the dialogue hurdle when trying unsuccessfully with the first cohort in the study, primarily because Freire's dialogic approach is time-consuming and time, for a hurried trainee teacher feeling under scrutiny, is at a premium. Throughout the research and attempts at invigorating dialogue, I found that trainees simply preferred to be told about their teaching rather than be required to think about it in critical and possibilitarian ways. It seems that Freire never seemed to cement this one either (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987) and I think it is here where critical theories, manifested through critical discussion, seem to falter somewhat and reach early limits in their mission of developing understanding through dialogue. Paradoxically, while I have tried to briefly argue here that Freire's philosophy was overly-utopian, Freire himself warned against utopian arrogance (Freire, 1994; 1996) and leaves me further mindful of the inherent dangers of ascribing values or differences to others. Yet selective mutism, I suggest, is not unlike trying to have an argument with someone who will not argue back – there is a tension there but it remains unexplored and under-developed through inaccessibility. It was recognition of the frequently-occurring selective mutism of the first cohort that turned me towards Rancière's philosophy as a potentially more fruitful approach to the study, as I will discuss next.

Rancière is alive to the fault line between language and emancipatory education as he positions politics side-by-side with equality, a humanistic ideology that he

clearly shares with Freire, where emancipation is concerned with '...workers emerging from their minority status' (Rancière, 2010: 40).

The first and most crucial difference between them is the base concept of equality which, for Rancière, is seen ostensibly through '...the unreality of representation' (Rancière, 2010: 41), meaning '...the unreality of the idea of equality as well as the arbitrary nature of language' (ibid.). Thus, his philosophy hinges on the postulation that equality already exists and needs to be engaged with in meaningful ways (although this seems highly fraught in practice), as opposed to starting from a point where inequality is the norm and needs to be re-claimed, as in Freirean thought. In other words, the core of Rancière's various philosophical works, as I will signpost later, seems to be empowerment politics where equality is practised and verified by people, not provided for them by the state (or a teacher or researcher for that matter). I repeat this as being the crux of Rancière's philosophy – equality already exists, yet its attainment is barred by politics. If this chapter is indeed the nexus of the thesis, then Rancière's underpinning framework is at its very core. Interesting paradoxes surface from here.

In education, Rancière's ideological perspective for realising equality via emancipation focuses on individual intellectual freedom which Citton (2010: 28) translates as, '...all of us are able to figure out, by trial and error, what we need to know in order to master the codes that surround and structure us'. Whilst this may be an over-simplification of his work, and gives a nod and a wink to his post-structuralist leanings, Rancière seems to strive to move beyond post-modern uncertainties in promoting a less utopian view of educational equality and the role of power relations in emancipation and it is here that his axiom is troublesome because it relies on a number of assumptions, conditions or opinions:

Trust between teacher and learner(s) is required (and which echoes Freire's reliance on trust).

Everyone is of equal intelligence and must acknowledge it.

Everyone is capable of consciously using their intellect to form their own opinions.

Everyone must use their will to drive their intelligence.

Rancière's axiom ('a self-consistent self-evident statement that is a universally accepted truth resting on intuition rather than experience and forming the basis of reasoning' [Hanks, 1979: 101]) is grounded in the fundamental notion that, despite all the technology and science at our disposal, neither intelligence nor intellect can be accurately measured, therefore his axiom cannot be disproven. Fundamentally, we cannot deny his assumption that all intelligences are equal therefore those with an interest in emancipatory education must pick up the gauntlet that he threw down and posit his axiom into a particular field then examine its effects. At this crucial juncture it is prudent to recall the opening gambit of the thesis:

> The point here is quite simply that Rancière's educational work is not a recipe for any kind of pedagogy. It is a story. It is not a method. It waits not for implementation. It waits instead for another story to be told in return.
>   (Bingham & Biesta, 2010: 152)

Rancière's axiom was born in his reading of Joseph Jacotot's bi-lingual learning experiment in the early 19th Century which he re-wrote in 1991 as *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. Briefly, Jacotot was charged with teaching French to Flemish students although he could neither read nor speak Flemish nor they French. He gave them each a copy of the *Telemaque,* which was fortuitously written in both languages, and instructed them through an interpreter to read the first half of the book carefully and with repetition, then read the second half quickly and write, in French, what they thought of the book. To his amazement, the students' subsequent written accounts were on a literary par with native French speakers and writers. When Rancière discovered the book as a student, he took it as an example of what can be achieved under the name of equality because Jacotot '...had communicated nothing to them' (Rancière, 1991: 13) although he had taught them in a learner-centred way. Interestingly, it seems that the success of Jacotot's method has never been replicated although many have tried.

Rancière's re-writing, which the translator describes as, 'maverick intellectual itinerary' (Ross, 1991: vii), because it is unclear where Jacotot finishes and Rancière takes over and vice-versa, postulates on the notion that the pedagogical act relies on the relationship between will and intelligence. Specifically, there

are two wills: the teacher's and the student(s)'; and two intelligences: the student(s)' and another. When someone, for example the teacher, explains something then there is oppression because the students rely on the more knowledgeable other which reinforces the inequalities – much like trainee teachers wanting to be told about their teaching rather than having to think about it. When learning from a book, as in Jacotot's experiment, the learners' intelligence was linked to the intelligence of the book. For learning to be an emancipatory, the learners' intelligence must be linked to itself and they must have the will to push themselves as Citton (op. cit.) translated. In short, for Rancière, *explanation* or *explication* is the very devil – the more the teacher explains, the more of an oppressor s/he becomes and the more oppressed the learner becomes – a regressive cycle of '...enforced stultification...' (Rancière, 1991: 7) that reinforces the inequalities and power relations which clamour for emancipation in the first place. An interesting caveat here is that Rancière's axiom must be concerned with the will and intelligence of the individual – it does not work, apparently, with groups and therefore has another dissonance with Freire's reliance on emancipation and learning in social settings (see Chapter 6). Rancière perceives current educational contexts and practices as being incompatible with claims for equality because such systems are not set up to promote it. Despite a minority of alternative pedagogical ideologies in the LLS, for example Duke of Edinburgh programmes and Forest Schools, "education" is set up by the policy makers so that teachers teach and learners (usually in groups) learn under the teachers' tutelage, a state of learner dependency that relies on explication that reinforces inequality.

So in Rancière's axiom there are four assumptions, two of which I cautiously suggest are usually outside the scope of the teacher's influence: everyone is of equal intelligence and must acknowledge it; and everyone is capable of consciously using their intellect to form their own opinions. The other two assumptions have a place in a teacher's tool kit: trust between teacher and learner(s) is required (already theorised as a fragile concept); and everyone must use their will to drive their intelligence. This final assumption resonates with anyone who has tried to teach "Application of Number" or similar to day-release apprentices on a Friday afternoon, or who has read Wilt (Sharpe, 1976). This is

where one of the gaps may begin to emerge in Rancière's axiom where he maintains:

> The master is he [sic] who encloses an intelligence in an arbitrary circle from which it can only break out by becoming necessary to itself.
> (Rancière, 1991: 15).

I confess that, as a teacher educator, I do not model this as a pedagogy in my taught sessions. Although one of the difficulties that teacher educators face is not knowing what emancipatory education looks like in practice, we have the three questions (in the same way that Socrates and Freire adopted questioning approaches) which Rancière (1991: 23) proposes in order to verify that the learner has indeed attended to his or her will.

- What do you see?
- What do you think of it?
- What do you make of it?

What Rancière proposes here is not that knowledge is revealed but that intelligence is revealed to itself and the verification process is not to assess whether learning has taken place (a popular performative component of a lesson in the LLS) but that the learner has looked and paid attention to what s/he has seen or found. Basically, his axiom seems to amount to, '...a thought experiment' (Citton, 2010: 26).

The fieldwork for this research has mirrored this approach, I suggest, throughout which the trainees have been invited to tell their own stories "as they see them" as a conduit for emancipation – because there is no book or other resource that can help them to operationalise their goods and values in their subject specialism in their context – and is certainly not something I can explain to them. Such an approach is indicative of the third and current generation of critical theories where, according to Brown (2005: 15) '...critical theory aims to render crisis into knowledge, and to orient us in the darkness'.

So for Rancière, the emancipatory teacher must already be emancipated although this is not the lot of the trainee, the qualified teacher or the teacher educator in the LLS – the performative blueprint does not entertain such a teacher whose non-

reliance on explication would sit uneasily with the neo-liberal thrust of social and professional control as embodied in the professional standards.

The majority of the literature on emancipatory agendas generally seem to be concerned with exposing the ways in which power relations operate in order for the oppressed to identify a way out yet, when this does not happen, critical theory and its reliance on dialogue appear to be somehow insufficient as I will discuss later in this chapter. Further, using the data in Chapter 5, I will suggest that, in Rancièrean terms, something else quite interesting happens in that rather than being inevitably closed down, critical theories help to reveal new spaces for individual agency to slip into where: identities and dispositions assume a new mantle or appearance; power relations are reconfigured in discrete but tangible ways; and new political subjectivities emerge both in contrast to the reified politics of the sector and as a developmental reflexive positioning of the trainee. I intend to argue, through the data in Chapter 5 and its analysis, that this is not the grand claim to offering new knowledge to the body of current literature in the sector that it might initially appear to be.

Politics & political

Thus far, the elephant in the thesis room is politics.

Throughout the literature regarding the LLS, commentators seem to use the root "politic" and its derivatives in general terms in much the same way that other terms and grand narratives are used on the flawed assumption of a common understanding, for example, "quality", "inclusiveness" and "widening participation". Examples include Bounous (2001: 197) who puts forward the belief that teachers are the primary political actors in education and '...have the potential to engage in counter-hegemonic practice through the development of collaborative relationships with students', whilst (Jacobson, 2012: 171) offers the notion that, '...with education and the education profession becoming more politicised and the scapegoat of society's ills and tribulations', and Smyth's (1996: 42) blunt declaration that, 'Teaching is an avowedly political activity.' For Kreisberg (1992), Avis & Bathmaker (2004a; 2004b; 2005) and every other commentator I seem to have come across on the doctoral journey, education is inherently political and, like Freire and Rancière, challenge any presumed neutrality of educational practices including the notion that, because of the way such practices are set up, teachers and learners share parity of status. The

normative structure of the LLS is that teachers have "power over" rather than "power with" and the reverse can only occur, it is suggested, when the teacher relinquishes control of the learning to the learners (or in the case of this fieldwork, invigorating the reflective process). Yet this is also laden with tension when we acknowledge that "learner-centredness" is yet another grand narrative in the persuasive language of the sector (see later in this chapter). Similarly, critical theories own an inherent place in any discussions of politics and Brookfield's cautionary remarks come to the fore here again when he observes that critical theory is grounded in political analysis, particularly as a problematic critique of ideology, warning:

> For critical theory to be critical, it must be on guard against its own ossification as a "grand theory" meant to explain all social interaction, for all people and for all time.
> (Brookfield, 2001: 18).

Therefore, I will attempt to be specific rather than general in the next discussion where I use Rancière's terminology: I take the term "political" to mean the way in which education in the LLS is structured and governed (what Rancière perceives as the "police" order. It is essential to make clear here that "police" is not meant to represent domination or oppression, rather "police" is used by Rancière to understand that which holds things, like the norm or reified concepts, in place – and this is also my understanding for the purposes of this thesis); and I take the term "politics" to mean the ways in which gaps, exclusions, invisibilities and silences in the police order are engaged with by others. Rancière uses two further useful terms here: '...identification...' (Rancière, 1997: 37) (taking up an existing or known and recognisable identity, for example, an "Outstanding" or "trainee" teacher) and '...subjectification...' (ibid.: 35) referred to elsewhere as: '...disidentification, removal from the naturalness of a place' (Rancière, 2007: 36) and akin to the notion of "Other" or "Otherness". I understand this to mean anything that re-defines, contests or sits contrary to the "norm" of a field or site and which he sometimes refers to as the '...supplement' (Rancière, 2003: 226) because it adds something, for example, Ron (in Chapter 5) teaching without having prepared a session plan (generally the norm in the LLS).

For Rancière, there is a clear distinction between politics and political as they are often subsumed into each other within the literature and which he works to clarify, '...by splitting the current notion of the political into two concepts: politics and police' (Rancière, 2003: 226). "Police" is taken to mean recognition of that which is either visible or seen '...to the exclusion of all empty spaces and supplements...' (ibid.) whereas elsewhere (Rancière, 1992: 58) takes "political" to mean '...the political is the encounter between two heterogeneous processes – those of policy and equality'. It is cautionary to mention here that Rancière is charged with being '...inconsistent...' (Biesta, 2011: 144) in his use of the terms "police" and "politics" whilst conceding that subtle distinctions between the two may just be casualties of translation.

In Freirean terms, policy is seen to deny equality whereas in Rancière's ideology 'Policy wrongs equality' (ibid.: 59). So while Rancière's version of emancipation seems to sit uneasily with the bulk of the literature, his views of politics and the political are equally in dissonance from the outset. This is interesting not least because that, whilst his axiom of equality is a set of working assumptions that evade a particular truth, his politics and political standpoints both draw on and generate theories which are able to be engaged with by practitioners and other actors. For Rancière, the issue is not whether we as players or actors in society are committed to equality, but rather how we do so. Consequently, there is a direct resonance between both emancipation and politics in Rancièrean terms, specifically that both are enacted by those involved in their configuration – and looking and thinking are also actions here, I suggest.

Nonetheless, there are also subtleties between emancipation, politics and the political in Rancière's terms. For example, when John (the Police trainer in Chapter 5) says that he would embed particular goods or values within his teaching if he had more time, yet such a luxury is unavailable, makes the very tension or gap a political site in which the wistful utterance of "If only..." becomes a political act. Here there is, I suggest, a test and verification of the assumption of equality in a trainee's context (therefore emancipatory) and, rather than being a visibly disruptive event, such politics and political action can be seen as productive relationships between different perspectives and systems (see Chapter 5). Indeed, Rancière is quoted by Bingham & Biesta (2010: 52) as suggesting: '...what is called "political philosophy" might well be the set of

reflective operations whereby philosophy tries to rid itself of politics...' (Rancière, 1999: 12) which, when co-located alongside his belief that: 'But nobody escapes from the social minority save by their own efforts' (Rancière, 2007: 48) leaves me pondering, "Are we not really concerned with thinking wars here? Is there such a thing as looking wars? Is that what politics and emancipation amount to in the LLS?" For example, when either trying to invigorate dialogue or leaving "points of potential" questions for a trainee to engage with in the spirit of testing and verification, either of which the police system might not appreciate for risk of unsettling a trainee's enculturation, I am invoking reflective practice that amounts to a political act. Likewise, in reflecting and responding, or choosing not to respond as the data will suggest, the trainee is also engaging in their own political act and which resonates with Brookfield's (2005) belief that learners are also agents of power.

So here, I argue that Rancière's complex way of examining politics and political action offers a particular lens through which to look at, then tentatively invigorate thinking about, the social and political actions of trainees and how they work both individually and collectively within their sites. The critical literature is clear that Rancière is alive to the politics of the workplace where, in his ideology, the "visible" hierarchies in the food chain of power are fair game to be challenged through '...localised acts of dissent...' (Ross, 2010: 153), specifically by those Gill, et al. (2012: 511) describe as '...the part that has no part in the existing order...'. Such dissensus is not a quarrel but a gap in which the logic of the police order jars against the logic of equality – it is concerned with what occurs in this seemingly irreconcilable space or event where either individual subjectivity surfaces or a trainee gives a sense of (possible) disidentification within the norm. Although Rancière is seen as a post-modernist (Deranty, 2010), I am persuaded that he is also something of a post-structuralist (Bingham, 2007; Rancière, 2009; Biesta, 2011) and a critical social theorist (Rancière, 1992, 1999, 2004, 2009; Parker, 2002).

For Rancière, emancipation begins to breathe life when power relations are challenged and is concerned (in this fieldwork) with the trainee teachers thinking for themselves, on the assumption that all intelligences are equal, thereby rupturing '...the privilege of thought to some' (Rancière, 2003: 219) and in turn re-configuring the small space in which trainee teachers operate in order to

improve their future teaching practice. I suspect that, for the post-modernist, Rancière's politics is concerned with exposing power relations as he works with the past and the present yet any projection to the future is likely to be heavily veiled and so vague as to be elusive – where emancipation is only enacted in the present with the future remains hanging on the twin horns of hope and trust. I can appreciate this yet, conversely and problematically, throughout his work (passim) he also tries to look beyond the paradox of troubling dualisms almost as a forward-thinking hope, particularly when discussing his own work when he puts forward, '...he does not say what politics is but what it might be' (Rancière, 2009: 119) and I take this to mean both what politics amounts to in the present and what it could look and feel like in the future, particularly when a story is told in return and which adds something to the knowledge in the particular field of study.

Self & other

In this section I intend to examine identity and "Otherness", otherness being a concept that has interested me endlessly during the fieldwork and which I have begun to understand through a particular literature. Here, I understand "Otherness" to mean that which is not necessarily subtle and hidden but, as Cole (2008: 22) suggests:

> ...doesn't fit in with what was being framed in the first place; in education the normative concerns are the narrative forms of conformity, regulation and control that exclude otherness.

The notion of otherness came from the Phase A taught sessions which were underpinned by a frequently-recurring Bourdeusian refrain of "you only know what something is when you know what it isn't", for example, one might only begin to appreciate what it means to be rich if one has been, or become, poor. Whilst this seemed both interesting and a little provocative, it began to breathe life when trainee teachers' identities and dispositions began to be examined in the light of their opposites as the data in Chapter 5 will illustrate. Indeed, given that self and other are seemingly joined in this way at the hip, the discussions in this section will consider both concepts in parallel.

It is the educational concern of both the post-structuralist and the critical theorist to examine the master or dominant narratives or discourses at work in the LLS

and to explore how language, and here I offer reflective practices into the mix, speaks of identity. Yet this is no easy reconciliation since there are tensions in writing about oneself or another where language, being a socially constructed concept, is constantly and critically in play or movement (see later in this chapter). Whilst the theoretical standpoints of both philosophical perspectives have their separate traditions, there is a literature (Burbules, 2000; Blumenfeld-Jones, 2004; Gur Ze'ev, 2005; et al.) which suggests that both paradigms share a good deal of common ground, a commonality which, I suggest, might be embraced in order to examine the trainees' self and their diverse manifestations of otherness. Yet Rancière again offers a particular lens through which to make such an examination where he puts forward the idea that:

> Political subjectivisation is the enactment of equality – or the handling of a wrong – by people who are together to the extent that they are between. It is a crossing of identities, relying on the crossing of names: names that link the name of a group or class to the name of no group or no class, a being to a nonbeing or a not-yet-being.
>
> (Rancière, 1992: 61).

Today, Rancière might point to the faceless, nameless refugees on our television screens as a fine example of this although, I suggest, the "trainee teacher" is another example where disidentification appears in various forms as the empirical data in Chapter 5 will suggest.

Otherness has two facets here where it can be seen: firstly, in trainees' identities and emerging a little in the questionnaire responses – with disidentification emerging as an individual subjectification (see R60's data) and in the form of the collective, for example, only trainee engineering teachers spoke of apprenticeships as being part of their vocational identities; and secondly, as a practical trait in trainees' pedagogic approaches and trying to emerge in their post-teaching observation dialogue, for example, Samia's data fragment in Chapter 5.

For his part, Freire (2005: 125) positions the emancipatory endeavour alongside the notion of self and identity as:

> The importance of the identity of each one of us as an agent, educator or learner, of the educational practice is clear, as is the importance of

our identity as a product of what we inherit and what we acquire. At times in this relationship, what we acquire ideologically in our social and cultural experiences of class interferes vigorously in the hereditary structures through the power of interests, of emotions, feelings, and desires, of what one usually calls "the strength of the heart".

Strength of the heart is a use of language that I can relate to Freire's humanistic ideology although it is not a usage used elsewhere in the literature, it seems, but is (possibly) implied variously within discourses concerned with ethics and morals (Blackburn, 2005), morality (Skorupski, 2000), ethical frameworks or models (Crisp, 2000), the modern moral mindset (Higgins, 2011) and goods (Higgins, 2003). This seemed like a swamp of its own but one that I needed to enter in order to have a frame of reference with which to attempt to consider both trainees' responses (sayings) to Q. 2. "Why do you think so?" and their relatings and doings through post-teaching observation dialogue. I will try to be swift and concise here.

Ayers (1982), Pinchin (1990) and Higgins (2011) concur on the inseparable nature of ethics and morals, in a traditional sense, where: morals tends to be concerned with systems, for example, theoretical principles of conduct, duty and obligations; whereas ethics tends to focus on the application of morals, for example, through asking questions such as, "How should I act" and "What type of person should I become"? The same authors also put forward the notion that morals and ethics have come together during the 20th Century where, from a modern perspective: ethics amount to a combination or conflation of traditional ethics and morals; and morality (one's current ethical horizon) has been introduced. I think that the newer, narrower conception of morality is an interesting frame of reference when considering why trainee teachers in the LLS hold particular values. Here, Higgins (2011: 22) explains morality as: '...our current ethical horizon, in the sense that a horizon cuts off one's vision but gives one the impression of surveying the whole landscape', and which Skorupski (2000: 600) usefully contextualises as:

> The idea that morality is dysfunctional, that blame and guilt deny life or impose pain without securing compensating gains, has considerable influence in contemporary society (as does the idea that they are compromised by those who can shape them).

In working to try to further contextualise the place of morality as an ethical system, Crisp (2000: 256) argues for a collective, '...which involves notions such as rightness and wrongness, guilt and shame...' whilst Higgins (2011: 29), leaning to the value systems associated with morality, suggests that (and here "goods" are not material goods but "good" acts, obligations or principles), 'Goods are not valuable because we value them; we value them because they strike us as good'. There is a subjective here which I suggest is an ethical introspection or reflexivity which he sits alongside an intriguing American study in moral psychology (Bellah, et al., 1985, no page):

> They asked middle-class (and it seems mostly white) Americans from a range of professions why they made the choices they did in their lives. Invariably, the subjects responded that their choices flowed from their values. When pressed further, when asked why they held those values, they responded that these were the values they had chosen. Now the point is not to catch people out in a logical fallacy. The circular reasoning here is vicious because it impairs our ability to articulate our values and understand our choices.
>
> (Higgins, 2011: 32).

Later, Higgins returns to this dilemma by suggesting that modernity, '...works in myriad ways to obscure that unity' (ibid.: 39) – the unity of one's modern life. He could be speaking of the trainee teacher here when he continues:

> ...part of what makes modern life so inhospitable to eudaimonistic (sic: eudemonistic [happiness]) ethics is the way it invites us to carve up our lives into developmental stages, to divide our time between labour and leisure, to hive off public roles and private selves (MacIntyre, 2007 [1981]: 204). With these reminders in hand we may now read the objection itself as one more example of such partitioning, in which the agent is asked to be moral from 9 to 5 and ethical on the weekends, to develop a public morality and a private ethics.

This, I suspect, is one of the uncertainties for the trainee teacher. Not only are they unsure about what can be said, they are equally unsure about what constitutes morality and ethics in their context and/or organisation as I will discuss in Chapter 5. Yet there are also difficult reconciliations here for the researcher/teacher educator when trying to examine trainees' values and goods.

If we conceive of otherness being, as Cole (2008: 22) defines, that which '...doesn't fit in with what was being framed in the first place', then it begs questions such as, "What are the norm values or goods" and "What is the norm in order that we can see otherness"? Here, trying to get to grips with the realism of the trainees' world raises four particular post-structuralist problematics, unknowns and uncertainties.

Firstly, when engaging trainee teachers in post-teaching observation dialogue I might be susceptible to falling into the trap of assuming that they are autonomous enough to have the ability to adopt their own reflective, reflexive or critical interrogatory position on their teaching practice, values, ethical standpoints or morality. Atkinson (2004) suggested that trainee teachers cannot form subjectivity through reflective practice but only through that which is unconscious or imaginary. Whilst trainees in the sample give a sense of being both reflective and reflexive practitioners, it is understandable that their written accounts seem to balk at examining dominant voices through higher order critical reflection (see Chapter 5). However, this may not be so much a case of trainees lacking a particularly critical perspective, but may be more a case of them being wary and unsure of the political and ideological structures that govern both their organisations and the fields in which they operate. If the latter case is true for some trainees or contexts, such political structures might either seem at odds with their goods or values or the opportunities to begin to articulate them are not clearly identifiable.

Secondly, although structuralist, there is something Lacanian (1979) here where the trainee never fully knows him or herself, but only as a subject of the symbolic or imaginary, and which offers another lens through which to examine their practice and agency. Yet I am implicit in framing trainees in this way whenever I complete a TP2 since written feedback and commentary of an observed session represents the trainee not as a being but as an individual according to signifiers embodied in the formulaic and instrumental professional standards that are ostensibly teacher-led. So, whilst TP2 is a political form of surveillance which both eludes the "Real" and the "Other" whilst maintaining one of ITE's dominant discourses, reflective practice (in the TP3), being another of the grand narratives of ITE programmes, seeks answers to the Real through the symbolic although the answers are, seemingly, always lacking (see later in this chapter).

Thirdly, and also from a Lacanian perspective, each trainee is storied by me in the symbolic structure of the teacher yet sees him or herself located within a variety of possible and competing structures – because that is where I unwittingly place them when leaving "points of potential" questions, questions which often focus on resources or approaches, for example, relinquishing some control of the learning to the learners. This cannot be easy for them – being positioned within multiple normative structures of meaning whilst being provoked to critically reflect their way out of them as Samia's data in Chapter 5 will illustrate well.

Fourthly, from my own perspective, there are no certainties here and neither trainees nor I can know a future. In attempting to examine trainee teachers' dispositions, goods and the potential for emancipatory projects, I am mindful that I position and construct them in certain ways – not an easy reconciliation as I am also a teacher, learner and researcher – multiple positions where there are many gaps that call to be explored while I also seek to construct myself. For example, when I ask any trainee a question relating to what I have observed in their class, I am equally guilty of adopting a stance harboured in the same normative framework that I seek to examine. Likewise, when engaging trainees in dialogue I am invading their small space and, possibly, threatening to take away whatever sense of independence and autonomy they have. Yet there is a further tension here in that Neo-liberalism shifts responsibility from the state to the individual, as Ball (2003, op. cit.) implies that it does, and I could also be accused of perpetuating the same slippery, faceless, dominant narrative.

Language

Language is also at the heart of the thesis, especially the empirical data and the way in which politics paints a wash over the LLS, because it shapes the ways in which we see and consider the world around us. In similar ways to Bourdieu's and Habermas' frameworks for considering and conceptualising language, Kemmis et al. (2013: 30) offer '...sayings, doings and relatings...' as an educationally-specific contextual version of critical theory where: *sayings* is the way actors speak in a particular context; *doings* are their actions within the context; and *relatings* are the ways in which they interact with others and artefacts characteristic of the context. This interests me for two reasons: firstly, Kemmis et al.'s thoughts resonate with Friere and Rancière's (see earlier)

underlying notion that equality and emancipation are grounded in the past and present, with the future left to the vagaries of hope and trust, in their view that:

> These practices, which constitute a project of one kind or another, occur in the present, although they are oriented towards the future and in response to the past.
> (ibid., p. 33)

and secondly, their suggestion that educational practitioners act individually but are orchestrated by the politics of the educational system.

One of the major difficulties I faced throughout the doctoral journey is the realisation that language and dialogue fail in many ways. If politics distorts, then so does language, I suggest, and that even sayings, doings and relatings cannot be adequately captured by language. For example, where there is silence, reluctance or hesitance from trainees who might be uncertain about what can be said when, where and by whom; that some things cannot be made visible through language (reading a reflective account of a session never seems to give me a clear sense of having been there); trainees (and I) often cannot articulate what we mean, therefore some things, like the origins of individual dispositions, either get left behind or remain unexamined (Thayer-Bacon, 1998) and we can be tempted to fill in the gaps through assumption or extrapolating meanings from elsewhere; consequently, our own reflexivity reaches "early" limits when data is incomplete; there are myriad ways of reading, and being read, in discursive and dialogic structures; and the professional standards for teachers in the sector amount to a set of centrally devised, improvement focused competence statements that fail to capture the artistry, craft, dynamics and outright connoisseurship of teaching and learning in, I argue, any context. This is particularly so when attempting to understand difference or "otherness" where there are inherent tensions even in what constitutes the "norm". Burbules (2000: 264) echoes these sentiments as:

> The power of such social processes [classroom discourses in communities of practice] may restrict lines of enquiry, distort dialogical interactions, and silence perspectives in ways that conflict with the explicit purposes of education.

He does not say what he perceives those purposes to be, although he earlier mentioned '...altruism...' (ibid.: 256) as being a goal of universality, which I understand to apply to both teacher and learner. However, I am working with the principle that, as a teacher educator, one of my purposes should be to develop trainee teachers' reflective and reflexive practices as an emancipatory endeavour, or even as a liberating approach to pedagogy, whereby they develop the confidence to step outside a narrow blend of tried and trusted pedagogical strategies and try unconventional or "risky" approaches to invigorating learning in their contexts. In echoing this sentiment, Rancière (2007: 51) theorises that:

> The democratic man [sic] is a being who speaks, which is also to say a poetic being, a being capable of embracing a distance between worlds and things which is not deception, not trickery, but humanity; a being capable of embracing the unreality of representation.

In articulating Rancière's philosophy, Bingham & Biesta (2010: 118) summarise:

> The political actor is not a person who takes language to be fixed to truth. Rather, such an actor is one who understands that utterances are always contestable rather than tethered to particular truths.

There are a number of reasons why I sit easily with the notion that language appears to be a contested, yet potentially productive, concept. Firstly, I argue that silence or selective mutism is both equally troublesome whilst offering a lens through which to examine dialogue, especially failed attempts at dialogue. Whilst not wishing to appear alarmist, and acknowledging that my hermeneutic interpretation of trainees' reasoning is poised on particularly thin ice, I suggest the performative burden of the LLS assumes a notion of fear that is becoming more prevalent throughout English culture and society, possibly in contrast to Freire's Latin American cultures. Such a fear may be born through the daily witness of, for example, politicians having to apologise, often repeatedly, for their juniors' actions before resigning under the premise of wanting to "spend more time with their families" and where sports or media personalities are called to account amid the media's baying. This is no idle meandering thought on my part but one which Rancière (1995: 31) articulates as '...we once again hear the howling of the pack' as a feature of the political milieu of today's society. I

suggest that it is then not unreasonable for the trainee LLS teacher to harbour suspicions regarding how their goods or values sit with the heavily veiled politics of the performative system. Specifically, there could be a fear that less than outstanding 'performance' in front of a class, and murmurings of discontent or uncertainties in the staffroom, could be wheeled out at one's annual appraisal as surely as, 'A dog returns to his vomit' (2 Peter, 2:22) as a provocative analysis. Whilst Peace (2010: 4) sums this up well as: 'In today's politicised climate, teachers are far more likely to have their competency called into question than applauded', Coffield & Williamson (2011: 48) go further in suggesting that:

> The main driving force for change in England has become fear: fear of poor exam results, fear of poor inspection grades, fear of sliding down the national league tables, and fear of public humiliation and closure. Fear is inimical to learning.

The majority of trainees seem to prefer to be told what their strengths and areas for development are and given watertight strategies for becoming teachers who are, possibly, as far removed from the threat of reproach as possible. Here, lifting subtle and hidden pedagogical barriers, if only temporarily and in dialogue, seems to sit uneasily with most trainees who seem to have quickly become enculturated into what might appear to them to be a deeply embedded political structure where the only route for deviation takes one down the route of remedial provision. In the trainees' changing world of fast-becoming enculturation into an apparently hostile work situation, they may be being careful not to expose the workplace to their world view either through fear of the remedial reproach or because they fear that the workplace might try to expunge their values from them and, therefore, adopt the stance of selective mutism. This reluctance is not unknown in the literature (Bingham & Biesta 2010; Freire 2010) where the trainees are, I suspect, uncertain about what can be said and which Rancière would recognise as atypical of the politics of the sector amidst the posturing for equality (Bingham & Biesta, ibid.) – yet not posturing around equality of opportunity for learners, as is the master narrative of equality in the sector, but equality for the expression of a teacher's values or goods. Whilst Deranty (2010: 184) posits the belief that, 'People are always more free than the

social scientists and external observers give them credit for', it is difficult to see such freedom when observer and trainee sit down to discuss how a session went. Secondly, the neo-liberal agenda is one which purports to shift responsibility for regulation from the state to the individual, and which Trifonas (2000: 235) suggests forces teachers to make an, '...enterprise of oneself,' whilst paradoxically maintaining tight control through the performative structures busy at work in the sector. Indeed, the power of the evaluative state seems to feed on intensification and uncertainty where the dominant hegemonic and polarising discourse and practice of performativity, being that which typically measures spurious notions of quality, degrees of inclusivity, the extents of equality and diversity, and the vagaries of a *one size fits all* educational structure, avoids the place of "otherness" in the sector. Thus, managerialist performative education seems not to accommodate types of emotional investment – not only because teachers are required to focus on satisfying learner (see customer) demand and regulatory judgement (emotional investment must not get in the way of targets), but also because they may, and more likely so as trainees, find it difficult to see these performative and stultifying political strings as having any place in the practicalities of teaching and learning as the data in Chapter 5 will suggest.

Bingham and Biesta's (2010) work with Rancière suggests another link between the performative sector and reluctance to embrace the notions of emancipation or potential pedagogical options that are rooted in selective mutism and which they refer to as (teachers'), '...refusal to know...' (ibid.: 10). This, they further suggest, may be due either to ignorance or is part of the enculturation and change process:

> But, the refusal to know can also be understood as a successful interiorization of the logic of the system. ... Every program of reform thus appears immediately futile.
> (ibid., p. 10).

Thus, there is a case for considering that the trainees might prefer to conform to their organisational structures and cultures, not unlike a neo-liberal comfort blanket, and opt not to challenge the power relations in their small spaces in the sector, even through the critical educator's offer of emancipation from outside the organisations' lenses, but conform to the ways things are and make the best of

hard places. Whilst this is a useful and persuasive theory on Rancière's part, Yee's (1990) research is drawn on by Bullough & Hall-Kenyon (2011: 136) to make the similar point that, '...hostile work conditions can and do weaken a teacher's sense of calling', and the critical theorist in me suggests that the unspoken is something valuable here. I suggest that selective mutism can point towards where perceived truths might lie in the gaps and complex political inter-relationships between current LLS education policy and educational outcomes and processes. Notwithstanding any apparent reluctance at dialogue, Rancière's ideology offers the notion that thought, even as a substitute for spoken language, can be employed as a tool for reconfiguring trainees' small spaces, particularly his suggestion (Bingham & Biesta 2010: 43) that:

> The only thing that is needed is to remind people that they can see and think for themselves and are not dependent on other who see or think for them.

Again, I think I might be concerned with thinking wars here where thinking substitutes for spoken language or articulation as Ross (2010: 135) suggests:

> The expression of the plenitude of meaning is "mute" because it always escapes the posture of authority of the supposed masters of language, those such as the consecrated writers and experts [and I am thinking of LLS policy makers here] who are presumed to own the "means" of expression.

So, the critical theorist in me argues that the obstinate silence of selective mutism has the potential to be productive and could offer something by way of useful knowledge and praxis in the LLS.

Thirdly, language can also limit what trainees achieve to the extent that those (others) who grasp the emancipatory nettle and invigorate critical reflexion are ill-served by the spoken and written word. For example, a trainee might turn a pedagogical problem into an embedded strength (as Samia's data in Chapter 5 will claim) but the reflective journal (TP3) might fail to capture the enormity of what s/he and her/his students seemed to have achieved as a result – the "Other" cannot, it seems, be captured by language. I offer this as an example of where I feel the critical or emancipatory project falters: when critical analysis of a situation or discourse can examine a trainee's dispositions and contextual

tensions, but it does not lead to a truth of a situation; where a language of potential can be grasped and embraced as a pedagogical good, yet still makes assumptions regarding who knows what; and where dominant voices are maintained because those in positions of power do not hear of the success stories that are (possibly) the reality of the sector in some trainees' small spaces. Perhaps Burbules (2000: 270) was correct when he posited the notion that, 'If one believed truly that such encounters [dialogue] always fail, it is unclear what meaning "education" could ever have'. A cursory glance at the professional standards might lead a reader to question the kind of education intended for the sector although, paradoxically, dialogue with a trainee could invigorate teaching and learning that the same reader-turned-observer might celebrate as a small victory over an allegedly dysfunctional LLS education system as the literature in Chapter 2 suggested.

Fourthly, when discussing the self and other earlier in this chapter (and in contextualising trainees in Chapter 2), I conceded that framing trainees through my own, often pejorative, use of language positions them in unfavourable ways. For example, throughout this thesis I have referred to them as "my" trainees (they do not belong to me and any power I might have over them is, I hope, only perceived) yet not all of them are new to teaching, like most of the police officers who are channelled into a training role at various stages in their career and only decide to pursue a teaching qualification when retirement appears on their horizon. Yet the language of the sector labels all unqualified teachers as trainees to the extent that: they grade aspects of their practice according to Ofsted "Trainee" criteria; they must have a subject specialist mentor, although they may be experienced mentors in their own right; and that they constantly record their pedagogic development towards "becoming" a teacher in a "full" role in the LLS, despite many being graded as Outstanding in general Ofsted inspections of their host institutions where no margin is given for trainee status. Whilst this suggests a more pejorative and neo-liberal use of language that seeks to manage and manipulate unqualified teachers in the sector through the use of grand narratives, there are two other tensions. Firstly, that I am as guilty as the narratives of the LLS, regardless of the extent that I try to de-mystify and distance myself from such narratives; and secondly, no amount of language or labelling can adequately capture what a trainee (as self or other) is as Butler (2000: 12) asserts: 'You call

me this, but what I am eludes the semantic reach of any such linguistic effort to capture me'.

I suspect that the reader may have been clamouring for the data before now (and it will have been worth the wait) but the empirical data in the next chapter needed the contextualisation (Chapter 2), the rationale for its collection and analysis (Chapter 3) and the problematic that permeate it as a necessary underpinning for what I make of it (Rancière, 1991: 23).

Chapter 5: Empirical data, analysis and discussion

Having laid out the landscape, the methodological approach for examining it and identifying some of the problematic beasts that reside therein, I will next examine the empirical data in this chapter. Here, a selection of empirical data is presented and discussed which draws on data from successive cohorts of In-Service final year trainee teachers, comprising 156 completed questionnaires and post-teaching observation dialogue from 81 of them, over the four academic years to June 2013. This is their story.

Analysis

At this point, I remind the reader of the three questions on the questionnaire:

1. What do you consider to be educationally desirable in your subject specialism and/or context?

2. What makes you think so?

3. In what ways do you try to embed such thinking in your teaching?

With the first data collection method with the first cohort sample (2009 – 10), data from the questionnaires was used to promote a preliminary form of coding (Silverman, 2001) of key concepts emerging from trainees' espoused dispositions, where they got them from and how they did, or did not, influence their pedagogical approaches. These were developed with the emergence of data in the second (2010 – 11) cohort, some of which seemed notably "Otherwise" from the earlier sample. That is, there were data fragments in the second year, especially with the Specialist Conference groups, which appeared somehow richer insofar as the use of language seemed to have a dissonance with the first cohort. There are multiple ways of reading and being read, yet the data in the second and third cohorts seemed to open more new lines of thought, interpretation and potential than the first cohort. As a result, this later data almost killed any notion of drawing tangible meaning from the responses because attempted analyses raised far more questions than answers, troubling dualisms and contradictions surfaced throughout and the "Other" seemed far more in attendance than previously. At one point I began to think that I was getting better at drawing out thinly veiled meaning although by the end of the third year I was less convinced - language just seems to be slippery and some fragments are more

slippery than others, I quickly discovered. Nevertheless, the categories and coding that I worked with after the first cohort are as follows:

Q	Categories	Codes
1	Skill development	Vocational or occupational "Basic" skills (Language, literacy, numeracy and ICT)
	Social justice	Employability Pastoral or emotional care Life chances Other or otherness
	Values (explicit)	Values Opinions Beliefs
	Values (implicit)	Values Opinions Beliefs
	Other	Other or otherness
2	Lived experience	Good experiences of own educative spaces Bad experiences of own educative spaces Apprenticeship-related experiences
	Social justice	Employability Pastoral or emotional care Life chances Other or otherness
	Values (explicit)	Values Opinions Beliefs
	Values (implicit)	Values Opinions Beliefs
	Other	Other or otherness
3	Pedagogical approaches	Motivation Mean-making or transfer Anecdotal
	Resource-related	Physical Human Time Other or otherness
	Constraints	Resource-related Performativity Managerialism Other or otherness
	Other	Other or otherness

Table 1: *Data Categories and Codes*

For the specialist groups, these gave interesting insights into the ways in which trainees from different sub-contexts and particular disciplines within their fields seemed to engage with a number of features of both their teaching craft and their

organisations, as I will discuss later in this chapter. With "my" trainees, the questionnaires provided useful starting points to their second year which helped to subsequently reveal some emerging shifts over the duration of the year and also acted as a spur for invigorating their reflexive processes in the post-observation dialogue, also discussed later in this chapter.

In particular, the second data collection method of post-observation dialogue sought to triangulate (Cohen, et al., 2007) their teaching craft with their conceptions of educational desirability and my own interpretations of the session although its analysis is, I suggest, poised on rather thin ice. Here, I elected to categorise and code data using the same signifiers as for the questionnaires, for the purposes of stability, consistency and reliability, although others quickly and consistently emerged through Phase B. It seemed that as soon as I identified a new particular feature or dimension, for example a trainee's perceptions of foreign students, another one would emerge, for example a trainee suddenly claiming to be able to see the landscape from an experienced teacher's perspective. Thus, it seemed that the further I ventured into the swamp, the more species I discovered – a constantly unsettling reflexive dualism that seems to support Blumenfeld-Jones' (2004) critical belief that creating categories for people cannot adequately capture them. And neither can language, I suggest - another paradox for the storyteller to agonise over, particularly so when trying to be in some small way empirical.

Despite the shifting landscape, I will discuss a small sample of the data in three successive data sets or sections: commencing with questionnaires from the 156 Specialist Conference attendees (identified by number); progress to some of the post-teaching observation dialogue (identified by pseudonyms); and concluding with longitudinal data from the most recent group.

The narratives in the empirical data were examined for signifiers which gave a sense of trainee teachers' individual dispositions and value systems, although this was no easy reconciliation because the data is often "gritty" and language seems to reach early limits in any effort to read into what the narratives tell me.

The categories and codes being used here are not complex, I suggest, yet they offer only limited value in examining data from the Specialist Conference groups in isolation. Notwithstanding the lack of opportunity to consider these offerings in the teaching context following an observation of the respondents teaching,

they give a sense of certain dispositions that trainees claim where a total of 16 separate subject specialisms and disciplines are represented in the first section of data as follows.

Q.1. (What do you consider to be educationally desirable in your subject specialism and/or context?) responses seemed to be quite equally divided in most specialisms between notions of social justice, for example, *Providing a service to the community* (R85, Beauty Therapy) and skill development, for example, *The ability to pass on industry knowledge to progress the skills shortage in this country* (R76, Construction) although for different reasons. Interestingly, some specialisms (if the respondents' offerings can be taken as indicative of the specialism) seemed a little polarised. For example, the majority of nursing practitioners invoked only skills based values in response to Q.1., with none claiming any overt allegiance to notions of social justice, whilst the opposite trend appeared in LDD (Learning Difficulties and Disabilities) groups. These separate positions are better examined in their entirety (see later in this first section) and give a sense that Rancière's notions of identification and disidentification might relate to collectives or communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Q.1. responses included a few cases of "otherness", because they seemed to fall outside these two broad categories, including:

To enthuse my learners into being able to easily achieve their original learning aims into being a useful and productive member of society, with all the benefits that this should entail. To be fulfilled in their chosen career (R34, Engineering). Whilst this response sits closely with a notion of social justice, I think that there is an element of otherness in, *being a useful and productive member of society*, a reflexive use of language that perhaps hints at something that is hidden, something that is perhaps indicative of Freire's (2005, op. cit.) strength of the heart. For example, is R34 suggesting that learners are/will be expected to contribute to society in some way and, if so, is there a corresponding reward? Does such a give-and-take make one fulfilled? I think that this is less about social justice and more about societal values, although where these came from was not made clear by R34 in response to Q.2. Also: *To be able to explain the terminology in meaningful ways so that the student can understand (in order to maintain the respect of the students).* Yet his reasons for this, and the ways in

which he embodies such in his sessions, were entirely skills-based with no other linkage to *respect*. Whilst it is unclear whether respect is concerned with learners' self respect, respect for others or respect towards the teacher, R34's response to Q.2. fails to identify where or when this became important for him and leaves an unknown over whether this is social or cultural capital at work, possibly because one's views regarding respect are difficult to articulate.

One of the anomalies of Q.1. (because of the way it was written) was that some respondents seem to interpret the question as more of a "wish list" or "how would you like your job to be?" For example, (Q.1.): *Decent funding so I am able to do the job I am employed to* do, reinforced by (Q.2.): *Always working with next to nothing* (R80, Carpentry & Joinery).

Q.2. (What makes you think so?) responses, as with Q.1., gave a similar sense of disparities in vocational habitus between subject specialisms. For example, almost all the LDD trainees alluded to their perceptions of what is educationally desirable being grounded in their own experiences, but these were in a general way, did not differentiate between good and poor experiences nor did they differentiate between whether those experiences were as tutors, learning support workers or as themselves as former LDD students who had been supported. Another LDD tutor responded: *Nature of my learners and the make-up of my group is very diverse. Historical nature of department and its methods. Successful professional relationships as a result of being flexible, adaptable + positive* (R51) and gives a clear sense of how, for the critical theorist, language fails. I suspect that there is a wealth of meaning, values, habitus and professional disposition in this fragment of biography, yet it mostly eludes capture and interpretation. I think, however, that this data fragment suggests that R51 might think in terms of the symbolic: learners; department; methods; and professional traits, although the more interesting feature is that the *nature of* appears twice and leaves me asking, "How can we know the nature of a learner? Is the nature of a group of learners the same? Are they not individuals with different natures? What are the yardsticks for measuring nature? What is the historical nature of a department? Can the natures of learners and departments be measured or considered in the same way?" Again, this is possibly one of those accounts where the origins of particular values get left behind or unexamined as Thayer-Bacon (1998) suggested in Chapter 2.

A notable trend surfaced uniquely in the Engineering groups where they were the only respondents across the whole gamut of disciplines in the LLS to express any reference to apprenticeships. Whilst there was a distinct trend towards what were almost atrocity stories in trainees' lived experiences they were, in fairness, fairly well balanced by others with contrastingly good and supportive apprenticeships and experiences. For example:

(R30): *From when I was an apprentice, all the older skilled tradesperson always knew how to solve all of the difficult problems that I had to face. The skilled tradespeople in my company I served my apprenticeship with, all had a lot of time for the apprentices and would gladly help*. This is now manifested in his own taught sessions as: (Q.3.): *I modelled myself on some of my mentors, particularly my metalwork teacher who from the age of 11* (I doubt that the teacher was 11 at the time) *taught me for four years and learnt a hell of a lot from. Put as much history in as possible in the subject*. Several engineers responded to Q.2. in similar ways and give a sense of a number of dispositions that smack of having survived a process of enculturation (even having come out of it for the better) that seems imbued with processes whereby skills and confidence are passed from an older to a younger generation. Indeed, the engineering teachers seemed to illustrate some of the notions identified in the literature in Chapter 2, for example, a *positional good* within industry (Colley, 2003, op. cit.) and where vocational identity is seen as a *piece of the person* (Richardson, 1990, op. cit.). Yet R30's data fragment is interesting also because it differentiates between skilled vocational tradespeople (responsible for his learning within industry) and his metalwork teacher (responsible for earlier learning which, possibly, got him considering engineering as a career upon leaving school). Here, R30 acknowledges the value of workplace learning and experience but seems to give a privileged position to the school metalwork teacher, and on whom he models his teaching approaches, now that he is himself in a teaching role.

There were also responses to Q.2., concerning more concrete experiences, that I had difficulty categorising because they seemed to overlap the codes, for example, ... *and pass on what I have learnt in the past 35 years ...* (R75, Painting & Decorating – but see later).

Q.3. responses (how values are embedded in their taught sessions) tended to be fairly equally divided between pedagogical approaches, the majority of which were laced with anecdotal stories to be used as resources or for mean-making, and a preferred focus on articulating why respondents were unable to put into action what they believed was important because of various constraints, for example, *Targets and money prevent this from happening* (R136, Employability) and, *I try to challenge students, make them challenge each other, ask them to challenge me. This can be constrained by students' inner reticence or cultural differences* (R143, Languages). One of the themes to emerge from Q.3 responses, as the next section will illustrate better, is the sense of constraints in trainees' spaces and which resonate with the literature in Chapter 2 concerning the influence of neo-liberalism in the LLS through performativity and managerialism, even to the extent of echoing Rancière's (2010, op. cit.) claim that such policies disable teachers from doing their jobs properly.

Many of the respondents offered data that deserves reporting in its entirety to give a flavour of personal dispositions, lived experiences, tensions in the workplace and, possibly, underlying thought patterns – particularly because they offer a more cohesive whole although this was often thwarted as R57's (Music) responses suggest: the reason he believed *The performance aspect and developments in technology* (Q.1.) were educationally desirable was because (Q.2.) *It is what was desirable to me. When I finished my diploma I became good friends with my lecturer.* Fascinated at how this is manifested in his own lessons he revealed: (Q.3.) *These are not very good questions. Too open.*

However, two of the health practitioners in the same conference group (with similar ages and biographical details) responded in different ways, suggesting that biography is a fragile concept to attempt to draw any inferences from:

(Q.1.): *Ability to challenge learners' attitudes with confidence.* (But what kind of attitudes are these and how are they manifested? Is there not something here concerned with teacher-learner relationships? Why are challenge and confidence the most important things to this trainee?) (Q.2.): *Culture of today's society; experience – life and teaching.* (This is an example of how difficult analysis can be – what is meant by the *culture of today's society*? What are R21's experiences of life and teaching that make challenging *learners' attitudes with confidence* the most important consideration?) (Q.3.): *Constraints - learners' attitudes – due to*

their own experiences (R21). Again, *learners' attitudes* appear again and I can only speculate as to why this facet achieves the prominence that it does both in R21's habitus and in a short data fragment. So whilst R21's data is intriguing, yet tells me very little, her colleague took the opportunity to seemingly take a swipe at what appears to be the lowering of entry and other standards in the health profession (mostly NHS-based but not exclusively so) in a more detailed account:

(Q.1.): *School qualifications grade C or above; A level grade C or above; Alternatively NVQ/QCF level 3 or above*; (Q.2.): *My subject specialist subject was undertaken many years ago and this was the entry requirement. Since this time, increased to degree status and don't think this necessarily produces a workforce that is fit to practice and I see my subject specialism as a vocation rather than academic!*; (Q.3.): *Within my teaching role I have no remit around level/ability of learners who attend as it is a mandatory requirement for them to attend as part of workforce legislation and dept. requirements* (R22). This trainee seems to be contrasting current professional habitus with an earlier time when, perhaps, she sees it as somehow better then than it is now because of academic inflation and a shift towards institutional professionalism axiomatic of Murphy et al.'s (2009, op. cit.) belief of a mismatch between current educational philosophy and practice.

Some responses appeared to be particularly closely held views where there was underlining, exclamation marks or asterisks although none of the 156 resorted to highlight pens. For example:

(R59, Music): (Q.1.) *Motivation – both tutor and learner. "We need adequate funding and support from organisation. Needs to be accessible to <u>all</u> with <u>all</u> learners valued equally* (original emphasis); (Q.2.): *A little bit Marxist*; (Q.3.): *Try not to make class/value judgements re: dialect, appearance etc. Respect <u>everyone</u> and expect respect <u>from</u> everyone* (original emphases). Three years later this fragment continues to intrigue me and raises more questions than answers. For example, is it possible to be a little bit Marxist? Which bit of Marxism does she subscribe to? How does she define or perceive Marxism? This is, again, language failing in that R59 uses a term to seemingly label herself on the assumption that it either justifies a particular set of dispositions or, possibly, speaks on her behalf. However, *Motivation – both tutor and learner* is a

value that sits well with Rancière's axiom where will-to-will is an essential relationship in invigorating emancipation and pursuing equality.

A prison educator (R60, Language, Literacy & Numeracy) offered a similarly interesting set of responses: (Q.1.): *Well motivated students. A broad ranging syllabus with opportunities for the development of cultural awareness and social skills. Some funding in the offender learning sector would be nice*; (Q.2.): *I'm a dyed-in-the-wool old-fashioned Socialist socially conscious old hippy and that's why I work in prison education*; (Q.3.): *I teach English language and lit. So all of human life is therein contained, making the embedding of social/political issues relatively easy.* There are a number of features here that, I concede, flummox me and which illustrate one of the difficulties in trying to interpret language and the slippage of the origins of particular dispositions, particularly within the constraints of the thesis word count. The use of *old-fashioned* is interesting because it begs the questions of: how he (page 3 shows that he is in his late forties) either sees himself or wishes to be perceived (does he buy his clothes from retro shops?); Does he see a teacher's life and role as somehow better many years ago, as R22 may have also implied? Likewise, *Socialist* and *old hippy* form part of the same descriptor that serve only to raise a myriad of questions. For example, can any of us define what a hippy is? Is the 1960's and 1970's media portrayal of hippy lifestyle (and I offer "possibly highly independent and free-spirited" as a working definition here) commensurate with the core values or persona of a tutor whose students are locked in cells for up to 23 hours in a day? What types of behaviours or values does R60 model in his sessions and for what purpose? And, what kind of *cultural awareness* would he be trying to develop within the tinderbox environment that is his learners' reality? Wonderful data but, I suspect, impossible to reconcile. Indeed, whilst a surface reading of his data might suggest something akin to Rancière's (2007, op. cit.) notion of disidentification or otherness in the way R60 portrays himself, we simply have no tangible or reliable means of confirming, refuting or further examining him. Then again, could this also be a fine example of Rancière's (2010, op. cit.) notion of the unreality of representation?

The Engineering groups were not without their joined-up respondents, for example, (R27) (Q.1.): *The ability for these learners to have pride in their work and to be the best in their field as they can be*; (Q.2.): *Not starting out in*

engineering, I started fresh at the age of 18, I feel self belief and thinking that I could be good at something helped me to constantly improve, despite a harsh time in my workplace (during my apprenticeship). Ambitions to better myself pulled me through; (Q.3.): *I talk to my learners about my troubles through being an apprentice and try to get them to see education more positively, importance of developing skills to be the best they can be. More practically based lessons + adding things not in the curriculum – (engineering drawing, hybrid tech. Etc). Make them a more adaptable to change* (sic). I found this to be a particularly interesting piece of data, partly because it combines notions of both social justice and skill development, but primarily because R27 appears comfortable in using his own bad experiences as learning resources. Throughout the data fragment there appears to be a value-laden strand comprising self-belief and a positive mental attitude, intrinsic motivation towards self improvement, *pride in their work* and aspiration. I think these can be taken more as personal values, even values that are useful to the next generation of engineers, although the extent to which they might be societal values is less clear, as is the meaning behind his pursuit of making his learners *more adaptable to change*. On a similar note R29 responded:

(Q.1.): *I think there is very little to ignite learners' passions and get them excited about the subject. Too much emphasis is put on filling in forms and not enough on fully understanding the subject. Not enough time is given for them to explore their own abilities*; (Q.2.): *My Dad was a 'self-learnt' builder. He was a very passionate man about his work and an inspiration. I had a lot of interest in my subject from a very early age and was given opportunities to develop and explore my subject*; (Q.3.): *I try to pass on my excitement, skill and love of my subject area. I try to do things that are a little off the curriculum but which create a real interest in my subject*. Again, this is interesting use of language where *self-learnt* might be taken as a more accurate alternative to the more normative parlance of being "self taught" and raises a number of questions regarding how knowledge and skills are developed. Specifically, from an andragogical perspective, do we teach ourselves what we need to know or do we learn them? Or are they the same? Does it matter? Similarly, what does it mean to position one's teaching *a little off the curriculum*? Or is this a trainee's invocation of Rancière's (2007, p. 36, op. cit.) disidentification as, '...removed from the naturalness of a place', and

thereby an autonomous political act on a trainee's own terms according to his particular goods and values? Whilst these are interesting uses of both language and configurations, the important things for R29 seem to be overshadowed by constraints, specifically a seemingly institutional (or would it really be a performative requirement of the neo-liberal agenda?) need for form-filling (learners or teachers?) at the expense of time better spent engendering passion for one's *subject* and *own abilities*, although we can only speculate about the efficacy of time used in this way if form-filling were removed entirely.

There were, seemingly, more responses which hinted at "otherness" as follows.

(R92, Childcare):

Q.1.: *I use reflection and knowledge from my own childcare business to embed this* (safeguarding) *thinking.* Q.2. (Not answered). Q.3.: *I use practical teaching to help my learners to value my experience but it doesn't always become received as well as I think.*

Here, R92 offers to give a glimpse into a number of concepts from her perspective: the efficacy of anecdotal evidence when used as a resource; learner dispositions; and teacher-learner dialogue, yet the glimpse is closed down when the articulation ceases. Now, if we take it that language is a form of knowledge, there might also be knowledge when language ceases or is closed down. For example, I read in this fragment that R92 brings not only practitioner knowledge to the classroom but also experience of operating an associated business – possibly a bonus point over other applicants for the teaching post she applied for, yet it seems to make up a vocational habitus that is not universally appreciated by her students, although it sits easily with some of the engineers who value a perceived vocational habitus and lived experience. But she is unsure: *as well as I think* is unclear and could mean different things: is this a suspicion; is it mixed messages from learners that are unclear; is it unrealised teacher expectation; is it unrefined reflective practice; or is it something else? For example, could it be an example of what Rice (2004, op. cit.) had in mind when arguing that teachers anticipate some value-laden common ground, subsequently unrealised, with their learners?

(R95, Art & Media):

Q.1.: *I would love to have decent quality materials for my students to work with. I would like there to be more freedom to wander from the curriculum according*

to where inspiration gained from research takes you. In terms of materials, I have <u>never</u> (original emphasis) *come across a studio in which the materials were adequate. Q.2.: The curriculum for art and design seems a bit outmoded and may be restricting the idea of 'taking flight'. These two issues are linked. Q.3.: Art materials (and art lessons in general) are treated as unimportant when compared to, for example, ICT, maths, science etc. This attitude is so short-sighted when you consider that visual learning through the arts could link to the other subjects. Even 'Creative Partnerships' is being dissolved. Shame.*

This contribution offers a number of interesting thoughts, for example, the seemingly emancipatory notion of curriculum that gives (either teachers and/or learners?) the *freedom to wander from the curriculum according to where inspiration gained from research takes you*, and which might be what she later describes as *taking flight*, and not unlike R29's earlier claim of not having enough time to enable learners to *explore their own abilities* and *a little off the curriculum.* Nonetheless, throughout R95's entire response there seems to be a sense of the curriculum, and in consequence the learner experience, becoming either diluted or impoverished from her specialist perspective, perhaps even some sense of being powerless as she witnesses such decline. Again, there are concerns regarding resources, time and missed opportunities which are attributed to *this attitude*, although it would be dangerous to make any assumptions where *this attitude* springs from except that it is clearly somewhere beyond R95's sphere of influence and could be symptomatic of Rancière's (2013, op. cit.) claim of '...privileged thought to some'.

There are echoes of R95's struggles in R70's (Dance) contribution:

Q.1.: *Students feel inspired to continue their dance training as it is not achievable within two years of the BTEC. Students gain some knowledge of artistry and what is required to forge a career in dance. Q.2.: These were the important factors that steered my choices and were the factors that were missing from poorer parts of my education. I thrive of* (sic) *people and experiences and want to give my learners as much of this as possible.*

Q.3.: *Help: Openness of the BTEC specification – allows personal strengths to shine. Embed through curriculum (this can be easily done). CPD allows constant renewal of knowledge. Constraints: The close-mindedness of policies of*

my employers. E.g. £1000 can be spent on a trip to Alton Towers but they can't budget for a dance floor. Retention – dance is not for everyone.

Whilst this fragment is one of the unusual ones in that it seems to encompass all three aspects of Kemmis, et al.'s (2013, op. cit.) *sayings, doings and relatings*, R70's data smacks of Gleeson & Shain's (1999, op. cit.) managerialism (characterised by *close-mindedness*) and Ball's (2003, op. cit.) performativity (*retention*) possibly choking the important dance concepts of artistry and learner inspiration which she values so highly. Whilst several respondents in other specialisms made similar points regarding funding, it was interesting and appreciated to see an example given where (possibly, even probably) limited finances are used in ways that are seen at odds by those on the front line as Bathmaker and Avis (2005, op. cit.) suggest. Never having been to Alton Towers nor bothered with a dance floor in a meaningful way, I suggest that this is also an example of one of those concepts I invoked earlier where I do not make any claims to be a knower of pedagogy and where I am one of what Thayer-Bacon (1998, op. cit.) referred to as 'limited human beings' – I do not know the difference, if there is one, between the learning benefits to be derived from a trip to Alton Towers or a new dance floor, despite what each might offer.

The next offering strikes me as particularly poignant where R75 (Painting & Decorating) reveals his current situation less than two years after moving from industry into teaching in the sector and which comes across as a clear example of the 'darkness' that Brown (2005, op. cit.) referred to.

Q.1.: *My past life skills and learning in my 30 years as a painter and decorator from working on the books to being self employed. I would like to give my skills back and pass what I have learnt in the past 35 years and hope this will make a difference in someone's life. Q.2.: As above. Q.3.: I am disillusioned at the moment because I am spending my time doing admin., filling in forms and filling gaps left by not having a line manager for a year. So this is impacting on what I like learn my learners practical as well as theory work.* (sic) *So at this moment in time I am having a rethink about have I made the right choice in the job I do.*

This account is indicative of a trainee who may be at a watershed – with so much to give to the next generation of tradespeople (echoing notions of social justice elsewhere in the questionnaires) but bending under the spurious demands of managerialism, audit and accountability to the extent that he is *disillusioned* and,

perhaps, not far from following the exodus of experienced teachers that Colley, et al. (2007) discovered. I too have my demons regarding what can and cannot be said and I doubt that it would be acceptable for me to reflexively comment on R75's situation other than to suggest that, possibly, this is an example of: what Rancière (2010, op. cit.) meant when he said that, 'neoliberal policies ... disable teachers from doing their jobs properly'; or what Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2011, op. cit.) meant by hostile work conditions; or Cribbs' (2005, op. cit.) notion of principled infidelity (an ethical drift); or Freire's (2005, op. cit.) strength of the heart colliding with Gleeson & Shain's (1999, op. cit.) understanding of strategic compliance; or that this might be what Brown (2005, op. cit.) meant by dark times.

R76 (Offender training, specialism not declared) seems not to hold back in exploiting the use of lived experience and hindsight which he candidly contributed as, Q.1.: *The ability to pass on industry knowledge to progress the skills shortage in this country. To allow learners the chance to pursue their own goals especially in offender learning*. Q.2.: *I came from an undesirable council estate. Most of my friends ended up in drugs and prison etc. I was lucky, I didn't but it was touch-and-go for a while.* Q.3.: *By relating my life experiences I hope to prove to my learners that they can make a success of their lives*. Whilst many of the prison and Young Offender Institution (YOI) educators gave a similar sense of values concerned with social justice, emotional care and role modelling, none gave this depth of lived experience in response to Q.2. which is used as an "Other" resource in the same way that R27 (Engineering, earlier) articulated.

R66 (Early Years)

Q.1.: *To be able bend the curriculum to meet the needs of my students*. Q.2.: *I have experienced over the last year how the National Curriculum that my students must abide by complete their Early Years practitioner status does not meet the requirement for working with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. I work using a different programme that supports my students and the children they work with to enhance my students' abilities and make the child's development programme positive. I have watch over the years working as an Inclusion Officer how my students see themselves as failures as their key children do not seem to be developing. This is disheartening for the practitioner (my students) and the children. I have a disability myself and am married to*

(name) *who is also disabled. I grew up in a very negative schooling system. I was labelled retarded in my juniors but actually I was half deaf and had a form of dyslexia. These negative times have driven my passion to change the system. Q.3.: I investigated further into why the curriculum is set to a specific box. I then started looking at different authorities and how they tackled this. I have then put their suggestions into my lesson plans. I needed many meeting to persuade my peers, managers and the educational psychologist that actually it can work. I am in a pilot study now to achieve this"* (sic, passim). This lengthy and interesting account seems to give a flavour of a trainee who, based on diverse lived experiences, might have begun to challenge the politics and grand narratives in her context and is persisting in her efforts to change them (Trifonas, 2000, op. cit.) – an "other" account that is unique in the data from any cohort. Here, there is a sense of many dispositions, goods and values emerging through saying and relatings, for example, *positive child development,* learners' self-perception as *failures...disheartening...negative schooling...*and being *labelled.* Yet, despite a fresh approach to session planning, we have no way of knowing what those endeavours are through doings. Again, this appears as a detailed fragment of data which opens up, only to be immediately closed down.

So, I feel that there are limitations in the data from the Specialist Conference groups insofar as they are data fragments locked in time which I did not have the opportunity to clarify or examine by relating them to the observation of respondents' teaching. However, the common denominator between the accounts related in this first section is, I suggest, the politics and the political that are at work in these trainees' lives. Here, I think there is some evidence of the police order at work in trainees' efforts to respond to neo-liberalism's various demands which seem, possibly, incongruent with trainees' goods and values (Holloway, 2002, op. cit.). Likewise, there is a great deal of political activity, if thinking and writing about tensions in small spaces can be taken as actions, and I think that some trainees are alive to the ways their goods and values sit uneasily with their host institutions', and occasionally learners', perceived goods.

With "my" trainee teachers the questionnaire was something of a mixed blessing in that, more often than not, it fed post-observation dialogue, although in some cases there was no apparent connection between claimed values (sayings) and their embodiment in teaching and learning with pedagogical approaches that

were observed in practice (doings) and which resonate with Elbaz's (1983, op. cit.) suggestion that there is often incongruence between what teachers feel they should be doing and what they actually do when in class. In this second section of data I will briefly discuss some of the longitudinal data of this type (comprising questionnaires, TP2 "points of potential" questions and TP3 responses) that are, I feel, valuable. The names of respondents have been changed.

Ron's (teaching academic English to overseas pre-undergraduate students in a university) responses to the three questions on the questionnaire (September 2011) were:

Q.1. *Comfortable learning environment which allows* <u>*all*</u> *learners to progress without unease or partiality* (original emphasis). *Enjoyment is "educationally desirable" and I believe enhances learning. Progress is, of course, desirable but not all learners need a certain level so progress should be according to need or wish (can be for its own sake or for other reasons).*

This is an interesting set of goods or values which both hints at a somewhat relaxed approach that amounts to "learning should be enjoyable and anything else is a bonus" and where progress is a learner need, or not. What Ron does not mention is targets for retention and achievement that his organisation has to achieve (a worry voiced by his mentor elsewhere in Ron's evidence) and how this personal philosophy sits with the performative regime.

Q.2. *Partly based on my own schooling which was (or felt like it was) based on competitiveness and making learners feel small and stupid. Seeing (as an adult) other ways of teaching was a revelation both observationally and educationally – I learnt French enjoyably, quickly and successfully even though school told me I was "useless" at languages. I still refer back to a teacher I had in my 20's (I'm now 58) as a model of good practice.*

In this response, I think that Ron has perhaps felt comfortable in showing something of his personal background, for example, giving his age (which might suggest: maturity; experience; that the teacher he refers to has had a long-

standing influence on him; or that it speaks of identity or agency in some way). Similarly, in giving a sense of schooling experience and culture that might have been almost belittling for him, Ron seems to be saying that he has survived that culture, has progressed and achieved beyond others' expectations (or despite them), yet still harbours his school experience as a model of teaching practice, or touchstone, that he avoids replicating because he is aware of the negative impact it could have on motivation, for example.

Q.3.: *I remember what it's like to be a learner. I try to be aware of all learners' needs and difficulties. I try to like my learners (it's very rare that I don't) and I always attempt to make learning enjoyable. I know I don't always succeed but when I'm enjoying it they usually are too. Serious cultural differences and my strong opinions on some aspects of certain cultures can cause "interesting" debate.*

Once the group had completed their questionnaires, I took the unusual decision to have a nominee from the group seal them in an envelope and reflect on their claimed values for a month before having the opportunity to revise them prior to offering them as data. Subsequently, Ron was one of only three who added to their original responses and which read (and I refer to this as Fragment #1):

Since first writing I (probably) want to reflect further on cultural features and use this as a possible Specialist Conference topic. I actually quite liked re-reading what I wrote a month ago and don't want to change anything. The value of the original exercise was in knocking it out quickly without having time to think too much – this makes it a fairly honest stream of conscientiousness.

Whilst Ron added only a comment to, rather than edited or corrected his responses to three questions, the exercise seemed to provoke critical reflection on the culture of his own students and the ways in which he needed to work with them as cross-cultural dispositions in his taught sessions, a set of cultural tensions which were crystalised as his Specialist Conference paper which was lauded well by conference peers later in the year (April 2012).

I think that, perhaps, Ron might be portraying himself as trustworthy in *a fairly honest stream of conscientiousness* (or did he mean *consciousness*?) to his new second year tutor and that, possibly, he tends to get things right at the first attempt. If this is correct, then he could be signposting himself as either a trusted student or teacher, or both, but this could be a huge assumption on my part. He also highlights the notion of culture (although he does not speak of what type of culture) as being important for him (and/or possibly for his learners) and this could be him speaking again of lived experience and maturity.

Fragment #2 is a dialogic response on form TP3 following the second observation of Ron's teaching. At the first observation he had chosen not to produce a session plan, because he thought that they do not "work" for him, and this account relates to the ensuing discussion on that strategy as a "point of potential", left on TP2, which asked him to consider finding or devising a form of session planning which did work for him – as an exploratory endeavour.

My approach to planning has been an experiment to find out what works and your comments have been a very helpful part of the process. This is the only part of being a teacher where I still feel like a bit of a square peg in a round hole – I will continue to give it serious consideration and will include it in the next discussions with my mentors. For the next observed class I may revert to the standard lesson plan format to see whether, in the light of experience, I can make it work more effectively than before.

Here, Ron might be looking to do a number of things: to tick a hypothetical box that demonstrates he has been reflecting on his feedback and the session in question; to show that he is deliberately working to resolve a feature of his teaching role which he feels is a weakness or area for development; to acknowledge the benefit of professional discussion and dialogue (although how he positions me as his younger tutor and observer is unclear – he gives no real sense of our relationship other than that, on this occasion, he found it beneficial); he sees himself as "other" (disidentification) in contrast to his peers, although only in one respect and otherwise he is identical to his peers (identification); and that he has a working relationship with his mentors (most trainees have only one mentor).

Fragment #3 is a reflective journal account (being the fourth of the required six) of a teaching session that had not been observed:

Trying to look through the learners' lenses is difficult but I am learning that the style of education in their home country (mostly Libya) has a major effect on their willingness to learn in a student-centred environment and I am attempting to understand what (to me) is a very lax approach to learning. This does not mean that I am prepared to accommodate such attitudes, nor will it prevent me trying to explain to learners the cause and effect related to attendance, engagement and home study.

This is a particularly interesting fragment, which was offered after the success of his Specialist Conference paper, where Ron appears to paradoxically position himself as a student-centred teacher (Rogerian? Facilitative?) while retaining a teacher-centred hold on the power relations (*This does not mean that I am prepared to accommodate…).* (This was like a wake-up call to me – do I relinquish learning or try out other student-centred strategies on my own terms, yet being quick to reclaim the hegemony when it pleases me?) But there are also imprecise subtleties in this fragment worthy of examination where Ron might be making a small claim to suddenly being something of an authority (identification) on Libyan culture, pedagogy and educational motivation, although this is far from clear and precise. Yet, this could be a data fragment where what falls through the gaps could point to something else. For example: attempts to *look through the learners' lenses* is fraught with difficulty (as I also discussed in Chapter 4) since he concedes that their *home country* has features and characteristics that are nationally inscribed, therefore alien to him (disidentification); this then begs the questions, "How does Ron perceive *home study* and is it shared by his learners?; his use of the personal pronoun *I* is in a state of constant movement so, perhaps, he is trying to find himself in some way; there could be a dichotomy of willingness and resistance in the different perspectives of teacher and learners; and the notion of *a very lax approach to learning* is interesting, particularly when located alongside his questionnaire responses where his personal philosophy is that learning should simply be enjoyable. I am not suggesting that there are contradictions in Ron's data, but

that interesting tensions surface when power relations and the politics of the classroom are brought to the fore, and further still when juxtaposed against multi-cultural dispositions and language barriers where differences or otherness are revealed, only to be immediately reabsorbed into sameness – but such is the nature and difficulty of language. Yet the more I dwell on this data fragment, the greater the maelstrom of circling concepts where, for example, the goods and values Ron has chosen (Higgins, 2011, op. cit.) seem not to be reciprocated by his Libyan learners because, possibly, they have chosen different goods and values which might sit better with cultural dispositions inaccessible to Ron who then sees the subsequent culture collision between teacher and learners' goods as *a very lax approach to learning*. In Rancièrean terms, Ron may have a mental image of the police on his terms whilst his Libyan learners are possibly reactively engaged in political activity which is their own subjectification of their norm and leaves me pondering whether LLS policy makers have similar tensions in their minds regarding how policy is devised, at the macro level, and implemented at the meso and micro levels. For me, all this just seems to problematise the norm where, in Ron's fragment, the teacher might be claiming to hold the normative high ground and the learners are an unfathomable collective of otherness, rather like the entire marching parade being out of step with the solitary marcher doing something else in the belief that s/he is the only one who is in step. Interesting.

Yet any analysis of this fragment from Rancière's political perspective could be contested and is slowed down a little when we pull the emancipatory end of the same Rancièrean (1991) string into focus, particularly will-to-will and intelligence-to-intelligence. Here, Ron seems to have mobilised his reflexive goods or values in order to reveal his intelligence to the intelligence of Libyan culture. Whilst this appears to be akin to lifting a veil Ron is, I suggest using Rancière's (1991: 23, op. cit.) three questions, begun to be emancipated in that he has attended to his will (What do you see?) and paid attention to what he has found (What do you think of it?) but been unable to work with it very much (What do you make of it?) Is this what Rancière had in mind when advancing his axiom: 'The master is he (sic) who encloses an intelligence in an arbitrary circle from which it can only break out by becoming necessary to itself' (Rancière, 1991, p. 15)? If this is anywhere near an accurate analysis, then I suggest that being emancipated could be a difficult place to be.

In Fragment #4, an extract from Ron's set PIA assignment being a 3000-word essay exploring *Professional Issues* in the sector, there are further hints of a search for the self, I suggest:

I realise that as I walk through the classroom door I become another person and that teaching, for me, is part self and part performance. In my two jobs I am usually already in the classroom as the students drift in,... but in my summer job I used to enter the room with waiting students and I could actually feel a change taking place. I do not think this is a dishonest disguising of my true self...

I suggest that this fragment does a thorough job of making Ron's *true self* elusive: he paints himself as different when in and out of the classroom; the true self is not a performer; and the tangible feeling of change taking place. No, I feel that there would be no reason why this might be a *dishonest disguising* – it could be a wholly honest disguising. There is an extensive literature that I enjoyed in Phase A concerned with the notion of teachers as actors and resonates closely with Ron's feelings of leaving oneself out in the corridor and acting in the inauthentic way I mentioned in Chapter 1 by way of introduction (Elbaz, 1993; Atkinson, 2004; Hanley, 2007). Yet at the writing-up stage, I am no closer to answering the various riddles concerned with the problematic mask-swapping of the true self and the disguised self, like: Do all teachers do this? Do I do it? Does it matter? Why? Why not? And equally elusive, does Ron slip into an affective language of *feeling* rather than his earlier certainties about teaching and learners because he is less certain about the shifts in his various selves? Again, I think this is interesting.

John, a Police Chief Inspector from one of the Saturday cohorts, was observed twice teaching different groups of newly-promoted Police Inspectors and on the first occasion, during a rare opportunity to engage in dialogue, responded to the question, "What was important, from your perspective, in this session?" as:

After 29 years I'm at the end of my Police service and my job has been dis-established. So what I want is to leave this next generation of inspectors with the core skills that they will need to be able to see the vision and implement it in their everyday planning.

Followed by, "How did you achieve that?"

It didn't help that there's only six of them (I always have 14 on this course) and two of them are from Hong Kong so I split them up. The session is for them to plan a team development day, according to a written brief, and present it to the other groups. I then challenged what they'd planned because, whatever they do, there would be tensions and potential difficulties – there always is (gives examples of typical omissions). It all comes down to the thinking behind the plan – they don't yet think like inspectors and I want the pennies to drop so I can move them forward.

When considering the reflective "point of potential" question that would appear in his written evaluation of the session, "What else is possible with this group and/or topic?", John concentrated on his observations of the dynamics of the group, the ways in which the Hong Kong officers felt the course was *making them think* and, finally:

One aspect I hadn't identified before it emerged in the classroom was that I was able to identify the differing interpretations and approaches and use it as a means of selecting directed questions to the learners. This enabled an entire new learning process to take place. The learners, rather than share their thoughts about the peer presentations, began examining the different approaches and started to explore and develop their ideas. This allowed the learning to develop at a much more natural pace and enabled me to assist the learners in identifying how these issues related to their leadership role within their normal working environment.

This is an interesting response when considered from a *relatings* perspective. Here, although only really alluded to, John's pedagogical approaches shifted according to his sense of the climate of the session and group working activities where *differing interpretations and approaches* (presumably the Hong Kong officers were on this occasion working differently to the UK officers and previous Hong Kong officers he had worked with) were grasped as something of a "magic moment" to invigorate a type of learning that was new to him. The

section of this fragment that troubles me is the ensuing learning being *at a much more natural pace* (whatever that is) and its relationship to *their leadership role within their normal working environment* (where I have difficulty in even beginning to think what the small space of a Police Inspector in Hong Kong looks like, although I would be surprised if it was in any way in resonance with what I might consider a *natural pace*). So, how do we conceive of *natural pace* and is it as thorny and elusive as R51's (earlier) notions of *Nature of my learners* and the *Historical nature of department*? How can we know the nature of something? Does the landscape of the LLS that I sketched in Chapter 2 give a clear sense of its nature? Did the same chapter give a sense of the nature of trainee teachers who enter teaching at an average age of 37 years? I think that this mirrors the cautionary discussion regarding the slipperiness of language in Chapter 4 since definitions of "nature" (Allen, 2003, p. 926) unhelpfully amount to:

> ...4 the physical constitution or motivating forces of an organism. 5 the inherent character or constitution of a person or thing; essence. 6 disposition or temperament. 7 an individual's inborn or inherited characteristics, as distinct from those attributable to NURTURE. 8 a kind or class of thing.

Following the second observed session, John was left with the following reflective question written on the observation form, "How would you refine your teaching and learning strategies/resources if you were to repeat this session?" which he responded to on TP3 as:

If I was to repeat this session, with regard to the role play exercise, I would use floor cards indicating the five ego states rather than the basic parent, adult and child, and assisted the learners by photocopying their scripts to enable the exercise to play out more naturally; with regard to the Paxman –v- Howard video, I would split the class into two and ask each group to identify the ego states that their character passed through at the various stages. I would then ask the groups to compare and contrast their responses and would have facilitated a discussion between the two groups and utilised critical questioning. (Goes on to explain, through engagement with cited theories, how he would develop his

critical questioning style and concluding wi*th*): *To make these changes I would have to negotiate an extension to this session so that it covers two hours* (it had been cut to 90 minutes with little notice*) however the refinements in my teaching and learning strategies would significantly increase the value of this session.*

In both sessions John was, I felt, an outstanding teacher and his approaches were located firmly alongside his notions of educational desirability for newly-appointed Police inspectors as carefully outlined in his questionnaire responses. Whilst his latest account gives clear praxis-oriented strategies for invigorating what he saw as the necessary learner behaviours, ostensibly developing higher level thinking skills in a new context, there were also political tensions in his context which seemed to constrain and frustrate him. Here, a blend of organisational re-structure, dis-establishment of posts, a reduction in promotions and hastily-reduced time for sessions conspired to limit the potential quality of learning that was important to him. So while John seems to be able to locate his goods (Higgins, 2011, op. cit.) and value systems (Halliday, 2002, op. cit.) alongside his sayings, doings and relatings (Kemmis, et al., 2013, op. cit.) he gives a sense of being able to achieve much more if the neo-liberal system would cease clipping away at his small space and constraining his perceived potential for more valuable learning in his context. (As a post-script, John was compulsorily retired from the Police service, registered with an LLS teaching agency and is now teaching contractually on a Public Service programme for full-time learners in a local LLS general college where the greatest challenge, according to personal emails, has been to cope with the foci on performativity and accountability which he had not experienced in the Police service).

Similarly for Paul, teaching Business Improvement Techniques (BIT) to groups of 12 manufacturing operatives in an engineering company, seemingly ad hoc cuts to his programme limit what he also felt able to achieve. According to his questionnaire responses, Paul believed that: Q.1.: (The) *Development of personal responsibility and questioning current methods* were the only things that were educationally desirable in his specialism and context because, Q.2.: *It is the only way that improvements can be sustained*, a briefly explained perspective which is embedded in his sessions through, Q.3.: *Encourage responsibility from the beginning – give learners tasks and roles to complete themselves. Do not do*

things for them. The dialogue that followed the first observation of his teaching included:

What was important, from your perspective, in this session?"

There's a lot of tension at the moment – the funders have dropped it from 16 weeks to 12 and you just can't do it. Well, the important thing is getting their portfolios completed within the 12 weeks and you have to be a bit canny about it, so I'm managing that – just.

"So what do you cut out?"

Theory – lean techniques (efficiency processes) *and H&S* (health and safety*) in depth. Basically, they could do with everything in more depth.*

As an industry BIT specialist, Paul seems to be echoing Elbaz's (1983, op. cit.) suggestion that there is often incongruence between what teachers believe they should be doing and what they are actually doing.

Following the second observed session two months later, Paul was asked to consider what was possible within the reduced time constraints as he repeated the programme with a different group from the same company to which he responded:

Well, the same priorities are still there – the company needs a change of attitude from the shop floor and we need to have them finished – and we're getting there with both of them. I think I shouldn't intervene as much – I should use coaching and encourage learners without being directing. Try to encourage a discussion of how the ideas developed in the session relate to the learners' experience on the shop floor.

From a *doings* perspective, Paul seemed to be struggling with the duration of the course being reduced by 25%, a loss of 12 hours with each group, and possibly indicative of what Allman, et al. (2003, op. cit.) meant by the insidious influence of education policy, which had the potential for a significant impact. Here, Paul was trying to manage two competing demands, but in less time – to achieve the same degree of shop floor *attitude* and to have learners achieve through the compilation of individual portfolios. It is unclear whether Paul considered a shift

of emphasis towards coaching to invoke a more learner-centred focus in his sessions was because of a preferred pedagogical shift on his part, or whether it would liberate more time in the sessions to manage the process of capturing evidence for portfolios, or both. What is (possibly) clearer is that he did not appear to consider any extension or significant development of the learner experience, for example innovation or creativity, because he had two battles to fight on other existing fronts, in similar ways to John trying to maintain training stability amid radical cultural changes. Given that Paul had already declared his stance of, *Do not do things for them* in the questionnaire, and therefore a move towards coaching might not have been a seismic shift for him, I suspect that his primary focus may have been on coping with competing managerialist demands under the constraints of reduced programme time. Again, there is a politics at work in Paul's context which is not challenged or contested but seemingly absorbed in the hope that such absorption will satisfy his supervisors and he can continue in his role in strategic compliance (Gleeson & Shain, 1999, op. cit.).

It is, I feel, difficult to see emancipation at work in Paul's dialogue because he seems to be concentrating on coping rather than exploring potential or disturbing the gaps in the police order. Despite Paul's specialist knowledge and expertise, there is an interesting movement in language between the self and the collective where, in this fragment, he speaks of ...*we need to have them finished – and we're getting there...* immediately followed by, ... *I think I shouldn't intervene as much – I should...*and leaves me pondering how he positions both himself and his employer: interchangeable? With malleable boundaries? Does he have other responsibilities within the collective that permeate his teaching role? Is this Rancière's identification and subjectification taking turns? Whose value systems (Halliday, 2002, op. cit.) or goods does he privilege? And what or whose will or intelligence is Paul linking his own to? So, a fascinating account but one that seems to close down or shift too easily.

Elena's teaching role, training nurses to use new patient monitors on hospital wards, echoed some of John and Paul's tensions but with slightly different dimensions. At her first observed session, because of staff being required to manage the wards as an understandable priority, only one learner attended. At the second session, one nurse arrived five minutes late and another left after 20 minutes, having been recalled to the ward, although Elena seemed accustomed to

such interruptions and constantly managed the learning according to the time that she had for each student. One of Elena's constraints was that the only resources she could utilise were those that she could take with her, the new monitors not having been delivered prior to the training, and she used one monitor per group. Her lengthy reflective account of the second session included her thoughts on the question left on TP2 regarding what was possible in her sessions:

I would certainly like to incorporate discussions and learners' experiences further into my teachings, and have done in the past, but often find that these can elongate the teaching session considerably, often resulting in core materials then not being taught as the unit demands pull the nurses back to their clinical duties. I do not believe that I have many other options in overcoming these issues (concerned with resources) *with the exception of getting each student a monitor to use personally, and, rather than demonstrate the features, use instruction. The benefit of using this approach to learning is that the student not only receives the information but concretes it through the immediate practical application* (then cites theories to support this). *Logistically, though, this is not practical from getting the number of monitors required or space in which to conduct the training.*

(Further, she discusses exploiting the use of a patient simulator as): *By this, I mean that without talking I could initiate different alarms or patient situations and the learners have to react to that situation accordingly. I feel that this could be an excellent way of assessing gained knowledge and could easily be integrated into the assessment/consolidation exercise at the end. We know that a student will learn best by doing so let's "do it" in a safe controlled environment to ensure they have the skills and knowledge ready for the real situation.*

Elena seemed to have embraced the notion of emancipatory potential in practical and pedagogical ways and, perhaps, these suggestions were aimed at satisfying the issues of learner motivation outlined in her questionnaire responses where she expressed concerns about nurses' perceptions of the mandatory nature of attendance. Likewise in the questionnaire, she also railed against the constraints of her role (Q.3.) as, *Limited time and resources. Lack of prior information and contact with learners*. Whilst Elena approached each session having prepared

meticulously beforehand, she seemed to have to immediately abandon her session plan because of competing clinical demands on the wards and to shift the learning focus, sometimes repeatedly, throughout her sessions although this seemed to be the norm for her. However, I am far from convinced that the neo-liberal agenda driving the LLS can or should be taken to be the same agenda driving the NHS and it seems that there is a conflation of both sectors here that is beyond cursory attempts at analysis. For example, does Rancière's (2010) claim that neo-liberal policies prevent teachers from doing their jobs properly also prevent nurses from doing their jobs properly? Like Paul and John, Elena also seems alive to the political climate in which she works and where she strives to make the most of a hard place and which has a little resonance with the politics and tensions that R22 (earlier) discussed. Indeed, Elena concludes her account almost with a flourish or passion, ...*so let's "do it"*...("let's" meaning "us" – but to whom does she refer?) and *We know that a student will learn best by doing*... (again, who does she mean by "we"?) Elsewhere throughout this fragment, Elena uses the personal pronoun "I" which, like Paul's narratives, shifts to a collective when invoking a "to boldly go" mission to improve nursing skills and knowledge – but the origins, logic and purpose evade us, I suggest. And there we are – I have just done it also. Then done it again.

Samia completed the questionnaire as a teacher of parenting skills with adult learners although her second observed session was with a group of five Year 11 girls, close to exclusion from a secondary school, and was one of 10 sessions relating to sex education. She requested an observation of this session because it was outside her normal learner profile and the learners had proven a challenge for her because of constant disruption from the use of mobile 'phones. The brief post-observation dialogue focused primarily on me using critical questioning to help Samia explore options for addressing the mobile 'phone problem including what might be possible if the learners' mobiles, subject to ethical permission from the head teacher, were utilised as learning resources which the girls had to use. (It was unusual for me to provoke or invigorate critical discussion in this way but, I felt, needed to be done because Samia was at a loss for possible strategies for overcoming the problem). The outcome of the dialogic exchange was that, one month later, Samia had learners sending text answers to her as a means of assessment, used the learners' mobile 'phones to teach key concepts of

the reticular activating system and to send positive comments to each other and which she summarised in her reflective journal as, *Overall, the introduction to the use of mobile phones worked very well with this particular group, trying to separate them from their mobile phones was a near impossible task.*

I suggest that the mobile 'phone tensions that Samia worked with in the group had their origins in cultural dispositions which, whilst not being necessarily alien to her, were not something she had experienced much in her 10 years of teaching adults and she had to think and plan creatively in order to teach at the lower age limit for the LLS. Whilst the ability to re-align one's approach to accommodate learners' diverse needs is an expectation embodied in the professional standards, Samia's case raises two pedagogical questions that are not easily reconciled. Firstly, the performative requirement of being able to shift one's teaching effectively across a range of learner cultures and age ranges in order to accommodate their diverse needs is far easier said than done, I suggest – *sayings* and *doings* are not the same and the education policymakers' *sayings* cannot readily be transposed into a teacher's *doings*. Indeed, Samia's creativity needed to be deliberately invigorated during the post-observation feedback through the emancipatory dialogue, rather like Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development or "more knowledgeable other" (a highly uncomfortable positioning for me), before she could begin to see possibilities although the governmental grand narratives inherent in the professional standards assume that such thinking is readily available. Secondly, there are clear ethical and counter-structural tensions where embracing the use of learners' mobile 'phones offers a way to achieving the type of effective learning that school regulations seek to achieve, yet fly in the face of. For example, no other students in the school are allowed to use their mobile 'phones, thereby questioning the validity of the school's equal opportunities policy; Samia's learners could not use them in other lessons, thereby driving a dualist coach and horses through school rules; the issue of requiring students to use their 'phone credit or run up a larger monthly bill in class is an important ethical concern; and the likely behaviours that the teacher of the next lesson might be faced with, etcetera.

Despite these two vagaries, the critical theorist in me suspects that Samia might see herself: in the duality of the learner when discussing the session during the break; and again as a teacher when provoked to explore potential solutions;

subsequently, when she approached the head teacher for permission to have the students use their mobile 'phones as resources, she was then operating within the structures of the neo-liberal agenda which informs and polices both the organisation and the sector; a further structure concerned with resources; an institutional structure; and a cultural structure. Unwittingly, this is what I do to trainees when, as an allegedly emancipatory endeavour, I leave them "points of potential" questions to reflect on and respond to – I place them in multiple structures and expect them to reflect their way out of them. Again, 'Physician, heal yourself '(Luke 4: 23,op. cit.).

Yet, having been provoked to think a little wider, it is perfectly possible that Samia may have been driven by forces which compelled her to explore her class out of necessity and to confront disruptive and energy-sapping behaviours from her students in order to promote more equitable and socially just sessions for her students and herself. If this is correct then I offer the notion that, as a result of emancipatory and critical discourse, Samia's (seemingly "Other" – because she arrived at what I thought were creative uses of learners' mobile 'phones) critical reflexive practice may have been effectively invigorated or developed and achieved that which the writers of the professional standards might uphold as exemplar practice. Then again, she may have been seeking to negotiate her way out of dialogue through enabling a consensus that "satisfies the observer and gets him out of the building".

So, there could be a number of political actions in Samia's fragment which sit well with Rancière's notion of politics and his axiom of emancipation. Firstly, the police order (the way in which the school's norms are held in place) is deliberately ruptured, albeit with the head teacher's consent, to provide a political space in which Samia and the learners could act, disidentified, from the norm of the space. The interesting feature for me is that the head teacher is claimed to be somewhat complicit in this seemingly subversive act and leaves me speculating on whatever goods or values he holds. Secondly, in Rancièrean (1992, p. 58, op. cit.) terms, the political ('...the political is the encounter between two heterogeneous processes – those of policy and equality') appears as a paradoxical site of equality where Samia's group are suddenly treated differently from the rest of the school and where school policy (police) has shifted for one group.

Yet Rancière's world is, I feel, complex and dense and his reflexive framework hinges on the notion that equality already exists but is barred by politics. As I suggested in Chapter 4, interesting paradoxes surface from here and Samia's data offers only a glimpse of a particular political action that is absent from the rest of the empirical data in that it appears to be the only fragment where equality is practised and overtly verified by those involved. I further suggest that this is unique in the data because it is a reflective account of the '...unreality of the idea of equality' (Rancière, 2010, p. 41, op. cit.) – something happened that was never allowed to, according to school policy, and amounted to a political act that ruptured the logic of the police order and was verified only by those who took part.

Geoff was teaching functional skills numeracy to vocational learners in a large, multi-campus general LLS college with which several smaller colleges had been merged. His notions of educational desirability were also praxis-oriented and focused on making maths interesting as he justified in the questionnaire (Q.2): *Learners constantly asking 'Why' Do we have to do maths? What's the point? (Leitch and Moser) reports show poor attainment in maths * But why*'* (sic, original emphasis). As part of the dialogic exchange following his first observation, Geoff expanded on what appears to be a series of first thoughts by explaining that learners are enrolled on their programmes, for example to be motor vehicle engineers, and it is only upon attending the first session that they discover that they need to achieve functional skills qualifications in Maths, English and ICT at level 2 as part of their programme. Geoff's frustration was that, given that the learners had studied these subjects for five years at school and not achieved GCSE grade A – C, he and his colleagues were measured and subsequently graded on the learners' achievements in these topics when he taught them for only one hour per week for 34 weeks, that is, being expected to achieve in 34 hours that which compulsory schooling had failed to achieve in five years. Whilst this might seem an overstatement, this was Geoff's perception and gives a flavour of the constraints that he, and he believed also his colleagues, face. For Geoff, the small space of potential, in Q.3. amounted to, *Making the numeracy tasks interesting*, for example, through electronic games and the use of on-line route planners to calculate mileages, *and vocationally relevant*, for example,

measuring windscreen wiper blades and calculating garage repair invoices, etcetera.

Here, Geoff's dialogue suggests that there appear to be a number of clear tensions and dualities in the minds of those in this part of the sector. Firstly, the perception that they are expected to achieve that which their contemporaries in compulsory schooling have not, despite a perceived disparity with, and privileging of, school teachers in terms of pay, conditions of employment and pensions (a perception that surfaced passionately during taught sessions of the In-Service course where most trainees in the cohort were on casualised contracts prevalent in the sector). Secondly, the issue of motivation where, in Geoff's underprivileged geographical area, high rates of unemployment combine with learners' low aspirations and expectations of a world of work to make motivation (or will-to-will) a particularly difficult concept to put into practice. Thirdly, teachers' perceived sense of injustice when learners are not informed of the full nature of their programme until their induction and which Geoff suspected was a managerialist ploy intended to promote recruitment. Here, he gave several statistical examples including 20% drop out rates in the first week of the course, with further subsequent early leaving rates, giving a sense of learners 'voting with their feet' as a response to feeling, possibly, duped and which immediately affect retention figures upon which his team are also measured. I suggest that the sense of injustice that Geoff invoked may have been shared by both teachers and learners and may have resulted from what Rancière could have termed "managerialist jiggery-pokery" rather than the electoral variety (Rancière, 1995, op. cit.). Fourthly, like John, Paul and Elena, there is the time constraint which Geoff sees as disproportionate to the demands placed on both learners and himself which college funding mechanisms appear to take no account of and which, I suggest, raises questions about education policymakers' understandings of the purposes and processes of education in the LLS and its dissonance with those of teaching practitioners on the front line. But this is the neo-liberal state we are in as the literature in Chapter 2 suggested (Gleeson, et al., 2005; Orr, 2005, 2008; Hillier, 2006; Colley, 2007).

Politically, I think that in Geoff's data I see something of Rancière's (1992, p. 59, op. cit.) belief that '...policy wrongs equality', primarily through the neo-liberal agenda. Whilst it was never my intention to conduct organisational research, I

have an uneasy feeling that the large city college that Geoff worked for may be a good example of what DIUS had in mind when publishing its (2008) "Models for Success" document (Rushton, 2009a; Appendix A) and comes across as a fair illustration of how macro, meso and micro levels inter-relate (Klein & Koslowski, 2000). Here, LLS policymakers at the macro level set performative targets for Geoff's employing institution at the meso level, a police process that brings together the notions of '...governing without governing' (Olsen, 1996, op. cit.) and Orr's (2008, op. cit.) 'TINA (there is no alternative)'. When passed down the food chain to the micro level (in Geoff's case the Functional Skills team) the targets are seemingly perceived to be irrational, deny logic and sit uneasily with the demographics and learner motivations and aspirations in a deprived inner city. There is still no choice and Geoff seems unable to identify any way of rupturing the police order (that which holds things in place) or making policy work for his learners or the team. However, the relationship between Geoff's sayings, doings and relatings is closed down when, according to his questionnaire responses, Geoff is aware of influential official reports that impact on his specialism and context but there is no way of knowing the veracity of the reports or whether Geoff had ever read and/or understood them. Notwithstanding this, Geoff's narrative suggests that he focuses his attention on mean-making and motivational strategies in order to invigorate learning, either as an act of compliance (Gleeson, et. al., 2005, op. cit.) or emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983, op. cit.) and possibly leaving little energy for exploring potential in small political spaces.

In this third and final section of data I present data extracts from one of the sample of 16 from the 2012-3 academic year provided by Mary (not her real name) who teaches Maths to ophthalmic dispensing technicians on a FdSC programme one day per week alongside her full-time ophthalmic dispensing post for a chain of Opticians.

Mary's responses to the three questions on the initial questionnaire (Fragment #1) were:

Q.1.: *The ability to deliver the syllabus that is appropriate and flexible.*

Here, Mary gives a sense of her values being located within a product curriculum (the syllabus is the important thing) and that she needs to fulfil the role assigned to her (to deliver the syllabus). It seems that the emphasis is on a teacher-led approach, if *to deliver* means to teach, although the relating to a syllabus that is *flexible* is open to speculation.

Q.2.: *The idea stems from the fact that I am a dispensing optician myself and would like to assist my students in reaching their full potential.*

Mary seems to shift slightly to a perspective focused on social justice (she aspires to *assist* them reach their potential, although she does not define what that is) and positions herself, perhaps, as a role model that they can aspire to. In particular, Mary seems to story herself and her identity as both a vocational specialist and a teacher, seemingly ascribing no particular privileged position to one or the other.

Q.3.: *I often reflect on my experiences as a student as well as that of a teacher. I have picked up on the areas of mathematics that will benefit the students the most throughout their course; however, my biggest constrain is time (there is just not enough of it).*

Interestingly, Mary gives no sense of how someone sat at the back of her class would see her values or goods being outplayed, whilst giving a clear sense that she is a reflective practitioner who brings a range of experiences to the teaching role. Mary possibly invokes a feature of the "Other" here in that she still reflects on her experiences as a learner (does this mean when she was learning to become a qualified dispensing optician? Or earlier when at school?) or is she relating to her learning on what was then her current PGCE programme? More interestingly, this raises questions regarding how, *I have picked up on the areas of mathematics* sits with the centrality of the aforementioned syllabus, and *benefit the students throughout their course* rests with career aspirations. The time constraint is a regular tension for many of the trainees, according to data elsewhere in the study.

Fragment #2 (Reflective account of 6th observed session):

On the observation feedback form (TP2), Mary was left with the questions, "What was the most important thing in this session? To what extent do you think

you achieved it? In what ways might you pursue this ideal if you were to repeat this session?" Mary spent two weeks reflecting on this and responded on Form TP3, the reflective account, as a post-script to her pedagogical reflections on the session:

Maths skills permeate the everyday job of any dispensing optician. Throughout the course we cover a range of topics and admittedly the practical application of some of them is not always evident immediately. The learners are required to do more than just calculate the percentages and solve basic arithmetic problems. In order to progress through the Foundation Degree it is essential that they are equipped with basic knowledge of algebra, geometry and trigonometry.

Firstly, on one hand in asking such questions of Mary, I am intervening in her teaching practice from an external perspective – a critical approach that Rancière argues for in pursuit of giving the oppressed an insight into the power relations at work in their contexts. On the other hand, I am also an oppressor or figure within the same workings of power insofar as I decide whether she will ultimately pass the course and I have no idea to what extent this plays on Mary's reflective accounts, particularly when I frame a question such as, "To what extent do you think you achieved it?" Likewise, in attempting to analyse data from a critical perspective, I am trapped between the need to be on the outside looking in whilst undeniably being a part of Mary's world. Secondly, there might be something paradoxical in, *The learners are required to do more than just calculate the percentages and solve basic arithmetic problems* and, *it is essential that they are equipped with basic knowledge of algebra, geometry and trigonometry*, although this is not articulated. Thirdly, Mary has responded to only the first question although why this should be is unclear. Again, language (or sayings and relatings) seems to fail.

Fragment #3 (Reflective account of 8th observed session):

On the observation feedback form (TP2), Mary was left with the questions, "You have been with this group for almost a whole year. What has been your guiding principle or aim this year? To what extent do you think you achieved it? In what ways might you pursue this ideal if you were to find yourself teaching the group

next year?" Again, Mary spent two weeks reflecting on this and responded on Form TP3 as:

My ultimate goal is to create a learner-centred, safe, caring and supportive, cooperative and well-managed learning environment.

One of the motivation factors for my learners is a tangible career progression path in their workplace. Every now and then I remind them of their predecessors who have successfully completed the course and went on to become managers, contact lens opticians, ABDO examiners and lecturers.

I like to think that the learners went away with the knowledge that passing their exams is achievable as the quiz gave them an indication of the variable difficulty of questions. Also, I let the trainees know that I would be very happy to provide additional guidance and support with the exam revision. In addition to this, some of the students, who struggled through the semester, appeared more positive and determined and gave me verbal feedback regarding their progress and learning experience.

Here, Mary seems to do a number of things through sayings and relating. Firstly, Mary has shifted to a place where learner-centredness might be a pedagogical or pastoral priority for her whilst these were less privileged, or articulated, earlier in the year. Further, I suggest that this might be a political act on her part as she may be reclaiming a little of what Rancière (2003, op. cit.) termed '...the privileged thought to some'. Secondly, she reiterates the aspirational focus using role models outlined in her questionnaire seven months previously – perhaps it has been there all along but here it seems to speak of vocational identity, vocational goods (it is good to aspire to climb the vocational ladder, possibly) and Colley's (2003, op. cit.) '...positional good'. Thirdly, there is a suggestion that she believes, overall, that she has done a good job with the group regardless of how they perform in the forthcoming exams, although we cannot know the extent to which students' exam results plays within her reflexivity. Fourthly, there may be an element of pride in her work despite the many difficulties that she has endured and she seems to derive satisfaction from having developed teacher-learner relationships to the extent that her learners seem comfortable in offering positive feedback, and it seems that she was not expecting this. Finally,

Mary appears to give a sense of her habitus and identity in terms of the sayings and relatings as she speaks of herself. Here, Mary is, possibly: either aspirational or intentioned (*My ultimate goal*); possessive (*my learners*); managing or reinforcing (*I remind them*); preferential (*I like to think*); giving (even benevolent?) (*I let the trainees know*); and additional (*I would be very happy*). I acknowledge that this is a difficult analysis but Mary seems to be combining her vocational goods (which she at no point questions as being different to those of her learners – possibly a huge assumption) with her positioning as not only a teacher, but the teacher who might stand or fall depending on her learners' exam results. So I suggest that Mary may be shifting her personal stance in defence to a series of future unknowns, for example, success rates, future staffing (she has a 0.2 post) and the politics of the college while she is working in industry five days each week. We can only speculate on these influences in the same way that we can only speculate about when she does her session planning, her marking, her PGCE work and accommodates married home life – yet this is far from unusual for new entrants to the LLS.

Fragment #4: Professional Issues Assignment (PIA)

In discussing professional values and notions of "Professionalism" Mary wrote):

In the context of a discussion about professionalism, the notions of responsibility and accountability come with granting the autonomy (sic). *As an individual practitioner, I have an opportunity to decide and to make choices and judgements about best courses for action (Robson, 2006).*

The concepts of care for others, trust, honesty and, to some degree, altruism permeate both my teaching practice and work ethics within (name of employer deleted here) *Opticians. I value all my students as individuals and want to improve their life chances and careers by creating an interest in education.*

The teacher is a key resource for addressing the long-standing problem of student underachievement, proposes Walshaw (2010), but is students' success largely influenced by a teacher? How about factors beyond my control? How much of a difference can I really make? Perhaps, by acting freely, autonomously

rationally and by pursuing my values, I can change students' perception of learning and promote a more egalitarian classroom.

Here, near the end of the programme and eight months later from completing the initial questionnaire, there is a sense of a shift towards autonomy where Mary has, *an opportunity to decide and to make choices and judgements about best courses for action* although these sit uneasily with her earlier (Fragment #1) privileging of the syllabus and the need for a *basic knowledge of algebra, geometry and trigonometry* (in Fragment #2). Likewise, her value of *creating an interest in education* in her learners is a new, but unexplored, contribution. More interesting is a seemingly cautious step away from learner achievement being one of the central remits of the teacher when other forces are at work, a forcefield which could be a troubled political discussion of its own which is not developed. Whilst these are interesting shifts, the possibility of *acting freely* and *pursuing my values* give a sense of being a different or new type of teacher for Mary and seems to be a bold development of her use of the personal pronoun (in Fragment #3) where her sense of self and identity shifted around with less certainty. Finally, Mary's potential to *promote a more egalitarian classroom* raises a number of questions. For example, how does she define egalitarian? What would an egalitarian classroom look like and what might the power relations be or become? How would it achieve the exam results that she seems to hope for? Would an egalitarian classroom hold to the centrality of the espoused good to *deliver the syllabus* or would it be manifested in "learning the syllabus" in order to achieve the good? Etcetera. From a Rancièrean perspective, an egalitarian classroom is symptomatic of a quarrelsome field of force as he illuminates:

> Egalitarian effects occur only through a forcing, that is, the institute of a quarrel that challenges the incorporated, perceptible evidence of an egalitarian logic. This quarrel is politics.

> (Rancière, 2004: 5).

As a teacher, Mary is indeed in a political place but it is unclear whether she really advocates invigorating polemical political discussion, especially in ophthalmic mathematics.

Later in the same PIA assignment, when discussing the influence of education policy on teaching professionals, Mary developed her thread:

Until recently, it never occurred to me that my full-time colleagues have been having the exact professional issues described by many authors (Avis, 2007; Robson, 2006; Carr, 2003), namely, loss of control, intensification of labour, increased administration and stress of performativity. FE and HE lecturers are constantly subjected to targets, reviews, judgements and comparisons; furthermore, they experience the ever changing flow of demands, expectations and indicators from the institutions. I have witnessed them doubt their efforts and judgements, question their techniques and abilities and struggle to cope with the intensity and pressure of day-to-day practice. Surely, effective moral judgements, which are expected of teachers, cannot be made in the absence of the right kind of sentiments, sensitivities and sensibilities (Carr, 2003).

By the end of the second year Mary seems to be more comfortable in challenging some of the politics in her part of the LLS yet, interestingly, she does so from without – considering the tensions that she has witnessed in others, not herself, specifically. Is there some comfort or security in looking through others' lenses or, because she is part-time, do such tensions bypass her own *day-to-day practice*? This latter fragment suggests that Mary is alive to the performative and managerialist tensions in her context although such awareness seems to come initially, if not entirely, from her reading. Then Mary locates the impact of the neo-liberalist agenda within her own lived experience as a trainee, fractional teacher, but maintains the view from without: *I have witnessed them* (testimonial). In the final sentence, Mary questions whether *effective moral judgements* can *be made in the absence of the right kind of sentiments, sensitivities and sensibilities* and in doing so lifts another lid where, possibly: moral judgements are claimed to be the remit of the teacher, that they must be effective and that they are somehow currently oppressed; sentiments, sensitivities and sensibilities (three different notions which she does not illuminate but, possibly, cites Carr [2003] to speak on her behalf) are conflated yet are coupled with moral judgements as a strand of professional identity; and that such value systems may be being expunged from teachers in the LLS in the current climate where, possibly and politically, teacher values are reabsorbed into sameness.

One point of this discussion or examination of one trainee's longitudinal data, and there is a great deal more that can be examined, is to make clear some of the limitations of critical theories. Whilst the post-modernist might swoon over the many and various discussions, tensions and contradictions, and particularly that which is not said, such data analysis leads one to the inevitable point that "There are no absolute truths here". The critical theorist would seek to take something, anything almost, from such data fragments with a view to taking data collection and analysis further. For example, it might be possible to say, overall, that Mary's data gives a sense of being: laden with tension and competing demands; contingent but, as data develops, paradoxical at times; evasive (wittingly or unwittingly) of responding directly to the posed "points of potential" questions (and is this a selective mutism, a fear of exceeding a word count or misinterpretation of what the tutor/observer was asking?); shifted by the end of the programme where the "voice" is being used more freely (sayings), using colleagues' perspectives rather than her own (relatings) and invigorating debate and challenge; and an example of how language fails, both in the writer articulating her thoughts and in the reader's interpretation.

Yet Mary has told her story: a story of shifting identity and reflexivity that is in movement, perhaps more so as she developed her voice and sayings; a story that works hard to legitimate teacher responsibilities (as she perceives them) in pedagogical approaches or doings; and a story imbued with institutionally and governmentally-inscribed politics of relatings which privilege the evaluative state over goods and values. I think that Mary's story is a fine example of how multiple data fragments offer much more than the questionnaire managed to glean on its own, not only for the glimpses that the four fragments offer but also for the questions that they raise around the gaps and unknowns. So, for the critical theorist, while there might be a sense that there is something to work with in pursuing a hope for the future, there are no certainties.

And here there is another story – not all of "my" trainees completed or returned the questionnaire and many who did opted not to respond to the "points of potential" questions on Form TP2, as was their right. But such silence, whilst seemingly on one hand (possibly to another reader) obstinate, is on the other hand telling insofar as it raises important questions for the teacher educator. For

example, is trainee silence the same thing as selective mutism (Bingham & Biesta, 2010; Freire, 2010, op. cit.)? If so, do silent trainees just want to be told about their teaching rather than think about it in critical and possibilitarian ways as I suggested in Chapter 1? If so, would this equate to reluctance on their part? Or if not the same, does trainee silence mark a particular level of reflection as the boundaries of their interrogatory positions, as Atkinson (2005, op. cit.) proposed? If so, how can the teacher educator move trainee teachers' reflective practice onto reflexive practice then onto critical reflexive practice? But reflective practice, regardless of different levels and models, is yet another grand narrative of ITE programmes in the LLS and one that has been, I have suggested elsewhere, '...over-theorized...' (Rushton & Suter, 2013: 2) and is fair game for being contested as a political interference. Whilst these seem to be important questions that fall through the cracks in the data and the thesis, there are a number of related questions that are worthy of a more deliberate address, as follows.

Discussion

Firstly, I think that trainees' apparent reluctance to sayings, that is their silence or selective mutism, might have gone beyond mistrust and become a fear: fear of what might happen if they expose their inner thoughts within the workplace context; fear that the organisation might want to expunge their goods and values from them; or fear that their moral mindset and ethical perspectives might turn out to be in dissonance with those that they are expected or required to hold. Earlier, in Chapter 4, the works of Peace (2010, op. cit.) and Coffield & Williamson (2011, op. cit.) suggested that a prevalence of fear was becoming an everyday force in UK society and which permeates the education sector, respectively. If trainee teachers in the sample harbour any fear of speaking of potential, then I suggest that Bingham & Biesta's (2010, op. cit.) belief that '...the refusal to know can also be understood as a successful interiorization of the logic of the system...' could explain how trainees manage such fear. But then, is this not what neo-liberalism does best – keep each in their place striving mightily to achieve the system's objectives and economic imperatives? If so, perhaps fear is the norm when trainees, new to the LLS, travel with the herd whilst trying to make sense of '...the logic of the system...' (ibid.) whilst simultaneously trying to conceptualise the many grand narratives that suddenly surround them alongside

contextualising their own goods, values and agency. In other words, it may be that fear-fuelled silence is used as a coping mechanism to escape a perceived posturing of authority within particular contexts – a way of keeping one's head down or '...playing the game...' as Wallace (2002, op. cit.) described.

Secondly, despite whatever truths might be here I think that there is also something valuable in the notion of "thinking and looking wars" that I invoked in Chapter 4 and which, I argue, surface in this empirical chapter. Here, in the first data section there were fragments of thinking (in the sayings) from some of the 156 trainees who took the opportunity to do so. In the second data section there were data sets from six trainees from the 81 (I am not trying to be quantitative here – just putting the data into context) who had been thinking (reflecting through sayings and some doings and relatings) on the post-teaching observation "points of potential" that were left. In the final section in this chapter, there was evidence of longitudinal, developmental and shifting thinking from Mary, particularly so in her sayings and relatings, much of which resonated with some of Ron's data fragments, particularly when speaking of the self and agency. I acknowledge that it is unwise to extrapolate meanings from elsewhere, but I argue that just because some trainees do not commit to practitioner research or commit their thoughts to writing, does not mean that they have not been thinking or looking and, therefore, are not engaged in such forms of warfare – just holding a solitary stance in a small but meaningful front of which little is known. But they each also have a story. I can ruminate on this endlessly, for example, did they begin to think aloud after they qualified? Have those on fractional or casualised contracts waited until they enjoy more secure positions before exercising a voice? Or did they find a better forum for expression elsewhere? Once qualified, I seldom hear from former trainees although I cling to a small hope that, just as Mary developed over a year her confidence with speakings and relatings with a hope for better doings in the future, the silent trainees might be now using a voice or enjoying some sort of equality in their small spaces. Then again, maybe I am too utopian for my own good.

Thirdly, and emerging from silent thinking and looking wars, are important questions concerned with what silence or selective mutism tells us about the politics of these unexplored small spaces or war fronts. For example, what work

is politics doing in the absence of data (or the silences)? Or, what political work is the absence of data (the silent trainees) doing? At the writing-up stage I have begun leaning towards a belief that there might be something quite powerful at work here – a logic that seems to have unfolded without any help from me. Specifically, I am mindful of Brookfield's (2005, op. cit.) conviction that learners are also agents of power and also the analogy I drew in Chapter 4 concerned with trying to have an argument with someone who will not argue back – the silent non-actor is a more powerful actor than the one shouting, I suggest. This paradox sits quite easily with Rancière's work, I feel, where he might recognise the silent trainee teachers (that is, non-participants) in this study as '...the people who are together to the extent that they are between...a non-being or a not-yet-being' (Rancière, 1992, op. cit.) and therefore engaged in a political act of emancipation on their own terms or, as Ross (2010, op. cit.) put it, '...localised acts of dissent'. Whilst I imagine that Rancière would be interested in this aspect, non-participants could also be seen as "Others" or as indicative of the notion of "Otherness" within the folds of the four successive annual cohorts of trainees and which seem to me to represent one of the fault lines between equality and emancipation that Rancière would jump on. So I feel that the politics of the other is, paradoxically, not so much about the silent trainees being necessarily oppressed but more about the power that the silent other wields.

Fourthly, there is the problematic dimension of language, or trainees' sayings, throughout the empirical data which, whilst essential, is laden with tension. No matter how close I get to a trainee or how well I get to know them, I can never be where they are, therefore, I rely on interpretation. I do not need to check with anyone that this is not one of my strong points – I am alive to many of the things that hamper me and interpreting language, narrative and discursive textual fragments is one of them. Here, I find that language is somewhat fuzzy, is in a constant state of movement and is never (really) clear, which is why I feel it fails.

Chapter 6: The Teacher Educator's story

Throughout the thesis I have endeavoured to give a sense of my own reflexive stance and I am not unduly concerned if this has played less than a cameo role because I wanted to tell the trainees' stories, as a return offering, rather than my own. Yet the six years of the doctoral journey and five years of navigating the swamp, especially the writing-up stage, deserve a small but overt mention at this late stage.

Throughout Phase A I moved from seeing myself as an 'uncertain interpretivist' (Rushton, 2009a: 2), to a 'cautious critical theorist' (Rushton, 2009c: 4), to being something without a label (because they seemed not to be helping very much) (Rushton, 2010a) but trapped in 'an ideological and professional reflexive trauma' (Rushton, 2010b: 6) and culminating here in something sodden from the swamp with one weak hand striving to retain a hold on the slippery bank. Whilst life in the swamp may have taken its toll, it also deeply embedded some changes in my reflexive self which I can make out in the swollen whorls of my finger tips. Firstly, I can see that I have become much more cautious, contingent and subjective, which accounts for the recurring use of "seemingly", "it might be", "this could" and "possibly", et al. throughout the thesis – a use of language that could (I am doing it again) be a nuisance for a reader who thirsts for truth and objectivity. I do not believe that there are any particular or absolute truths that emerge from this thesis and from the trainee teachers' particular small spaces that can be cornered in tangible and reliable ways or even in my own sense of self. I have my supervisors to thank for this.

Secondly, and related to the first point, I can make out the development of my reflexivity which feels to be quite wide open, considered and thoughtful – I have slowed myself down considerably. I think this is illustrated in Chapter 5 where my lumpy attempts at data analysis do not arrive at answers but seemed to raise more questions, yet I am comfortable with this. There are no easy reconciliations in the ways that trainee teachers grapple with the politics of the LLS and tentatively trying to settle any of them seemed to be laced with multiple perspectives and laden with tension, therefore I am comfortable in continuing to think and reflect on them.

Thirdly, I feel that I am more accommodating of both my own failings (I have already self-flagellated a few times to the tune of 'Physician heal yourself' (Luke 4:23, passim) and I am mindful not to ascribe to others that which I am not prepared to ascribe to myself.

Fourthly, I can see in the whorls that the reading, research and considered engagement with language that has populated this story has spread beyond the thesis. For example: with a colleague I co-authored a book on reflective practice which was published last year (Rushton & Suter, 2013), something that would not have materialised without being critically immersed in trainees' data; I co-authored an international journal article with one of my supervisors and another EdD student (Pearce, et al., forthcoming) on the tensions and dualities inherent in pedagogic silence, something I could not have done in Phase A when I deemed silence to be obstinate and reluctant, whereas now I see silence as powerful and productive; and I have developed the confidence to present difficult concepts to conference audiences and respond to their challenges and arguments.

I am not aware of any label for these shifts other than the polymorphous self and I concur with Butler's (2000, op. cit.) assertion that: 'You call me this, but what I am eludes the semantic reach of any such linguistic effort to capture me', yet I would still like to be a teacher educator (which makes me a teacher in the policy makers' eyes) but it will come at a price as James puts forward: 'My brothers (sic), not many of you should become teachers. As you know, we teachers will be judged with greater strictness than others' (James, 3:1). I imagine that there are myriad ways of strictly judging my own reflexive stance but I think I should subscribe to my earlier (p. 21) concurrence with Freire and Rancière that both critical theories and emancipation cannot be "done" from outside – one must "do" them. Having nailed my colours to those twin masts throughout, I will attempt to answer Rancière's three emancipatory questions (apply his axiom) to myself to determine whether I have attended to my will, linked my intelligence (sic) to itself and verified that I have done so, using another fragment of data from the sample and drawing on the media of the fieldwork and doctoral journey, as follows.

At the end of the 2012-3 academic year (Mary's cohort) I adopted Cowan's (1998) "two letters" approach to programme evaluation with the trainee teachers with one half of the group of 16 collaborating on writing a supportive and helpful

letter to the current first year group, regarding potential pitfalls and "top tips" for the following year, and the other half writing me a letter advising what I should change about my practice. One of the points they made in the "Dear Mr. Rushton" letter was: *When we asked you a straight question, we often found that the answer was not direct* (Sample, 2013: 1). It would have been useful if they had given one or two examples as there were lots of questions over 30 weeks. A second point made in the student letter was:

The three questions you left after each observation were often meaningless and made more work when reflecting on the session on the TP3 form. People felt like they were just thinking of something to comment on the questions asked. Are these necessary? (Sample, 2013: 1)

When I initially read this second point I thought that either 30 weeks is a long time in education or grasping Rancière's emancipatory variety of the "potential" nettle is far from easy for trainees. Indeed, two months after receiving the letter I delivered a conference paper (Rushton, 2013) based on those initial thoughts and which painted the educational emancipatory agenda as all but dead in the water. It was well received, if verbal feedback from the Australians in the audience was anything to go by. Nearly a year later, and with the benefit of immersion in data and writing-up, I am thinking distinctly differently as I will discuss next using Rancière's three questions: What do you see? What do you think of it? What do you make of it?

Statement 1: *When we asked you a straight question, we often found that the answer was not direct.*

What do you see?

I see what appears to be a true statement that is a response to an open question.

What do you think of it?

My immediate thought upon reading this was, "I make no apology for requiring trainee teachers to think", yet there is much more here in what I make of it. I also think that there were a great many questions that were answered directly, but they either do not count or are discarded in the final analysis, I think.

What do you make of it?

Had I been a teacher trainer, leading the group of trainees from one outcome to another, one theory to another and one submission to the next, much like a well-rehearsed tour guide, then I would be troubled at the prospect of not having done enough. As a teacher educator, I echo Ranceire's belief that: 'The only thing that is needed is to remind people that they can see and think for themselves and are not dependent on others who see or think for them' (Bingham & Biesta 2010: 43). I suspect that this is a breakdown in the will-to-will relationship where trainees prefer to be told rather than to think. Yet this is not a deficiency in the trainees but an omission on the part of the teacher educator whose job it is to create the conditions and situations under which the trainee's will is invigorated in order for intelligence to be revealed to itself. I understand that I am not alone in being unable to do this yet given that many have tried to replicate Jacotot's strategy but without success to date.

Statement 2:

The three questions you left after each observation were often meaningless and made more work when reflecting on the session on the TP3 form. People felt like they were just thinking of something to comment on the questions asked. Are these necessary?

What do I see?

Another statement, possibly true, formed in a collective or social setting and in response to an open question.

What do you think of it?

It is interesting. Again, the will-to-will link appears to be broken where my will in the form of "Points of potential" questions is met with what seems like reluctance.

What do you make of it?

Well, why should they reflexively consider their pedagogical potential? I had already told them what their strengths and areas for development were – was that not enough for a trainee to have to reconcile? Why consider their potential when the professional standards require mere competence and a few boxes to be ticked? Why, in attempting to invigorate them to theoretically rupture things in their small spaces, am I oppressing them? In ascribing avenues for exploration to trainees would I not be better served in concentrating on my own small space and

what I can do with/in it? Put simply, I concede that I have no right to invite them (will-to-will) to think within or beyond their confines, despite Goulet's (2010, op. cit.) suggestion that '...the mark of a successful educator is...the ability to dialogue with educates in a mode of reciprocity'. However, there are other potential powers at work in what appears to be reluctance: it could be that they are exercising their political powers (on the last week of their PGCE course) by having a final throw of the dice in enacting a political statement on their own terms as agents of power (Brookfield, 2005, op. cit.); or it could be indicative of Bingham and Biesta's (2010, op. cit.) suggestion that: 'But, the refusal to know can also be understood as a successful interiorization of the logic of the system...'; or it may be sufficient to be somehow good enough to avoid coming under closer scrutiny with the potential for being perceived in need of some remedial attention – just do enough to keep one's head down and do not unsettle any norms.

Regarding intelligence-to-intelligence (linking the trainee's intelligence to itself), it seems that it can only occur once the will-to-will component has been achieved, although Rancière has not suggested that this is a precursor or necessary preliminary step. Or it could also be that I had not led them into intelligent thinking – a concept that might be much more problematic since they are entirely on their own. I know little, if anything, of the subject specialisms, communities of practice, resource availability, contextual dispositions and institutional constraints that the trainees labour under, and certainly even less of their educational values, dispositions and goods, therefore they need to rely on what they know or can discover for themselves. Unlike Jacotot's experiment, there is no contextual book that the trainee can turn to and neither can the teacher educator explain (oppress) anything here – trainee intelligence must be revealed to itself, but there must be another, more effective way of doing so rather than leaving written questions. The other feature of this second statement is that it seems to confirm the belief amongst the literature that Rancière's axiom does not work with groups – it is entirely individual and appears to be one of the limitations of this particular approach. For example, it occurred to me that perhaps I could model Rancière's axiom within the sanctuary of the PGCE taught sessions – but it does not work with groups. But then again, it might be that, despite individual thoughts and dispositions, the group chemistry or social setting

allow sameness to be reabsorbed, float to the surface and be portrayed as the norm. So, I continue to ponder on these thoughts as my own "points of potential" questions.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

It is important to reiterate at this stage that this thesis and the research that underpins it was never about giving trainee teachers a voice, although their voices have been heard nor, as a story, was it meant to impose one dominant narrative over another and I hope that this has not happened. Similarly, I hope that I have sufficiently taken on my own chin that which I have ascribed to others.

At the concluding stage I argue that the thesis thematically contributes new and diverse data and discussion to the existing, minimal body of knowledge pertaining to trainee teachers in the LLS. Specifically, these contributions deal with: the dialogue that emerges from pedagogic encounters in a range of specialist contexts; the myriad ways in which trainee teachers work with their own goods and values as particular strands of their habitus which they bring to the sector from a range of diverse sources and histories; how identities, including notions of sameness and otherness, are relational within trainees' contexts and how such notions can be engaged with by those with a legitimate interest in developing pedagogy in the LLS; the conflicting and problematic power of political forces and subjectivities, often from unassuming sources, at work in the sector; some of the strengths and limitations of critical theories as an interpretive research paradigm, particularly when considering the work that language does; the ways in which trainees' sites of practice can shift under the influence of political acts within the landscape of the impoverished LLS; and the conflicting and contradictory ways in which one effort to embrace Rancière's emancipatory approach has turned out. I will conclude each of these features or contributions next with the caveat that I have no intention of making grand claims, indeed, this conclusion is intended to be cautionary in the extreme, however it reads.

This thesis is not only a story in itself but draws in and upon multiple stories that are nuanced, unique and contingent, individual accounts that are mostly hurried and which capture feelings, thoughts and actions at a particular point in time over the last five years. Some of the stories from the pages of the questionnaires give a palpable sense of social justice, emotional care and the giving back to society of a particular skills set or body of knowledge, most of which seem to be offered unconditionally and occasionally (possibly) rejected by those who could benefit

from them and for whom they were intended. Here, I suggest that there were particular glimpses of vocational identities within the Specialist Conference groups which, whilst these must not be taken as generalisations, went a little further than the literature suggested. For example: Colley's (2003, op. cit.) notion of a 'positional good' within particular occupations was developed, I suggest, by some of the engineers who seemed to claim their apprenticeships almost as a badge of honour or passage – something possibly greater than a good; and Avis and Bathmaker's (2006, op. cit.) suggestion that trainee habitus reveals workers having been conditioned for particular roles, although the contrasting data from some of the nurses suggests that the implied or perceived standardised outcomes of such conditioning are far from assured and certain.

Other dialogic stories have been offered which are the culmination of (I hope) careful and prolonged reflexive practice by trainee teachers unfairly located within multiple frameworks and structures which I envisaged them being able to reflect their way out of. This is my greatest regret. Here, trainees were already working hard to reconcile any number of competing and oppressive forces and I simply added more by leaving "points of potential" questions or bait which, fortunately, many chose not to rise to. This is my greatest comfort – that I did not oppress as many as I unwittingly tried to. There was also a sample of a few longitudinal stories which provided rich data occasionally suggesting that individual dispositions can shift, that self perception and perceived identity is probably so slippery that it might never be reconciled and that embedding the values and goods that they bring to the LLS table is fraught with difficulty and tension.

I argue that critical analysis of a piece or fragment of text can only tentatively examine a trainee's habitus, dispositions and contextual tensions and can no more "know" the other any more than it can lead to a truth of a situation and left me for a long time pondering what Burbules (2000: 270) really meant when he posited the notion that, '...if one believed truly that such encounters [dialogue] always fail, it is unclear what meaning "education" could ever have.' Yet within the TP3 reflective accounts and fragments there is also a recurring theme, I feel, of where trainees generally arrived at pedagogical solutions or potential developments to their practice, as they saw them, despite being often unable to implement them – and I suspect that Burbules might have been encouraged by this because, it

seems, their pedagogic approaches are seemingly underpinned by a generally under-utilised armoury of aspirational practices and processes that trainees are aware of, and would seek to embrace if conditions were somehow better, and emerges a little in their sayings, doings and relatings (Kemmis, et al. 2013). Thus, I caution Bingham and Biesta's (2010, op. cit.) suggestion that trainees might be in ignorance of how to move their practice forward – I think that many of them had forward-thinking ideas of how they could invigorate their teaching, if conditions were different, but conformed to the situations they were in and made the best of what they had in these "dark times" and hard places – perhaps even hope for the future which Freire (1994, op. cit.) claimed was '...impossible to exist without...'. Encouragingly, the sayings and relatings in much of the data therefore suggest that many trainees believe they can liberate the learning that occurs under their tutelage when they begin to value potential over prescription, I suggest.

Also within the empirical data there was a glimpse of trainees holding fast to particular goods and values whilst travelling with the herd during their enculturation into the sector as they sought to reconcile their individual modern morality (Higgins, 2011) with that expected of them, or as they perceived such expectations to be. Herein seems to lie both caution and reluctance.

Here, much of the questionnaire data seemed to point quite readily to tangible goods and values although these sayings and relatings generally seemed to either close down or defy sufficient articulation to draw many inferences from, for example, R29's efforts to teach 'a little off the curriculum'. The dialogic data embraced doings, in addition to sayings and relatings, although these were more slippery fragments concerning values that were often cautionary, sometimes conflicting and usually closed down within the constraints of the TP3 word count, perhaps, for example, John's notions of what is the 'natural pace' of learning for a Hong Kong Police Inspector. For me, the more longitudinal data seemed to exacerbate the slipperyness of data concerning values and goods because identities, particularly for Ron and Mary, seemed to be distinctly fluid, in movement and shifting, even shifting behind the self in some ways, for example, Ron's 'I do not think this is a dishonest disguising of my true self'. So here there seems to be a paradox for the researcher in that the richer and more detailed the data, the more slippery it becomes and which, I seem to have found, just raised

more questions than answers. Nonetheless, the questions that emerged from the data could be pursued by other researchers in future, I suggest, and I will certainly be seeking to chase down some of them for my own clarification.

Yet whilst the empirical data owns more than a surface appeal (it is interesting, I suggest) it became decidedly nuanced when considered against the literature concerning the relational nature of identities. Here, sameness and otherness seemed to amount to a swamp of their own where both were, in one moment, recognisable and able to be worked with (for example, Samia's story and the possible otherness of the head teacher's apparent collusion in circumventing the school rules) yet in the next moment shifting, blurred and irreconcilable as in Paul's story where it was unclear where the self ended and the collective began since he seemed to speak and relate interchangeably on behalf of both. Rancière's work was, I felt, crucial here in that his twin foci of politics and emancipation combined to frame the norm in order for me to examine both what the norm might look like and what made it, or them, the norm. The literature in Chapter 4 suggested that otherness is an exception to the norm or in opposition to it, but I argue that otherness could also be a consequence of, or reaction to, the logic of the system that frames the norm in the first place. Again, whilst this mode of articulation felt dense and difficult, the norm seemed to shift from its place and to raise further questions yet I also felt that it smoked out far more examples of otherness than I had anticipated, particularly acts in small spaces making discrete and barely-perceptible claims to otherness. For example, a trainee seemingly reluctant to respond to "points of potential" questions could also be taken as a trainee effectively engaging in a political act on their own terms and which, possibly, shifted such politics in small spaces more towards the norm than the other.

Likewise, the possible prevalence of fear (Rancière, 2007; Peace, 2010; Coffield & Williamson, 2011, op. cit.) that trainees might harbour was not overtly apparent in the empirical data unless it could be relational to a fear of the unknown, the seemingly irrational or the illogical, for example, the perceived injustice of education policy and how it is sometimes implemented (the police order) as Geoff and others perceived it. Indeed, there were so many allusions to the counter-productive effects of the evaluative state of the LLS within the data, and Mary was one who I could see trying to untangle it from a distance, that

leads me to tentatively surmise that fear of the unknown and irreconcilable political powers that pervade trainees' worlds is one of their norms and where, in this regard, otherness only appears in isolated cases when trainees begin to question the way things are. If this fear of the unknown is correct, then I suggest it may begin to explain why sayings and relatings, in respect of values and goods, are not fully articulated or understood. Readers of this work might have wished me to make more authorial claims regarding this but there is, I argue, only a suspicion that: trainees perceive their goods and values to be under threat; that they set aside their personal beliefs and morality from 9.00 – 5.00; that the LLS works hard to expunge from them any values or beliefs that threaten to unseat whatever their employing organisations perceive to be the normative position; or that there is any truth in Bingham and Biesta's (2010: 43, op. cit.) suggestion that trainees are actually demonstrating a '...successful interiorisation of the logic of the system '. For me, the irrefutable evidence or truths of these situations and contexts is just not there in the data, I suggest, although researchers are beholden to continue its pursuit as Rancière (2007: 36) urges:

> For indeed it would be the ultimate scandal for philosophy, the highest price it could pay for its Platonic arrogance in the face of the empiricists, if it were to leave to the sole judgement of political jiggery-pokery, not just the conduct of the people's business, but what is perhaps philosophy's own most intimate business: how to deal with fear and hate.

I am also cautionary because I appreciate that I have been asking difficult questions of uncertain trainee teachers in dark times and, consequently, it has not been possible to conclude these analyses, discussions and examinations since: they are contingent, interpellatory and constantly being reconfigured; the trainees in the sample have qualified and moved on; and the neo-liberal state, through its reified police norms, is constantly reconfiguring the site of the LLS and shifting the spaces and opportunities for narratives, I suggest.

Throughout the critical examination of self and otherness was the omnipresent powerplay of politics and trainees as political actors as suggested in many fragments of data. For Rancière, as I stated on p. 47, the issue is not whether we as players or actors in society are committed to equality, but rather how we do so. I suggest that the data gives rich vignettes of this, for example, Ron's account of

Libyan learners' attitudes to learning which, for me, offered a sense of the learners being the norm and Ron, trying hard to invigorate what he perceived to be appropriate pedagogical approaches, seemed to come out of the story as the other – a tense and uncomfortable positioning for him despite his insights into Libyan culture, as he saw them. In contrast, and only because it was an example of a different way of engaging with equality, was Geoff's data where I see Rancière's (1992: 59, op. cit.) belief that 'policy wrongs equality' amounting to a seemingly insurmountable obstacle in the hot house of Geoff's Functional Skills team at the micro level where, I suggest, the only option that he could see open to him was Hobson's Choice, or Orr's (2008, op. cit.) 'TINA', to continue 'playing the game' (Wallace, 2002, op. cit.) in strategic compliance, possibly with hope for a better future resting in his desk drawer or somewhere for when education policy makes its next move.

In Chapter 4 I put forward the notion that political action in small spaces and gaps could, possibly, be productive and I think that this has been borne out in some of the data, particularly in the looking and thinking wars that trainees engage in and I think that their importance is a crucial outcome of the thesis. Here, references to mutism and apparent reluctance on the part of trainees should not be taken to mean obstinacy – it is simply (sic) silence, with all that this difficult concept embodies (Pearce, et al., forthcoming) where trainees' thoughts and actions are not distinct but are overlapping and contingent, fluid, dynamic and shifting. Further, they are also relational, both in research terms and in the pedagogic choices that trainee teachers consider, balance, choose or reject, and Kemmis, et al.'s critical approach has been particularly useful in working with the relational data. So whilst I have argued that silence in trainees' small spaces is a (possible) manifestation of their powerful engagement in looking and thinking, I further suggest that it is a deliberate invigoration of their reflective practice (my lumpy and obtuse version of emancipation) in and on their own terms (their political acts) that was not verbalised – and nor did it need to be in order to be effective. Was Rodin's Thinker thinking aloud? What of the person who declines to enter an argument, as I discussed earlier? No, I am far from convinced that the intelligences and intellects of trainees is not in a state of limbo or "in neutral gear" because they do not rise to the bait of the oppressive

researcher, whatever hat he is wearing at the time, and speak aloud in order to be heard. I therefore argue that this particular use of silence, and here I include fragments that seemed to close down quickly, by trainees sits closely with Rancière's complex notions of politics and the political where police holds things in place, for example, language, dialogue, identity, individual and collective action, silence and the norm (Rancière's [1997: 37, op. cit.] 'identification'). Rather, political action is, I argue, clearly evidenced in Rancièrean terms in the empirical data as much through silence, the wistful "If only I had more time..." and the incomplete as it is through the articulated narratives. Indeed, one of the most palpable political acts within the data is, for me, R75's doubts regarding having made the right choice in moving from the painting and decorating industry (and bringing with him 30 years of experience) into teaching. Here, the managerialist and administrative demands heaped upon him in the absence of a line manager seemed to have effectively scraped out most of his altruism and left him embroiled in a thinking war – a localised political act with a host of ramifications if he opted to go back into industry.

The use of critical theories as the prime methodology in the research seems to have been something of a mixed blessing as a discourse of knowing. On one hand, Kemmis, et al.'s (2013, op. cit.) praxis-oriented approach of working with sayings, doings and relatings has been particularly useful in examining what does, and also appears to do not, emerge from trainees' narratives concerning their small spaces of everyday practice. I argue that trainees' language is not only complex and fragile but also relational, especially when attempting to analytically burrow into the particular nuances of their espoused values and more tangible pedagogic practices. Here, critical theories have, I argue: helped to gesture towards where trainees have been and the influence that lived experiences have had on them; gone some way to capturing their thinking and dialogue at important points in time during their enculturation into the swampy milieu of the LLS; tried to give a sense of where and how trainees can be in the future; given glimpses of what not only holds the norms and familiar in place, but how such norms can be seen to shift, reverse, exchange places and emerge as interesting reconfigurations of political subjectivities; and helped to reveal trainees' reflective and reflexive practices as emancipatory acts, not as illusions.

On the other hand though, critical theories' reliance on language, dialogue and interpretation have felt to be difficult, tentative, provisional and cautionary. I do not claim to have settled any of the questions regarding sameness and otherness because the other, I feel, cannot be either adequately or sufficiently captured by language, for example: why particular words or expressions in the questionnaire data were emphasised; where reading a reflective account of a trainee's teaching does not give me a sense of having been there; where identity and personal values and goods elude being captured by language; and where fragments cannot be accurately interpreted by the reader, for example, R59's response to Q. 2. (why are these important to you?) as: 'A little bit Marxist'. Likewise, in the context of this study, critical theory can be seen to offer little beyond post-modernist uncertainties since there are no absolute truths to be found, just possible glimpses of potential hidden in the cracks between the uncertainties, the shortcomings of language, possible fear of the unknown, the emergence of further questions whenever one question is caught between the cross hairs of professional or critical scrutiny and faint hopes for an uncertain future.

Throughout the thesis I have probably given a sense that language fails, repeatedly and frustratingly, because some things get either left behind or unexplored or the written word does not fully articulate a trainee's feelings or thoughts, and that this has been a major difficulty for me as a researcher. Well, it has, but I am mindful that language might also necessarily fail because it is only meant to go so far, perhaps. For example, if trainees' data fragments were able to tell their story in its entirety then researchers would not be required to work as hard as they do nor get their feet wet in the swamp thereby contributing little more than milk-and-water findings to the existing body of knowledge.

I argue also that the thesis gives a sense of the ways in which the neo-liberal agenda (manifested through the police order's norms, for example, unqualified teachers being "trainees" and qualified teachers being seen as "experienced") drives the policies and politics of the LLS to the extent that its effects on trainee teachers blurs and shifts the conditions and sites for knowledge generation in the sector. Whilst neo-liberalism received only a brief address in Chapter 2, like its influence on trainees' small spaces it has been there throughout the fieldwork and the writing-up, humming away assuredly in the background and keeping its norms in place through its loathsome and invidious (or so they seem to me)

policies and practices. I suggest that it has much to answer for: knocking trainees' altruism out of them (as in R75's story); promoting seemingly obscene paradoxes (like the trip to Alton Towers being privileged over a new dance floor); the jiggery-pokery of allegedly independent reports that refuel the drive for more with less (as in Geoff's story); and the lack of space for emotional investment by trainees (as R92 and R95 suggested). The charge sheet could be a long one. Notwithstanding the potential for neo-liberalist harm, I also argue that: far many more trainees grapple to hold onto their goods and values as institutionally and governmentally-inscribed politics circle their small spaces of the swamp; that trainees continue to explore and develop their pedagogic practices making the best of what they have with conditions as they are at the time; and that they actively work with difference and otherness in the gaps that appear in their fields and sites. They have much to be commended for.

Yet at the same time the neo-liberal agenda seems to have spawned something else in the swamp – a small body of practicing combatants engaged in individual emancipatory thinking and looking wars, discretely up-ending the politics of their small spaces and, probably, nigh impossible to root out. I argue that this particular concept might also suggest shifts in some trainees' identities as each becomes a new or different type of teacher in response to the climate of the LLS, shifts that seem to have emerged and been evidenced a little in the empirical data, such as fluid use of the personal pronoun.

Thus, I am persuaded by the data fragments which seem to bolster Rancière's work in suggesting that their emancipation is already alive, growing, shifting and on its way to an inarticulate future, a future that some trainees are forming and re-forming as they look, compare, contrast, think and verify – emancipation that is at work disfiguring the neo-liberal assumption of a passive and compliant subject.

Yet, whilst I adhere firmly to Rancière's belief that: 'The only thing that is needed is to remind people that they can see and think for themselves and are not dependent on others who see or think for them' (Bingham & Biesta 2010: 43, op. cit.), I have found that inviting trainee teachers to think for themselves, on the assumption that all intelligences are equal, is equally problematic as I discussed in Chapter 6. I suggest that creating spaces for dialogue and reflection can be highly valuable and potentially productive as a strategy for revealing otherness

and subjectivity, if only to itself or as verification, but I can also recommend that leaving "points of potential" questions on teaching observation forms is not the best way. There must be a better way since, after all, it is simply (sic) a matter of creating the conditions under which trainees' intelligence can be revealed to itself. It cannot be too hard, surely.

I did not embark on the doctorate with the intention of producing anything that amounts to a list of top tips for fellow teacher educators across the Consortium, research-inspired recommendations for practitioner development or anything akin to a HEA best practice guide for teacher educators. Yet the overall aims of this project were, however, "What do trainee teachers perceive to be educationally desirable in their subject specialist contexts and how can teacher educators work with that?" (p. 6) and I need to reconcile these here if only to move my own practice forward.

I suggest that to "work with that", despite the many difficulties and tensions, I owe it to future trainee teachers and their students to:

Continue giving them opportunities to speak of the way things are in their small spaces as a form of equality and it may be more productive to adopt Rancière's three questions within a dialogic space instead of relying on written dialogue. Whilst this strategy was tried and discarded after working with the first cohort in the sample, for time-related reasons, it could help to clarify some of the language-related components that seem to get left behind when relying on written reflective accounts.

Model emancipatory approaches within taught sessions on the ITE programme through carefully orchestrating (but, again, I am being oppressive here) ways in which trainees can use their own data to apply intelligent thinking to their specialisms, pedagogies and contexts. Examining their own and others' stories in supportive pairs might sit much more closely to Rancière's axiom, I suspect, as could questioning the banalities and constraints of neo-liberalist education policy in the sector.

If we conceive of education in the Lifelong Learning Sector as a site of struggle, where blurred structural constraints jostle with trainees' identities, dispositions and choices in the equally blurred moral and ethical axes, then I should also deliberately embrace notions of *difference* and *otherness* commensurate with the diversity of the sector.

Further value and advance the notion of pedagogical potential and practice over the vagaries of prescriptive approaches to teaching and learning throughout the duration of Initial Teacher Education programmes.

Consider developing Cowan's (1998, op. cit.) two letters approach to programme evaluation to include a third letter, one from those completing the programme to those entering the sector for the first time, giving a sense of their own stories of enculturation.

Continue to exercise my own critical reflexivity in the pursuit of engaging my own, and other teacher educators', aspirations towards how education in the LLS could be.

Recommendations

In summary, I argue that this thesis makes a significant and robust contribution to the existing body of knowledge concerned with the enculturation of trainee teachers into a shifting and tension-laden sector of the English education system that is labouring under the yoke of the neo-liberalist agenda. Notwithstanding this valuable and vibrant contribution, the original feature of this thesis is in operationalising the work of Jacques Rancière. Here, reading for the doctorate revealed that Rancière's revolutionary work concerning educational emancipation, equality and politics is examined by scholars in abstract and theoretical discourses, and such commentary has been invaluable in directing this research, but has not been put into practice and reported on. I argue that this thesis is the story that Rancière called for to be told in return: to apply his "thought experiment" to a particular field of study, examine its effects and tell the story. I suggest that the 157 individual stories which informed the thesis story is only the beginning and that the story-telling should continue.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Rushton, I. (2009a) *The business of Further Education: professionalism in the trenches,* Assignment 1 (Professionalism), EdD., Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix B: Rushton, I. (2009b) *Critical squabbling around the binaries: the tensions of knowing what we know*, Assignment 2, EdD, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix C: Rushton, I. (2009c) *The trainee now standing: dilemmas in trainee teacher observation and intervention*, Assignment 3, EdD, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix D: Rushton, I. (2010a) *Alligators and swamps: research perspectives on pursuing a truth of the classroom*, Assignment 4, EdD, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix E: Rushton, I. (2010b) *Acting like teachers: re-thinking educational identities in the Lifelong Learning Sector*, Assignment 5, EdD, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix A

Ed. D. ASSIGNMENT 1 - PROFESSIONALISM

THE BUSINESS OF FURTHER EDUCATION: PROFESSIONALISM IN
THE TRENCHES

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08983195

January 2009

Glossary of Terms

DIUS   Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

FE Further Education

LSC   Learning and Skills Council

TQS   Training Quality Standard

Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to critically analyse the nature of teacher professionalism in the Further Education (FE) sector in the light of a recent education policy initiative, *Further Education Colleges – Models for Success* (DIUS, 2008) (hereafter referred to as *Models for Success* or *the initiative*). Specifically, the assignment will explore the potential impact of the initiative through a number of interrelated strands: policy discourse and power relations, managerialism and performativity, culture and teacher professionalism. Whilst the work is intended to be an academic endeavour, the strands running through the piece will be located in my own context and employment (hereafter referred to as *ABC* College) and will draw on the particular nuances of the relationships arising from ABC's embrace of, and response to, the initiative as it impacts on my own identity.

Biographically, I was a truck mechanic for 22 years, entered FE 14 years ago to teach motor vehicle apprentices, became an Advanced Practitioner five years ago whilst simultaneously moving to a full-time role in Post-16 teacher education where I am currently Centre Manager and Programme Leader for Initial Teacher Training at ABC, duties commensurate with the role of a lecturer. I enjoy a particular interest in learning cultures and a morbid curiosity in the alleged failures of a plethora of successive Government attempts to formulate effective FE and Post-16 education policy (Ball, 2003).

Although many policy initiatives come my way, Models for Success offers an inviting outlet for my study, reading and reflection at this early stage of the Ed. D because of the ripples that it promises to make across the pool of professionalism and cultural dispositions in the wider FE sector. Indeed, the potency of the initiative threatens to sweep aside any notion of culture and identity in the pursuit of implementing the Government's Skills Strategy whilst challenging power relations both at ABC and throughout the sector. In attempting a Kantanian critique (Blackburn, 2005), the assignment has woken me from dogmatic slumber and invigorated reflection on my own beliefs and presuppositions about the relationships I will discuss since, as Turnbull (1999) urges, *Any philosophy that is worthy of the name should be about liberating us from these dark phantoms of the modern age.* (p. 27).

Models for Success.

In simple terms, Models for Success is the latest addition to the Government's toolbox designed to tinker with the edges of FE where blurred boundaries now exist between compulsory and post-compulsory education, between education providers and consumers (learners and employers, et al) and between traditional and emerging notions of teacher professionalism.

The perceived victories of New Labour's post-1997 education policy mania (14 Education Acts and 370 Consultation Papers, et al [Edexcel, 2008]) may have been the spur for Bill Rammell's foreword to the document (Appendix A) where he ascribes its rightful successive place as the inevitable product of the Foster review of the future of FE (2005), the Leitch report on the UK skills shortage (2006) and the natural extension of the Education and Inspections Act (2006). These earlier initiatives were pivotal in creating a customer-led, user-influenced performative structure to FE provision where purchasing power and skills-based needs currently hold the reigns of power. The foreword carries a pat on the head for a hitherto compliant FE, a rhetoric of 'to boldly go' and a promise to update the document once consultations are completed, a promise which resonates uneasily with Jesus' cautionary parable (see Luke 14: 28 – 30) to his disciples about starting something without having thought it through meticulously beforehand (Anon, 1982). But the devil is in the detail and I begin by reproducing the textual extracts to be analysed in this assignment:

The Government has a wide set of ambitions for the further education (FE) system. It plays a crucial role in securing wider Government ambitions of economic and social success through its development of the skills and talents of young people and adults. We want the sector to build on its strengths and to go further to:

- *Develop innovative and collaborative learning routes*
- *Listen and respond to the needs of employers*
- *Reach out to those that are least likely to engage in learning; and*
- *Offer a wide range of opportunities and resources to their local communities*

It is important that FE colleges reflect on these ambitions and consider how they impact on the institution's mission. We want colleges to use the wide range of organisational options available to them in developing their business model. Within the FE college sector we want to see:

- *Greater innovation,*
- *Increased flexibility,*
- *Yet more collaboration, and*
- *The forging of new and effective partnerships*

to strengthen and enable the FE system to respond to the challenges ahead.

Colleges must undertake robust and effective appraisals of the options available to support delivery but, whatever the potential model, it must take account of local, regional and national arrangements as appropriate.
(DIUS, 2008, p. 5)

We will require more innovation and collaboration as new and effective partnerships and ways of working are forged, ensuring that the FE system can respond to the challenges ahead. This will include the development of new business models which reflect and respond to the new operating environment and are capable of making the most of the new opportunities available to schools, colleges and other training providers.

In order to ensure that FE colleges are supported in delivering these new ambitions we have set out a range of business models available to them. We recognise that these are not exhaustive. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 extended the "Power to Innovate" to FE colleges, allowing colleges to consider new and innovative ways of working.
(ibid. p. 6)

We recognise the significant challenges and opportunities faced by the FE college sector. This document sets out the government's position in relation to our expectations and aspirations for further education into the future. We recognise the significant challenges and opportunities faced by the FE college sector (sic). *This document provides the framework within which the sector will work as they develop or enhance their business and partnership models to respond to these. It is aimed at those working with and in the FE sector – including those with overall responsibility for the planning of further education delivery – the LSC and local authorities – as well as college governors, principals and management teams, who are responsible for developing business and partnership models. It will also be of interest to other providers in the wider FE service as they continue to work with colleges and each other.*

Colleges and other providers are autonomous bodies and there is no intention to specify or impose any particular model of organisation either pre or post 19. However, within that freedom to operate, we do expect collaboration between organisations, and innovation in delivery models, in order to provide a rich and diverse offer to young people, adults and employers.
(ibid. p. 7)

As with any business, colleges will continue to assess and reassess their position within the "market" and local circumstances within which they operate. They respond to the changing needs and demands of learners and employers; they respond to the needs of their communities; and they respond to government priorities.
(ibid. p. 8)

We need a system that meets the needs of learners of all ages, employers and communities and offers genuine choice, across a diverse range of high quality provision, for all. We will continue to apply the principles of competition and contestability to ensure that high-quality learning and training opportunities are

available to all, welcoming new providers and new delivery models where they will enable this need to be met.

<div align="center">(ibid. p. 9)</div>

Customer-centred delivery models will require colleges to reassess what they are doing and how. This may mean that alternative delivery models are required and that different approaches are needed to meet the needs of different audiences even within one institution. It may require different approaches to managing the college workforce and the use of its physical assets as well as the management of finances.

<div align="center">(ibid. p. 10)</div>

Policy discourse and power relations.

As a precursor to my tri-themed analysis of the language within the selected text I should make clear my connotation of 'discourse' which I take to mean:

...a way of speaking, writing or thinking which incorporates particular things as given, unchallengeable truths. The unchallengeable nature of these 'truths' means that, within a particular discourse only certain things can be said or thought; to question these assumptions is to step outside the discourse.
(Paechter, 1998, p.2, in: Avis, Bathmaker & Parsons, 2001, p.2)

Herein may reside the 'true believerism' of the policy maker yet, I argue, the political high ground of power relations is poised on rather thin ice, particularly so when such discourse is both viewed as discursive persuasion (Valentin, 2001) and excludes competing argument (Blackburn, 2005) and is thus open to question in my pursuit of truth.

In the first of the three themes, that of policy discourse and power relations, I aim to contextualise the language of the initiative. Here the Government makes clear its reactive contribution to the globalisation agenda thereby claiming an implicit political reason and rationality for driving up the UK skills base by echoing similar agendas in Australia (O'Boyle, 2004), USA (Ecclestone, 2004) and elsewhere in Europe (Keep, 2006). The reader is thus persuaded of the rationality of the initiative which assumes a global respect and a perceived universal legitimacy in a UK-contextualised educative endeavour that is simply replicated elsewhere.

Within the text an empowering liberal-humanist language persuades the reader to accept the moral correctness of the initiative where the Government is claiming to raise the aspirations and life chances of the socially disadvantaged, despite research that suggests that the socio-cultural benefits of such initiatives are *illusionary* (Parsons, et al, 2001, p. 2). However, the language of social justice is

<div align="center">143</div>

consistently coupled with economic success, for example, *ambitions of economic and social success* (op. cit., DIUS, p.5) and, *a rich and diverse offer to young people, adults and employers* (ibid, p.7) and hence the reader is persuaded to embrace the skills strategy and, thus, the initiative. Likewise, FE colleges are both praised for their previous similar efforts and reminded of their frontline position in delivering the skills required to raise the UK economic status of the future. Whilst the twin foci of globalisation and social justice have a rationality that should draw widespread acclaim and support, the heart and soul of the initiative extols a business ethos as a common-sense panacea to cure all ills.

Yet within the potentialities of the language there abides the very clear, some suggest Marxist (Fitzcharles, 2002), manipulation of the FE sector – colleges have no choice but to deliver on the Government's promises, a notion that sits well with New Labour's Third Way politics and to which FE is no stranger. It is within the discourse that we see the Third Way rhetoric work hard to persuade, through offering choice with one hand whilst simultaneously taking it away with the other, and to clearly show where the power lies. For example, *We want colleges to use the wide range of organisational options available to them…* (ibid. p. 5) and, *Colleges and other providers are autonomous bodies and there is no intention to specify or impose… However, within that freedom to operate, we do expect…* (ibid. p.7). Throughout the text colleges are reminded of the flexibility bestowed on them and left in no doubt about how they are required to use them with seven separate calls for them to "respond". Indeed, the *"Power to Innovate"* (ibid. p. 6) is particularly paradoxical in that such power is enacted by Parliament and begs the question, "Whose power is it?" Clearly, the discursive language of the text locates power relations firmly in the hands of the policy makers where, in just 700 words, "we want" and FE "will work" appear three times each; "we require" four times; that FE "must" twice; and "we expect" and "we need" once each. Perhaps "demand" and "insist", presumably also in the thesaurus, are being saved for the next initiative.

Yet FE has a rich post-Incorporation tradition (Randle & Brady, 1997) of being malleable in the hands of policy makers and the writer of Models for Success works with an undercurrent of "just a little more of the same" which FE professionals constantly anticipate being just around the next corner anyway. Such momentum, or *policy hysteria* (Keep, 2006, p. 59), could sit well with Foucault's (see Fitzcharles, 2002) postmodernist notion of discursive practices where professionals' identities and constructs are shaped by language and

thinking and, therefore, channelled into compliance. However, there is no mention in the text of either employers or FE professionals having been either consulted on the initiative or located in its evaluation therefore such compliance is, I suggest, driven by notions of governmental power based on a knowledge preserve. Here knowledge is assumed to be the sole possession of the policy makers where they decide what constitutes knowledge and legitimate its use in pursuing business goals and maintaining dominant values. In this technical-rationalist view of social relations those without knowledge (e.g. teachers) are bereft of any power, assume the mantle of "resource" and their views are ignored in the narrative of the marketplace (see later). Yet the knowledge/power paradigm is contested as Martin (2007) suggests, *knowledge is always constructed and contextualised through power struggles* (p. 1) and Models for Success is likely to invigorate much debate in the future.

Notwithstanding this there is a growing body of commentators who suggest such initiatives, hard on the heels of previous failed efforts, are merely successive stages in a cycle of intervention which inevitably breeds further failure (Keep, 2006; Allen & Ainley, 2007; Coffield, 2008, et al). The cyclical routine is not unknown to employers, heralded within the language as customers seeking value for money as FE assuages the thirst for 21st Century skills, who have been in a needy place at the centre of similar business initiatives for 25 years. Although they are only mentioned three times in the selected text, employers maintain their prescribed place of need and demand in both the sector and the initiative although this is a questionable existence.

Firstly, employers have no more power than colleges and only share equality with the disaffected, the unemployed and their communities. Secondly, there is no reference in Models for Success of employers having been consulted about the initiative, the implication being that they have not since the author would have sought to cede power to them, if only as a passing sop. Thirdly, since there is nothing new here for employers, their role is again relegated to a subservient recipient of yet another Government scheme provided for their benefit, whether they like it or not, and in which they will play at best no more than a cameo role (Huddleston, Keep & Unwin, 2005). Fourthly, research suggests that such interventions are unwanted: *The state ascribes a centrality to upskilling that is not shared by other actors, particularly employers* (Keep, 2006, p. 52).

Given the Government's friendless position of power in the initiative, I offer the notion that Models for Success is driven by their lack of trust in the stakeholders that they seek to persuade and embrace.

Managerialism and performativity

The second theme is that of managerialism and performativity which, in Models for Success, casts colleges and their staff as public servants – responsible and accountable for local implementation of central policy. The reasoning behind the centralist business initiative is built on a governmental belief that best practice can be easily transposed into other geographical and social cultures and contexts, a belief which research (James & Biesta, 2007) and I fundamentally question (see later). Although managerialism and the enterprise culture as effective FE structures have been widely contested (Randle & Brady, 1997; O'Boyle, 2004; Keep, 2006; Coffield, 2008, et al) it is here and in wider policy contexts for the near future and must work in order for colleges to survive:

As with any business, colleges will continue to assess and reassess their position within the market and local circumstances in which they operate…and they respond to government priorities.
    (op. cit., DIUS, p.8)

Furthermore, *We will continue to apply the principles of competition and contestability* (ibid, p. 9).

In Models for Success, following several pages of business-focused persuasion and rationality, FE management is clearly tasked with ensuring the success of the initiative:

…those with overall responsibility for the planning of further education delivery – the LSC and local authorities – as well as college governors, principals and management teams…
(ibid, p. 7).

In doing so, the reductionist logic and technical rationalist nature of the discourse brings managers into the hallowed circle of knowledge and, therefore, colleges are empowered (on the Government's terms) rather than consulted with reason and rationality employed to defend the Government's dominant position.

The powerful language of customer-focused responsiveness also throws down the gauntlet of flexibility and innovation, whilst reiterating where the power lies, and removes the sting of change by providing a menu of suggested operational models whereby senior managers need only peruse and select, not unlike a Post-Fordist or Taylorist wine list. Yet, whilst accelerating into recession at the time of writing, I am pondering which commendable attributes of the business world we are supposed to emulate – those of the Icelandic banking fraternity or the directors of Woolworth's? The marketplace is currently a fragile place and further problematises the, *complexity, contradictions and messiness of educational practice* (Avis & Bathmaker, 2004a, p. 308) within which education suffers when treated like a commodity as Reeves (1995) suggests it does. Notwithstanding the managerialist ethos and enterprise culture of FE, the text pays due credence to FE's historical compliance in the performative culture of the sector, the connotation of educational performativity being assumed as:

Performativity, it is argued, is a new mode of state regulation which makes it possible to govern in an 'advanced liberal' way. It requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation. The new performative worker is a promiscuous self, an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence.
(Ball, 2003, p. 215)

Whilst not overtly stated anywhere in the document, the implication is that Models for Success relies heavily on established measures of performativity for policing its implementation, the only determinants of which will most likely continue to be the invasive target-driven audit and inspection regime so familiar to education from nurseries to universities. Equally, teachers are absent throughout the document, although they may not be the intended audience, a familiar faux pas established by Margaret Thatcher where fields of expertise were suddenly not considered of value. Likewise, the power relations in the initiative make no provision for learners (and learners are not necessarily assumed to be the customers) other than to position them as recipients of provision devised by others who know best.

Meanwhile, the management of ABC, who have never been slouches when it comes to reading between the lines of policy, monitoring trends and predicting the next shift in the landscape of the sector, have been outstandingly

accommodating. From a minimalist management structure two years ago, the college now boasts 65 managers (Appendix B) (one for every seven staff) and a revised strategic plan. Five new Business Development Managers are now working to an Employer Responsiveness Strategy and setting annual Operational Plans within the remit of a recent and successful Training Quality Standard (TQS) bid based entirely on employer responsiveness. ABC is therefore in the marketplace and, whilst it has not yet merged and its managerial context may be an irrelevance at first sight, its revised strategy drives Models for Success firmly home in the next section.

Culture and professionalism

This third theme explores the implications for the initiative on the culture and professionalism of ABC where the college management have sought to firmly embrace key features of the policy:

Customer-centred delivery models will require colleges to reassess what they are doing and how. …It may require different approaches to managing the college workforce…
    (op. cit., DIUS, p.10)

Appendix C is a communication from the Director of People and Performance (sic) at ABC outlining the college intention to re-establish all lecturing posts as Lecturer/Assessor in order to respond to Government policies and changing agendas. Whilst the document is not open to analysis in this assignment, the implications of restructuring, the timing of the intention which coincides with the successful TQS bid and the nature of the stealth-like response to the Government's agenda are pivotal in any discussion about my own and my colleagues' notions of professionalism, identity and culture at ABC.

My construct of the culture and social setting of my own professional activities is not as the Government perceive it - acting as their agent and applying a one-size-fits-all pedagogy that they would like to believe works elsewhere, but as an autonomous, intuitive, emancipated professional working with my learners' needs as they are at that time and which Furlong better describes as:

Rather than inhabiting the 'high ground' of professional certainty, they (teaching professionals) *have to work in the 'swampy lowlands' of everyday life, facing situations that are complicated and messy, defying easy technical solutions:*
    (Furlong, 2003, p. 18)

It is within the confines of these swampy lowlands, more akin to surviving in the trenches, that I dialogically grapple with my own identity and sense of professionalism. Prior to commencing the Ed. D I have been comfortable in viewing my FE professionalism as "a mechanic doing something else". Yet the reading for this assignment has raised the spectre of a problematic mix of dispositions, which Models for Success exacerbates, and I propose here a language of possibilities to move my own professionalism forward – a social construction (hopefully unromantic) drawing on culture, values and my own constructs of the reality of FE which I balance against three competing notions of professionalism embodied in a range of settings.

- Traditional professionalism

Firstly, a traditional and functionalist notion of professionalism, common in the 1950's and 60's, focuses on teachers' knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Braverman, 1974; Hoyle & John, 1995) which Models for Success renders obsolete. However, I question the validity of a Governmental power base that is propped up by a self-perceived knowledge preserve at one end of the knowledge-power paradigm whilst teacher knowledge is represented by a functionalist and crumbling speck at the opposite end. Within the framework of the highly prescriptive initiative teachers are not mentioned once either for consultation, delivery or evaluation of the effectiveness of the model. In the same way teachers' knowledge from the chalk-face concerning where the gaps exist between policy and practice continues to be ignored. Thus, there is an implied epistemological assumption that FE lecturers have neither power nor knowledge and are therefore even less empowered and emancipated than previously. In the same way, ABC's response of restructuring lecturer posts into lecturer/assessor posts (existing assessors at ABC have greatly diminished contractual terms and reduced benefits) illustrates a shift in professionalism that is geared towards achieving pre-determined skills-based outcomes. Scholars agree that such interventions, ostensibly concerned with structural change, are also repressive mechanisms for reforming our conceptions of professionalism and what it means to be a teacher, particularly so as it stifles intuition (Valentin, 2001; Ball, 2003; Ecclestone, 2004; Maxwell, 2004, et al). Yet with my identity pressurised, I am reluctant to accept that I have no knowledge and cling to Wallace's (2002)

assertion that, *subjective truths can be counted as knowledge* (p. 82) and intend to hold fast to what knowledge I do have.

Likewise, Models for Success proffers autonomy only to the managers albeit it significantly. The prospect of lecturers becoming the assessment servants of choice seekers from local industry suggests a disregard for teacher autonomy which resonates with Brown et al's (2008) notion of educational Taylorism where *permission to think* (p. 11) is, in this case, reserved for managers. Such an implication offers the prospect of a divergent co-existence where teachers' intuition and reluctance to surrender autonomy (see later) may drive a wedge between the priorities of managers and lecturers.

The initiative works within an implied regulatory framework with regard to responsibility where, in the emerging climate, culture and organisation of ABC, lecturers are responsible and accountable for the local success of the initiative passed to them by managerial fiat.

Therefore, like Braverman (1974) I will discard the traditional model and consider my own theoretical framework of professionalism.

- Cultural professionalism

Secondly, whilst the postmodernist theoretical framework of discourse and power relations is contested, for example a reluctance to accept that the policymakers know best, there is a competing and growing body of empirical research (Allen & Ainley, 2007; Thompson & Wiliam, 2007; Nash, et al, 2008, et al) that suggests that language and power are only part of an untold story – that of culture and the learner dimension.

Extensive and recent research into learning cultures seems to unanimously identify learning as a problematic struggle between learning outcomes and the diverse social and cultural dispositions of those doing the learning although the foci are equally diverse. For example, Thompson & Wiliam (2007) found that teacher quality is one of the greatest influences on learner achievement and attainment whilst James & Biesta, et al (2007) and Nash, et al (2008) suggest that learning cultures are the key drivers in improving learning, attainment and, therefore, social advancement and economic well being. Here, the research abounds with examples of how teachers make a difference and demonstrate adherence to a duty of emotional care for their learners (Colley, 2006) in their successful and creative endeavours to capture what the Government seeks to achieve through Models for Success.

On the cultural playing field, many FE teachers work in an autonomous and personal theoretical framework which sits well with Coffield's (2007) notion of "what works" in that they listen to their learners and personalise their teaching in accordance with their learners' diverse needs, a pedagogy that is entirely absent from the meaning and intention of Models for Success. This omission suggests that policy makers do not listen to either teachers or learners but enjoy a misguided assumption that, as Ball (1994) postulates, teachers and context adjust to policy rather than the reverse. Research suggests that teachers do indeed adjust in accordance with new initiatives and managerial posturing and either acquiesce, resist or co-modify their identities (see later). (Bathmaker, et al, 2002; Maxwell, 2004; Avis & Bathmaker, 2006, et al).

The individualised and personal reactions of lecturers to FE change, and Models for Success is just another, contribute to the problematic and fragile interpretation of cultural professionalism emerging in the post-16 and HE sectors when performativity has further tightened its grip. *The fractured professionalism characteristic of FE lecturers renders it a weak bulwark against the inroads of managerialism and performativity.* (Avis & Bathmaker, 2006, p. 176).

I feel that Models for Success will bind my own agency still further but I baulk at becoming one of the passive voices that thinks and inwardly speaks of the latest version of FE reality.

- Semantic professionalism

Thirdly, whilst notions of professionalism throughout all sectors of education are as rhizomatous as they are contestable, there appears to be less emphasis on labels or, "what's in a name?" Scholars tend to use the terms "education" and "training" interchangeably and, to a lesser extent, "teacher" and "lecturer" and do not seem to have spotted the emerging "assessor". Whilst there appears to be little concern or research regarding job role titles, I am troubled by the dualism of "lecturer/assessor" based on the different existing conditions of service for each at ABC. In doing so, I concede that "lecturer" and "assessor" undoubtedly share some commonalities, examples from my own team including a symbiotic relationship when a lecturer and assessor team teach a module about assessment or when a lecturer carries out an observation of a trainee's teaching. Notwithstanding this, language shapes relationships and scholars (Hyland, 1996, and Helsby, 1999) suggest that fragmentation, and re-structured roles arising

from Models for Success is simply another example, amounts to nothing less than professional de-skilling.

Having worked with colleagues at ABC for 14 years, I anticipate that they will not resist the impact of the initiative but will either comply or, more likely, co-modify their professional identities as they have done previously. This co-modification typically manifests itself in teachers making the right noises for their managers (conforming) whilst pursuing a set of values or agenda of which they dare not speak for fear of being perceived as subverting a rationally-constructed attempt to respond to policy change. Whilst co-modification is common at ABC it produces an, *inauthentic sense of self* (Avis & Bathmaker, 2004b, p. 7) which the lecturer/assessor dualism promises to exacerbate.

Likewise, social identities have been widely recognised by researchers between vocational and academic teaching teams whilst distinctly differing identities and perceptions exist even between vocational areas. For example, gas trades lecturers at ABC consistently bemoan a perceived de-professionalism of their vocational habitus since being merged with the plumbing department. I imagine that the plumbers will finally appreciate this particular nuance when it is their turn to receive Appendix C from the Director of People and Performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that Models for Success speaks a rhetoric of social emancipation and economic liberation that is not new, a Third Way policy of thinly-disguised central Governmental control more akin to a blunt instrument than a carrot and carries an enduring legacy of institutional reform that will leave a professional after-taste that few will find palatable.

Fitcharles (2002) claims that professional identities are not fixed but are fluid and in a constant state of flux and Models for Success promises to maintain the fluidity both at ABC and throughout FE. As teachers, lecturers and lecturer/assessors strive to make sense of their own professionalism in the coming years, I rejoice at the prospect of having a professional platform where I, my Ed. D peers and my trainee FE teachers can unpack the tensions of discursive literature central to our roles.

Word count = 4750 (+ 230 cited work)

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Appendices

Appendix A   DIUS (2008) Further Education Colleges – Models for Success

Appendix B   Organisation Chart – ABC College

Appendix C   Correspondence from Director of People & Performance, ABC.

Appendix A

Appendix B

Ed. D. ASSIGNMENT 2 – (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY &

METHODS 1)

CRITICAL SQUABBLING AROUND THE BINARIES: THE TENSIONS
OF KNOWING WHAT WE KNOW

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08983195

A second assignment submitted towards the requirements of the Manchester
Metropolitan University Ed. D. unit on Research Methodology and
Methods.

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Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to critically analyse the nature of two theoretical, current and competing educational research paradigms and to locate my own value-laden orientation alongside them.

In identifying two suitable paradigmatic standpoints I was tempted to contrast two strikingly different dualities, for example early structuralism against Marxism, but concur with Seddon (1996) that to do so would be insufficient since there is little challenge. Given the Ed. D ethos of stretch and challenge I have chosen, as an uncertain interpretivist, to examine the problematic, squabbling tensions between critical theory and post-structuralism as a vehicle to make sense of my professional situation as a post-16 teacher trainer and Advanced Practitioner. (By "uncertain interpretivist" I mean that I am frequently left pondering my interpretation of many of the discourses that I engage in daily and seek to cement my perceptions, if only in a less watery way, in the course of completing this assignment).

As a teacher educator I am required to embrace a plethora of Government-inspired policies as a guide to effective practice, both my own and my trainees', rather than develop my own ontological value judgements regarding truth, knowledge and meaning. Similarly, I am expected to capture complex relational practitioner skills from observation, and theoretical knowledge, meaning and a sense of trainee disposition from written and oral accounts. Yet toeing a policy-ridden relativist line that purports to drive the UK skills strategy within a globalisation agenda, and mindful that New Labour's teacher is not meant to be a researcher, I am lured by Biesta's (2007) criticism that, (education) *is too important to allow it to be determined by unfounded opinion* (p. 4) and believe that it is incumbent on me to

embed interpretivist principles in the conduct of my own practice and action research.

At the start of my reading for this piece I was wary of the "one-size-fits-all" policy rhetoric in the sector and mindful of Turnbull's (1999) postulation that there are no absolute truths or values. As a humanist and potential rationalist practicing in the age of enlightenment, I intend to explore the different epistemological positions of the chosen paradigms in order to synthesise my own ethical perspective regarding truth, knowledge and meaning within my professional role. Specifically, I intend to relate the chosen paradigms to a recent action research study of a mentoring relationship (hereafter referred to as the "project") where I was tasked with raising a trainee teacher's (hereafter referred to as *Tom*, a site of multiple meanings and teaching Public Services) grade four (unsatisfactory) performance to grade one (outstanding) through my chosen medium of Frierean dialogue (Shor, 1993). Another purpose of the research was to utilise my role as an Advanced Practitioner (AP) to identify and advance an effective mentoring framework that other APs could adopt across college.

The chosen paradigms of critical theory and post-structuralism share many features although, whilst I explore here a concern with understanding complex relationships and inter-relationships between social structures and educational outcomes, there is a terminology throughout the associated ontological sphere that I will seek to avoid.

Paradigms

For the purposes of this assignment I understand a paradigm to be a philosophical stance, frame or lens through which to take an epistemological perspective on the source and status of knowledge in what counts as truth (after Barker, 2004). I caveat this definition, and echo the sentiments of Soucek (1994) and Ozga (2000) in their challenges of the post-Fordist pedagogy I grapple with daily, with the belief that, in deciding whose interpretations count as truth, the concepts of reflexivity and heuristics are central and notions of emotional investment, ethical and moral purpose and autonomous judgement are fundamental in adopting any philosophical perspective in the pursuit of truth. Hughes (2001, p. 32) offers three further elements of any paradigm which further underpin my understanding:

* A belief about the nature of knowledge – what it means to say that we know something.
* A methodology – what to investigate, how to investigate it, what to measure or assess and how to do so.
* Criteria of validity – how to judge someone's claim to know something.

The following section seeks to explore the philosophical differences between the twin paradigms of critical theory and post-structuralism in constructing knowledge in the arena of education and educational enquiry, where epistemology appears to have moved centre stage in recent years (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997), and will conclude with an exploration of the ethical and heuristic common ground between both paradigms.

Discussion

Overview

Both paradigms have evolved from the Frankfurt school's blend of Marxism and psychoanalysis, share similarities with deconstruction, post-modernism and a concern with structural inequalities and both focus on a hermeneutical methodology in constructing knowledge.

Proponents of a quantitative, scientific or technocratic persuasion, including some education policymakers who make selective use of the same (Hughes, 2001; Alexander, 2008, et al), have a seemingly pervasive view that interpretivist or phenomenological perspectives lack a certain rigour in the validity of either data collection or analysis, or both, and therefore have no place in educational research. Similarly, there is the underlying belief that reflexive questions, the heuristic and hermeneutical lynch pin of the chosen paradigms, are both undesirable and unnecessary (Scott & Usher, 2004) whilst there is a literature that makes a cogent argument for an interventionist framework whereby a reflexive model can co-exist alongside a positive model to inform ethnographic interviewing for social enquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, and Heyl, 2001, et al).

Post-structuralism in education and educational research

As a starting point, these could be valid criticisms since, for the post-structuralist, central tenets of the paradigm are the dissolution of the self and the rejection of objectivity, reality and truth (Blackburn, 2005). Hence, there is a literature that casts post-structuralists, particularly Foucault and to a lesser extent Derrida and Lyotard, as philosophers who interpret the purposes of modern technocratic power, for example education policy, as a means of control which alienates those

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at the margins of society, a peripherality that Tom felt upon receiving the grade four. There is an authoritative body of support for post-structuralism as a valid research paradigm (Heyl, 2001; Hughes, 2001, et al), insofar as it explores the alternative workings of society at the margins through escaping the rigidity of conventional structures, although it is deeply problematic and contested and could be represented by the twin horns of a dialogic dilemma.

The first of the horns of post-structuralism is a reliance on inter-textuality or extra-linguistic reality through the relations of words and the breaking down of master narratives, for example the CIF (Common Inspection Framework) grading criteria and its assumed epistemological truth. In the same way I argue that the spoken word can be similarly analysed in the pursuit of meaning and truth since context and contextualisation are dialogical phenomena in this linguistic turn (Lafont, 2002 and Clark, 2004).

The second horn is where the authority or privileged position of the author (or speaker) is dismissed in favour of the reader (or listener) becoming the active producer of meaning (see later) and makes for contestable shades of grey in its claims to truth.

Together, the twin horns of post-structuralism's discursive attempts to fabricate notions of identity, both self and other, become entangled with those of power relations, autonomy, representation and responsibility and dissolve into a seemingly intangible estrangement from the normative positioning of the teacher. In this respect post-structuralism rather complicates itself in that, on one hand, it seeks to break down the barriers at the binaries, for example the different perceptions between mentor and mentee or between observer and observee. On the other hand, it seeks to give a voice to all, through dialogic interpretation and discursive analysis, to shape what counts as truth and identity. Therefore, whilst the model promises to be the Equality and Diversity Officer's panacea, a major

paradox of post-structuralism is the intended emancipation of the individual, through sensitive handling of data, against careful accommodation of the individual dispositions of both observer and observee or mentor and mentee where there is dispute over who "knows best".

In the project Tom was initially reluctant to be mentored, blamed his students' behaviour and perceived his teaching skills to be at least adequate (grade 3), but was similarly positioned between the cross hairs of a developmental system put in place to modify his behaviours whether he liked it or not. It is questionable whether his stentorian parade ground style of barking instructions (successful as it was with Air cadets on a Friday night but of little use with a 14 – 16 school link group who did not wish to be in college after Tuesday lunch) would be welcomed with open arms by the post-structuralist. The ethical obligation of this paradigm of embracing and emancipating the marginal raises the question of whose oppressed interests it should serve – the harassed teacher or the disaffected learners? The reality is that the college quality system seeks to raise the achievements of the learners through improved pedagogic practice of the tutor as directed by the mentor, the uncomfortable assumption being that only the mentor, as the system's hit person, has any knowledge of what works, can derive meaning from others' classroom practice and thus knows the "right" way to effective pedagogic practice (or the "truth of the classroom" in this case). This privileged positioning of the mentor holding the key to unlocking competence through craft knowledge is implied throughout a literature of mentoring whilst Government rhetoric makes clear the connection (Ofsted, 2001; DfES, 2004 and LLUK, 2005) and thus legitimates the institutional adoption of APs as mentors.

For the purposes of the mentoring research project, essentially to mentor a reluctant and allegedly "failing" trainee teacher, I chose to adopt Friere's dialogic approach of an *'epistemological relationship to reality'* (Shor, 1993, p. 31) in

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which the teacher, through critical and almost Socratic problematising, both engages with the learners' culture and draws them away from it in such a way as to promote detached, objective thinking: *With dialogic reflection among their peers, they gain some critical distance on their condition and can consider how to transform them.* (ibid.). Although Friere was concerned with learners, Hodkinson, et. al. (2004) argue that a mentored teacher paradoxically becomes a learner, *What applies to the students also applies to the tutors* (p. 6.). Likewise, when mentor and mentee are both teachers they can also be considered as peers as Falchikov (2001) justifies: *Potential development may be realised under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.* (p. 5) with Brockbank's (1994) notion of the mentoring role highlighting the comfort of such a relationship, *as nearer that of friend, confidante, counsellor or parent figure who is non-directive and non-judgemental* (Brockbank, 1994, cited in Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 253) although none of this seemed to register on Tom's radar at the time.

Before exploring the discursive practice of the mentoring relationship in the project, it is worth noting Lyotard's likely perceptions of such a master narrative as deeply problematic, not least since the legitimation of education through performativity renders knowledge a commodity having *exchange valu*e rather than *use value* (Palmer, 2001, p. 151) and, despite the fragile positioning of trainee teacher and disaffected students, are more Marxist than anything else. Indeed, the extent to which post-structuralists portray themselves as "soft left" is one of the ironic squabbles of the paradigm, given its reliance on discourse shaping the objects of knowledge whilst at the same time excluding other ways of reasoning as unintelligible, and leaves wide open the epistemology of the post-structuralist paradigm as allegedly, *impossible from the start* (Trevelyan, 2001, p. 266).

For example, a post-structuralist discursive analysis of the inter-relationship between Tom and I would examine the associations between our language,

dialogue, power relations and sense-making of each other's dialogue in an extra-linguistic attempt to construct identity, meaning and truth (although I will later contest the notion that analysis, rather than synthesis, is insufficient to make sense of the relationships between complex factors, especially inter-textuality). Here is where the post-structuralist paradigm seems to play fast and loose in the pursuit of truth (that is, epistemologically elusive) since it adopts a position where meaning, and therefore knowledge, can never be fixed or captured and to do so would negate any dynamism. Hence, knowledge and truth of the ironic complexities of the social world can therefore only be provisional, deferred, locked in time and entextualised where empirical truth is not so much found as made through reflexive practice.

However, at a procedural or methodological level, post-structuralism relies on ethical use of heuristics to fill the hermeneutic gap, that is, the difference between what is said and what is interpreted of what is heard, a particularly troublesome concept when Tom was playing "smoke and mirrors" in his selection of how much to disclose, what to recognise or acknowledge and the historical culture of the group as it had developed under his watch.

Foucault, to his credit, would probably have considered Tom's agency to have been the effect of his subjugation yet he claimed the paradigm as a process that allowed the subject to speak for him/herself and to analyse both the constraints and the enablers of meaning through his particular version of discourse, the regulated "surface" of language in a historical context. Yet herein lies an interruption to my belief in logical action research since post-structuralism threatens to have a destabilising effect in the sense that it has nothing practical to offer other than contesting the canons and orthodoxies that have historically worked well in similar settings. In doing so, post-structuralism appears to subvert attempts at answering the epistemological question, "How do we know what we

know?" in favour of ascribing salience to the normative interpretations of the small guy, because he is the small guy.

Before considering the place of heuristics, reflexivity and hermeneutics in creating knowledge, and their implications for educational research in post-structuralism, I will explore the philosophical implications of critical theory as a research paradigm, again located within the project with Tom.

Critical theory in education and educational research

Critical theory initially emerged from Adorno's efforts to blend Marxism with Freudian psychoanalysis into a culturally-specific lens through which to explore the contradiction between what society promises and what is delivered. More recently, Habermas appears to have built on the work of Heideggar and Rorty et al, and shared a little commonality with Gadammer, in advancing an emancipatory paradigm in the pursuit of social justice and exposing power relations. Whilst critical theory, or *the melancholy science* (Turnbull, 1999, p. 175), shares with post-structuralism a heavy reliance on heuristics, it is singularly acknowledged as the critical school from which action research, as educational practitioners know it (Hopkins, 1985, and McNiff, 1993, et al), is derived.

The question of the extent to which Tom was given a voice as a research subject would be one of the key contestations between post-structuralism and critical theory and appears to be the main watershed between the two paradigms, what Lincoln & Guba (1994) describe as, *the value-determined nature of enquiry – an epistemological difference* (p. 109). Another related focal point of contention would be that critical theorists embrace grand narratives as located, cultural and contextualised phenomena that demand consideration against the discursive data.

There is a literature of critical theory which makes a robust argument that the post-structuralists' almost rudderless acceptance of intertexuality in the binaries is

an over-simplification, (McHoul & Grace, 1993; Silverman, 1993; Barry, 1995; Hughes, 2001; et al) and that the resultant time-bound deferral is not the best way of making valid claims to the truth. In contrast, critical philosophies are argued to be guided by a stronger sense of the ethical that is simultaneously grounded in praxis and culture, which is given the same credence as logic, in order to challenge the dominant rationality of educational policy assumptions. Putnam (1999) suggests (after Wittgenstein,1953) that meaning is derived from reference to both context and content although, crucially, meaning cannot be derived from generalised theories but from accurate description of practice which, like post-structuralism, changes over time.

In the project, Tom and I co-produced a framework of dialogic and situational interpretation based on a guiding principle of disciplinary coherence focused mainly on the engagement of disaffected learners. The framework was initially difficult for Tom since disaffection had never been a personal construct for him nor did the Air Cadets or his full-time groups lack motivation and thus he needed to consider, for the first time, the socio-cultural dispositions of the 14-16 learners and the implications of the biographical baggage that they brought with them. This was particularly difficult for both of us since they were new dimensions for Tom and I had to identify ways in which he could access relevant information without spoon-feeding him, my analysis of Tom being that if I gave him advice he would not follow it, but if he had to work to arrive at his own advice then he probably would. In this respect, the critical approach permitted me to have Tom arrive at his own suggestions whilst having him believe that they were all his own ideas – a fragile game of that was played amongst language, pregnant pauses in dialogue and classroom delivery, verbal and non-verbal communication with his learners and against a backdrop that Tom perceived as a hostile, alien culture and its ambassadors. Ethically, the approach was akin to walking on egg shells

although I argue, after Moustakas (1990), that heuristic dialogue and self-enquiry are an important process in identifying underlying meanings of human experience. The Frierean approach (see later) was empowering insofar as it gave both of us a voice, liberated Tom from a self-inflicted self-perceived sense of peripherality within his team, constructed in his practice what the world might recognise as an eclectic toolbox of effective pedagogic techniques in accordance with the norms of the institutional culture and did indeed advance a mentoring framework for adoption by the other seven APs in the organisation. Yet the success of the project did nothing to challenge the mandated status quo of performativity nor could it be argued to have achieved any enduring societal improvement.

Thus, the ethos and ethics of critical theory appears to be the centrality of a true believerist stance that the world can be a much better place than it currently is and an enduring concern for democracy and the usurpation of rampant technicism (Palmer, 2001), for example the notion that good education is a promise for the future, yet not exactly what the policymakers always claim to have a firm grasp of.

Whilst there is the danger of casting action research-based critical theory as the best thing since post-modernist bread machines, it is limited and cautionary insofar as it cannot be a warranted assertion that all cultures or perspectives are rational, nor that all truth is intelligible, but that mere "best" descriptions can accurately represent the world without empirical or rational foundations. For example, critical theory concedes that what works with the Air cadets cannot be assumed to work as effectively with the school link group, a notion that the scientific philosophical band of education policy makers seem to struggle with (Ball, 2003; Coffield, 2008; et al) as did Tom in the beginning.

Reflexivity, hermeneutics and heuristics

Heuristic research cannot accommodate the objective perspective, and this is one of the squabbles between Friere and Wittgenstein, but requires a framework of reflexivity that allows us to know our own frame, be subjective and constantly critique our understanding of how we are constructing cultural positions and agency as part of the social world that we explore. Moustakas (1990) postulates that, *Emphasis on the investigator's internal frame of reference, self-searching, intuition, and indwelling lies at the heart of heuristic inquiry.* (p. 12) where the researcher brings to the field of study a biography rich in personal experience – *There must have been actual biographical connections* (ibid. p. 14). Ozga, 2000, and Gallacher, 2007, echo these sentiments in their recognition of the researcher's background experience in data interpretation in preference to holding fast to a pre-determined set of methodological constructs.

The psychoanalytically-derived dimension of critical theory's Habermasian perspective on hermeneutics is to, *restore to consciousness those suppressed, repressed and submerged determinants of unfree behaviour with a view to their dissolution* (Palmer, 2001, p. 218). Yet I got the feeling that Tom was not repressing anything – he simply had, as his own version of knowledge, a very narrow selection of teaching, learning and behaviour management techniques from which to draw. It would be fair to concede, however, that Tom felt suppressed and disempowered by being allocated a mentor and it took several informal meetings before his reluctance thawed and he became a willing heuristic participant. Frierean dialogue, drawing on my alleged AP breadth of pedagogic and attentional (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) skills (sic), enabled us to collaboratively explore his teaching situation and events, for example, "Why was Michael distracted?"; "How could he have been refocused on the task?"; "What is the length of his concentration span?"; "What would we need to do after 10

minutes?"; "What are the options?"; "Where might Ben come into this?"; "What do you suppose might be the value of using…" etc. My interpretations of Tom's responses dictated whether the tasks he was given for the following week were directed towards finding out what his colleagues or others used for certain situations or whether he was tasked with reflecting on practice and options or needed to go back to teaching textbooks for answers. Such a relatively unconstrained communicative approach co-constructed new identities for both of us and sits well with the pervasive view that the heuristic researcher needs to put a little distance between him/herself and the situation, in my position to ponder my own triangulation between truth, objectivity and subjectivity. At no time was Tom given any answers or suggestions, but was guided or channelled to arrive at his own solutions through his own Heideggarian (rigour of thinking) efforts, a crucial feature being that Tom needed to celebrate *his* success rather than ours (emphasis intended). Whilst there is the caveat that he had to arrive at the "right" answers which aligned with my supposed ethnocentric truth or knowledge based on experience, I justify the validity of this bias by drawing on Biesta's (2007) postulation that *old knowledge* (p. 16) (in this case pedagogy, context and culture) helps us to make sense of either a situation or problem and to evaluate the adequacy of a proposed solution.

In the same way, Frierean dialogue with Tom and his Curriculum Manager was used as a communal test (Rorty, 1979) to validate the interpretive process by checking claims against facts and exploring salient and causal relationships.

Whilst this sounds somewhat descriptive and mechanistic, there were hermeneutic tensions throughout. For example, the post-structuralist could question whether I interpreted Tom's words and actions, whether as a teacher, AP and mentor accurately; could equally question Tom's interpretation of what I asked him and could be particularly thorny as to what extent I had any real truth to which to steer

him towards. The critical theorist may have been more accommodating of my culturally-specific and epistemological biography in the pursuit of deriving meaning and socially constructing a new Tom, although may equally well have questioned the meaning of what I derived from Tom's dynamics, for example his cautionary editing and marshalling of thoughts before responding to my probing.

It seems that here is where the "rubber hits the road" and the two paradigms stake their respective claims to hermeneutical truth. For the post-structuralist, the human perspective becomes an insurmountable barrier, possibly due to my perceived intentionality as the organisation's Mr. Fix-it. Foucault, for example, would be against hermeneutic attempts to reveal meaning in discourse, suggesting instead that I concentrate on description and analysis of our discourses (McHoul & Grace, 1993), whilst Lyotard would be equally dismissive and urge us to celebrate the diversity and instabilities as valid educational outcomes, before possibly leaving them there. In summary, the post-structuralist might require me to describe, analyse and leave situations hanging with any dynamism removed and, possibly, with Tom no further on.

The Habermasian critical theorist would be more likely to require me to elicit meaning and construct knowledge by relating Tom's perceptions to my own socially and culturally-located experiences with school links groups, disaffected learners and pedagogic knowledge as seen through his eyes, that is, to search for meanings rather than phenomena. Whilst such an interpretation would be only momentary, and thus sit well alongside the post-structuralist's intertextuality, the key difference would be the critical theorist's synthesis of all data against the post-structuralist's analysis.

Here, I argue, is the polemic crux of the dichotomy between both paradigms' attempts to construct meaning, knowledge and truth from methodological procedure in that analysis seeks to break down dialogue and situation in order to

extract, identify and describe key components. Far more challenging is synthesis which seeks to isolate and interpret the key components in the same way, relate them to other salient components (for example, teaching and learning strategies that have been effective in similar situations elsewhere) and construct a new whole or concept. In other words, the post-structuralist unpacks and leaves the parts where they are as a new provisional truth whereas the critical theorist unpacks and uses those and other parts to make, in the philosophical context, a new contextually co-produced classroom truth.

Concluding rationale for own development

I suspect that an educational research framework that accommodates both subjective and objective perspectives, and which embraces cultural dispositions of mean-making and knowledge construction in persuading rationality in education policy makers, is elusive. Both paradigms invite further development of reflexive and heuristic practice in understanding the role of educational research whilst paradoxically threatening to bind me to arguments about effectiveness, performativity and whose version counts as truth. Likewise, the hermeneutical and heuristic dimensions of both paradigms do not easily sit alongside unarguable, objective pedagogical truths that become transmuted into education policy.

I agree with Foucault that the self is not fixed but constantly shifting in discursive tension from one place in time to another, and that post-structuralism can successfully challenge the privileged position of corporate interests in policy discourse on behalf of the marginalised. Conversely, I am little impressed by post-structuralism's seemingly milk-and-water version of constructing truth where the superior theory is simply the latest and which appears to amount to nothing more than a paralogism – a fallacious argument that promises to lead me in circles in my teaching or research practice. Biesta (2007) urges that, *Education*

professionals need to make judgements about what is educationally desirable (p. 20) but I do not see post-structuralism's notion that "textually different, because I think so" equates to effectively offering a meaningful, ethical educational practice or research framework. In short, the findings of post-structuralist enquiry seem to amount to authoritative analysis of textuality, but not actually authoritative findings which hold water, I argue.

Alternatively, critical theory promises to compensate for the culturally- and contextually-specific shortcomings of post-structuralism and offers a vehicle by which shared conceptions of educational values and knowledge can be co-constructed through open and informed discussion. Conversely, the creative synthesis of critical theory leaves out the question of whose discourse is accepted as truth and the utopian tenor of the paradigm, which sits rather closely to Marxism, falls short of being a panacea for those seeking to escape the bindings of overtly instrumental, pre-determined standards of education.

At the conclusion of this assignment I believe that discourse shapes what counts as truth although there is the ever-present danger that the dominant voice may counter-productively be the one simply ascribed salience over another because of post-compulsory institutional power relations. Similarly, I am far from confident that the technocratic principles of performative education will ever come close to embedding concern for emotional investment and moral purpose. Yet part of the post-structuralist has rubbed-off onto me insofar as I have reaffirmed the importance of hearing and acknowledging the voice of post-14 learners (stuck in the blurred boundaries between school and college) and older learners as a necessary ethical and emancipatory step to overcoming their suppression, for example as "units of funding" rather than individuals. Perhaps I need to fight more human capital corners in colleges.

As a researcher I further believe that there are nuanced vacuums in qualitative research which the chosen paradigms fail to satisfy, especially the complex inter-relationships between social structures and educational outcomes, and particularly when I am no closer to answering the question, "How do we know what we know?" Notwithstanding this, I am more mindful that the discourse-oriented, contextualised, critically-inclined research data I generate in future can too easily be restricted by the questions I ask in the first place and the attention that I give to heuristic interpretation and the multiplicity of meanings in cultural sites of learning.

I am left, possibly, with the agency and reflexivity of a cautious critical theorist (marginally better than an uncertain interpretivist) and continue to reconstruct, with peers and learners, my new self as a work in progress.

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Appendix C

Ed. D. ASSIGNMENT 3 – (INTERVENING AS PROFESSIONALS)

22

"THE TRAINEE NOW STANDING" – DILEMMAS IN TRAINEE TEACHER
OBSERVATION AND INTERVENTION

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A third assignment submitted towards the requirements of the Manchester
Metropolitan University Ed. D.

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Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to critically explore my developing sense of professionalism and identity at the end of the Ed.D first year by questioning the theories embodied in the first two assignments as they jostle for position against a professional intervention with a group of trainee FE (Further Education) teachers. Whilst the practicalities of the intervention (hereafter referred to as "the project") assume a lesser role in this assignment, the agendas of professional intervention in the field of education will be deconstructed in respect of the first two assignments' theories (hereafter referred to as "Professionalism #1" and "Paradigms #2") in pursuit of an updated sense of professional identity. In doing so the assignment will critically analyse some of the key components of professional intervention, the problematic nature of language, discourse and culture in post-16 education, the equally problematic business of coming to terms with one's developing self and the fragile positioning of the trainee teacher alongside the FE policymakers' skills-based rhetoric.

The intervention took place in June 2009 with a group of first year trainees on a two-year ITE (Initial Teacher Education) in-service programme at a university in the north of England.

Six months in.

Professionalism #1 "The business of further education: professionalism in the trenches" raised many philosophical issues that both legitimate the scope and nature of intervention, as presented in the project, and simultaneously question my pursuit of truth over the duration of the first year which I will briefly revisit here for the benefit of the reader.

I critically analysed one of the Government's managerialist education policy initiatives (DIUS, 2008) by exploring its potential impact on FE through the inter-related strands of policy discourse and power relations, managerialism and performativity, culture and teacher professionalism. The portrayed true believerism of the education policymaker, which seemed to masquerade as discursive persuasion designed to win practitioners' hearts and souls to any rationality in the name of social justice, left me pondering where my sympathies should lie – with the disengaged and unskilled who turn to FE for a second chance, with the teachers who shoulder a performative burden in a life of calculation or with the policymakers who, possibly, believe that their reductionist logic is welcomed as benevolence with open arms throughout the sector.

Having discarded the traditional model of professionalism as being obsolete in New Labour's managerialist education system (given autonomy's near absence), and having also conceded that the semantic model had no further part to play in an increasingly casualised workforce (e.g. lecturers becoming lecturer/assessors with less favourable employment conditions), I was left considering the third notion of professionalism which plays a central role in the project. Here, the cultural model of professionalism, epitomised by notions of personalised learning and "what works" (Coffield, 2007), is stifled by managerial fiat that boasts a thin

wash of social emancipation. As current and emerging post-16 policy carriages are snapped into place on the creaking FE train, I maintain my suspicion that repressed teaching professionals will experience further binding of their individual co-modified and collective agencies and either speak only inwardly of the latest version of FE reality or speak openly and take their chances with their contracts. Despite the Government's invidious policies to make the train do more for less, and which bear more than a passing resemblance to the emperor's new clothes, culture lies at the heart of what we do and is interwoven throughout this assignment.

Paradigms #2 "Critical squabbling around the boundaries: the tensions of knowing what we know" took me on a journey from being an uncertain interpretivist to a cautious critical theorist. The reading amounted to a maelstrom of competing ideas, embodied in the paradigms of post-structuralism and critical theory, whose tensions raised more questions than answers. Firstly, whilst I was left with admiration for the post-structuralist's efforts to fight the small guy's corner, I was similarly unimpressed by its epistemological elusiveness as it appeared to play fast and loose in the pursuit of truth. Secondly, I felt that the utopian and emancipatory tenor of critical theory was the main flaw in a paradigm that nevertheless seemed to expose power relations and the vagaries of Government rationality but was unable to liberate post-16 education from policy hysteria. Conversely, it seemed that critical theory was sufficiently grounded in praxis and culture to synthesise the many strands that tug at the truth of the classroom through heuristic and reflexive practice.

Whilst Paradigms #2 left me no closer to answering the question, "How do we know what we know?", critical theory has given me the legitimacy to continue

searching and assumes a central role in action research intervention, the rationale

and methodology of which will be briefly introduced next.

Action Research

Action research emerged in the United States in the 1920s by a progressive movement who applied a scientific methodology to the study of educational problems (Cohen and Manion, 1989). Dewey, more noted for his work on reflective practice (1933), developed the model by advocating the use of reflective thinking skills to solve educational problems in order to improve the practice of teaching and learning through critical theory. The methodology came to prominence in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, initially through the libertarian work of Stenhouse (1975, 1980) which regarded teachers as researchers in their own practice, and was further developed by Elliot (1981, 1987, 1989) in his collaborative work with teachers.

Whilst action research has grown in Australia, where Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) have developed an externalised model (after Chomsky, 1986), a further liberating and internalised approach by McNiff (1993) appears to be currently winning a credible body of adherents. The dichotomy of internal and external approaches perfectly illustrates, and problematises, the nature of action research and discourse as understood by the key theorists.

Here (briefly but see later) the externalised model relies on the interpretations of action, as perceived by observers, in relation to a value base set by others. For example, in the policy making context of teaching and learning at the macro level, the underlying assumption is that what works in one class should work in another, a notion that flies in the face of anyone who has ever stood before two different classes in FE. Such a model is highly contested and does not represent the consensus view (Hopkins, 1985; McNiff, 1993; Halliday, 2002; Greenbank, 2004; Hodkinson, 2004, et al) since simply adopting effective classroom

strategies, for example, does little for personal or professional development. Likewise, the externalised model also, in relying on theories identified by an observer, places a higher value on theory than on practice, a notion that this assignment will discuss.

In contrast, the internalised model is personal and individualised and which McNiff describes as,

An I- (internalised) enquiry is that conducted by the individual into her own practice. She reflects critically on her work, either privately or through discussion with others, and aims to think of original ways that will help her improve. The status of an I-enquiry is personal.

(McNiff, 1993, p. 16)

Indeed, McNiff advances an unashamed passionate advocacy for the personalised nature of action research where own values, ethics and self-development need to be clearly understood and rationalised before development of learners can be facilitated. In doing so she pragmatically emphasises a holistic view of situations at the macro level through participative democracy, where learners' views are valued, in the pursuit of knowledge generation through action and experimentation. In short, the focus on practical knowledge to solve practical problems is a humanistic and emancipatory approach which combines both action and reflection, in a cyclical model, with a view to developing new understandings of teaching and learning.

Alternatively, there is a literature that makes a robust argument that action research is not a panacea for studying all problem areas. For example, the emphasis on qualitative methods finds little favour with those of a more positivist inclination who see validity in objective procedures, a rigorous adherence to quantifiable data and freedom of distortion by human subjectivity (Kincheloe,

1991, Altrichter et al., 1993). Similarly, one of the strengths of action research, that it is the lens for seeing into the situational dimensions of a lesson with a view to the teacher identifying a problem and subsequently working a way around it, is deemed a weakness in the model since the teacher's perception can be unreliable. Indeed, Kincheloe (1991) concedes that in some cases the researcher is so familiar with the site and situation that he/she cannot see what is obvious to an 'unfamiliar' person.

Encouragingly, action research offers the means by which both qualitative and quantitative methods can work well together, as advocated by Denscombe et al. (1998), and Denzin (1989) et al in a triangulated approach whereby a more detailed and balanced picture may emerge, hidden contradictions may be revealed and the validity of data more reliably promoted.

The Project

Having moved from an FE college to a teacher training university in April 2009, the lengthy phase of induction and enculturation at the mopping-up stage of the academic year allowed me to support colleagues by carrying out observations of their trainees' teaching and learning sessions in HE, FE, the public services and adult and community settings across the north, often in deprived areas. Prior to the 90-minute observation trainees complete form TP1 where they can request specific feedback from the observer on any aspect of the session, and on which several trainees requested tips on managing, "this age of learner" and, "disruptive behaviour" etc. Observation of nine of the 21 taught sessions demonstrated that trainees had, in my opinion, only limited skills in managing "disaffected" behaviours.

I discussed the emerging trends with the group tutor and offered to run an additional three hour session at the end of the first year programme for any of the group who wished to attend a session focused on managing challenging behaviours. With the group tutor's consent (Appendix 1), I emailed each student with my proposal, invited them to express their interest in attending once more after the final session and ten of the group did so. I planned the session according to the trainees' needs, as I perceived them, and six trainees attended the additional session.

Before the session started the trainees completed a simple questionnaire/consent form (Appendix 2) which combined both quantitative and qualitative tools for them to both rate their confidence at managing challenging behaviours and to identify the most difficult aspect of their first year teaching placement. The same questionnaire also elicited trainees' biographical and placement data to give me a

focus on developing my action research with the group since I will be their 2nd year tutor and may develop the project further as a longitudinal study to inform the Ed.D thesis.

At the end of the session the trainees completed a second, similar mixed method questionnaire (Appendix 3) to evaluate the effectiveness of the session and to gauge any improvement in their confidence levels. Having observed all the trainees teach in year 1, I will be able to monitor the effects of the intervention as I observe each of them three times over the coming academic year.

Whilst contextualising the study, and prior to analysing the trainees' data from the bespoke session on managing challenging behaviour, it is interesting to explore the problematic nature of language and discourse at the mezzo and macro levels.

At the macro level, specifically within the literature of schools ITE, the notion that trainee teachers have anxieties regarding student misbehaviour is as commonplace as it is understandable (Cohen & Mannion, 1989; Rogers, 1997; Kyriakou, 1998; Philpott, 2006; et al) and which Gray et al (2005, p. 198) encapsulate as, *This is probably the greatest fear of most trainee teachers*. The diversity of post-14 education, with its blurred boundaries between secondary and FE, offers a more potent potion where the cultural mix is firmly ladled onto the drive to widen participation and encourage second-chance returners, under-represented groups, Year 10 & 11 groups, those pupils excluded from mainstream schooling and anyone aged 16-19 with an idle fancy to satisfy while they ponder their career options, continue in education (Norman & Hyland, 2003). The resulting tensions in FE classrooms leave the trainee lecturer understandably on edge as they scour the local colleges and training providers for

the timetable crumbs that fall from the desks of full-time staff in order to complete their training.   Yet there is the belief that ITE trainees have inappropriate expectations of the learners they will be working with as Butcher postulates,

Inexperienced teachers can often possess unrealistic expectations about the likely behaviour of 16-19 students. This is important because the inflated expectations about compliant behaviour and positive attitudes to learning can falsely inform planning for the 16-19 classes.
(Butcher, 2005, p.114)

Likewise, Avis et al. (2003) and Bathmaker & Avis (2004) found firm evidence from qualitative research interviews that trainees found *working with disengaged, unmotivated 16 – 19 year olds is not what they had expected* (ibid., p.9). Similarly, Maxwell (2004), drawing on the work of Wallace (2002) and Avis et al. (2003) conceded that, *In reality, they find students unco-operative, badly behaved and unable to meet the demands of the work.* (Wallace, 2002, cited in Maxwell, 2004, p.3). Whilst the FE sector literature is less comprehensive than compulsory schooling in this regard, the language of the researchers give a clear sense of trainee disempowerment and helplessness, the reality of which is expressed in TP1 pleas for help prior to observation by an experienced professional who is expected to have at least some fruitful suggestions, if not watertight strategies.

And with good reason since when observing trainees teaching I am assessing one of the first year core modules, DFA7130, which prepares trainees to identify and manage, *Barriers to learning…Socio-cultural influences on learning…Class management and coping with disaffection*, etc (Iredale, 2009, pp. 13 - 14). How first year tutors teach such indicative content is left to the tutors' autonomy and

sense of professionalism and the work of the first year tutors with the sample group is not open to question or discussion in this assignment. Yet my own sense of identity grows in the wake of Gallagher et al (2007), in that it carries with it the expectation that I should leave trainees better equipped than I found them, even if it involves me intervening to supplement the first year learning of related teaching craft (see discussion later).

The Government have, to their credit, been consistent over recent years in their use of Ofsted to instil appropriate pedagogic techniques and coping strategies in ITE programmes (Ofsted 2003, 2008, 2009a), firstly through the FENTO standards (Fento, 1999) and more recently the LLUK overarching professional standards (LLUK, 2005) as a grand narrative of performativity through prescribed and McDonaldised (Ritzer, 1998) competences. One could argue that, by the Government's regulatory yardstick, the group's lecturers have been successful in so equipping trainees involved in the project since the effectiveness of the programme was inspected by Ofsted, also in April 2009, who commented that, *Trainees' skills and knowledge and standards of professional practice are good.* (Ofsted, 2009b, p. 16). Yet both the trainees and I believed that there was room for improvement in some of the contexts observed, a perspective that challenges my ideas of "the truth" of the classroom and which the following analysis explores.

Analysis

The six trainees in the sample represented the post-16 contextual areas of FE, Work-Based Learning (WBL), Adult & Community (A&C) and Public Services (PS), were all female with two aged 36-40 and four aged 41-45. Four of the sample were employed as full-time trainers or teachers, one part-time and one on secondment whilst all but one had children of their own. All were teaching at either level 2 or 3, being below the level of their own qualifications, and only one was in her first year of teaching whilst the two most experienced had both been teaching for five years. Only the two key skills teachers, both in FE and with limited confidence, were graduates and were teaching 16 – 18 year olds, the remainder teaching a wider range of learners including mature students up to an upper age limit of 55 – 70 years. The entry questionnaire revealed that 67% of the sample had only limited confidence in managing challenging behaviour with the remainder being fairly confident.

The aspects of the teaching placement which trainees had most difficulty with in the first year, although most respondents listed several, ranged from organisational issues, for example *lessons changed due to shortfalls* (Faye) and *rank issues* (Carol) in the PS sector (33% of responses) to outward displays of challenging behaviour, for example *disruptive behaviour* (Brenda in FE), *unwilling to participate* (Emma in PS), *lack of motivation* (Carol) and *low level disruption* (Debbie in FE) in 67% of responses. Faye, one of three PS trainers, was the only respondent not to list a behavioural concern although, interestingly, no challenging behaviour was witnessed in the PS groups during teaching observations.

The exit questionnaire revealed mediocre success for the intervention with all the respondents leaving fairly confident although the Likert scale showed that whilst half the group found the session *very useful* at 5, the remainder rated it at 4. The sample were unanimous in their belief that they had gained new strategies for managing challenging behaviour, for example, *Influencing states* (Emma) with 67% couching their comments in terms of a positive return to the classroom, typified by Debbie's mission of, *Can now take the strategies away and try and use them in real life – very useful.* One would have liked the session earlier in year 1 whilst two of the police trainers would have liked more focus on the reluctant learner, although I had not witnessed any learner reluctance when observing any of the public service trainers.

Discussion

Rather like Descartes (Pring, 2004), I am trying to work through my doubts about my beliefs and notions of truth to arrive at whatever sense of identity, reflexivity and self cannot be doubted, whilst harbouring suspicions about a fool's errand. The following five discussions explore my deconstruction of language and discourse that surround the project in the pursuit of the limits and absences of truth whilst working towards an understanding of the place of knowledge and truth in professional action.

Firstly, Professionalism #1 explored the policymakers' discourse that urges FE to develop the skills and talents of young people and ensure high quality learning, a social advancement notion that generally receives widespread support and which the project trainees bought into, mostly as an altruistic endeavour, when they joined their course. Yet there is a groundswell of opinion (Pring, 2004; Coffield, 2007; James & Biesta, 2007; et al) which argues that politicians try to couch the language of education in a non-challengeable discourse of social justice, the benefits of which are *illusionary* (Parsons, et al, 2001, p. 2). Further, the discursive theme of liberal and humanistic emancipation makes assumptions that learners have no skills, desire employability skills, are not content with their lot and have no future without a level 2 in something. A case in point is where the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £40 per week is given to full-time students to encourage them to develop such skills, whilst failing to acknowledge that many students attend college simply for the £40 pocket money or, from my own experience in teaching at Entry level, being required to tip up the money on the kitchen table at the end of the week. Therefore, as Paradigms #2 identified, education policymakers seem to fail to make any link between educational

concepts, e.g. motivation, and the wider problems in society and industry (Keep, 2006) which surface, for example as non-compliance, in the trainees' classrooms. Whilst absorbing a little of the post-structuralists' concern for the marginalised in Paradigms #2, I have serious misgivings over whether education should be expected to compensate for society's shortcomings and nor do I see the project as having freed trainee teachers from the atrocities of their learners' lives. Moreover, I have still less faith that post-structuralism's blanket deconstruction of education policy's master narratives, such as social justice, the modernising agenda and the official language (see "performance indicators" [Ofsted, 2009b]) of teaching competences, carries promises for a better future for either teachers or learners since the paradigm is so epistemologically elusive and does not appear to have the ear of the policymaker.

Secondly, decision makers, albeit allegedly too far removed from classrooms (Biesta, 2007), similarly seem to play with a somewhat crooked ball in their play with educational research to bolster governmental knowledge preserves and dominant values. Here, selective use of quantitative research studies and performance indicators (e.g. retention and achievement figures), and critical reviews of education practice (Lochman, 2000; Ozga, 2000; et al), are used to legitimate enacted technocratic power which, paradoxically, alienates both teachers and learners through their disempowerment as Professionalism #1 illustrated. Additionally, policymakers stand accused of ignoring empirical research findings (Biesta, 2007, and Nastasi & Schensul, 2005) where it does not provide the answers that Government seeks although, in fairness, there seems to be an absence of accumulated practitioner knowledge to inform Post-16 educational practice as Morris, et. al. (1999) found, *scant reliable evidence was*

available (p. 2). The findings that emerge from ethnographic studies like those cited on pp. 10 & 11 earlier make a token contribution to this under-developed area but, realistically, offer little by way of truth that can be transposed into either educational change (Edwards, 1991) or action or, as my reflexivity prefers, practice into theory into practice as evidence-based research.

Moreover, Piggot-Irvine (2002) draws on the work of Habermas (1972) and Elliot (1997) to make the case for action research becoming a politically-inclined research paradigm that is grounded in praxis, an ideology that Paradigms #2 recognised in critical theory, and which I sought to use within the project to narrow the gap between theory and practice (see later). Nastasi & Schensul (2005) make a salient link to the third discussion,

One limitation of intervention research is lack of attention to cultural and contextual factors which not only inhibit the effectiveness of intervention but also influence the social and ecological validity of the interventions.
        (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005, p. 16)

Thirdly, there was a literature in Professionalism #1 that positioned education policy's "one size fits all" stance unfavourably when culture was brought to the mix. Ball's (1994) postulation that teachers and context adjust to policy is, I argue, true for some teachers and contexts, but not all. For example FE conforms to, nay, often embraces (as in Models for Success), policy revisions in order to maximise funding streams in order to stay open next year. Teachers, conversely, often co-modify their ways of working in an effort to do what needs to be done whilst avoiding the cross-hairs of scrutiny as the case of Tom, in Paradigms #2, illustrated. Teachers' practice of conforming to institutional norms, e.g. managing learner behaviour through the observed application of a range of

techniques that pass muster according to the Ofsted tick list, is often far removed from the type of underground working that effectively engages the disaffected (Colley, 2006).

Here emerges another paradox – Biesta's (2007) assertion that *Education is too important to allow it to be determined by unfounded opinion* (p. 4) was levelled at education policy makers but may be equally relevant to the trainee teacher who exercises their autonomy in taking a particular course of action, in the light of their own values, perceived norms and informal rules, in a particular context and circumstances because they feel that they can "read" the culture, chemistry and discourses of the classroom. Notwithstanding the fragility of trainee teachers doing what they think best, Ofsted actively encourage trainee risk-taking (a grade 1 performance indicator) (Ofsted, 2009a) and which Dewey (1929) alluded to much earlier in his belief that nothing is learnt when all is well.

Here, I draw on LeVine's dated (1972) but salient definition of culture to position both trainee teachers and disaffected FE learners within the intervention,

(Culture is) *an organising body of rules concerning the ways in which individuals in a population should communicate with one another, think about themselves and their environments, and behave towards one another and towards objects in their environments.*
        (LeVine, 1972, p. 4)

Thus, I argue, the culture and language of the classroom is at the nexus of trainees' requests for help, their learners' individual dispositions, the blindness of education policy, the paucity of practitioner research findings that make theoretical sense of education practice and many of the tensions in society. The size of the problem, specifically where social and cultural norms and educational

effectiveness converge in the FE classroom, waits in the wings of the Ed.D thesis since it cannot be addressed here. For example, of what type of culture do we speak here – institutional, gendered, ethnic, youth, social, educational, technological or other? The rhizomatous and anthropological nature of culture and FE climate must surely call for a critical theory if we are to explore and explain the complex phenomena of what is expected of learners and why some behave in certain ways; the tensions of the pedagogic paradigm (Randle & Brady, 1997) whereby FE management buys into government policy but teachers do their own thing; how education policy sits uneasily with Brown et al's (2008) notion of professional Taylorism where permission to think is denied teachers; how FE promises to empower learners through the skills agenda then binds their agency through rules; and why FE seemingly fails to live up to its historical and hard-earned reputation for developing thinkers as it currently chases certificates as outcomes. As Rollinson, et al succinctly put it,

Culture provides a code of conduct that tells people the expected and appropriate ways to behave, whereas climate tends to result in a set of conditions to which people react.
(Rollinson, et al, 1998, p. 564)

Fourthly, I am troubled by the juxtaposition of educational theory and practice implicit in the observation of trainees' taught sessions. I questioned earlier the policymakers' assumption that teaching craft or pedagogic techniques are easily cross-contextually transposed and there is a wealth of ITE literature that instrumentally describes pedagogy to assume that end. Yet such theories are problematised by a critical literature ranging from, *a toolkit of alternative strategies isn't the answer* (Gutherson & Pickard, 2005, p. 5), through Rogers'

(1997) far from comforting theory that *Teachers who are non-assertive and indecisive and lack confidence may well be in the wrong profession* (p. 135) to Pring's empiricist critique that,

...theoretical work is called to account before the court of common sense. So too with the preparation of teachers. Theory is seen as a disease, which has to be eradicated and replaced by professional judgement. This is gained from practical experience.
(Pring, 2004, p. 77)

Herein lies another nexus akin to that of culture where, as a visiting tutor, I observe teacher craft/competence/skill, eavesdrop on the narrative of the lesson/social interaction and try to interpret the application of theory in practice, compounded by the trainees' anticipatory requests for guidance on "this age of learner" and "disruptive behaviour" etc. (p. 9, earlier). But what, exactly, am I observing?

Within the externalised model of action research I don the power mantle of one who judges fellow professionals, invariably and indefensibly outside my own cultural norms and habitus since none of the trainees share my subject specialism, according to a set of objective *a priori* criteria imposed by central government who, I have argued, have little idea of what to look for. Following encouraging and supportive verbal and written feedback and suggestions for future development of three (maximum) areas of practice, the trainee's nerves resume normality and my fragile sense of purpose and usefulness is re-enamelled. Thus, I feel pretentious when reflecting on the relative and unauthorised comfort of the externalised model which seems to have an over-reliance on theory-as-solution.

In contrast, McNiff's (op. cit.) internalised model seems more reflexive and demands my identity be more firmly dovetailed to both the context and my role as observer, or more pointedly, that sense of self be located at the intersection of both the research focus and the researcher's role, not unlike a Venn diagram.

Whilst research findings are insufficient in supplementing the ITE literature on pedagogic techniques, simply because post-16 research seems to have avoided testing theories of pedagogy, I draw on two theories of tacit knowledge to inform my deliberations of trainees' teaching craft when seeking to shape change consensually in an emancipatory endeavour.

In the first instance there is Barthes' (1982) notion of the punctum where interpretation is unfolding but not fully understood and which Cook (2009) contextualises to the messiness of research. The punctum is seen in the intervention where, for example, the only trainees who cited learner motivation as their greatest concern in Year 1 were the police trainers, and leaves me after the event in a small space pondering half-formed theories about police officers. Thus I dwell uncomfortably on Cook's (ibid.) suggestion that researchers should be comfortable in such small spaces.

In the second place there is the tacit knowledge *...which remains personal and implicit (Polanyi, 1958) at a level of practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984)...*(Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 7). Here, Meyer and Land effectively explore the place of troublesome knowledge as HE learners grapple with threshold concepts and which sits well with Cook's use of punctum within the project. For example, my 15 years as an FE teacher and the personal development work that I pursued in that time makes it clear to me that a trainee's use of, "These are the ground rules, as you know, so don't do that again" is far less effective than,

"Jason, remind everyone of *your* ground rules regarding…" (emphasis intended), the effectiveness of which eludes the trainee.

I suggest that both theories promote critical scrutiny of the effectiveness of pedagogic theories in messy educational practice. Such messiness, I argue, promises a dialogic of non-common sense (the multiple realities of the learners and their cultures having rendered common sense spurious) that both observer and trainee can explore alongside a theoretical framework but with a focus on the practice of teaching and learning. Whilst I caveat this suggestion with the cautionary notion that common sense, although it gets most of us somewhere, is a troublesome concept, I argue that an experienced observer's indispensable *a posteriori* knowledge offers the basis for meaningful dialogue in moving a trainee teacher forward as Pring (2004) suggests,

In developing a non-common sense attitude to one's beliefs one is at the beginning of the disciplined, critical and reflective thinking that is the mark of educational research.
        (Pring, 2004, p. 84)

Such use of the internalised model of action research offers to exploit the observer's inductively-generated findings and half-formed theories of previous critical work (observation, reflection, peer dialogue and introspection etc) in a heuristic dialogue like the Frierean questioning used with Tom in Paradigms #2.

Fifthly, while I seem to be struggling with knowing and interpreting my small space and sense of self in the pursuit of empowering the trainees' teaching practice, I am encouraged by Biesta's (2007) suggestion that Dewey's (1933) action-theoretical framework, because it relies on experience, eliminates the subject/objective divide which was a feature of the first and fourth discussions.

Still, the hermeneutical dilemma of my multiple roles in shaping the educational experience of the next generation of post-16 teachers and learners deserves consideration of both objectivity and subjectivity.

From the objective perspective, I am unconvinced of the policy-driven discursive notion of objective, measurable teaching competence as a means of improving the act of learning, particularly so given that competences are a weak substitute for situated attentional skills, that culturally-inspired pedagogy cannot be assumed to exist in demonstration (through observation) and that educational practice is, Pring (op. cit) argues, more a moral activity than a competency-based or scientific practice. Yet there must be an objective dimension since, without objectivity, the earlier example of the trainee drawing a disruptive learner's attention to ground rules would be out of kilter with what a critical theorist would be looking for when observing, therefore objectivity has a place.

From the subjective perspective, I am reflexively mindful of filtering that which is the product of my fragile, inductively-generated knowledge and experience since the little that I have is meaningful only to me and I am encouraged by Wallace's (2002) assertion that, *subjective truths can be counted as knowledge* (p. 82).

Yet that is precisely what the university recruited me for and which they expect me to work with as key components of my sense of professionalism. And I am drawn to the classroom narratives and cultures that prompted the intervention in the first place – had the trainees' management of various disaffected behaviours been, in my opinion, more effective then I would be discussing a different project here.

So I suggest that there is a place for having a "feel" about what I observe; for critically exploring how theory and practice sit alongside each other, or not; for creating small spaces of semiotic mediation for feedback on teaching observations which are less "splash-and-go" but explore trainees' accounts which seek to accredit their approaches through dialogic interchange; and for unpicking trainees' internalised notions of pedagogy whereby they question the ways things are and how they could be, rather than assume the way things should be at the margins as dictated by official rhetoric.

Conclusion

Only at the completion of this assignment can I see where Professionalism #1, Paradigms #2 and Intervention come together – they take a highlighter pen to where the gaps of classroom truth exist, and they are more troublesome than I anticipated.

The triple foci of reading, intervention and critical scrutiny of self have challenged my own instrumental assumptions about pedagogical craft, how my own and others' norms are constructed and the fragile positioning of the teacher within action research. I feel that I have reconstructed my subjectivity not so much to the benefit of the project group, since I moved them to somewhere only marginally better than where I found them, but for the benefit of the next cohort of trainee teachers. Meanwhile, the post-structuralist in me can only draw the attention of a discrete and equally disempowered audience to the tedious Governmental rhetoric that takes FE's train, with a full head of steam, in the wrong direction.

Yet heuristically, the cautious critical theorist in me has identified the "come hither" look of the desolate, twin, small spaces where post-16 pedagogical theory and practice converge with the fragile act of observation feedback and which promise to be a rich and hitherto untapped harvest ground, *The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in* (Matt. 9: 37, in ABS, 1976) for the thesis. The paucity of research findings into the multiplicities of observer and trainee discourse and fractured identities, the juxtaposition of post-16 educational theory and practice, and the cultural tensions of the post-14 classroom invite a critical enquiry of the taken-for-grantedness of the Government's twin agendas of globalisation and skills, which are seemingly the antithesis of sound

educational practice, as I tentatively move my developing sense of identity forward. I feel a cautious critical rationalist coming on.

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Appendix D

Ed. D. ASSIGNMENT 4 – (RESEARCH METHODS 2)

Alligators and swamps: research perspectives on pursuing the truth of the classroom.

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A fourth assignment submitted towards the requirements of the Manchester Metropolitan University Ed. D.

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Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to critically explore the co-located place of educational research, sitting alongside and within my developing sense of professionalism and identity, as I submerge into the fourth assignment. The watery metaphor is not inappropriate, ethnographically, since my pursuit of the truth of the classroom appears to be leading me nowhere other than further into the philosophical swamp. Whilst "The trainee now standing" (Rushton, 2010) is with the reviewers, I am left eyeing five small discussions, not unlike circling alligators, that I did not think even existed at the start of the Ed.D in the relative comfort of my largely unchallenged world, but which are starting to trouble me. This assignment will be an attempt to skewer two of them, thereby dealing a glancing stab at a third, whilst possibly leaving one for the thesis and one for those made of sterner stuff. For the purposes of reminding the reader of the five discussions, I briefly revisit the outcomes of the third assignment (Intervention) here.

The first discussion identified the dichotomy that is the Government's grand narrative of social justice that is allegedly attainable via the Lifelong Learning Sector's (LLS) (formerly Further Education) assorted "to boldly go" mission statements and strategic aims targeted primarily at employers and the marginalised in society, yet often surfaces in my trainee teachers' classrooms as challenging behaviour. I argued my misgivings that education should be expected to compensate for society's shortcomings, believe my best effort is to repeat the bespoke session on managing challenging behaviour, if I ever feel a need for it again and unless, and until, I find a 'better' solution, and leave any pondering over the LSS's part in social emancipation and the potential for human

agency (Ecclestone, 2004) to those with the stomach for it, perhaps those at the election hustings over the coming weeks.

The second discussion bemoaned the paucity of research findings where there is scant ethnographic evidence of how pedagogic theory and practice contributes to cornering the truth of the Post-16 classroom with a view to invigorating educational change. Here is where I intend to make the glancing stab by offering "The trainee now standing" to an international audience, to sharing the five discussions with like-minded peers (see later) and synthesising the fruits of this assignment by narrowing the gap between pedagogic theory and practice in which Denscombe (1998) better outlined as, *The ethnographer's final act should be a construction rather than a thick description…* (p. 68).

The third discussion was that focused on the culture of the Post-16 classroom, and which I acknowledged was excessively problematic for 5000 words, and which I hope to return to for the thesis. I know an overweight alligator when I see one.

The fourth and fifth discussions, those of the troubling dualisms of educational theory and practice and the twin horns of the subjective-objective divide (Pirsig, 1974) respectively, are the two discussions with which I intend to address the outcomes of this second research methodologies assignment. Whilst I need to move my Ed.D forward, if only to limp from one liminal space to the next, I currently have a clear sense that my new Higher Education practitioner's 'self' should be located at the intersection of both the researcher's role and the focus of my action research and which Getz (2009) suggests involves, *learning how to engage one's internal experience while maintaining an ongoing reflective stance* (Ab.). Thus, like David when he realised the inadequacy of attempting to design

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a house fit for God (2 Chr. 6:18) (ABS, 1976), I have an uneasy feeling in advancing an epistemology that could in any way be an adequate understanding of what is educationally desirable in professional teaching practice.

Having turned "The trainee now standing" into an EAR (Educational Action Research) journal draft, hosted a workshop at the school's annual research conference (University of Huddersfield, 9th March 2010) on the subject and read more widely and frantically as the waterline lapped my armpits, I look to this assignment to further cement the ways in which I might live more effectively within my role as a Post-16 teacher trainer.

Theoretical approach

A traditional or 'clean' research methodologies assignment would begin with a question, theory or hypothesis but here I am concerned with a 'dirty' or 'messy' (Cook, 2009) endeavour that is primarily to advance and rationalise a research-oriented framework by which I can construct some form of knowledge from the ashes of the third (Intervention) assignment. The dirt or mess comes from the realisation that data is something of a slippery concept and which Pitt and Britzman (2003, p. 757) ponder as, *...what counts as data and what data counts as,* and would take the form of narrative-based data in any future studies. The twin foci of trying to bring educational theory and practice closer together, and reconciling the place of subjective and objective perspectives of what is educationally desirable, offer themselves to a methodological framework that is not so much polarised but a critically-oriented eclectic toolbox where nothing is necessarily ruled in or out. Such a framework seemed to emanate quite naturally, if not uneasily and loaded with tension, from the intervention and will be critically argued as I attempt to deal with the twin foci simultaneously and ideologically, ever mindful of Billig's (1988) belief that, (ideology) *does not imprint single images but produces dilemmatic quandaries* (p. 146).

With regards to action research, my reading for the 'Intervention', and subsequent reflection of my efforts to collaboratively instil transformational change as a fragile notion of educational desirability, persuaded me of the case for adopting a blend of externalised and internalised models of participative action research in pursuing data in my professional role. On one hand there is a clear sense of falsehood in accepting the 'Ofsted shilling' by holding fast to a set of externally-defined, instrumentalist, performative criteria for the observation of

teaching and learning in my trainees' classrooms yet, I argued, objectivity has its small place, for example, that there is oral questioning to all learners at key points in a session to assess learning at that point. On the other hand, the internalised model demands that the observer's interpretation of the plethora of semiotics at work, and the trainees' engagement with their learners as a set of responses, for example effectively engaging a reluctant learner, be grounded in the observer's experience of both theory and practice. Yet a hybrid of both models opens the way for dialogic interchange which seeks to give trainees the space and time to accredit their pedagogical approaches, for example, to identify that Darren was not questioned because he cremated his father yesterday. Here I suggest there is an overarching subjectivity which trumps objectivity in giving the trainee a voice since they are closer to the culture and, therefore, truth of the classroom where the visiting observer allegedly knows about theory and practice, but not the dynamics of what lies beneath the chemistry and discourses of a session.

To date, nine months on from the intervention, little has changed in the feedback that I give trainees except that there is less guidance and more Frierean questioning on my part to unpick their impressions of how theory co-exists with practice in the pursuit of what they believe is educationally desirable in their context and which was effective with Tom in assignment 2; where they have a safe place to legitimate their practice at that time and place against what they believe are the ways things should be; and where they can deconstruct a collective of socio-cultural semiotics momentarily free of the ideologies that ordinarily bind the teacher, as opposed to the often standard feedback diet of a provocative analysis. This Habermasian (1972) praxis-oriented approach to

unconstrained communication, I suggest, avoids the educational structures that are often the norm of those being observed. Thus, the concept of praxis is central to observation feedback insofar as the trainee teacher is located within a structure, yet is handed the role of choice-maker. I acknowledge the danger of relinquishing the driving seat of dialogic interchange to the trainee, for example, where the trainee feels legitimated to focus on a thick description of events, but the onus of responsibility for 'picking away' remains with the observer. Here there is the potential for a tension in the power relationship in that I attempt to cede power to the trainee yet claw it back when it is not exploited fully; when I am prying for the trainee's understanding of what is educationally desirable whilst being uncertain of my own understanding of the same when the group and context are outside my own subject specialism and experience.

Here, we are immediately at the nexus of what is 'dirty' or 'messy' in the field of educational research and which I want to explore as a methodological approach or optic to invoke reflexive scrutiny. In previous assignments I made what I thought were robust arguments for a critical theory to pursue the truth of the classroom since it demands immersion in the myriad of semiotics at work in a taught session and promises to be comforting to work with. Paradoxically, such immersion needs to articulate some of the messiness and tensions which pervade my professional role and is far from settled in my mind since, as participant-as-observer (Junker, 1960), I have only an approximation of how things should be for any particular trainee teacher. Unearthing ways in which I can scrutinise the assumptions and structures that trainees and their learners labour under, and challenging the "taken-for-grantedness" of educational theory-in-practice as the participants understand them, makes for an equally messy toolkit. One of the

available tools is to take the five discussions back to the swamp which spawned them since data interpretation and methodological development can be promoted by others who share identical small spaces of professional practice. Hence, I outlined the discussions from the "Intervention" to peers and PhD students at the school's annual research conference with a view to invigorating discussion of the tentative initial findings. Audience contributions focused on the work of Bernstein (1977) who advocates a structuralist approach to my further enquiry and development where there is a freedom to explore the educational structure by utilising a framework that could, one suggested, shape educational change from within whilst leaving the structure intact. Whilst such a notion seems to draw me inexorably back to the first discussion (social emancipation and the myths of the skills agenda) and may lack the defining focus that I seek, it offers a lens through which to partly deconstruct a trainee's positioning regarding theory and practice and which Pring (2004, p. 78) usefully co-locates as, *Theory is the articulation of what is implicit in practice*. For example, trainees seem beholden to teach according to a dramatically over-simplified, universal set of standard techniques embodied in the overarching *professional standards* (LLUK, 2005, II) (for the sector) which appear to be written by someone with little understanding of learning which, I argue, is relational and inter-woven through identities, dispositions, culture and environment - artefacts of a relativist ontology. Here, trainees mediate conflicting and potentially damaging divergent forces emanating from their organisational and cultural structures to promote and enhance learning but are quick to apologise, for example for deviating from a session plan or intervening in some way, during feedback dialogue because they believe that they have breached a practical rule or fallen foul of a theory. There is a

hegemony here (Gramsci, 1971) which, I argue, the trainees could challenge in the safety and sanctuary of the feedback dialogue if only to acknowledge the givens and inequalities of everyday practice but which ostensibly gives them openings to accredit their choices and consider alternative possibilities.

Additionally, Bourdieu (1970) offers an interesting three-tiered framework of knowledge where, at the highest level, there is the development of reflexive knowledge that enables the observer to metaphorically turn the mirror outwards, for example, to become subjective about subjectivity etc. Whilst being allegedly structuralist, such reflexivity sits well with critical theory's reliance on thinking that facilitates judgement and synthesis (outlined in Assignment 2) where critical theory goes beyond post-structuralism's deconstruction and offers a new "whole" or nugget of new knowledge from the data and which seems to benefit me more than the trainees. For example, since exploring dialogue and narrative with trainees (a fruit of the Ed.D) I have become aware that they refer to all of their 150 hours of taught sessions over the two years of their programme as 'lessons' yet invariably refer to the eight observed sessions as 'observations'. This intriguing phenomena suggests that they perceive me as yet another performative influence that they need to navigate, possibly by moving their framework around to accommodate the observer in some way; that there is a perceived scrutiny from the observer which they imagine places a premium on 'performance', however they deem performance to be, over the dynamics of naturally-occurring teaching and learning; that, possibly, such teaching is perceived to be more important than learning; that observed sessions are in some way inauthentic or misrepresentative of what they normally do; that they naturally perceive themselves to be operating within a deficit model of teaching; and that satisfying

any deficits may present further tensions, for example, clarifying who owns the responsibility for identifying and addressing weaknesses in practice. I am mindful that there are probably other similar Freudian slips in their narrative which could be revealed if only I really listen to what they are actually saying in their *Playground of transference* (Freud, 1914, p. 154) and which could point to the truth of what I seek.

Brookfield (2009) adds weight to the messiness of such hegemonic phenomena and which he sees as unmasking power relations through *ideology critique* (p. 293), where the observer is perceived as a judge of normality and the trainee is under scrutiny, yet where Friere (1992) cautions that critique does not remake the world. Yet Brookfield's (2005) critical perspective acknowledges that trainees are also agents of power, for example, having the capacity to subvert and resist, and I think that he persuades educators to make use of the sort of spaces and opportunities I advocate here in developing a dialectical relationship between critical theory and pedagogical practice, especially when adopting the non-common sense approach that the 'Intervention' guided me towards.

Like Bourdieu (1970) and Pring (2004) I am challenging a common sense orthodoxy that is the education policymakers' vision of how teaching and learning should look in the post-16 sector, an orthodoxy that has been robustly challenged elsewhere (Pring, 2004; Coffield, 2007; James & Biesta, 2007; et al). Stepping out of the structures of common sense and into the swamp of abstract, theoretical thinking and reflection offers to release me from the 'norm judge' positioning and liberate some of the mess with the implications that it carries for constructing educational knowledge within the twin foci.

In developing a non-common sense attitude to one's beliefs one is at the beginning of the disciplined, critical and reflective thinking that is the mark of educational research.
(Pring, 2004, p. 84)

Thus, hermeneutically, there is a value in being distanced from trainees' language insofar as it constitutes data that is located in time and place, although such detachment immediately raises a psychological barrier behind which I may be only a spectator and the truth, as I construct it, amounts to a value-laden expression rather than tangible experience – a sort of naïve realism between my description of reality and reality itself as in the earlier fictitious example of Darren (p. 6). For the trainee, as Dewey (1929) suggests, the experience is located alongside both old knowledge, since they tend to repeat previously successful strategies to impress the observer, and the potential for new knowledge that lurks at the end of intelligent thinking about features of the taught session. Yet trainees seem to want to be "told" about a session rather than to be guided into intelligent thinking through exploring possibilities and nuances through Frierean questioning, a disposition that is indicative of the current performative culture of the sector where they appear to have been conditioned to limbo unnoticed under the "observation" door rather than explore the possibilities for repainting the door, oiling the hinges and making their passage through it noticeably more palatable.

Like Dewey (ibid.) Biesta (2007) suggests that educational research (and here I dovetail in the trainee experience) only refers to, *what worked rather than what works* (p. 16) and which captures experience as a historical phenomena without any promise of its efficacy in future sessions with different learners. Whilst common sense gets most of us somewhere, as in identifying what worked

previously in a particular set of circumstances and may be replicated with broadly similar results elsewhere, providing everything is roughly equal, it offers ideas and potential pedagogic solutions for the future but promises little else other than to vulgarise trainee teachers' potential to be innovative and creative and to moderate their aspirations towards the way in which things could be.

In contrast, a critical approach that views the cut-and-thrust of the classroom through a non-common sense lens liberates both observer and trainee from the "right" solutions and opens dialogue to untouchable avenues of what is possible. Such a transgression from the norm, I suggest, offers a way forward for trainees to find their own liminality and thresholds (Meyer and Land, 2003), to explore how things are and to grow into their next space. Put simply, I could load my trainees onto a bus, drop them at a theatre and seat them with a clear view of the stage. What I am arguing for here is handing them the keys to the bus – a non-common sense transgression but heavily loaded with possibilities for experience and 'becoming'.

Here, I am increasingly mindful that a non-common sense lens promotes a view of my own hermeneutic dialogue with my trainees and where I can shift within a space bounded, at one extreme, by dialogue that is perceived as an ideal to be rejected, and at the opposite extremity as dialogue perceived as an inherently liberating pedagogy (Burbules, 2000). Within such a space I am comfortable in considering theories simply as a set of ideas that invite enquiry; where perceived truths can be replaced with other ideas; where assumptions, being understandings of how our world or the ambiguous zone of teaching practice works, are a moveable feast; and where multiple voices and perspectives are free to lend

expression to an emerging, interpretive and relativist concept of teaching and learning that values cultural dispositions over prescription.

Yet within such a space I am equally uncomfortable with a lens that has blurred spots where the structuralist and the critical theorist jostle for position, a combative tray in the toolkit which offers both threats and promises. For example, I am encouraged by Schwab's (1978) structuralist stance on enquiring whether certain teaching and learning techniques are the most appropriate, and why, and how we know, etc, a cyclical exploration of seeking characterisation of knowledge and understanding that is typical of my world, yet the inner voice of the second assignment (Research Methods #1) whispers that any conclusions will be locked in time, unfairly but simply because he is a structuralist. In the same lens there are the critical theorists of Bailin & Siegel (2003), who I discovered recently, and Brookfield (2009) whose discussions also capture what is happening in my world. Here, I am drawn to Bailin & Siegel's belief that the critical theorist needs both the ability to reason well, and the disposition to do so, two related rational dimensions that probably underpin any adherence to a non-common sense research approach. However, they place a premium on critical thinking being self-correcting and which contrasts with Burbule's (op. cit.) belief that critical dialogue is not self-correcting *if there are unexamined silences in the exchange* (p. 252), a salutary warning, I feel, against the temptation of traditional splash-and-go feedback dialogue.

Having read Brookfield more widely and closely this year I am persuaded that his discussions sit well with the outcomes of the third assignment where I was struck by two complementary theories of knowledge which seemed to offer a way forward: Barthes' (1982) notion of the punctum, where interpretation is

unfolding but not fully understood and which Cook (2009) usefully contextualised to the messiness of research, and Meyer and Land's (2003) notion of 'troublesome knowledge', which they define (after Perkins, 1999) as, *knowledge that is 'alien', or counter-intuitive or even intellectually absurd at face value* (ibid., p. 2.) needs to be reconciled before threshold concepts are attained.

For example, a central component of many trainees' habitus, from my experience over the last six years as a teacher trainer, is that theory and practice are often regarded as unrelated concepts with comments like, "Yes, that's the theory but this is the real world" not uncommon. Thus, one of their threshold concepts may be to locate theory and practice within the same framework, despite the framework's imprecision and ambiguities already discussed. Yet this, I argue, is no easy reconciliation since its efficacy in attempting to corner whatever truth exists in a classroom relies on a fragile specimen to put under the lens, one that grew in a culture of hermeneutic engagement in understanding the dynamic between ends and means (Schwabenland, 2009). Firstly, trainees either represent or privilege particular understandings and ways of seeing and thinking, for example the police trainers in the intervention, differently to me. Secondly, their punctum or unfolding interpretation of theory, practice and particular events in a session are at different stages of development, both between trainees and me. Thirdly, they are likely to be in different liminal spaces on their journey towards crossing the theoretical/practical threshold and, fourthly although there are probably many others, they are unlikely to have worked with a non-common sense approach to reflective practice since the mainstream models of reflection

that are expounded in their first year of teaching rely on prescriptive and cyclical models of reflection which, they are clearly told, require their rigid adherence. Ethically, such a methodology promises to be fraught with difficulties where both my trainees and I are publicly funded and the onus is on me to ensure that we collaboratively explore their teaching the "right" way; where employer organisations share a widespread belief that a teacher training university produces graduate teachers who slide easily into the sectoral mould, rather than producing 40 renegades each year who insist on operating in a non-common sense way because their teacher decided to condition them that way; where trainees generally struggle to reflect on their teaching and could well do without me complicating things for them.

I am cautiously mindful here that the pursuit of a research methodology that goes some way towards capturing a truth of the classroom, or to simply validate dialogue in pursuit of a *language of possibility* (Schwabenland, 2009, p. 301), I should not marginalise the place of the trainee teacher, pivotal as they are, and subjugate them to being a hook on which I hang my preferences since "observations" are the stuff of sleepless nights, inconsolable anxieties and milestone events that live with trainees for an eternity. Within the tensions of the power relations, perceived or real, between tutor/observer and trainee teacher, I am convinced of the place for a whole group discussion with trainees at the start of the second year to make clear and explore the non-common sense approach to feedback dialogue and to develop the proposed approach only with those who provide written consent to being participants and who can withdraw from any research at any time and without reason.

Further, it is essential that early in our relationship I make clear my belief that ticking all the boxes does not imply outstanding teaching and that trainees maintaining core altruistic values of teaching and learning, as a guide to being pragmatic about what they can achieve, are essential components of a framework which they are at will to push around within their structures and constraints where, as Foote Whyte (1955) seminally alluded, relationships are more important than explanations. Thus the reliability and validity of data, regardless of the extent of trainee and peer involvement in its analysis and interpretation (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005), is highly fragile, leaves the status of knowledge questionable and indicative of *the crisis of representing teaching and learning* (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 757). Equally, there would be an inability to generalise from any findings. Thus, the nature and reliability of discursive, dialogic data collected from such sites and samples owns a set of tensions of their own where narrative and dialogue, during feedback discussions, and trainees' written reflective accounts offer data that is locked in time and place but offer meaning over time and lend themselves to a longitudinal study over an entire teaching year.

Concerning my own reflexivity, the more I think and read around this permeable, non-common sense methodological approach the more persuaded I become of its opportunities and potential for bringing together political, cultural and pedagogical components of troublesome knowledge and thinking into a data set that goes some way to salving Fraenkel & Wallen's (1993, p. 14) criticism that, *Research is almost always about improving existing practices rather then raising questions about the practices themselves.*

Conclusion

In this assignment I have argued for a methodological approach to teaching practitioner research that is collaboratively steeped in trainee teachers' experiences, as they feel them and I instinctively interpret them, that is deliberately removed from the lens of control and surveillance to one that tentatively focuses on development and influence of practice in unique contexts. Adopting a critical, partly structuralist, non-common sense approach, the framework advances a potentially liberating optic whereby both trainee teachers and I, as their tutor/observer, can expose as data the "mess" and troublesome knowledge of teaching and learning in the post-16 sector to examination and discussion. In doing so, the proposed approach offers the promise of trainee teachers identifying opportunities for transformational change in their own practice through an observation feedback dialogue that searches for a language of possibilities amongst the subjective and objective as a prelude to change, rather than seeking out neat reconciliations of theory and practice of what is educationally desirable in their particular situations. Consequently, any research claims would be no more than highly questionable, reflexive interpretations but would be welcomed at the next school research conference.

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Appendix E

Ed. D. ASSIGNMENT 5 – (RESEARCH PROPOSAL)

Acting like teachers: re-thinking educational identities in the Lifelong Learning
Sector

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A fifth assignment submitted towards the requirements of the Manchester
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Introduction

This fifth assignment aims to outline and critically advance a research proposal which aims to bring together learning from Phase A of the Ed.D and utilise the philosophical concepts as a research-oriented framework for contributing to the existing body of knowledge relating to the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS), formerly Further Education (FE), through the Phase B thesis, interchangeably referred to as "the project", the aims of which are to:

1. Determine trainee LLS teachers' perceptions of what is educationally desirable in their subject specialism and/or context.

2. Synthesise the factors that inform trainee teachers' perceptions of educational desirability.

3. Interpret the ways in which trainee teachers pursue what is educationally desirable in their teaching practice.

The aims of the project can be taken as three research questions that are of interest to me in my role as a teacher educator in the LLS where I have a responsibility for preparing and enculturating trainee teachers into the sector. In Assignment #4 I expressed a desire to return to an emerging problematic notion of the culture of the post-14 classroom in the thesis, a dimension that I will argue is central to the aims of the project, and to further explore the troubling dualisms of educational theory and practice.

Having begun to write for publication and shared my developing, if fragile, sense of professionalism with critical peers, I look to this project to give a knowledge-based turn to my role as a post-14 teacher educator rather than teacher trainer - a recent but notable shift. Likewise, within the project there will be engagement with my own reflective stance as I further grapple with the thorny issues of my own pejorative language and place in the power relations. For example, I refer to "my trainees" when I am simply their second year tutor

and some of them may have been in a teaching role for many years, a language and positioning that I am becoming increasingly uncomfortable with and will attempt to crystallise during Phase B.

Barrow & Woods (1988) caution that I need to know what I mean by "educational desirability" before attempting to research it and I offer such a definition in my context as, "To encourage and foster in trainee post-14 teachers a pragmatic and critical approach to what is possible in teaching and learning within their individual subject specialisms and contexts".

Context

My professional role as a post-14 teacher educator is multi-faceted, the core of which requires an ability to tug at the strings of a diverse community of second (final) year trainee teachers in order to promote specialist pedagogic practice that conforms to an equally varied set of institutional and cultural norms. Here I am required to make a significant summative contribution to producing the next generation of teachers for the LLS including Police, fire, nursing and ambulance staff, armed forces, those working in the prison service, adult and community settings, sixth form and general and specialist FE colleges, universities and private training providers, each of which is further divided into separate subject specialisms and audited by a variety of regulatory regimes. Indeed, whilst it is difficult to imagine a sector where the government's "one size fits all" rhetoric is more misplaced, there is a centrally-imposed over-reliance on managerialism and performativity throughout the sector that serves only to routinise and stifle teacher creativity and marginalise entrants from the outset (Orr & Simmons, 2009). Trainee teachers tend to co-modify their teaching practice according to what they believe they are allowed to say and do whilst endeavouring to do what is "right" for their learners, despite privileged governmental, cultural and institutional constraints that seemingly demand slavish obedience to a General Election (passim) grand narrative of UK plc, whilst endeavouring to demonstrate a level of teaching competence in a process more suited to Procrusti's bed.

Prior to the Ed.D, and bereft of a platform from which to challenge power relations, I enjoyed a relatively comfortable and unchallenged existence where I supported my trainees in developing the same well-rounded set of instrumental competences in line with the overarching professional standards (LLUK, 2005) imposed by governmental posturing within a wider skills agenda. Yet the learning, reading and assignment work in Phase A of the Ed.D, coinciding with a

career move from an FE college to a teacher training university, has challenged my professional perceptions to the core through engagement with a literature that could be deemed encouragingly subversive, a learning programme suffused with an ethos of deconstruction, a refreshing philosophy that challenges structural norms at every turn and a developing personal and professional reflexivity that is more comfortable with questions and ideas than an over-reliance on answers and theories. Similarly, my colleagues are revealing themselves to be a group of like-minded, critical but supportive peers who encouragingly share a love for a similar platform as they feed and nurture the existing wider body of knowledge relevant to our work and sector.

It has been an interesting two years testing the platform for springiness but I anticipate that it will pale into insignificance beside the Phase B journey since, having spent their first year re-aligning their aspirations, and often significantly so, my next two years' cohorts will encounter a more liberal, praxis-oriented and emancipatory curricular experience that seeks to pursue pedagogic practice through a language of possibilities (Schwabenland, 2009) where trainees get to decide what is true, good and proper in their contexts and where they can begin to prevent inequalities repeating themselves. The utopian tenor of the project is justified by Fine (1994, p. 30) who urges that (educational research should) *...challenge what is, incite what could be, and imagine a world that is not yet imagined*, a potentially liberating perspective indicative of a wider radical literature (see later).

Theoretical approach

The aims of the project stem from four sources. Firstly, reading and writing for the first four assignments where there was a deconstructive undercurrent that began with questioning the way education is supposed to be and culminating in advancing a notion of how education could be. Secondly, the omnipresent, deconstructive lure of the Phase A taught sessions manifested by the perpetually hanging questions of, "How do we know what we know?", "How does discourse and identity speak of one's reflexivity?" and "What is truth?" etcetera. Thirdly, the everyday encounters with trainee teachers going about their craft as they sought to impress me with what I suspect were often inauthentic displays of pedagogic practice designed to tick as many boxes as possible. Fourthly, the "dog and tennis ball" escapism that continually fought to reconcile the first three in an ideological and professional reflexive trauma where Billig (1988, p. 146) suggests, (ideology) *does not imprint single images but produces dilemmatic quandaries*.

Whilst the project questions were present throughout Phase A, it was only recently that I noticed them as I pondered a key note lecture (Pring, 2010) that questioned the purpose of education and echoed the sentiments of many before from Lester-Smith (1957), through the Black Papers (Cox & Dyson, 1971) and the Great Debate (Callaghan, 1976) to Coffield (2010) et al. Such a literature does not invoke a nostalgia whereby education was previously somehow better than now, but repeats the same unanswered question which Biesta (2007, p. 20) usefully and linguistically turned into, *Education professionals need to make decisions about what is educationally desirable*. Throughout the four assignments I made the case that government education policy and Taylorist rhetoric marginalise teachers in both education design and evaluation (Thompson & Robinson, 2008), where they are denied *permission to think*

(Brown et al, 2008, p. 11) and where they are expected to pay homage to a dominant business model that portrays education as a commodity and learners as consumers – a tokenistic ideology singularly at odds with the reality of the sector. In doing so, I identified a recent literature that made a robust argument for seeking a different version of LLS reality, the possibilities of which are embedded in the project aims.

It is salient to mention at this methodological stage that Phase A has raised the spectre of a polymorphous self where Assignment #1 left me feeling an "uncertain interpretivist" whilst Assignment #2 signalled the realisation that New Labour's teacher is not meant to be a researcher and moved me to seeing myself as a "cautious critical theorist".

In Assignment #3 I intervened with a bespoke session on managing challenging behaviour, because I deemed it educationally desirable, the reading and action research for which illuminated the political tensions of educational research. More importantly, the intervention brought home the pretensions I labour under when observing trainees' pedagogy, left me licking my wounds as a "cautious critical rationalist" and yet opened the way to explore ways in which I could make a meaningful difference for my trainees as I discussed at length in Assignment #4. There I made the case that trainees mediate conflicting divergent forces emanating from their organisational and cultural structures to promote and enhance learning but are quick to apologise, for example for deviating from a session plan or intervening in some way, during feedback dialogue because they believe that they have breached a practical rule or fallen foul of a theory. There is a politics and a hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) here which, I argued, the trainees could challenge in the safety and sanctuary of the feedback dialogue if only to acknowledge life at the margins of everyday practice but which ostensibly gives them openings to accredit their choices and

consider alternative possibilities in pursuing that which they perceive to be educationally desirable in both their subject specialism and context. Yet trainee teachers in the sector also bring with them a set of social and cultural dispositions, habitus, vocational baggage, ways of thinking and inherited language and knowledge that they believe equips them to teach their subject specialism within the sector – artefacts of a relativist ontology that is equally worthy of investigation (Rushton, 2008) and which Trifonas (2000, p. 253) posits as,

Education, however, activates and is activated by the vestigial remains of symbolical forms of expression and interaction, communication and interpretation grafted from the traces of cultural memory existing within us.

Throughout Phase A I had been blinkered by my own pursuit of a truth of the classroom but the project questions emerged quite easily, yet loaded with tension, when I began to consider what trainees perceived to be the purposes of education in their corner of the sector, what they brought to the table, where they got it from and how it all came together in what they did in front of class. In Assignments #2 and 4 I offered what I thought was a robust but still developing case for adopting an eclectic research approach in pursuit of such a truth of the classroom whilst harbouring unease in advancing an epistemology that could in any way be an adequate understanding of what is educationally desirable in professional teaching practice. At this point in time I am less concerned with whether my thesis findings will be correct or true, since no one view of the classroom is more reliable than another, but that I should give a clear, accurate account of them in the right terms, the approach to which I refine and justify here.

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Recent reading of a more radical literature has brought an awareness that I am alive to the contested, almost ghostly, nature of the educational and philosophical swamp in which I reside where there is a complexity that is alien to the policymaker. Therefore I baulk at adopting a simplistic methodological approach and advance one that is more akin to a mosaic, a nomadic (O'Grady, 2009) action research-based interpretivist approach to ethnomethodology within an overarching ethos of reflective critical thinking which Bailin & Siegel (2003) perceive as an act of cultural hegemony. I will suggest that such an ethnography, including symbolic interactionism, offers a valid and reliable approach to data collection and analysis in the chosen field; where the messiness of narrative and discourse provides an optic through which to invoke both trainees' and my own reflexive scrutinies; where tensions in the power relations can hopefully be sidelined, or at least acknowledged; and where theory, practice and different types of knowledge in a particular subject specialism and context can be articulated in a safe environment and which Giroux (2003, p. 5) locates as, *Any critical theory both defines and is defined by the problems posed by the contexts it seeks to address*. Thus, as discussed in Assignment #4, the project is concerned with a "dirty" or "messy" (Cook, 2009) endeavour, the mess coming from the realisation that qualitative data is something of a slippery concept and which Pitt and Britzman (2003, p. 757) ponder as, *...what counts as data and what data counts as,* and is symptomatic of narrative-based data and studies of this type.

From the first four assignments I retain a trust in Frierean questioning to deconstruct trainees' perceptions of how what they perceive to be educationally desirable is employed as a driver in their taught sessions and which Pring (2004, p. 78) posits as, *Theory is the articulation of what is implicit in practice.* Likewise, I also retain a non-common sense approach to data collection and

analysis and will later argue its rightful place in the project as an inherently liberating pedagogy (Burbules, 2000). In order to better articulate my ideas I will now draw on the main relevant theorists that I explored in Phase A and my recent reading.

The central thrust of the project may be seen to conform with theories from, or after, those of the Chicago and Frankfurt schools where Mead's (1934) seminal work seems to have been the spur for symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969, et al) that focuses on either role structures and social systems or role behaviour and social action, the latter being more relevant to the project, and which emphasised strong empirical research relating to how one thinks about oneself and society. Mead's work helps to interpret the trainees' teaching insofar as he uses the metaphor of acting to suggest that such social interaction is in a state of flux since we have no self to portray other than that required of us, not unlike trainees acting in an inauthentic way for the observer or other interested stakeholder, or even for their learners. Whilst symbolic interactionism has drawn criticism for being vague and weak on theory (Craib, 1992), it provides a particular lens for capturing the sophistication and subtlety of trainee craft, the authenticity of which forms part of the post-observation dialogue where individual trainees in the sample can relate their pedagogy, knowledge and practice to their notions of educational desirability.

It seems that the post-structuralist, despite that ideology's reluctance to do very much with data other than lock it in time and play fast-and-loose in its pursuit of a perceived truth, is seldom far from Phase A and so it is with the analogy of the actor. Here, Giddens (1984) also uses the actor metaphor to offer a new form of structuralism which, whilst it seems to constrain the teacher, is also enabling in that the language of education limits what teachers can say, yet they can say something. Thus his post-structuralist approach seems to offer a duality where

institutional structures can be analysed, and is thus welcome in the project, yet the institution has rules regarding communication that sit at odds with the ethos of the project aims. Yet Giddens' analogy of the actor is useful in that he uses it to illuminate three levels of reflexivity, not unlike Freud's (1915 - 1918) notion of the Id, ego and superego, where at the lower level there is an unconscious, then an implicit or taken-for-granted knowledge, and at the higher level conscious, reflexive knowledge.

Mead's work also sits close to that of Garfinkel (1984) who suggests an almost mischievous linguistic turn to question the way we conform to supposedly common sense structures and social interactions. Like Bourdieu (1970) and Pring (2004), Garfinkel legitimates challenging the education policymakers' common sense orthodoxy by advocating abstract, theoretical thinking and reflection that offers to release the trainee from the LLUK-imposed structures, and me from the norm judge position, in order to liberate some of the mess.

In developing a non-common sense attitude to one's beliefs one is at the beginning of the disciplined, critical and reflective thinking that is the mark of educational research.
        (Pring, 2004, p. 84)

Thus, theories of social constructionism seem to argue that common sense knowledge is unstable in that it is created anew in each encounter, is clearly enculturated and is out of kilter with the rhizomatous personal and pedagogic needs that learners bring to the post-14 classroom. Although I suggest that common sense knowledge enjoys no more than a cameo role in the reality of the classroom, de Botton (2000) believes that to question common sense conventions, as I did in Assignment #4 and continue to, *would seem bizarre, even aggressive* (p. 9) although I see little evidence of common sense's efficacy in New Labour's legacy in (see ashes of) the fragmented LSS.

Nevertheless, Nastasi & Schensul's (2005, p. 6) suggestion that, *the limitations of existing research is* (due to) *the lack of attention to cultural and contextual issues* is understandable given that teaching and learning are awash with individual and multiple identities, perceptions, dispositions, culture, context and specialism – and learners, trainee teachers and the lesson observer each have their own. As Rollinson, et al succinctly put it,

Culture provides a code of conduct that tells people the expected and appropriate ways to behave, whereas climate tends to result in a set of conditions to which people react.
(Rollinson, et al, 1998, p. 564)

I cited Rollinson, et al in Assignment #3 in the context of disaffected learners' behaviour yet it holds good when considering the ways in which some trainees may feel they are expected to teach, or not. In my seven years as a teacher trainer/educator I have no recollection of working with any trainee who came into teaching for anything other than altruistic reasons, yet many have suggested in the sanctuary of the reflective journal that LSS culture and climate have knocked such altruism out of them by the end of their training. Hence, over the next two years of data collection, I will be uncomfortable passing round the "hand-in" box for reflective journals to mark - another nail in the *Physician heal thyself* reflexive coffin (Anon, 1982, Luke 4:23).

Despite the fragility of the classroom and the moral argument for going beyond post-structuralism's blurred boundaries, the critical approaches argued for in Assignments #2 & 4 offer a praxis-oriented approach to data collection and analysis that harness reflexivity as another form of knowledge. Whilst being allegedly structuralist, Bourdieu's (1970) notion of reflexivity sits well with critical theory's reliance on thinking that facilitates judgement and synthesis, but where critical theory goes beyond post-structuralism's deconstruction and offers

a new "whole" or nugget of new knowledge from the data typified by Brown and Roberts' (2000) interpretation of Habermasian thinking as, *creating a better world, as conceptualised from specific interpretations of the present* (p. 11).

In the same way that Brown & Roberts' work helps to mediate an appreciation of the differing perspectives of Habermas and Gadamer, as discussed in Assignment #4, so Davis (2005) and Osberg (2005) helps to understand the Habermasian concept of emergence as data is revealed. Here, data collection will commence with an initial questionnaire to capture trainees' perspectives of what is educationally desirable, the sources of such dispositions and their thoughts of how such notions are manifested in their taught sessions. (A pilot questionnaire was trialled with an opportunist sample of 12 trainees at the School Specialist Conference in July 2010 with encouraging data being gathered). It would be valid to also capture biographical and contextual data at this point in order to code and categorise data during the analysis stage. The only other data collection that is planned for is to elicit trainees' perceptions of how their notions of educational desirability surface in the taught sessions arising from post-observation feedback dialogue and, possibly and only if they chose to do so, in their written reflective accounts over the second year. Within such a longitudinal study, Habermas' logics of contingency (1984, 1987) and emergence will help to formulate emerging data that builds on the initial questionnaire, and where post-observation hermeneutic listening is inherently contingent, not static, and leaves open a small space for the difference of a particular trainee's context and practice to emerge as a hitherto unimagined notion of "otherness". Within such a space for dialogue, a Habermasian (1972) praxis-oriented approach to unconstrained communication gives opportunities for trainees to deconstruct a collective of socio-cultural semiotics that negates

both the traditional provocative analysis of teaching craft and the ideologies that currently bind trainees.

Thus, as I argued in Assignment #4, common sense offers only "safe", repetitive and ostensibly pedestrian pedagogic solutions for the future but promises little else other than to vulgarise trainee teachers' potential to be innovative and creative and to moderate their aspirations towards the way in which things could be. In contrast, a critical approach that views the cultural, contextual and specialist dimensions of the classroom (Ollin, 2008) through a non-common sense lens liberates both observer and trainee from the "right" solutions and opens dialogue to potentially untouchable avenues of what is possible. Again, Habermas advocates a research focus that centres on interests that shape my understanding of what counts as knowledge, in particular a practical interest where reality is socially constructed, and an emancipatory interest which seeks to liberate trainees' voices in determining what constitutes worthwhile knowledge and which could inform their future teaching careers and sense of professionalism.

Whilst a reading of Habermas threatens the project with an almost egalitarian sense of enquiry, his ideas bear more than a passing resemblance to a wider literature that seeks a rational search for the truth of the classroom through discursive practice. For example, Habermas advocates a 4-stage "communicative turn" approach to discourse that sits well with O'Grady's (2009) three key concepts of interpretive ethnography comprising representation, interpretation and reflexivity described as, *A hermeneutical relationship would emerge between our theory and practice, our understanding of pedagogy continually reconstructed in the light of experience*. (ibid. p. 121). Apparently influenced by Gadamer, such a community of practice-based action research approach further illustrates the blurred boundaries between post-structuralism

and critical theory, but more interestingly promises a similarly productive partnership between tutor and trainees in the project as a questioning community.

In a similar way, Trifonas (2009) gives Derrida's post-structuralism a linguistic turn in advocating *discourses of knowing* (p. 301) among research participants but which accommodate differences of perception in a hermeneutic, subjective form of knowing. Whilst Trifonas acknowledges the quantitative researchers' criticism of such an approach as, *Science equates interpretation with idiosyncratic irrationalism* (p. 302) he also cautions that a new academic responsibility, and here I offer the project to the mix, must rely on the consistency of researcher bias and reflexivity, a stretch of particularly thin ice that I am also alive to.

Again, Habermas' (op. cit.) postulations for an ideology critique are maintained by Brookfield (2009) who adds weight to the messiness of such hegemonic phenomena and which he sees as unmasking power relations where the observer is perceived as a judge of normality and the trainee and institution are under scrutiny. Yet Brookfield's (2005) critical perspective also acknowledges that trainees are also agents of power and I think that he persuades educators to make use of the sort of spaces and opportunities I advocate here in developing a dialectical relationship between critical theory and pedagogical practice, especially when adopting the non-common sense approach that Assignments #3 & 4 guided me towards. Thus, stepping out of the structures of common sense and into a discourse of abstract, theoretical thinking and reflection offers to liberate some of the mess with the implications that it carries for constructing educational knowledge within the project.

I imagine that it is here that the project is at its most fragile, where I am offering trainees a way forward to find their own liminality and thresholds (Meyer and

Land, 2003), to explore how things are, how they could be and to grow into their next space since there will be an overwhelming reliance on leading them into intelligent thinking – a version of autonomy that sectoral systems and powers have worked hard and efficiently to deny entrants to the profession. Yet, Friere (1970, 1992) encourages subversion that seeks to educate and improve despite the boundaries imposed on trainees from their organisations and I think he would advocate the ethos of the project that I am advancing.

Whilst Dewey is proving difficult to read, in that he seems not to say what he means then rewords it later in another place, and allegedly refuses to accept dualisms of any sort (Stott, 2010), he suggests (1929) that experience is located alongside both old knowledge and the potential for new knowledge that lurks at the end of the type of discursive thinking I propose here. Although Dewey appears to be a post-structuralist, his pragmatism echoes that of Habermas in trying to comprehend education in context and to encourage cultural theory to emerge from practice, and resonates with some of the structural work of Bernstein (1977) and Schwab (1978) and the semiotics of Barthes (1982), all of whom contribute different ways of thinking to the project as discussed in Assignment #4.   In the same way I look forward to next reading the various semiotic works of Greimas and Hjelmslev, and the subversive literature of Trifonas et al, to see what they can contribute to the difficult reconciliation of practice and theory to individual disposition and context.

Thus, I no longer feel that I need to be firmly located within one particular paradigm, as I did upon completing Assignment #2, but feel confident with a methodological mosaic that can be taken for a loose conglomeration of theories, despite their imprecision, that will allow my learners and I to glean what we can and pass it on in a meaningful and accessible way. Within such a space I am comfortable in considering theories simply as a set of ideas that invite enquiry;

where perceived truths can be replaced with other ideas; where assumptions, being understandings of how our world or the ambiguous zone of teaching practice works, are a moveable feast; and where multiple voices and perspectives are free to lend expression to an emerging, contingent, interpretive and relativist concept of teaching and learning that values cultural dispositions over prescription. In pursuing an articulation of the messiness and tensions which pervade my learners' professional roles, and unearthing ways in which I can scrutinise the assumptions and structures that they and their learners labour under whilst challenging the "taken-for-grantedness" of educational theory-in-practice as the participants understand them, calls for the critical approach presented here.

Method

Although the project pursues only individual dispositions and perspectives, thereby avoiding unsettling the university's expectations for teaching, learning and assessment in the second year, I will initially gain institutional clearance from the School's Director of Research as a necessary ethical procedure.

I intend to conduct a whole group discussion with the 40 trainees at the start of the second year (September 2010) to share the aims and rationale of the project and to invite them to form the sample. At this point I will also make clear the proposed non-common sense approach to feedback dialogue where ticking all the boxes does not imply outstanding teaching but that trainees maintaining core altruistic values of teaching and learning, as a guide to being pragmatic about what they can achieve, are essential components of a framework which they are at will to push around within their structures and constraints, whether they choose to take part or not. I will make clear that the project will be conducted in line with the BERA (2004) Ethical Guidelines and the Data Protection Act (ICO, 1998) to guarantee that participation is voluntary; that participants may withdraw from the research at any time and without giving a reason; that all data will remain confidential; that questionnaires and transcripts will be destroyed immediately after analysis (October 2010 and July 2011, respectively); that those involved will be included in participant validation of their data; and how the findings will be disseminated.

Those who wish to take part will complete an initial 2-page questionnaire where page 1 gathers biographical data (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982) (for example, gender, age range, highest qualification and subject specialism and schooling etcetera) with a view to capturing a sense of social capital. A similar questionnaire (in Rushton, 2008) allowed data analysis to differentiate between graduates and vocational tutors; permanent and agency teachers; etcetera with good effect and

usefully offers a similar analytical tool to the project. Page 2 provides open

responses and prompts to the three core questions of:

What do you consider to be educationally desirable in your subject specialism
and/or context?

What makes you think so? (e.g. where did you get your opinions from; is there
anything in your background that steers such thinking; what are the
past/historical issues that influence you in that way? Etc.

In what ways do you try to embed such thinking in your teaching? What are the
issues that constrain or help such efforts?

Data from the questionnaires will be used to promote a preliminary form of

coding (Silverman, 2001) for the post-observation dialogue that seeks to

triangulate (Cohen, et al, 2007) their teaching craft with their conceptions of

educational desirability and my own interpretations of the session. Validity will

be promoted by involving individual trainees in checking my accounts of what

they said, and which Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 314) urge as, *the most crucial*

technique for establishing credibility, whilst giving them the opportunity to

refine their thoughts in the light of their reflections. Trainee accounts may also

appear in their reflective journals although, in order not to make participation

onerous, these would be seen as supplementary data. Still, I am mindful that the

reliability and validity of data, regardless of the extent of trainee involvement in

its analysis and interpretation, is highly fragile and leaves the status of

knowledge questionable and indicative of *the crisis of representing teaching and*

learning (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 757).

Having collected and analysed data from up to 40 trainee second year teachers

during the 2010-11 academic year, there will be an interim period of

disseminating the initial findings to critical peers and research students at the

host and Ed.D universities and the JVET (Journal of Vocational Education and

Training) conference in Oxford, in order to refine the approach outlined here

before repeating data collection and analysis with the next cohort in the 2011-12

academic year. Summary findings and recommendations for further research will be disseminated to a wider audience through a peer reviewed journal at the end of Phase B.

Conclusion

In this assignment I have advanced a methodological approach to teaching practitioner research that is collaboratively steeped in trainee teachers' individual dispositions and experiences in both unique contexts and common places. In adopting a non-common sense approach to action research that embraces critical, semiotic and partly post-structuralist paradigms, the framework advances a potentially liberating optic of symbolic interactionism whereby both trainee teachers and I, as their tutor/observer, can expose as data the "mess" and troublesome knowledge of teaching and learning in the post-14 sector to examination and discussion. In doing so, the proposed approach offers a *language of possibility* (Schwabenland, 2009, p. 301) to trainee teachers as an opportunity for transformational change in their own practice through heuristic dialogue and interpretation in a community of inquiry.

The proposed research will not shake the earth but has more modest aspirations – simply to exploit small cultural spaces in order to reclaim some autonomy for post-14 pedagogy; where trainee teachers can explore their own logics and demarcations of social capital as they impact on their professional practice; where they can grow into seasoned practitioners armed with the confidence to embrace difference with a view to making a difference; and where I can develop my own appreciation of the different types of knowledge that trainees employ.

Thus, I look forward to Phase B rising to Trifonas' (2000, p. 264) challenge of,

And here, at this juncture of a spatio-temporal opening between the curricula of past, present and future, we must prepare to begin to rethink education, yet again.

(5174 without quotes)

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