

The Creation of Transformative Learning Cultures in Higher Education

Hazel Susan Messenger

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Abstract

This research claims that transformative as opposed to informative learning cultures in higher education are capable of promoting student identity development alongside subject development. It makes a significant pedagogical, conceptual, methodological and contextual contribution to contemporary discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st century. Transformative learning cultures, based on the pedagogical values of the teachers involved, create an identity workspace where student development is encouraged. This workspace reflects the active demonstration of empathy on the part of the teachers and is represented by an integrated pedagogical pattern consisting of four elements; the development of trust, (ii) the creation of collaborative and supportive communities where students have the opportunities to play different roles, (iii) active confrontation and challenge and (iv) the effective use of pedagogical time and space.

A naturalistic, ethnographic methodology and case study approach was used to answer the question '*what is going on here?*' with teachers of Foundation Degrees in two colleges across several subject disciplines in order to explore the nature and purpose of the learning cultures created. A conceptual framework was developed through the active integration of empirical research and scholarship resulting in a socio-cultural approach to understanding the learning contexts. This was supported by the collection of rich and varied data including photographs, observations and interviews with both teachers and students. Visualisation also supported the interpretation and representation of data in an accessible format. An activity theory approach was adopted to support an integrated analysis of the data, enabling the isolation and identification of the influence of teacher intentions, student dispositions, roles and relationships and how development was influenced by time, space and context.

Higher education; Activity theory; Student development; Transformative learning culture; Visualisation; Pedagogical pattern; Identity workspace

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Introduction to Chapter 1

The research discussed in this thesis relates to the creation of transformative learning cultures in higher education. It has been undertaken in higher education taught in further education colleges (HE in FE), an essential part of government higher education policy, but relatively under-researched compared to university-based provision. HE in FE tends to be positioned with improving employability and skills development, however, an alternative conceptualization positions it as having a wider, moral purpose, aiming to be intentionally transformative, bringing about change and development of the individual. This thesis proposes that researching an intentionally developmental learning environment contributes to discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st century.

1.1 Why this, why now

In recent years there have been lively discussions in higher education around the development of 'employability' and 'skills', and The Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) point out that many of these discussions rest on a conception of skill development as technical mastery, rather than development of personal awareness (SKOPE, 2012). Recently, Quinlan (2011) has challenged educational processes which reduce the individual student to an employable product with a set of attributes, advocating instead a view of the student as a person with a role in society. She suggests that higher education in the UK needs to explore developmental processes in teaching and learning, something that is less common here than in higher education in the USA. As Palmer (2010a) points out, a higher education with developmental and transformative intentions needs to adopt different pedagogical processes to those anticipating that transactional processes and skills or

knowledge acquisition is an adequate outcome, and places different responsibilities on the teacher and the student.

Student development is often implicit in practice in HE in FE, as students may enter the higher education process with lower entry qualifications, or with a limited view of their own potential. For them engagement with their course might also include change not just to do with their subject but also personal, transforming their sense of themselves. As Boud (1991) indicated over twenty years ago, meaningful learning does not just involve knowledge and skills, it also relates to development and purpose, and without the connection between the two individuals will be only partially educated and limited in what they can do. This has been a core purpose of FE colleges for many years, something Hardy (2006) describes as the honourable tradition of further and adult education, but diminished by a view that considers that vocational degree courses only provide a factory-model of skills development for employment, rather than contributing to society by encouraging the growth of educated and empowered individuals.

1.2 The research purpose

This research commenced in 2008 and was instigated from the basis of wanting to know '*what is going on here?*' A research timeline is available in Appendix 1.1. At the time I was employed by a university as a senior lecturer responsible for the coordination, development and quality monitoring of degree courses taught in partner colleges, and my experience suggested that some contexts made more difference to their students' learning and development than others. I wanted to try and found out more about what was going on, from both the students' and the teachers' perspectives and contribute to practice in higher education by identifying factors that may support student development. The study involves two colleges on the outskirts of a large city, and although from 2009 my professional role changed, I was able to continue with the research with the agreement of college managers.

The research explores the creation of intentionally transformative learning cultures in higher education. Through undertaking it I aim to re-emphasise my own commitment to the potential of education and policies associated with widening participation in higher education, actively integrate my own experiences as an educational practitioner with the subject and process of the research and contribute to practice in higher education (Burgess et al, 2006; Wickes et al, 2008). Although Siraj-Blatchford (2010) argues for educational researchers to make transparent the potential offered to less privileged students by current educational policies, this study aims to go a little further than that, and provide the opportunity to examine how practice in HE in FE which focuses on student development contributes to higher education more widely.

In undertaking this research I aim to identify how transformative learning cultures, those which intend to bring about change and development in the student are created. I also aim to make a small contribution to practice in higher education through creating a space for knowledge creation and exchange, something that is achieved by involving teachers of HE in FE in research. In addition to these factors, I aim to develop skills and practice associated with creativity in research. Zajonc (2010a) considers that a limited view of the world results from a limited anthropology, an idea that Palmer (2010a) expands by suggesting that fragmentation of higher education prevents possibilities for communication and change. HE in FE may not be at the forefront of higher education research, but student development is a 'hot topic', and in communicating the findings of this research it is anticipated that a contribution will be made to ongoing conversations.

1.3 Ethical considerations

Throughout this project, I committed myself to researching with rather than about others, to enable research to be undertaken about an under-researched sector and to communicate in forms that would be accessible to a wide representation of the higher education profession. The ethical considerations surrounding these issues have needed to be taken into account at every stage of the research process, from instigation and

planning, to completion and continuation. The university's ethical approval documents are available in Appendix 1.2. Cohen et al (2007) indicate the lack of a fixed set of 'rules' in undertaking research, and emphasise the importance of a researcher identifying the ethical considerations that need to be taken account for their own research process. In this project, my ethical responsibilities included taking into account the factors associated with my close working relationship with the research sites, and also how that relationship changed after 2009. The following subsections introduce the ethical issues I needed to address, and how their resolution was approached. Further discussion of them is included in Chapters 5 and 6.

1.3.1 Researching with rather than on others

As indicated above, a researcher needs to make their own decisions regarding the ethical issues surrounding their research project, which will be based in part on their own moral code. I based my decision to research with rather than on others on a fundamental belief that it is wrong to exploit others. This was put into practice by adopting participatory research principles (Reason and Bradbury, 2008) with a commitment to not making life any worse for the participants because of their involvement. I adopted an ethic of care for the individuals and their organisations (Mauthner et al, 2002), a desire to act in a positive and beneficial way towards them. Therefore, if tensions were revealed because of the research process, for example, between individuals and their organisations, I dealt with them as problems that deserved highlighting in order that a solution could be found, rather than problems that deserved condemnation.

1.3.2 Obtaining and maintaining access and informed consent

The need to obtain informed consent to undertake research with individuals and organisations relates to the principle of the right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al, 2007). One of my major responsibilities as a researcher involved gaining permission to undertake research, to enable those involved to make their own

decisions about their degree of involvement and to clarify how the process was distinct from my professional role.

1.3.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Within this thesis and at events where research findings have been shared the confidentiality and anonymity of the organisations and individuals participating has been maintained. This is an important ethical consideration in educational research, based on protecting the rights, welfare and dignity of the participants (Cohen et al, 2007).

The two colleges have been referred to as College A and College B, and the teacher participants' names have been changed. However, because I have used photographs, a closer consideration of ethical issues in taking and using them is deserved (Loizos, 2000; Wiles et al, 2008). Because my research is for educational purposes and not journalism, I adopted the same ethic of care towards the research participants with the use of photographs as with any other of the research methods adopted. Practically, informed consent was given by all participants for the taking and use of photographs through prior discussion, explanation and consent forms (Appendix 3). However as Wiles et al (ibid) point out, mutual trust is an important principle underpinning consent, particularly in participatory research. In using the photographs, I have made careful choices so that the photographs used illustrate a point whilst maintaining the anonymity of the context, and similarly, all faces have been obscured.

1.3.4 Communicating with the higher education community

I have made a commitment through undertaking this research to making the process and findings accessible to the higher education community. This has been achieved by presenting papers at research conferences, individually and with other educational researchers. A summary of these may be seen in Appendix 2.

1.4 The structure of this thesis

Following this introduction, the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2, *Setting the scene*, provides the reader with an introduction to current policy issues in higher education, the place of HE in FE in higher education policy and Foundation Degrees. Chapter 3, *Conceptual framework*, is a discussion of the theoretical framework developed through the process of undertaking this research, which provides the foundations of the discussion of findings presented in Chapter 8. Chapter 4, *Methodology*, provides a summary of the methodology adopted for the study. This is followed by Chapter 5, *A reflexive account of purpose and methodology*, which discusses how I identified my purpose for carrying out the research, and how my beliefs and values shaped the methods used for creating knowledge, including the adoption of a case study approach and the use of arts-based research methods. It explains how I used drawing as a way of connecting the private place of thought with the public place of communication. It also includes a discussion of how a cultural view of learning and research supports the development of sound reflexive base to both the research product and to the research process and ends with a summary of my career history. Chapter 6, *Putting purpose into practice*, discusses how these principles were put into practice, and introduces the research design, an exploratory case study (Study 1), a collective case study (Study 2) and an interim group discussion. The chapter discusses the 'researcher toolkit' deployed in undertaking qualitative, naturalistic, ethnographic case study research, including methods for collecting data *in situ*, conducting interviews, and the use of a personal reflexive journal and photography. Chapter 7, *Data analysis and interpretation*, discusses the interpretation of the data from Study 1, through the group discussion to Study 2, and how interpretation and conceptualisation were developmental processes involving the parallel activities of research, reading and data analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion of how the data was integrated and analysed from an activity theory perspective (Engeström, 1987; 1999) in order that an holistic, interactive view could be achieved, rather than an oversimplified, reductionist one. Chapter 8, *Presentation and discussion of findings*, presents a conceptualisation of higher education as a transformative identity workspace and considers the intentions and experiences of

the teachers, the process of empathy and how students responded to being in an intentionally developmental environment. The final chapter, Chapter 9, *Conclusions: contribution to practice in higher education and personal learning*, suggests ways in which this research contributes to a higher education which is seen to be developmental and purposeful, indicates limitations and areas for further research. It also considers my own personal and professional learning.

1.5 Conclusion to Chapter 1

This introduction has outlined the subject and the purpose of the study being reported on, and the following chapter provides the context for the research in the current era, outlining expectations of the higher education sector particularly in relation to employability and skills development.

Chapter 2 Setting the scene

2.0 Introduction to Chapter 2

Key characteristics of the current era are the challenges and opportunities presented as the world faces rapid change. This is a different state of affairs compared to more stable eras because environmental, social and economic issues now need resolution on a global scale (RSA, 2012). Chickering and Reisser (1993:208) suggest that in the past the principal task of education was socialisation, helping children and adults learn how to join and be productive within their societies. Pointing out the change in global affairs, they propose that where “*change is the only certainty*”, identity formation, not socialisation is the central task of education.

At the end of the last century, Unesco published *Learning: the treasure within* (Delors, 1996), a report focusing on learning for the 21st Century. This too highlighted the problems to be faced in the future and proposed that education was central to managing and overcoming them. The proposals made by Unesco have been adopted by national and international governments and policy advisers, and used to underpin policy developments, enabling individuals and communities to advance their potential by promoting the interdependence of social justice and economic success. In the UK, the triple aims of higher-level skills development, widening participation in higher education and lifelong learning have been part of the higher education funding strategy for a number of years. Strategies adopted have included new qualifications, improved accessibility, development of employability and a revised approach to vocational higher education (Hefce, 2012).

This section will present an overview of recent policy developments associated with higher education, followed by an exploration of major policy drivers regarding higher-level skills’ development and employability. This will be followed by an introduction to HE in FE and Foundation Degrees. These issues put the research in

context, and the findings will contribute to ongoing discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education in the current era.

2.1 Government policy and higher education

2.1.1 Policy developments since 1963

In recent years successive governments have stimulated demand for higher education, while also aiming to open up opportunities to individuals from a wider range of social profiles than have been previously represented. This process began almost fifty years ago in 1963, when the Robbins Committee proposed that “*courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so*” (David, 2008:6). The Committee also indicated that higher education had two main elements, imparting “*employment skills*” and developing the “*general powers of the mind*” (Blass, 1999:1). Since then, the direction of UK policy has developed a higher education landscape that combines academic learning whilst promoting widening participation, the development of employment related education and skills, and also emphasises lifelong learning (Day, 2009). A significant milestone in the development of this policy was provided by *Dearing Review of Higher Education* (Dearing, 1997) which encouraged the expansion of higher level qualifications both at degree and sub-degree levels, whilst also proposing that students and employers should take more responsibility for funding higher education, which led to the introduction of tuition fees.

Policy development after the *Dearing Review of Higher Education* (ibid) included the *Leitch Review of Adult Skills Development*, which promoted the cause of “*economically valuable skills*” (Leitch, 2006:6). The government responded by indicating that the UK should be the world leader in skills by 2020 (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2007; Greenwood et al, 2008; UKCES, 2009). A significant part of this policy involved collaboration between employers, universities and colleges, with an emphasis on ‘demand’ by employers, rather than ‘supply’ by educational institutions.

Previously, it had been anticipated that graduates would join the workforce and then their 'employability' would develop. This policy reversed this trend, with employers being able to collaborate with educational institutions in identifying the higher-level skills anticipated at graduation. This discussion continued with the government white paper, *Higher Education at Work, High Skills-High Value* (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2008), which focused on the need to drive forwards a knowledge based economy. This document clearly put the responsibility for the development of employability skills with higher education (Day, 2009), indicating that its purpose should be to provide graduates who could enter the job market with the skills ready to contribute to the economy.

In the higher education blueprint, *Higher Ambitions* (Denham, 2009), the place of FE colleges in higher-level skills development was brought into focus. The report emphasised the need for the UK to remain competitive, and although it spoke predominantly about universities, it reinforced the involvement of FE colleges in higher education, in part to support accessibility. It explicitly proposed the need for higher education provision to move away from the prevailing culture of three year, full time degree courses, encouraged the expansion of Foundation Degrees, and reinforced former policy initiatives associated with widening participation and the importance of higher education to economic growth. In addition, it required higher education institutions (HEIs) to make explicit the approaches used to enhance student employability, so that prospective students and employers could anticipate links being made with the future.

These changes in the emphasis on employability also occurred in parallel with increases in tuition fees and the introduction of student loans. Most recently, *Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011) has continued the emphasis on employment, encouraging greater collaboration between providers of higher education and employers. This policy anticipates that higher education will enable students to gain the knowledge and skills they need to embark on rewarding careers and as with *Higher Ambitions*, it also indicates the intention to open up the higher

education market, with an explicit mention of the role of FE colleges in enabling local communities to engage fully in higher education.

Although these policy initiatives often appear remote from day-to-day practice, Day (2009) points out that it is through the actions of both educational institutions and individual practitioners that they are implemented, and each carry equal responsibility in order that individual goals and national prospects are sustained and developed. However, there are different understandings of the terms involved, and an exploration of the meaning of ‘skills development’ and ‘employability’ in higher education is the focus of the following section.

2.1.2 Higher education, skills and employability

As indicated in the previous section, ‘employability’ and ‘skills’ have a high profile, often uttered in the same breath, going hand in hand in debates regarding national prosperity. Employability is regarded as a complex issue, but one that is closely identified with definitions of “*good learning*” (Yorke, 2006:2). The skills debate is also complex and often conflicting, as the term ‘skills’ covers a diverse range of issues, including individual employment, company profitability, global economic competition and societal wellbeing (Shoesmith, 2011). In 2003, the government white paper *21st Century skills* (Dfes/HM Treasury, 2003:6) indicated that “*we all know skills matter*”, and employers have also contributed to the debate (for example, *Known Unknowns: the demand for higher level skills from business*, Kewin et al, 2008). Skills and employability are not just a concern for the UK, as similar reports have been published in the USA (for example; Casner-Lotto and Barrington, 2006) and in Australia (for example, Cleary et al, 2007).

Shoesmith (2011) suggests that definitions of skills and skills development should be clarified and broadened, in order that they may be successfully embedded within education systems, but this is far from being a straightforward issue. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) introduced the use of the term skills in relation to education policy over 20 years ago in order to identify the current and future skills

needs of businesses (CBI, 1989). They adopted an holistic vision of skills, emphasising the need to integrate different types alongside technical and job related competencies. They have more recently continued with this attitude, and in *Future Fit: preparing graduates for the world of work* (CBI/UUK, 2009), the list of higher-level skills for employability include personal awareness, a positive attitude, problem solving and business awareness alongside more conventional 'key' skills like literacy, ICT and numeracy. This point of view is reinforced by a number of publications from the UK and the USA, which emphasise that employability goes beyond the acquisition of key skills, suggesting that contemporary higher education has a need to develop self-aware graduates who are capable of becoming responsible citizens. These publications indicate that graduates need to be able to make and justify personally and socially meaningful decisions in complex, changing, multicultural environments (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; DfES, 2005; Huber and Hutchings, 2004; Kreber, 2008).

The meaning of the term 'skills' in relation to higher education has not been without contention, and confusion. Baty (2011:5), quotes Steve Shwartz, Vice Chancellor of Macquarie University, Australia, who, in claiming that universities used to be about character building, commented that,

"Politicians and universities often refer to skills shortages. Apparently, we need more salon managers and circus performers. But no one seems to worry about a shortage of philosophers and ethicists."

In the UK, Wright et al (2010:3), in a report for the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, state that *"improving the nation's skills profile - both hard (qualifications) and soft (generic skills) - is essential to the future prosperity of the UK"*, commenting that educational institutions tend to focus on qualifications rather than preparation for the workforce. They propose that enabling highly skilled individuals the freedom and flexibility to use their higher-level 'softer' skills, like teamworking, creativity and communication skills has a significant place in the development of new products in a

knowledge intensive economy, and that this focus should be built into the education system. Terminology like 'hard' and soft' adds to the confusion, and Payne (2004) and the ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance, (SKOPE, 2012), suggest that many discussions regarding skill development rest on conceptions of skills that are rooted in a nineteenth century, manufacturing model of technical mastery/knowledge. SKOPE (2012) indicate that the manufacturing model assumes that methods that encourage personal development and decision making can be the same as those that develop technical skills, or that these characteristics should be developed separately.

Skills development is not therefore a new issue, but the current era makes it a 'hot topic'. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2011) have committed themselves to reframing and refreshing the debate, to find out what works, where and why. Recently Pegg et al (2012) have proposed that employability is not about lists or categories of skills, but relates to personal development and skilful practices in context. Their summary of current research indicates that raising the confidence, self-esteem and aspirations of higher education students, and providing them with the ability to articulate their learning seems to be more significant than a narrow focus on skills and competences. Baty (2011) adds to the discussion, but uses the term '21st century literacies' as opposed to skills. He reframes 'skill development' as 'character building', implying that employability relates to the person, and to their development.

These issues, although about graduate employability, relate fundamentally to ongoing debates regarding the nature and purpose of higher education. Reed (2011) for example, suggests that the emphasis on skills is mistaken and other, more fundamental qualities associated with 'mindset' are important, for example, openness to new ideas, approaching the world in a way that is beneficial to others and having the persistence and resilience to keep going. He proposes that the development of 'mindset' requires a deep and fundamental shift in approach within higher education. Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2011) propose that higher education should aim to produce

graduates with an identity which integrates values, intellectual rigour, performance and social engagement, rather than creating skills-based checklists. They conclude that;

“universities and government would be better employed promoting student employability indirectly through the promotion of graduate identity and well-being... rather than directly through employability skills” (ibid:582).

These last points resonate with the suggestions made by The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2002), Baxter Magolda (1999), Huber and Hutchings (2004), Kreber (2008) and Wells and Claxton (2002), all of whom point out that the complexity of societies in the 21st century require complex responses by education, and graduates with the capabilities for confronting uncertainty. As Chickering and Reisser (1993) point out, the needs of the current era are different to those of the past, and this requires a broader conception of the nature and purpose of a higher education. They indicate that the central and continuing task of higher education should be identity formation, something that David (2008) recognizes by suggesting that it should increase students’ self-awareness and make them into motivated lifelong learners. She comments that further research should be undertaken into learning in higher education that extends beyond subject expertise to understanding personal and social development, and considers that higher education institutions should take a wider view of their role, so that graduates develop the intellectual, personal and social resources to be able to fulfil themselves and contribute to society.

Policies in higher education associated with economic growth, higher-level skills and employability have developed alongside those associated with widening access to higher education and encouragement of lifelong learning. Although HE in FE exists at the margins of higher education, it has a significant role to play in these policies (Blackie et al, 2009). However, in addition to this, FE colleges have a long and productive history associated with developing people for the benefit of personal and societal well-being, something that Quinlan (2011) recognizes to have been somewhat

lost in higher education and which she suggests should be regained. FE colleges and the part they play in higher education, particularly in the provision of Foundation Degrees is the subject of the discussion in the next section.

2.2 Higher education in further education colleges (HE in FE)

2.2.1 FE colleges

Further education is a large and diverse sector. It has played a significant part in the policies of successive governments, following agendas associated with employability, basic skills development, lifelong learning and widening access to higher education (Association of Colleges, 2011a). Data collated by the Association of Colleges (2011b), indicates that there are just over 400 colleges in the British education system providing education for more than 3 million individuals over the age of 14. Of these, approximately 170,000 are higher education students, with 99,000 studying for a Foundation Degree (Association of Colleges, 2012; Hefce, 2010). 67% of the colleges provide Foundation Degrees, which is half of the national Foundation Degree provision. 17% of the overall student population in colleges are young adults between the ages of 19 and 24 (Association of Colleges, 2011b). Because of the diversity of their provision, quality monitoring in FE Colleges is undertaken by more than one agency including the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2009), and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2010).

In a report to the government Foster (2005:38) suggested that the acquisition of skills and employability be the key purpose of FE colleges, “*contributing to economic growth and social inclusion*”. He describes them as the “*neglected middle child*” of the British education system, but Diamond (2008:2) indicates that FE colleges have a “*unique importance in British life*”. He points out the range of responsibility for FE colleges includes meeting skills needs for the local and national economy, providing new educational opportunities for individuals developing or changing career direction and providing second chance education for those recovering from unsuccessful encounters with school. Hodkinson et al (2008) however, consider that these issues

may have contributed to the lower status provided to colleges compared to the school and university sectors.

2.2.2 HE in FE

As Parry (2012) points out ‘further education’ or ‘technical’ colleges, have a long history of offering higher or university-level qualifications (HE in FE), often for those wishing to study part-time or close to their home or employment, and in 2007 legislation enabled FE colleges to apply for degree awarding powers (Association of Colleges, 2012). Although Edward and Coffield (2007) comment on the difficulties associated with charting the impact of government policy on practice, policy changes following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (Bolton, 2007), followed by restrictions on funding and parallel increased emphasis on widening participation in education and training, impacted significantly on the management of FE provision. Colleges needed to adopt a more managerialistic approach compared to their university counterparts, pursuing policies associated with resource efficiency alongside increased emphasis on performance management. Creasy (2012) doubts whether universities will experience the turmoil that has affected further education, possibly because the presence of a research culture, research values and academic freedom have protected them from the tightly controlled systems operating in colleges. He comments that understanding whether higher education is regarded as a private or public good, for self-development or as a utilitarian means to an end, is relevant to discussions regarding the integrity of higher education as a whole, and questions whether HE in FE should be expanded without these concerns being addressed.

Higher education in many FE colleges constitutes a small part of the provision, and courses are often subsumed into the expectations and culture of further education, rather than into one traditionally associated with a university. However, successive reports from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (for example, QAA, 2004a; 2006; 2007) comment on good higher education practice in colleges, including supportive staff, curricula informed by professional and vocational needs and

personal development planning. Parry et al (2003) describe HE in FE as a hybrid, in some ways like college-based further education, and in other ways like university-based higher education. However, they point out that it has its own identity, particularly in relation to the relationships existing between staff and students, and the provision of a personalised, nurturing environment. Comments made as part of the National Student Survey (Attwood, 2009), indicate that courses are well received by students, and Parry et al (2003:22) suggest the need to positively recognize these attributes if colleges are to be regarded as “*normal and necessary*” settings for higher education, something recognized in the final report of the *What Works? student retention and success programme* (Thomas, 2012). Conceptions of learning and teaching adopted by teachers in FE colleges have been reported as committed and caring, often despite prevailing “*invasive, audit, inspection and performance cultures*” (Jameson, 2008:7). However, although further education and HE in FE remain under-researched (Scofield, 2007), Nash et al (2008) comment that contemporary issues affecting effective pedagogy in HE and FE, wherever they are taught, show considerable overlap.

Teachers of HE in FE are often involved in courses which form part of the formal FE offer, and Burkill et al (2008) indicate that working simultaneously in HE and FE, plus the demands of a diverse student population can influence approaches made to teaching. In *Learning and Working in Further Education in Wales*, Jephcote et al (2007) reports on the emotional labour involved in the teachers’ conceptions of being an FE professional, through having the combined intentions of improving students’ results and helping with the wider realities of their lives. The authors suggest that the teachers have professional identities associated with compensating for previous educational disadvantage, incorporating an ethic of care and a moral commitment to social justice. However, they comment that this role may be under threat from the demands of bureaucracy and managerialism in colleges. FE colleges need to be responsive to changing political and social pressures, but both Ecclestone (2008) and Edward et al (2007) comment on the difficulties associated with operating within a culture influenced by changes in college policies, power relations and resources.

Continually changing political and educational goals, structural reorganisations and the expanding roles of the workforce all influence employment in FE colleges, impacting on learning and teaching, curriculum design and job security (Postlethwaite and Maull, 2007), something that has been less evident in universities.

An issue driving this research was my desire to find out more about how and why some HE in FE teachers involved in widening participation policies in England appeared to demonstrate a deep commitment to their students' success, regarding the subject they were delivering as the vehicle through which this was achieved (Blackie et al, 2009). I was aware of the challenges that many of these teachers faced because of personal experience. Although The Institute for Learning (2010:5) suggest that "*brilliant*" teaching in the 21st Century needs intellectual and physical space and time to innovate, the opportunities available for doing so are limited, and often influenced by performance monitoring requirements relating to FE (Ofsted, 2009). However, as Edward et al (2007:170) report, teachers in FE colleges often show "*determination, resilience and creativity*" in order to continue to meet the needs of their students, overcoming the bureaucratic demands of their college managers. They also suggest that the professionalism of experienced teaching staff should be acknowledged and listened to. Many FE teachers enter the profession following a successful career in business, a trade or other professions, and currently Lingfield (2012) is coordinating an investigation into professionalism in further education. He too comments on the need for recognition of the virtues of further education, its unique place in UK education, and for a definition of professionalism which suits its diversity. Ecclestone (2008:10), in reviewing the effects of changes in policies and resources on teachers' roles, aims and practices, comments that college managers and educational policy makers should have a much better understanding of the context in which the FE teachers and their students have to work, adding that often "*great things are achieved against the odds*". One of the policy initiatives in higher education that has had a significant impact on HE in FE in recent years relates to the development of Foundation Degrees, and it is to this initiative that the discussion now turns.

2.2.3 Foundation Degrees

Introduced in 2000, Foundation Degrees were a specific government initiative, part of an emphasis on the vocationalisation of higher education (Greenwood et al, 2008). As two-year, ‘short cycle’, sub-degree qualifications, often with lower entry levels than full honours degree provision, they are designed to support the widening participation agenda through providing a new, accessible route into higher education, whilst also meeting the shortfall in higher technical and associated professional skills (QAA 2004b; Hefce, 2007; Blackie et al, 2009).

Foundation Degree policy anticipates that the integration of work based learning and academic rigour are achieved because the design and delivery of the programmes involves close collaboration between employers, universities, FE colleges and sector skills councils. However, the introduction of this first major new qualification in UK higher education for almost 30 years did not meet with universal acclaim. Although as Hyland (2002) suggests this policy provided a new place for vocational studies in higher education, Hussey and Smith (2009), like Creasy (2012), comment on the perception of Foundation Degrees as utilitarian, with many academics regarding them with suspicion or even “*beneath contempt*” (Hussey and Smith, 2009:102).

When the Labour government published the Foundation Degree Prospectus, comments were made regarding their wide remit. The prospectus announced that the intentions were to;

“address intermediate-level skills shortages, enhance the employability of students, widen participation in higher education and contribute to lifelong learning” (Hefce, 2000:3).

Brain et al (2004) suggest that meeting the needs of the widening participation agenda and addressing the skills gap are incompatible bedfellows. However, Parry (2006:405) considers that the creation of Foundation Degrees enables a different style of higher education, one that values higher-level qualifications related to work, providing the opportunity to meet widening participation targets and to redress the

historic skills deficit. An alternative view has been taken by Little (2005), who comments that Foundation Degrees might be seen by government to be a cheaper way of meeting objectives to do with widening participation in higher education, objectives to do with skills shortage objectives, and by students as a progression route towards other qualifications. It is important to recognise that for the teachers involved in this study, involvement in developing and teaching Foundation Degrees represented a continuation of their involvement in higher education, rather than a completely new experience. Each had been involved in sub-degree qualifications, including Higher Education Diplomas and Higher National Diplomas or Certificates validated by a range of awarding bodies for a considerable time, and it was because of changes to their organisations' policies that their responsibilities changed.

Parry (2006) and Greenwood et al (2008) point out that since their introduction, Foundation Degrees have been developed for new and established members of the workforce. The courses involved in this study were developed largely for young adults, and Greenwood et al (ibid) report that these types of students have indicated the benefits of the qualification for them. Although these benefits include gaining knowledge and the specific skills of a particular industry, they especially note the development of confidence through undertaking their studies. Hussey and Smith (2009:103), although not totally convinced by Foundation Degrees, suggest that developing provision that balances the need to develop skills and also develop motivated and autonomous individuals would be "*educationally sound*". They indicate that if Foundation Degrees could be developed in this way, then they would be a "*powerful educational tool*", and suggest that incorporating critical reflection, based on transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1985) would constitute a "*sensitive pedagogy*" (Hussey and Smith 2009:103).

Harvey (2009), in an extensive review of the published literature on Foundation Degrees, indicates that the literature reports that students experience personal and emotional issues through undertaking their studies. He emphasises that the students themselves report the importance to their success of appropriate teacher and peer

support, and as Beaney (2006) also suggests, these types of supportive and flexible pedagogies should be researched, as findings about their nature could support learning in the university sector.

2.3 Conclusion to Chapter 2

Chapter 2 has set the scene for this research by providing a discussion of policy associated with higher education, particularly in relation to ‘skills’ and ‘employability’. It has pointed out contemporary concerns with these issues, introducing proposals that a narrow focus on skills and competencies is inadequate to meet the needs of current and future eras. It has suggested instead that developing students with the personal and social resources to fulfil themselves and contribute meaningfully to society to have more value. It has noted that HE in FE is part of the provision that is designed to meet widening participation targets and to improve the higher-level skills base in the workforce. However, it has also noted that research indicates that the student experience of HE in FE is praised for its supportive nature, and that FE colleges have a long tradition for encouraging student achievement and development. It has proposed that researching pedagogies associated with student development may contribute to higher education *per se*.

The following chapter consists of the conceptual framework which guided the research process and the interpretation of the data in Chapter 8. This conceptual framework developed progressively through undertaking this research and helps to interpret a higher education which has a developmental focus.

Chapter 3 Conceptual framework

3.0 Introduction to Chapter 3

The previous chapter outlined contemporary discussions concerning student employability indicating a growing recognition of the need to develop an indirect approach through personal development involving identity and well-being, rather than directly, through the development of 'skills' (Hinchcliffe and Jolly, 2011; Pegg et al, 2012; Quinlan, 2011). Chapter 2 also outlined policies associated with widening participation in higher education, in particular considering the provision of higher education in further education colleges (HE in FE). FE colleges in the UK have a successful history of providing higher education programmes, with government policy tending to position this HE in FE provision as bridging the skills gap through vocationally based qualifications. This resonates with the "*banking*" concept of education condemned by Paulo Freire (1996/1970:63), with students being encouraged to gain qualifications to "*enhance skills and earning power in the workplace*" (Illustration 3.1: College A prospectus entry). However, an alternative conceptualisation positions this teaching and learning as having a wider, moral purpose, aiming to be intentionally transformative, bringing about change and development in the student.

The research discussed in this thesis relates to HE in FE, and the creation of transformative learning cultures. Portnow et al (1998:1) distinguish between learning that is "*informational*" or "*transformational*" by indicating that the former focuses on the acquisition of skills and an increased fund of knowledge, whereas the latter increases knowledge and also the learner's perspective and understanding. They indicate that informational learning occurs within a pre-existing frame of mind, whereas transformational learning involves reconstructing that frame. Claiming that a higher education is transformative therefore involves looking at processes that enhance or expand the person and their ability to understand the world, themselves

and their experiences (ibid), so that they begin to be able to construct understanding, rather than expecting it to be provided (Baxter Magolda, 2004a).

Illustration 3.1 Prospectus entries for Foundation Degrees

The Foundation Degree is a qualification in its own right, which will enhance your skills and earning power in the workplace. On completing a Foundation Degree you can enter the workforce or top up to a full honours degree.

Prospectus entry: College A

The foundation degree integrates academic and work-based learning through close collaboration between employers and programme providers. It builds upon a long history of design and delivery of vocational qualifications in higher education. Foundation degrees are vocationally focused and equip learners with the skills and knowledge relevant to their employment and the needs of employers. The programme also provides a pathway for life-long learning and the opportunity to progress to other qualifications

Prospectus entry: College B

The concepts presented in this chapter have been developed progressively through an interactive process of planning, data gathering, analysis, interpretation and reading. They are used throughout the research to guide data collection and analysis and form the foundation for the discussion of findings in Chapter 8. When I started on the research programme I had some knowledge of theories associated with learning and teaching, particularly those relevant to early years' education and professional learning, but aimed to keep an open mind about which direction my research would take. Although I wanted to find out about '*what is going on here?*' I needed to identify the "*horizons of significance*" (Taylor 1991:39), within which my study would be located, those issues and concepts that I felt connected strongly with what I wanted to find out about.

Initially I explored concepts associated with culture in relation to learning (for example, Bruner, 1996; James and Biesta 2007), higher education teaching (Fry et al, 2009), and the impact of subject specialism or vocational area on teaching (Becher,

2001). I also explored related fields, including retention in higher education (Dfes, 2003b), the dispositions of students towards learning (Kember, 2001; James and Biesta, 2007), of higher education teachers towards learning (Kember and Kwan, 2000), the transition from school or college (Lowe and Cooke, 2003), the impact of organizational priorities (Hill, 2000) and interpretations of higher education ethos (Jones, 2006).

The range of my reading meant that I could have taken the research in a number of directions, including, for example, teacher identity in HE in FE, the relationship between HE in FE teachers actions and those of their university counterparts or how Foundation Degree students experienced both the college and university environments. However, when in conversation with university colleagues regarding my interest in higher education as a transformative, developmental process, two books were recommended, which although not connected appeared to me to 'speak' to each other. These books have been significant to the direction the research has taken. Firstly, a colleague in the School of Education suggested *A Will to Learn: being a student in an age of uncertainty* (Barnett, 2007), and a few weeks later, a colleague from the Business School suggested *In Over Our Heads: the mental demands of modern life* (Kegan, 1994). Both contain 'big ideas', and provided an intellectual challenge to a new doctoral researcher, but set their discussions within the complexity of modern life, arguing that education needs to be concerned with the development of individuals able to flourish within and contribute to complex, demanding environments. A third text, *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education* (James and Biesta, 2007) presented a cultural view of learning and teaching, emphasised the development of individuals, the significance of dispositions towards learning, and the significance of the context and the teacher in this process. These three texts provided the foundations for integrating ideas concerning the purpose of higher education, the engagement of the whole person in learning and development and the creation of transformative, developmental learning cultures. Although I 'found' the text by James and Biesta (2007) myself, it is unlikely that the research would have had the same conceptual framework if I had not been

introduced, by different individuals from very different backgrounds, to Barnett (2007) and Kegan (1994). However, as my reading and research progressed, I realised that I was not the only one making these connections (for example, Kreber, 2008; 2010), and that discussion relating to a higher education purpose involving student development was gaining popularity in the literature. Baine (2004), for example, questions whether higher education should be considered such if it does not influence how students think, act and feel. Quinlan (2011) however, points out that there is less of a focus on research relating to higher education purpose and student development in the UK compared to other parts of the world (for example, Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Additional support for the conceptual framework developed for this thesis comes from texts from the USA and Europe. Notably these include, from the USA, Baxter Magolda (1999), Baxter Magolda and King (2004), Chickering and Reisser (1993), Cranton (2006a; 2006b) Kegan (1982; 1994), Mezirow (1985), Palmer and Zajonc (2010) and Parks (2000) and from Europe, Engeström (1987; 2008), Engeström et al (1999) and Illeris (2003).

3.1 Employability, student development and higher education research

The majority of the research relating to the development of learning and teaching in higher education relates to university provision, and involves a wide range of topics, including blended learning, subject specific, academic and employability skills, learning for assessment and student support (Fry et al, 2009). Recent research has also been concerned with student dispositions (Harding and Thompson, 2011) and there has also been a call to increase the amount of research relating to student development (Quinlan, 2011). With the change in the student population to include more students from non-traditional backgrounds some research is occurring in other higher education contexts, including HE in FE. Further education in general is not well researched (James and Biesta, 2007), but has been recognised for providing higher education opportunities that are valued by students (Attwood, 2009). Parry et al (2003) and Beaney (2006) suggest that the pedagogical processes adopted by HE in FE deserve investigation and recognition as they could contribute to discussions surrounding learning and teaching in higher education more widely.

As indicated in Chapter 2, there is a growing concern that a higher education that focuses on employability directly by promoting skills development is misguided. Barnett (2004) sees the idea of skills development as a cul-de-sac, and regrets a view of higher education that has replaced a “*knowing student*” with a skills-focused, “*performative student*” (Barnett, 2009:438). He proposes that contemporary higher education needs to develop a third purpose, one which is more effective in enabling students to cope with unpredictable futures, and which encourages development of the whole person in a process of being and becoming (Barnett, 2004). This viewpoint has been adopted by Pegg et al (2012), who suggest that rather than approaching employability directly through skills development, there is a need for an indirect approach, through the development of student identity and wellbeing. As indicated in Chapter 2, the nature of ‘employability’ is a hotly debated topic in higher education, involving policy and pedagogy in higher education institutions across the sector, from research intensive universities (for example, Kreber, 2010) to FE colleges.

That engaging in higher education should involve “*growing as a person*” has been a long-held ideal and Yorke and Knight (2004:34) regret that that a focus on employability and skills-based instrumentalism has had a detrimental effect on it. However, although their discussions on employability and development as a person clearly indicate the significance of teacher and student attitudes and the learning/teaching relationship to student potential, there are problems associated with confusing the ends of education with the means for achieving them (Dottin, 2010). Jones (2012) highlights how research relating to graduate attributes and employability sits at the intersection of policy and pedagogy, but also considers that to date, policy has driven pedagogy, without a detailed critical examination of either. Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2011) regard this to be a key area for research, but as Mulgan (2009) points out, developing a pedagogy with a character building purpose may be unfamiliar to educators and policy makers, presenting them with new challenges in pedagogical development and curriculum design. Research in this area, for example, the *Dispositions to Stay and to Succeed Project* (Harding and Thompson, 2011) advises

that higher education should take responsibility for delivering a transformative experience, to facilitate personal growth and a process of becoming. This project emphasises the challenge for organisations and policy makers, indicating that student outcomes as well as outputs need to be supported by learning relationships and curriculum design that encourage individual development.

In his summary of research associated with Foundation Degrees, Harvey (2009:56) finds that recurrent themes include the students' experience of learning, involving improved "*self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of achievement*" and "*enhanced academic and life skills, becoming more critical, reflective and having a better basis about making judgments*". However, although these characteristics relate closely to the graduate attributes of autonomy and independence required by employers they are importantly the pedagogical dispositions anticipated for successful participation in higher education. They might be described as "*active means waiting to be used*" (Dottin 2010:4) once developed, but developing them requires active engagement and reflective appraisal.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2011) have committed themselves to finding out what works, where and why with regard to the development of employability, although as Biesta (2007) points out, anticipating that educational research can create predictable outcomes for policy and practice is naïve. However, QAA Scotland (2012:1) have posed the question, "*What attributes, skills and competencies will graduates need in the twenty-first century and how can the achievement of these attributes best be supported?*" Kreber (2010:1) proposes an indirect response to this question, suggesting that rather than focusing on specific technical skills and their deployment within the economy, institutions should look at how the learning opportunities and learning environments offered by individual degree programmes prepare students "*to confront the challenges of complexity, change and uncertainty*" associated with contemporary life. She indicates the need for a local understanding of student development, and proposes that the pedagogical soundness of a course may be reinforced by identifying the learning tasks and learning

environments that support the development of particular dispositions and attributes. Similarly Jones (2012) considers the contextual nature of the identification and development of graduate attributes, indicating the significance of local disciplinary and departmental communities and cultures.

Returning the discussion to Foundation Degrees, Hussey and Smith (2009:103) consider that balancing the need to develop skills with the development of motivated and autonomous individuals would be educationally sound, and a powerful educational tool. They propose these dispositions might be encouraged through a “*sensitive pedagogy*” based upon the transformative learning theories of Mezirow (1985). Undertaking research relating to the transformative potential of Foundation Degree pedagogies could therefore be useful to a wider higher education landscape, one that is concerned with a higher education that has transformative, person-forming intentions.

3.2 A higher education with transformative, person-forming intentions

Although higher education in recent years has emphasised the link with economic development and the knowledge economy, writers including Freire (1998/1970), Shor (1992) and hooks (1994) have challenged approaches to education which emphasise knowledge acquisition or skills for employment. They consider that education and educational practice have a wider, more moral purpose, something that King (2009: xx) echoes, by proposing that empowering individuals to gain better self-understanding for their own futures is part of the ethical purpose of education, involving “*transformation in personhood*”.

As indicated in the previous section, although education for employability and education for personhood might be seen as polar opposites, recent publications concerning employability (for example, Hinchcliffe and Jolly, 2011) emphasise the need to look beyond graduate employability as acquisition of skills, and instead towards the development of the whole person. This is something that is echoed by Barnett (2004) as he suggests that this is needed to enable students to cope with unpredictable futures. The current era might be described as a “*hot society*”, a time

of rapid cultural change (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009:135), with significant challenges for those entering adulthood (Illeris, 2003). As Parks (2000:9) comments, this is a “*crisp time...a turning point in the flow of history*” as global economic and social changes present young people with a limitless array of options, a maze of cultural signals and expectations to interpret. In some respects, this may be seen as an opportunity for higher education to grasp the needs of society and enable young people to develop the critical awareness necessary for coping with the complexities and uncertainty of the future. Parks (ibid:5) suggests that the “*promise and demands of young adulthood lie in the birth of critical awareness*” but, as Rogoff (2003) indicates, work and society are becoming too complex for young people to interpret and join.

However, it is anticipated that young adults will have the determination to be able to deal with this complexity, with the resilience and creativity to become sufficiently economically active to be able to contribute to society, and not just function within multicultural, globalised environments but also contribute to the repair of economies that have become unbalanced. Chickering and Reisser (1993) argue for policies and practices in higher education that foster student development, and similarly Palmer (2010a:39) suggests that pedagogies have the opportunity to clarify complexity, and help students find their way, rather than “*multiplying the messiness*” and leaving them more lost.

The expectation is, therefore, that contemporary higher education will produce self-aware graduates, capable of becoming responsible citizens within this complex environment, able to make, and justify, personally and socially meaningful decisions (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; DfES, 2003b; Huber and Hutchings, 2004; Kreber, 2008). Kegan (1994:185) considers these to be complex demands, and suggests that to be able to respond to them, individuals need to have developed an integrated internal identity, capable of “*self-authorship*”, a personal authority from which to understand and interpret their experiences.

Bracher (2006:6) describes identity as a “*one’s sense of oneself*” and particularly emphasises the significance of “*the sense of oneself as a force that matters in the world*” in relation to education and learning. He identifies continuity, consistency, distinction, belonging and meaning as fundamental to having a sense of being personally meaningful, but as Lemke (2002) points out, forming this type of identity is fragile and needs constant reinforcement, something that is also part of Barnett’s discussions regarding higher education (Barnett, 2007).

In their discussion of the relationship between education and identity, Chickering and Reisser (1993) relate being personally meaningful to becoming purposeful. They suggest that developing and maintaining the ability to be intentional, to make plans and to overcome obstacles helps with overcoming the pull of the familiar, the habits and skills that have become embedded in an individual’s behaviour. Familiar habits and skills may be adequate in a stable environment, but would not be adequate in one that is forward-looking. For this, there is a need to harness existing resources purposefully, to develop new ones, and perhaps lose those that are themselves an obstacle.

Kegan (1994) explains that having an integrated, purposeful, personally meaningful identity is part of being capable of self-authorship, and Baxter Magolda (2004a) adds cognitive maturity and the ability to sustain mature relationships. This identity is capable of holding contradictory feelings without feeling threatened, integrate complex experiences and maintain direction, use personal interpretation to make difficult decisions, and maintain a focus on development in order to contribute to the well-being of society. Chickering and Reisser (1993) consider that identity formation should be the focus of contemporary higher education, but Kegan (1994) anticipates that many students do not develop a complex, purposeful, integrated identity during their higher education courses, something that leaves a mismatch between the expectations of society and the outcomes for the student.

Suggesting that higher education is capable of creating individuals with purposeful, integrated identities, therefore anticipates it goes beyond the transfer, acquisition

and application of knowledge and skills, something that Zajonc (2010a) considers to have been demonstrated as inadequate. It also has to have a developmental focus, in the same way that young children's education has a developmental focus, influencing student identity, the foundation of their understanding and engagement with themselves and the world. Any suggestion that the characteristics associated with being able to make meaningful and justified decisions and actions is a simple process of acquisition denies the research that has been undertaken on young adult development in recent years (for example, Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1985; Parks, 2000; Perry, 1970) and makes far more demands on the teacher. To paraphrase Palmer (2010a), acting as a guide through a swamp is far more difficult than standing at the edge and shouting directions. For educators and policy makers, it means maintaining a dual focus on subject and personal development, and working with integrity and awareness to encourage and support internal changes in the student (Kegan, 2000).

Van Manen (2002) considers that real teachers see life as a possibility, and act intentionally to show possible ways of being for their students, acknowledging that adulthood itself is never a finished project. Parks (2000:42) echoes this, describing adult development as "*the self in motion*" and suggests that young adults in particular need to be helped to imagine their way into adulthood, testing and trying out new roles, relationships and lifestyles on their way towards maturity. Illeris (2003) proposes that by developing a self-confident, integrated sense of themselves, young people can make choices that are both personally relevant, and relevant to a wider society. However, rather than this being simply trying out new sets of behaviours, gaining maturity involves inhabiting different ways of being, and of being able to make meaning of experiences that disrupt the status quo. Zajonc (2010b:105) describes this as "*living our way into the answers*", and points out that although outer facts might remain the same, the interpretation, significance and meaning of them changes, so the resulting decisions also change.

Although developing self-authorship may be the goal of some higher education courses, particularly in the USA (for example, Baxter Magolda, 1999; 2004a; 2004b), the process by which individuals develop towards it is useful to consider when

exploring the nature of a transformative, person-forming higher education. Building on work undertaken by Perry (1970), Gilligan (1982), and Belenky et al (1986), Kegan (1982; 1994; 2000) proposes that the development of an integrated identity takes time. He considers that it is an evolutionary, constructive-developmental process, with an individual moving through a series of stages, characterising successive, more complex identities, each capable of making decisions on the basis of their interpretations of their experiences (Kegan, 1982;1994). Notably, he regards transformative learning, originally formulated as a theory by Mezirow (1985), to be at the heart of this process (Kegan, 2000). Transformative learning, defined as

“a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated”
(Cranton, 2006a:2),

is seen as a process which enables individuals to become more self-determining. Rather than considering that the development of human potential ends with childhood, the theory of transformative learning proposes that the way in which learning is approached gives it the power to transform, bring about change and development of the individual (Mezirow, 1985). For students this may involve the way in which they are confronted with an area of knowledge, or confronted with their assumptions about themselves, or a combination of both. As Bruner (1990) suggests, ‘meaning’ is not fixed, as reflection or a new experience enables individuals to re-evaluate, and to change the way they perceive the past in the light of the present.

Although there are other developmental models that could prove useful, for example, Erikson (1963) or Levinson et al (1978), the model proposed by Kegan (1982; 1994) has the advantage in that it regards development as a lifelong process, taking time and varying within and across individuals. Here development is not associated with particular age-groups or life phases, but as Portnow et al (1998) explain, involves qualitative change in the way individuals understand their worlds. Chickering and Reisser (1993) point out that learning and development occur as individuals encounter new conditions and experiences, needing to develop courage, new competencies or

new attitudes if they are to be mastered. These characteristics are also proposed by Barnett (2007) to be necessary for successful engagement with higher education. Chickering and Reisser (1993) highlight that the process involves cycles of challenge and response, differentiation and integration, involving periods of difficulty and upset. Portnow et al (1998) explain that the periods of difficulty experienced between the stages occurs because individuals have a deep and pervasive shift in the way they see themselves, their relationships and how knowledge is created. In education in general, difficulty and resistance can be very informative, and in a developmental higher education, to be anticipated and promoted.

In relation to higher education, the theories and process associated with transformative learning might therefore provide a “*powerful educational tool*” (Hussey and Smith, 2009:103), helping with the development of purposeful and confident young adults capable of making meaningful decisions in a complex world. It takes the process of learning away from an informational model, concerned with increasing a fund of knowledge or acquiring more skills, to a transformational model, something more in line with contemporary suggestions regarding the development of employability and the nature and purpose of higher education (Hinchcliffe and Jolly, 2011; Pegg et al, 2012; Quinlan, 2011). However, in acknowledging that challenging the status quo has value, it is essential to note that the process may involve confusion, disorder, anxiety and fear (Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

Mezirow (1991) originally suggested that transformative learning involved a ten-stage process, but Brock (2009), in assessing the significance of each of these, found that having to resolve a disorientating dilemma, trying out new roles and being given the opportunity to critically re-evaluate existing assumptions and interpretations to be the most effective. Parks (2000) considers that young adults may be helped to create purposeful, integrated identities by being given the opportunity to make re-evaluation public and shared, so increasing the chances for finding differences in meanings and interpretations of the same issue. This is reinforced by research relating to transformative learning, which emphasises the significance of relationships, and the

intentions and dispositions of both teachers and their students (Cranton, 2006a). Making an individual's thoughts and behaviours the subject of open debate and scrutiny may be valuable, and provide the opportunity for expansive development, but is not something that should be undertaken casually. Cranton (2006a; 2006b), Cranton and Wright (2008), King and Baxter Magolda (2004), Wildman (2004) and Wildman (2007) report on a range of strategies, but all emphasise the difficulties associated with embarking on a process aiming to change a person, however well justified the intention.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) propose that the path out of the confusion and disorder that accompanies changes to an individual's sense of identity involves support from others, from internal resources and opportunities to practice new behaviours, roles, coping strategies and attitudes. They suggest that in this way, the period of confusion and chaos passes, leading to a new stability. Kegan suggests that the developmental path can be helped with the creation of appropriate "*transformational bridges*", supportive environments that acknowledge the losses and difficulties as well as gains (Kegan, 2000:65). He calls the area in which an experience is interpreted the "*zone of mediation*" (Kegan, 1982:2) and this is where, as Zajonc (2010b) points out, personal meaning is created. Bracher (2006:9) describes engaging in developmental activities as "*a risky business*", because an individual's sense of identity may feel threatened. Although providing the opportunity to critically re-evaluate experiences is one way of creating a transformational bridge, the bridge needs to acknowledge the fragility of the process, and should be safe to cross.

3.3 Learning, development and dispositional energies

A pedagogy with transformative, developmental intentions therefore needs to take account of the individual, their identity and the impact on it if it comes under threat. Developing a more integrated and purposive identity involves change and takes time. Kegan (1982) is keen to point out that this is not a passive process, but involves the use of dispositional energies, like persistence, resilience and determination, in order that integration and responsibility can develop. Expressions of identity, for example,

behaviours, assumptions and beliefs do not need to be made in words (Mezirow, 2000), so therefore, when students are confronted with challenges, awareness of their reactions is an important principle for higher education to appreciate (Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

Encouraging awareness of dispositions in learning has been the focus of research in a number of different areas, not just in higher education, and includes work by Costa and Kallick (2008), the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) Project (Vital Partnerships, 2010) and also the *Dispositions to Stay and to Succeed Project* (Harding and Thompson, 2011). This last report is particularly noteworthy, as it emphasises the need to articulate to students that a higher education institution is not just a place for acquiring a degree, but is place for challenge and change and that this should also be emphasised in the roles and responsibilities of staff.

In commenting on the ability of students to embark on, maintain commitment to and make the most of a course of study, Barnett (2007) considers that motivation alone is an inadequate explanation for the way in which the process develops. He too regards dispositions as significant, enabling students to create a dynamic relationship between themselves and their environment, where each influences the other. Students enrol on higher education courses for a multitude of reasons, including a rational decision to attain a higher level qualification to improve employment (Dfes, 2003b), family expectations and peer pressure, or even the inability to make any other choice. However, being able to engage with the possibilities of the course goes beyond a passive response to the subject being offered, and Barnett (2007) considers that dispositions provide the energy necessary for engaging at a personal level with the experiences encountered. Barnett also suggests that “*qualities*”, or attitudes, are manifestations of dispositions, including courage, resilience, integrity, self-discipline, generosity and authenticity (Barnett, 2007:102). Together, these dispositions and qualities may be regarded as providing the dispositional energies which Kegan (1982) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) consider being at the heart of identity development.

However, although these dispositional energies are complementary to the 21st century literacies described by Baty (2011) to be required graduate outcomes for employability, it would be wrong to assume that their acquisition or development is simple, or that even when possessed, that their enactment in a new context involves a straightforward process of transferring one set of experiences to something new. Hodkinson and Hagar (2009) criticise policy that assumes a ‘common-sense’, acquisitional view of learning, one that considers that learning from one situation may be easily transferred to another, indicating that this contradicts much of the research on learning that has occurred in recent years. They suggest that learning and acting in one situation and then in another, should be regarded as boundary crossing, involving the process of transition. Dottin (2010) also makes this point when writing about the development of dispositions in teacher education programmes, indicating that dispositions are developed in social contexts, and that it is necessary to understand how they are used in one context, before it is possible for them to be used in a different one. Hodkinson and Hagar (2009) agree, regarding developing and making use of personal dispositions to be a social and embodied process, involving the whole person in a process of becoming, through practical, physical, emotional, and cognitive experiences.

One study which is helpful to the consideration of the influence of dispositions on learning, and on their development, is summarised by James and Biesta (2007). They report on a major study of FE colleges in the United Kingdom, and point out that students’ pre-existing orientations or dispositions towards learning could be “*confirmed, developed, challenged or changed*” (ibid:33) through their educational experiences. They indicate that these dispositions develop from the accumulation of the students’ previous lived experiences, that they enable some forms of learning and inhibit others, and therefore influence engagement with a course as well as longer term outcomes. They also point out that dispositions may not necessarily be changed without conscious engagement with a process of reflection and monitoring, one involving understanding the reasons and rationales for attitudes and behaviours.

Returning to how dispositions might be involved in young people developing more integrated, purposeful identity involves, in this discussion, looking again at the developmental process described by Kegan (1982, 1994). Although developing towards self-authorship might be regarded as a long term aim of the higher education process, Kegan (1994:95) proposes that earlier stages in the developmental process are worthy of note. These too involve a change in the way experiences are interpreted, so that supporting the transition from independence and an instrumental way of understanding (the “*imperial self*”), to interdependence and a socialised way of understanding (the “*interpersonal self*”) to be more crucial to employability than lists of skills. Although he suggests that most individuals entering higher education will have already made this transition, this may not necessarily be the case.

Whatever the situation, and whatever the level of development, the process involved is difficult and fragile. This is something that Parks (2000) acknowledges, and she emphasises the need to have consistent integrating factors, encouragement and confirmation from adults and the opportunity to participate in authentic activities. Drago-Severson et al (2001) add that this makes great demands on a teacher, particularly if they are not able to spend a lot of time with their students, and indicate that a cohort may also be a consistent, integrating feature. Although having the ability to consciously integrate, for example, a confrontation with a new area of knowledge with the drive to interpret and master it may be helpful in knowledge acquisition, encouraging the development of individuals with the ability to make their own decisions involves a more complex process, making demands on the student, the teacher and the student cohort and the relationships between them.

When Barnett (2009) proposes that higher education may be seen as an educational vehicle which promotes student development, he suggests that the process of coming to know, getting a personal hold on experiences and knowledge, may have person-forming properties, i.e. a process for becoming. Colley et al (2003) also write about learning and becoming, but in relation to vocational education. They indicate that students involved in vocational education and training find themselves included in

their vocational sectors as they develop identities and dispositions derived from the expectations of their vocational culture, but they also point out that developing a vocational identity makes great demands on young people, emphasising the difference between regarding employability as acquiring a set of skills and regarding employability as a developmental process.

Transformative learning and the developmental model proposed by Kegan (1982; 1994) may therefore provide both a theory and a pedagogical process for understanding and encouraging the development of students towards having meaningful and purposeful identities. In HE in FE this may be associated with a vocational sector or it may be to do with the development of young adults. Whichever the purpose, it is a difficult process, requiring the use of personal dispositions that provide the energy for change.

In higher education, Baxter Magolda (1999) and Baxter Magolda and King (2004) have made use of the theories of Kegan (1982; 1994) to devise models for constructive, developmental and transformative approaches to learning. For example, *The Learning Partnerships Model* (Baxter Magolda and King, 2004; Baxter Magolda 2004b), encourages students to become more confident in their ability to learn and make complex decisions through a balance of guidance and empowerment. They were also involved in the *Dispositions to Stay and to Succeed Project* in the UK (Harding and Thompson, 2011), where awareness of the significance of dispositions is encouraged. Research on transformation in higher education has involved students, (for example, Coombes and Danaher, 2006), the professional development of educators, (for example, Cranton and King, 2003; King, 2004; and Glisczinski, 2007), and also learning and teaching, (for example, Lucas, 2008). In his study of transformative higher education amongst college students in the USA, Glisczinski (2007:324) emphasises the need for a critical assessment of the “*norms, contexts, history, social structures and power structures*” that characterise current practice. Like Barnett (2007), he sees the need for engagement in higher education to help develop an attitude to towards learning, as well as a fund of knowledge. However, as Cranton (2006a) and Kegan

(2000) point out, the way in which increasing a fund of knowledge is approached also provides opportunities for transformation. This purpose is central to the aims of the undergraduate entry programme in Australia described by Coombes and Danaher (2006). However, this study also reports on the expectations of the new student population in Australia, who are anticipating that both teachers and their institutions undergo critical self-evaluation, in order that they transform themselves to effectively meet changing demands.

Therefore, in relation to the development of young adults, capable of making decisions that are both personally and socially meaningful, the ideas of Kegan (1982; 1994; 2000) and Mezirow (1985; 1991; 2000) are useful, as they provide one way of unlocking learning's power to transform. In higher education, therefore, 'dispositions' might be seen not only as required outcomes, but also as the energy for change and development, and 'transformation' as the outcome and the process by which this occurs.

3.4 Teaching for development and authentic learning relationships

Although Cranton (2006a) puts forward explanations and practical suggestions for the promotion of transformative learning, she regards the development of authentic learning relationships to be a fundamental requirement (Cranton, 2006b). Cranton and Carusetta (2004) suggest that authenticity in teaching includes being genuine, showing consistency between values and actions and relating to others in some way to encourage their authenticity. Teaching for change is not a value-neutral activity, and Ettlign (2006) emphasises that it is essential that teachers firstly explore the appropriateness of their actions, suggesting that intentionally teaching for change requires "*attention and integrity*" (ibid:65). Barnett (2007) also turns to a consideration of the authenticity of the teacher in the promotion of a will to learn, regarding the intention to have a positive, inspiring effect as part of a genuine reciprocal learning relationship. Reciprocity implies a two way process, and Noddings (2003) considers that the process should be pervasive and persistent, so that the one-caring is present, acting to promote the development and wellbeing of

the other, even when physically absent. Neither Cranton (2006a), nor Barnett (2007), consider it possible to fake this type of reciprocal relationship, because as Rogers (1998) clearly explains, to do so would mean that the student engages with a role and not a person.

How a teacher influences the development of their students, helping them to change and develop towards a more integrated and purposeful identity, therefore relates to themselves, their own authenticity and their intentions towards their students, something that King (2004) recognises in suggesting that teachers and institutions need to understand their own philosophies, if they intend to create a supportive climate for transformative learning. This has also been highlighted by Thomas (2012), who suggests that organisational policies and practices in higher education should recognise this more, and not anticipate that teachers and teaching practices that have been adequate in the past are suitable for the present. Cranton (2006b) considers that when a teacher reflects upon their own values and beliefs about teaching they can have their own transformative experience, and this conception of learning and teaching is used by Coombes and Danaher (2006). They explain how the dispositions of the teacher, and their relationship with the student, are all part of the transformative process, and they add that if teachers take responsibility for their own development then they will be better able to meet the demands of their role.

Teaching to bring about change and development therefore needs to be based upon authentic relationships, which Barnett (2007) indicates includes empathy, respect, excitement and love. He highlights the difficulties associated with these personal characteristics, requiring the teacher to possess "*durable dispositions*" (ibid:119) and a genuine belief in the purpose of what they are doing. However, as Brookfield (1995) points out, it would be naïve and innocent to assume that students take the same meanings and interpretations from their learning experiences as their teachers intend, and if teachers challenge, or confront, or even encourage, their students will not necessarily perceive their actions positively. Student development therefore is based upon authentic relationships, caring and respect for the student, a transparent realness on the part of the teacher and trust by the student (Rogers, 1998).

Having a developmental approach to student learning means more, therefore, than developing an additional set of teaching skills. Rather, it means engaging with the personal meaning behind the purpose and processes of higher education. Teaching that aims to enable students to become responsible and self-aware citizens is value-based, and different to a process that emphasises skills or knowledge acquisition (for example, Kember and Kwan, 2000), the transmission of knowledge (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999), or even “*best practice*” (Kreber, 2006:88). If a higher education teacher needs to possess and act on the durable dispositions suggested by Barnett (2007), with the genuine desire to support and develop students, then research needs to explore teachers’ conceptions of teaching, learning and the purpose of higher education (Kember and Kwan, 2000). Taylor (2006) regards this as a positive move, and points out that teaching for change is an approach which has considerable potential, for students and teachers alike, because welcoming the whole student into the classroom involves developing relationships, and enables teachers to also be real, rather than just a role (Zajonc, 2010c).

Dispositions of both teachers and their students are therefore at the heart of policies and practices associated with higher education, whether they are to do with addressing social inequity and the development of secure economic foundations through vocational higher education courses (Dfes, 2006), the development of employability and 21st century literacies of all graduates (Baty, 2011), or developing the will to learn (Barnett 2007). Enabling young adult students to develop meaningful self-orientation (Illeris, 2003) by encouraging personal awareness and using this knowledge to create an integrated sense of themselves, supports a genuine higher education, through meeting the needs of individual actualisation and the needs of a wider society.

3.5 The challenges of a transformative pedagogy

The discussion to this point has indicated that a transformative as opposed to an informative higher education involves processes that enhance or expand the student, and needs to adopt a different type of pedagogy to one concerned with the

acquisition of skills, or increasing a fund of knowledge (Portnow et al, 1998). In contexts associated with encouraging under-represented groups to enter higher education (Dfes, 2006) a transformative pedagogy purposefully supports expansive developmental processes and constitutes effective and moral practice (Brennan and Naidoo, 2008; Schuetze and Slowley, 2002). However, a transformative pedagogy is relevant to all students in order to support an expansive higher education experience.

Parks (2000) considers that not all higher education experiences are expansive, asking big enough questions, the types of questions that provide the opportunity for students to expand their own boundaries and develop the confidence to value their own voice alongside other authoritative voices. She indicates that the process of developing this confidence can be a time of vulnerability and uncertainty, and that students require acknowledgement and encouragement for the processes they are going through. A transformative pedagogy therefore can be traumatic, as encouraging expansion through confronting the assumptions and dispositions that have served well enough in the past can make a student feel as if their sense of identity is under threat (Bracher, 2006).

A transformative pedagogy acknowledges that as the student expands their boundaries of awareness they have a fragility which is not a form of weakness, but vulnerability, like a young plant (Parks, 2000). Barnett (2007) considers that not only does the student need to have courage to engage with an expansive, confrontational process, but also the ability to deal with the muddle, doubt and uncertainty that it creates. Maintaining the will to learn, to explore, to continue to engage may result in a sense of loss and bewilderment, with new opportunities and awareness creating different relationships with familiar people and places and a feeling of being at sea without an anchor. Like Baxter Magolda (1999) and Kegan (2000), Barnett (2007) contends that a student's readiness for confrontation may influence the way they respond to the experiences with which they are faced, especially if they are presented with new possibilities, because, as Cranton (2006a:23) indicates, *"maintaining a meaning perspective is safe"*.

The dispositions associated with the ability to persist through uncertainty are therefore at the heart of a transformative pedagogy. A transformative pedagogy encourages in the student the development of a pedagogical being with a personal sense of meaning and critical awareness. However, as Barnett (2007) points out, this pedagogical being cannot be separated from their personal, human being. Like Parks (2000) he considers that a pedagogical being has a brittle quality, a vulnerability associated with the will to offer, learn and persist. This being can only put up with so much, and can be injured, lost or crushed according to circumstances. Whilst a pedagogy that is 'informational' might adequately anticipate in a student an increased fund of knowledge or skills, a transformational pedagogy anticipates a transformation in a sense of being through developing a wider sphere of consciousness and participation. For the student, it means being able to 'read' what is being asked for through the new possibilities on offer, having the courage to try them out and being supported in practicing the full range of complex feelings involved in the process.

A transformational pedagogy therefore confronts the students with difficulties about themselves and their engagement with their subject, their community and their future. If these difficulties are to be overcome, both Parks (2000) and Brookfield (2006) emphasise the need to continuously promote feelings in the student of self-worth and a sense of belonging, so that they can sustain the process of self-belief, and accept the feelings of discomfort and uncertainty which accompany the process of development. For this reason, a transformative pedagogy needs to consistently pay deliberate attention to the student's dispositions, supporting all of their energy to learn through a pedagogical process that involves challenge and change. As Barnett (2007), Cranton (2006a) and Noddings (2003) emphasise, this intentionality should have a lasting effect, both in the short and the long term. Barnett (2007) calls on the ideas of Freire (1988/1970) to suggest that the intention of higher education should not be to turn the student into something else, but to enable them to realise who they are, what they might be and what they are capable of. Rather than higher

education being a developmental journey of 'going away', it may be seen as an expansive experience of 'home' (Parks (2000)).

A transformative pedagogy therefore needs to offer a mentoring function, a place to belong and a place of nurture for the potential that is the student's being. It offers good company for the student's emerging strength and distinctive vulnerability, recognising that transformation in the meaning of the self involves a mutual recomposing of the social world. Helping students through this process involves helping them to imagine themselves into their own futures (Zajonc, 2010b). It makes demands on the teacher, as in intentionally teaching for change the teacher has to maintain a paradox, caring for the development of the student and challenging them to engage with processes that may change their sense of themselves. The teacher has the responsibility for creating a pedagogy which provides boundaries through which awareness can expand. It offers hospitality to the emerging self, recognition and encouragement through a viable network of belonging, and therefore as Parks (2000) emphasises, the social context may be the most crucial element in the process.

Barnett (2007) suggests that the higher education student should anticipate that their experience be transformatory, however, as Dewey (1938:25) indicates, not all educational experiences are positive, some may be "*mis-educative*" if they arrest or distort the growth of further experience. In their discussion of curriculum reform in English teaching, Fishman and McCarthy (1996:342), consider whether it is appropriate to create learning environments where "*no one can hide, where everyone's identity is on the line*". Therefore if the aim of higher education is to encourage development in young adult students, even if this appears to be a valuable process, then there needs to be a value based foundation to the teachers' intentions as they encourage students to confront themselves and possibly change in the process of learning.

3.6 The languages and environments for a transformative pedagogy

Chickering and Reisser (1993) consider that conventional descriptions are not helpful when considering curricular and pedagogies with developmental aims. Barnett (2007:76) suggests that a “*pedagogical sanctuary*” can describe a place where the student can be both challenged and nurtured through their engagement with the curriculum. Hussey and Smith (2009:103) consider that a “*sensitive pedagogy*” which promotes critical reflection could be a valuable educational tool, and Barnett (2007:76) proposes an “*hospitable pedagogy*” for one which provides support in times of difficulty, discomfort and uncertainty. Whatever the terminology used, Barnett (2007), Parks (2000) and Bracher (2006) all comment on the fragility and risk associated with the process, and how the environment and the relationships within it play a significant part.

A language for a pedagogy which has the intention to develop therefore may include a vocabulary which reflects empathy, support, nurture and genuine care for the other’s wellbeing, as well as one which reflects confrontation, challenge, difficulty and uncertainty. For teachers it means possessing genuineness and the ability to create and manage an environment that maintains a paradox, at once supportive and organised, but also uncertain, uncomfortable and challenging. However, as Noddings (2003) explains, in representing genuine care for the other’s wellbeing by creating this type of environment, the teacher demonstrates moral action. She also points out that the one-caring and the cared- for both participate in the caring relationship and that the moral intention of caring is only achieved when it is completed in the one being cared for. Therefore, both parties have roles and responsibilities within the relationship. For teachers, it means having an understanding of caring that goes beyond possessing a caring attitude and creating conditions that enable genuine student development to flourish. For students, it means possessing qualities associated with resilience and fortitude and the openness and trust to try something new, in the knowledge that the teacher’s actions are a genuine expression of their concern for the student’s future. For higher education, it means sharing an expectation that the experience will be exciting and also hurt at times.

Kegan (1982) acknowledges that opening up to new possibilities and integrating them into new ways of approaching experiences also involves the painful and uncertain process of losing, or differentiating, from old ones. As already discussed, this is not a passive process, but involves the individual acting both within and on their environment, evolving more complex ways of acting and interacting. A focus on the benign, positive aspects of higher education tends to avoid consideration of the negative aspects involving loss, uncertainty, discomfort and anxiety. Also, a focus on student-centred or teacher-centred learning and teaching avoids consideration of the integrated, interactional nature of student development.

Therefore, development of the person in higher education involves understanding a pedagogical process which involves letting go of tried and tested ways of interpreting experiences and being open to new ones. It involves developing new relationships and responsibilities, acknowledging that a caring relationship is not one sided and that genuine care is not necessarily an easy experience. It involves, in research, investigating the pedagogical patterns that provide the foundations for a difficult, transformatory process and the physical and psychosocial environments in which the process takes place.

3.6.1 Higher education as a holding environment

Kegan (1982:115) uses Winnicott's notion of a facilitative, "*holding environment*" (Davis, 1983; Winnicott, 1965), to describe the nature of psychosocial environments which promote development. This is the "*zone of mediation*" where individuals create meaning from their experiences (Kegan, 1982:2) and it provides the foundation of the developmental pedagogy based on learning as a partnership proposed by Baxter Magolda and King (2004). 'Holding' describes the protective, empathic, space-creating function of their creator (Allen, 2002) and holding environments provide the support of recognition, trust and empathy, plus challenges which when confronted and resolved, provide the opportunities from which differentiation, or development can take place. As dynamic, transitional growth spaces, they are not just the contexts where learning take place, but also the social practices through which individuals

learn. They provide an integrated, developmental bridge consisting of support and challenge, designed to take individuals to more complex ways of making sense of and acting on their experiences. It is important to note that support and challenge are not an either/or polarity, but co-exist together as both/and, and the idea relates well to Barnett's notion of a pedagogy being "*hospitable*", capable of supporting the discomfort of higher education (Barnett 2007:76).

The essential character of a holding environment is rather like one which helps a child to learn to ride a two-wheeled bicycle. The adult knows that learning may be a painful process, with bumps and scrapes and tantrums on the way, but that the effort will be worthwhile, as riding a bicycle will open up many more opportunities for the child. The child will be provided with a vision of the future that involves independence, cycle trips and expeditions with friends. Her bicycle is provided with stabilisers on the back wheels which provide the support necessary for building confidence, and also acknowledges the child's existing capabilities. Then, the child is encouraged to try without the stabilisers, but with an adult holding the bike steady from behind, so that the child can see where they are going. The child will be encouraged, praised, commiserated with when unsuccessful; plasters will be at hand for grazed knees and hugs for hurt pride. The adult will not give up and make life too easy, but continue to encourage and to provide the opportunities for mastery. Not only does the child need balance and strength, but also determination and perseverance, and it is the combination of these elements that will eventually be rewarded with success. Their first wobbly independent efforts will be greeted with 'keep going, keep going!', and the adult will carry on providing genuine support through not allowing the child to give up until basic capability is reached, and then for whatever comes next.

A holding environment, which aims to help an individual develop the ability to integrate complex experiences, rich with the possibilities of a particular subject area, firstly needs to "*hold well*". This means confirming and recognising how an individual currently makes sense of all of their experiences, with the subject, with others, with themselves and with their futures, and from this recognition, provide an environment

of support and challenge, an environment for development. Students will enter higher education with assumptions and beliefs about themselves, learning and how knowledge is created. These beliefs will have developed through the interpretation of previous experiences, and as Mezirow (2000) emphasises, will persist as habitual individual actions and dispositions. In order that these actions and dispositions become more visible and liable to change, they need to be acknowledged and individuals given the opportunity to try out new ways of acting based on this knowledge. A holding environment will do this by providing an environment which encourages contradictions, new roles to play, or areas of knowledge to confront, only solved if an individual finds for themselves new, more complex ways of acting. The environment at the same time provides stability, continuity and availability to the individual, so that the person that they have become remains supported and reintegrated into their environment (Kegan 1982:115). The environment is all in one, at once providing both support and challenge.

A central feature, therefore, of a developmental, transformative pedagogy, is one that is not only sensitive and hospitable, but also inviting, challenging, potentially provocative and confrontational. Perry (1970) explains that a developmental environment is like a Trojan horse, one which creates a feeling of safety and then gradually takes a more challenging stance. Mills (2002:115) suggests that an “*unorthodox pedagogy*” of genuine empathy for the student, paired with a provocative approach that challenges individuals to examine and justify their decisions can be a genuine expression of care on the part of the teacher. As Kreber (2006), points out, this type of pedagogy requires a different approach on the part of the teacher to one that emphasises for example, skills development, or knowledge acquisition.

Mills (2002) proposes that demonstrating empathy as a process, involves acting in the intersubjective space of the teacher and the student. This is the “*zone of mediation*” described by Kegan (1982:2) and empathy may be demonstrated through “*attunement, listening, identification, responsiveness and giving feedback*” (Mills,

2002:119). In this way the teacher demonstrates being insightful and sensitive to the student's feelings and ways of understanding and by developing a practical response, demonstrates their care for the student's development and wellbeing. This relationship may well need to be based on mutual "*active trust*" (Giddens, 1994:14), a willingness to trust and have a go at what is being offered.

3.6.2 Space for potential and being 'good enough'

Discussions regarding the creation of a transformative, person-forming learning environment may therefore use as a foundation ideas about facilitative holding environments. Allen (2002:152), again using Winnicott (1965), sees the intersubjective space created between the student and their teacher as a "*potential space*", one where the difficult, creative work of development may take place. He points out how the teachers' actions may influence this space, by for example, being over supportive, or by being neglectful of providing a defined, protected space where development can happen. Citing Winnicott (1965), Allen (2002:151) indicates that it is the teacher's role to be just "*good enough*", so that the student can take responsibility for trying out new ideas, or actions, or roles, or behaviours knowing that to do so does not risk compromising their own identity, but that it is safe try out something new. According to Winnicott (1965), within the potential space, transitional phenomena and transitional experiences symbolise the connection between the student and the teacher, and experiences become imbued with symbolic meaning, which again returns the discussion to Kegan (1982) and his claim that meaning is created between an event and an individual's reaction to it. Although the teacher is absolutely central to this process, as the meaning that they provide for classroom activities or assessment tasks or relationships will help to mediate the student's development, Drago-Severson et al (2001) consider that the cohort may also have a 'good enough' role. Key to being 'good enough' is maintaining a paradox, having the students' potential at heart, but not being 'too good', acknowledging or creating discomfort which the student needs to actively resolve in order to promote their own growth. As Cunnane (2011:1) succinctly put it, "*to spoon feed is not to nurture*".

3.6.3 Developing a more purposeful and integrated identity

A holding environment, therefore, provides the boundaries and opportunities of a supportive but challenging space, one which facilitates the development of a more purposeful and integrated identity. Identity is important in learning as it supports motivation and provides the basis for taking risks (Bracher, 2006). Allen (2002), reflecting the transformative theories of Mezirow (1985), considers that a pedagogy which involves trying out new roles, critical reflection and unexpected experiences helps with making connections between the academic and the personal. He suggests that then the development of the “*true self*” will emerge, an identity that is able to act creatively and developmentally with an environment (Allen, 2002:152). As Barnett (2007), emphasises, higher education should not be about turning the student into something else, but about enabling them to become themselves.

Allen (2002:152) also suggests that students construct a “*false self*” to protect their identity against environmental demands when these are seen as a threat. He uses the example of writing narrative based on personal experience as something that supports the development of the true self, as it provides a link between the academic and the personal, so removing the artificial gap existing between them. Although this might be regarded as a transfer of skills from one to the other, Allen considers this instead to be a linkage, something that integrates the self and develops confidence. As pointed out earlier, a ‘common-sense’ view of transferring one learning experience to a different situation contradicts much of the research on learning that has occurred in recent years and this process might also be regarded as making a transition, involving crossing a boundary from one space to another, and making connections between the two.

Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010:45) also use Winnicott’s notion of a holding environment in relation to a business school which aims to be an “*identity workspace*”, a safe container for “*identity work*”. They explain their use of the term ‘workspace’ to mean a “*physical as well as a social and psychological space*” (ibid:46), which implies that the cultural aspects of a space may be regarded as

providing the opportunities for identity development. They propose an identity workspace can support the development of an integrated sense of identity by enabling the risky business of re-examining and possibly losing currently constructed sets of beliefs and behaviours. Their definition of a holding environment focuses on dispositions, as they describes it as a “*social context that reduces disturbing affect and facilitates sense making*” (ibid:46). Instead of using the more familiar terminology of ‘support and challenge’, they use “*containment and interpretation*”. In this definition ‘containment’ relates to the preservation of wellbeing, as it means “*the ability absorb, filter or manage difficult or threatening emotions or ideas so they can be worked with*” (French and Vince 1999:9 in Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:50) and ‘interpretation’, the ability to “*provide connections, meanings or a way of comprehending previously unrelated experiential data*” (Shapiro and Carr, 1991:5, in Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:50).

When this terminology for an identity workspace is combined with the vocabulary of development as defined by Kegan (1982; 1994), and transformation as defined by Mezirow (1985), a way is provided for exploring the pedagogical patterns relating to learning and development in higher education, particularly when these are associated with the encouragement of a healthy and purposeful identity. How this workspace is constructed, and how this relates to the cultural nature of learning, and learning cultures, is the focus of the next section.

3.7 Learning, development and culture

When aiming to research a ‘learning culture’ it is necessary to clarify at the beginning the relationship between ‘learning’ and ‘culture’. Eisenhart (2001) explains how changing conceptions of culture in recent years have influenced educational research. Culture may be defined in a relatively stable way as a ‘way of life’, the normal practices of a human community, where human beings create and are created by environments, artefacts, social practices and so on (James and Biesta, 2007). This way of life may be passed down from one generation to the next and may be evidenced by patterns in the collective behaviours of particular groups (Eisenhart,

2001). Bruner (1990:11) explains it as a “*communal toolkit*”, which provides the means by which human beings live and work together. Because this is an active process, culture may also be regarded as a dynamic entity, where meanings are constructed and actively appropriated in particular contexts (Eisenhart, 2001). Bruner (1990) emphasises that it is because human beings participate in culture that they learn through this participation, learning occurring in and through social practices rather than just because of individual neurological activities. In relation to a pedagogical or learning culture, James and Biesta (2007:23) suggest that it is;

“a particular way of understanding a learning site as a practice constituted by the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants”, and “the social practices through which people learn”.

These social practices are themselves based within a particular culture, which therefore offers particular opportunities or constraints. Because ‘culture’ may be explained as a stable and a dynamic entity, it offers both reproductive and transformative possibilities in an educational context.

As has been pointed out previously, contemporary culture is characterised by change and instability (Chickering and Reisser, 1993), with the ways of life of previous generations less relevant. As Chickering and Reisser (ibid) point out the task for education to reproduce the past and socialise students into a relatively stable and predictable society is no longer relevant. Pedagogical cultures need to acknowledge this and their transformative potential through opportunities for identity development and express this through their norms, values and expectations. This should be emphasised through environments created, the individual dispositions of participants and their social practices.

Rogoff (2003) provides a valuable contribution to cultural studies of education as she emphasises that it is through examination of the cultural nature of everyday life that human development may be understood. A pedagogical culture with identity development in mind will consist of a series of interconnected cultural practices, not

a collection of variables that operate independently (ibid), whereby individuals fashion meaningful ways of being in the world (Eisenhart, 2001). These practices form patterns that have a coherence and understanding how they fit together is essential to understanding both the purpose of educational practices and outcomes. Researching these patterns was first promoted by Erickson (1986) who introduced teacher researchers to the possibilities of an interpretive, ethnographic approach to educational research. These possibilities have been extended by Eisenhart (2001) who provides a detailed summary of new perspectives on ethnographic, cultural research in education, suggesting the value of exploring both the ‘ways of life’ of particular context and the developing identities of those participating in them.

A transformative learning culture would be one, therefore, that has a pedagogical pattern that acknowledges the fragility and vulnerability associated with changing identities as students become more purposeful. Researching learning cultures provides a way of exploring both the backdrop, the ‘way of life’ alongside the construction of the identities of individuals as they participate and contribute to that culture and takes explicit account of student dispositions. It will consist of a series of cultural processes that fit together coherently to create an identifiable pedagogical pattern, a constellation relevant to a particular context. Understanding how these cultural practices fit together is essential, as what is done one way by one community may be done another way by a different community, with the same effect. Reading the pedagogical patterns of a particular context will reveal the intentions of the creators, be demonstrated in the actions and interpretations of its members, and embodied in the physical, social and psychological environment.

3.7.1 Culture as an invitation for change and development

Both Kegan et al (2001) and James and Biesta (2007:35) comment on the significance of the culture of a learning environment to an individual’s development. They emphasise that development is a dynamic, not a passive process, something that Rogoff (2003:11) recognises by stating *“humans develop through changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change”*.

She introduces the concept of “*guided participation*” (ibid:285) which recognises how learning occurs as individuals take on new roles and responsibilities and participate in and are guided by the values and practices of their cultural communities. Seen from a pedagogical point of view, culture therefore should not just be viewed as the static, familiar surroundings within which learning and teaching take place, but an “*inviting force*” (Zinchenko, 2002 in Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009:132), an invitation for change and development. Van Manen (2002) considers that every day has a specific wholeness and significance for each student and by participating in the culture of their environment, opportunities for development may be encouraged, enhanced, ignored or irrevocably damaged.

The constituents of any culture demonstrate what has been valued and what is valued at any given time in history. These include personal behaviours, interactions between people, rituals, symbols, artefacts, stories, language and so on, and together they provide the mediators and forms of human interaction that beckon participation. Rogoff (1990) proposes that a society places value on those cultural constituents that are required for achievement of its sociocultural goals. As has already been established, the goals of contemporary higher education relate to identity development, enabling people to develop the ability to cope with uncertainty and change, and these goals are seen as different to the goals of previous eras. Therefore, pedagogical cultures which acted as invitations to participate in higher education for previous eras may need revising, and those adopted given value by higher education communities, and enacted in the pedagogical processes created.

3.7.2 The mediation of development by cultural tools and symbols

The Russian psychologist Vygotsky argues that social interaction, mediated by cultural tools and symbols, for example, rituals, stories, experiences, behaviours and so on provides the basis of psychological development (Vygotsky, 1978; Arieviditch, 2008). He considers that mediation occurs first in the form of interaction between people and cultural artefacts, and the second time as an inner, internalised form (Kozulin, 2003). It is at this point where the meaning of the interaction is interpreted and acted upon,

either alone or in collaboration with others, that internal dispositions and relationships come into play. This process is termed “*double signification*” and means that internal dispositions and interpersonal relationships act as significant mediators alongside more concrete cultural tools (Karpov, 2003:138 and returns the discussion to Chickering and Riesser (1993). As they point out in relation to identity development when the status quo is disrupted, internal resources, or dispositions, may be brought in to help alongside support from other people.

Leiman (1999) considers that the transitional object or transitional experience described by Winnicott (1965) may be considered as equivalent to the mediating tool or sign described by Vygotsky, existing in the potential space between the teacher and the student. This is particularly helpful when aiming to integrate theories from different sources and provides a way of concretising how the meaning and interpretation of experiences are significant in development. Because Vygotsky emphasises that learning specific things in specific ways leads to the development of particular mental tools and attitudes, not vice versa (Wells and Claxton, 2002), Cole and Gajdamashko (2009:132) describe the tools that intentionally mediate development as simultaneously “*ideal*”, developed for a reason, and “*material*”, existing as a form.

In an educational context, external mediators include the range of strategies that teachers have at their disposal, including tasks devised, environments created and relationships developed. However, these strategies are not just material tasks, but are also ideal because they possess meaning. Just as ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, so the meaning given to these tasks will be constructed by the person(s) experiencing them, connected to the specific event that they have originally been associated with unless they have reason to relate them to a wider purpose or re-interpret them with an alternative explanation. Both Baxter Magolda (2002) and Wells (2007) emphasise the mutuality of the construction of meaning, and teachers need to take account of their students’ internal mediators, their dispositions and how they may be developed or changed. In an environment intending to be transformative and

person-forming, the ways in which internal and external mediators are deployed and perceived will therefore have rich educational potential (Kozulin, 2003). The pedagogical patterns created by the teacher, including the way in which they manage and develop student-teacher interaction using relationships and personal dispositions, will be central to the developmental outcomes of the student (van Oers, 2008).

A pedagogical culture therefore, has a teleological role in human development. Pedagogical patterns in the current era have the potential to prepare students for confronting the challenges of complexity, change and uncertainty. It is important to keep in mind that culture is a two way street, with the external environment and the internal environments of individuals mutually constituting each other (Rogoff, 2003). The culture of the 21st century desires that graduates possess dispositions including a positive attitude, concern for the needs of others and also tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty. It is through the experiences provided in higher education that current dispositions may be, in the words of James and Biesta (2007:33), “*confirmed, developed, challenged or changed*”. If society values and wants to encourage particular dispositions like those indicated above, then the learning culture needs to create an environment consisting of meaningful, object related activities through which they may be developed and awareness of them encouraged. This is where policy associated with the development of graduate attributes and a pedagogy for the development of a purposeful identity intersect, but again, it is important not to confuse the ends of education with the means for achieving them. To result in a productive and successful outcome, policy needs to take into account the complexity of the process.

The cultural tools, external or internal signifiers that are used to mediate this purpose will only achieve their desired outcome if, when internalised, they help individuals develop, or master, or perhaps change themselves (Kozulin, 2003). A critical examination of the processes involved in human development, and how they relate to pedagogical processes in higher education may be unfamiliar to educators and policy

makers (Mulgan, 2009), however, help may come from the Russian concept of ‘activity’, and an exploration of how individuals perform in a sociocultural setting.

3.7.3 Meaningful, object-related activity

Exploring and interpreting a purposeful learning culture, one which makes use of and creates relationships, artifacts and rituals in order to create a developmental outcome is a complex business. Rather than interpreting a dualistic situation of action and response, the Russian concept of ‘activity’, best translated into English as “*high-level motivated thinking, doing and being of an individual in a given social context*” (Ryle, 1999:413) provides one way of exploring how individuals perform in a sociocultural setting. This concept also helps with connecting the local, for example, HE in FE, to wider aims, for example the aims of higher education in general. As Sannino et al (2009) propose, by participating in activities humans develop their skills and their personalities, creating new possibilities for themselves and for the wider society. If the purpose of higher education is to develop young people with purposeful identities and a sense of being personally meaningful, then educators should support the development of thinking, doing and being towards this objective, which then creates more opportunities for development (Lektorsky, 1999). Meaningful activity, based on the process of making sense of and acting on all the options on offer, creates a dynamic opportunity for individuals to develop and use their dispositional energies to create a purposeful, integrated identity. del Rio and Alvarez (2002) point out that an integrated identity is best developed by an integrated education, suggesting that higher education needs to focus away from decontextualized individual cognition, independent of emotion and acknowledge that development involves the whole person in socially situated, personally relevant and socially meaningful activities.

Activity theory, based on the work of Lev Vygotsky, therefore provides a way of connecting individual development with personal and societal intentions. It represents a bridge between theory and practice, between the individual and the social structure (Engeström, 1999), and also connects collective motives and individual goals

(Engeström and Mietennen, 1999). It provides a way of communicating with fellow practitioners (Sannino et al, 2009), connects the past to the future, and enables research into the practicalities of everyday life (Daniels et al, 2010). Referred to as Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), it was described by Engeström and Mietennen (1999) as a well-kept secret, but as Kozulin (2003) suggests, it offers an opportunity to answer questions that have not been asked before, and has a developing profile in educational and organizational research.

These factors help identify why CHAT offers a way of analyzing the ways in which students develop if they are given the opportunity to be involved in socially situated, mediated and meaningful human activities (Claxton, 2002). In relation to this research, CHAT is particularly useful, as it is not purely theoretical, and provides a way for analyzing individual HE in FE contexts, the influences within them and on them and how they develop and change. It also enables analysis of the interaction between different perspectives on the same situation, for example, those of the teacher and those of the student(s), and also supports professional collaboration and development through visualization (Sannino et al, 2009).

3.7.4 The activity system as the unit of analysis

The unit of analysis in an activity system is the “*object oriented, collective and culturally mediated human activity....consisting of object, subject, mediating artifact (signs and tools), rules, community and division of labour*” (Engeström, 1987:72). Engeström’s model of an activity system, visually represented as a triangle (Figure 3.1) allows a situation to be viewed as if from above, and helps to overcome the dualism associated with the relationship between an individual and their environment, or learner and subject (Sannino et al, 2009).

The basic elements of an activity system consist of the object, the subject, the mediators (tools, dispositions, language etc), rules, community and division of labour (Engeström and Mietennen, 1999). Engeström (1999) explains how he developed the triangular model to take into account the motivational, societal and collaborative

nature of activities. It reflects the intentions of an activity (object), and the individual(s) at the centre of it (subject), and acknowledges how rules and boundaries, the extended community and the roles played by different individuals all impact on outcomes. It also acknowledges the internal tensions and contradictions between the different elements, and Engeström (ibid) indicates that resolution of these tensions is the driving force for change and development. It is relevant to note again at this point that Leiman (1999) considers that the transitional object or transitional experience described by Winnicott (1965) may be considered as equivalent to the mediating tool or sign described by Vygotsky, and therefore the model helps with locating systematically how dispositions mediate and influence outcomes (Roth, 2009; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

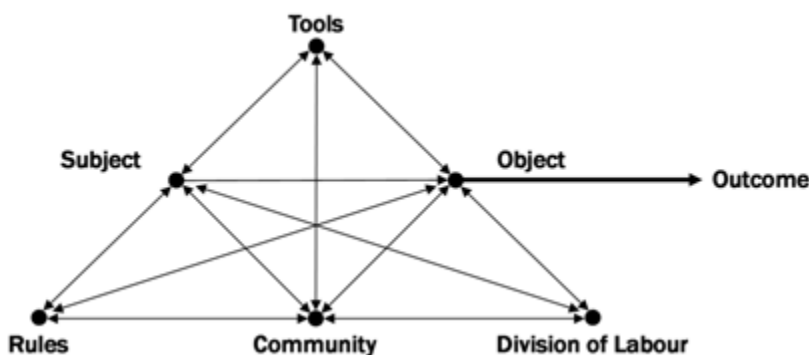


Figure 3.1 The components of an Activity System (based on Engeström, 1987:78)

This particular model of the different elements of a single activity system allows the relationships and tensions between them to be explored. In a similar way the relationships between overlapping activity systems may be explored (Engeström and Sannino, 2010), for example, the same system at different moments in time, or the co-involved systems of the student, the teacher and the organisation. An application of activity theory is the theory of expansive learning, which anticipates that there will be “*qualitative transformation and reorganization of the object*” (Engeström et al, 2003:181-183 in Sannino et al, 2009b: xiii). Learning may be described as expansive when the design of a learning activity and the acquisition of the new knowledge and

skills it requires are inextricably linked with each other (Engeström and Sannino, 2010). This acknowledges that successive learning activities do not represent a break with the past, but build on them and retain them as foundations. An expansive transformation is achieved when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity. Fuller and Unwin (2008) use this concept in their research relating to apprenticeships, and indicate the significance of the opportunities provided to whether the apprentices' outcomes are expansive or restrictive to their development.

A CHAT approach to human development therefore, explores how individuals act in activities which are object-related, instigated for a purpose. It is future related, but acknowledges historical background and helps with diagnosing a situation, with understanding influences and where problems lie, enabling exploration of how situations are maintained, challenged or transformed. With regard to this study on the creation of transformative learning cultures, CHAT is particularly helpful, as it integrates feelings, thoughts and actions with cognitive processes (Wells and Claxton, 2002), and helps with understanding how learning processes can actively transform the both the subject and the object of the activity, when that object is human development. It enables the exploration of transformative learning opportunities through for example, isolating and interpreting disorientating dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991), or the chance to try out new roles and reflect upon them (Cranton, 2006a). A CHAT perspective also invites a discussion regarding how educational activities can be designed to engage the active involvement of the whole person and identify the influence of relationships (Wells, 2007), and therefore may contribute to future discussions regarding the development of purposeful individuals. Also, with a conceptualisation of learning as expansive, it may help with discussions regarding identity development (ibid), especially if learning activities are devised to support “*goal formation*” rather than “*learning outcomes*” (Lompscher, 1999:268).

3.8 The creation of transformative learning cultures

Having a developmental purpose for higher education enables the integration of these two ‘big theories’, CHAT, and the developmental processes outlined by Kegan (1982; 1994). Both are based on a view that learning and development occurs in a socio-cultural setting, involving mediators, supportive relationships and the internal dispositions of the students. They are both very helpful in understanding transformative learning cultures and the creation of pedagogical patterns which encourage student development. Although integrating them may be unusual, together they create an opportunity for analysis, and an opportunity for design.

3.8.1 An identity workspace

As explained in Section 3.5.3, Petriglieri and Petriglieri, (2010:46) describe an “*identity workspace*”, as a safe container for “*identity work*”, somewhere that absorbs or helps to manage “*difficult or threatening emotions or ideas so they can be worked with*” (French and Vince 1999:9 in Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:50). As has been emphasised, identity has a significant role to play in learning (Bracher, 2006) and is a useful concept when it is aligned with the developmental processes proposed by Kegan (1994), the significance of dispositions in higher education (Barnett, 2007), the features of CHAT and investigating the pedagogical patterns associated with the creation of a transformative learning culture. Identity will be expressed through attitudes, behaviors and dispositions and mediates learning’s power to transform. Daniels (2008) explains how dispositions influence engagement with learning, for example, in duration or intensity. Barnett (2007), Baxter Magolda (2009), Daniels (2008) and Kegan (1994) all indicate that taking control of developmental processes is deeply affected by the nature and intensity of the challenge being faced, the individual’s own characteristics and the degree of support available.

Therefore, if a learning culture is devised with ‘transformation’ in mind, to support the creation of a more integrated and purposive identity, an ‘identity workspace’ is a

useful place to be. An identity workspace is a place for students and teachers to work together to recognize current capabilities, barriers or threats to learning, and provide support for overcoming these threats, as well as for the development of the dispositions needed to solve the challenges being confronted. It will consist of pedagogical patterns that support the development of a more integrated and purposeful identity, make use of time and be an environment that can help with encouraging the ability to tolerate the uncertainty that may occur during the process (Claxton, 2006a). It allows a teacher to bring themselves into the process, so that the students engage with a real person, rather than a role.

However, this is a difficult issue in a higher education context with time limitations and outcomes. Learning how to tolerate uncertainty implies that time may be spent on finding solutions. Yamamuzi (2007) explains that developmental, spiral time is a zone to be dwelled in and explored, existing somewhere between the linear time of the adult, and the circular time of the child. Therefore an identity workspace has an awareness of time as well as space and involves consistent, persistent relationships. Writing from a psychotherapy perspective, Ryle (1999) describes the need to be persistent in supporting uncertainty, although this is difficult when time is limited. Ryle (*ibid*) using Winnicott (1965), emphasises the need for an integrating feature, a consistent teacher to help resolve the conflicting feelings of discomfort and challenge, and as Parks (2000) suggests this task may also be shared by a cohort of students. To return to an earlier part of this discussion, in an identity workspace, a teacher would be 'good enough', and increasingly hand over responsibility for tasks that the students have to resolve, so encouraging the development of a consistent, integrated identity. Drago-Severson et al (2001) and Imel (2002) point out that the cohort may also have a 'good enough' role and be able to encourage and support each other to manage uncertainty and resolve problems. This can be particularly useful for a developmental higher education without time on its side. As Allen (2002) suggests, through being made aware of how their own approaches influence outcomes, students are able to take control over their own development, and also learn how to use their teacher and their peers to help them. Edwards (2005:168) and Edwards and Mackenzie

(2008:179), consider that “*relational agency*” is an individual’s ability to seek and use help that expands their developmental possibilities, and they too consider that this capability is an important factor in the development of a purposive identity.

Through helping students take control over their own development, an identity workspace provides “*the gift of confidence*” (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002:48). A self-confident individual is able to appreciate that support, encouragement and challenge are not a threat to the identity, but a demonstration of empathy and care. However, Mahn and John Steiner (ibid) also highlight that an individual’s established dispositions and attitudes influence how they respond to demonstrations of empathy. Mahn (2003:129) uses the Russian term ‘*perezhivanie*’, to represent the process by which individuals make sense of their experiences, a dialectical process where an individual’s identity shapes their experiences, and experiences shape an individual’s identity. This concept captures how the same objective situation may be interpreted, experienced or lived through by different individuals in different ways. A teacher’s awareness of students’ ways of receiving situations, their *perezhivanie*, contributes significantly to their ability to engage students in meaningful, purposive education (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002). This is another point where the discussion returns to Kegan (1982), as he too emphasises how development is deeply affected by the individual’s own characteristics and their developmental readiness.

However, taking account of *perezhivanie* also acknowledges that as an individual’s identity changes, so their needs and motives change, which in turn changes their relationship to the environment. The pedagogical pattern associated with an identity workspace needs to acknowledge and respond to this, something that Mahn (2003) points out when he considers the significance of critical periods in relation to development. Kozulin (2003) suggest that these critical periods can develop into crises, but Kegan (1982) considers that it is the resolution of tensions or contradictions that create development. In a higher education environment, Kegan (ibid) believes that young adults can get a sense of abandonment, particularly if they do not have the tools, including the personal dispositions, to enable them to master

new cultural expectations. In HE in FE where the student may not come from a background where higher education is the norm, this may be a significant issue, and it is important to create organising or “*rector*” activities (Japiassu, 2008:393) which are designed to meet particular developmental needs. However, Japiassu (ibid) points out the necessity for substituting one organising activity for another, in order to promote successively more complex forms of development, rather than relying on a once-and-for-all approach. An identity workspace needs to acknowledge and respond to this, creating activities that acknowledge the past, meet the needs of the moment and the future, realizing that individuals act on their environments as well as respond to them, and provide the means by which individuals master themselves through the experiences they have and the experiences they create (Daniels, 2008). An identity workspace is created through a transformative, developmental pedagogy being enacted by a culture that anticipates that support and encouragement, confrontation and challenge is a genuine expression of care.

3.8.2 A pedagogical pattern for a transformative learning culture

To summarise the preceding discussion for the purpose of this research, a pedagogical pattern associated with a transformative learning culture in higher education creates an environment which act as an identity workspace. This environment possesses an integrated pedagogical pattern that contains, respects and welcomes, but also confronts and challenges to bring about change and development of the participants, enabling individuals to develop more purposeful, self-confident and meaningful identities. Each environment acknowledges the fragility of this process and is founded on beliefs and values. It has student wellbeing at its heart, and a genuine intention to enable students to enact their own futures. It makes use of time and space, roles and relationships to develop a sense of mutual support and community, so that the task of being ‘good enough’ is shared between teachers and students alike. It acknowledges that the process of development is difficult; with students experiencing periods of doubt, uncertainty and disruption and that the mediators of development, external features and internal dispositions, are important factors to note. A transformative learning culture, rather than focusing on outputs, focuses

instead on outcomes, and the concept is relevant to contemporary discussions in higher education regarding employability, as it focuses on development of the student as an individual, rather than a graduate as a product with set of attributes.

3.9 Conclusion to Chapter 3

The discussion presented in this chapter provides the conceptual framework that has been developed through undertaking this study. This was an iterative and progressive process, with reading and research going hand-in-hand, each guiding the other. Following this discussion, Chapter 4 provides a summary of the methodology adopted and Chapters 5 and 6 a reflexive account of the approaches taken to the research. Chapter 7 then presents an analysis of the data obtained and Chapter 8 a discussion of the findings based on the conceptual framework presented here. The final self-critical, reflexive chapter brings the strands of the empirical research and the conceptual framework together, suggesting ways in which they may contribute to contemporary discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.0 Introduction to Chapter 4

This chapter summarises the methodology adopted for this study. A reflexive account of how this methodology developed through undertaking the combined activities of reading, reflection, research design and data collection is presented in Chapter 5, *A reflexive account of purpose and methodology* and continues in Chapter 6, *Putting purpose into practice*.

4.1 Methodological considerations

An interpretative, qualitative, case study approach was adopted to answer the overarching research question, '*what is going on here?*' Rather than wanting to ascertain quantitative issues of 'how much?' or 'how many?' the study aimed to explore qualitative issues, for example, 'what happens when?' or 'what are your intentions?' As Creswell (1998) explains, the reasons for taking a qualitative stance relates to the type of question which Merriam (1998) considers enables the elicitation of meanings from individual's situations and makes use of fieldwork to create richly descriptive findings. These factors were important in devising a study which aimed to explore and interpret the experiences of others. Interpretative research does not aim to test a generality, but to build understanding about a particular situation and was suitable for researching this new area. It can involve case study as a methodology (Merriam, 1998), and choosing this approach for research into learning cultures acknowledged the significance of each local situation (Yin, 2009), providing the means for being expansive, identifying patterns (Rogoff, 2003) and for following trails and emerging conceptualisations.

The study adopted a cultural view of learning and development (Bruner, 1999; Rogoff, 2003). This supported an integrated research design and the inclusion of multiple data sources. Each of the studies involved in this project involved detailed data collection *in situ* and the participation and contribution of the individuals involved.

Although agreed in the original ethical approval (Appendix 1), I chose not to include any quantitative or survey-based data in the research. This type of approach could be useful in the future as part of a larger study, by for example, using the Learning Activities Survey devised by King (2009) which is based upon understandings of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1985).

4.2 The structure of the study

The research reported within this thesis was undertaken in two FE colleges (College A and College B) in south east England and located within higher education “*learning sites*,” i.e. locations where students and their teachers worked together on learning (James and Biesta, 2007:162). This term reflects the wider range of locations, events and opportunities represented in the study than single course- or class-based activities. For example, the opportunity for informal data collection in Study 1 occurred during a week-long trip to New York involving teachers and students from four of the courses from College A. Ethical approval for the research and a timeline are available in Appendix 1.

Each of the colleges has a long history of involvement in higher education and currently works in partnership with a local university through a Consortium agreement. The learning sites represent Foundation Degree courses in Business and the Creative Industries, these being the full-time higher education courses offered by the colleges with the largest annual intake of students. The study focussed around the work of the college teachers who had the main teaching responsibility at each of the learning sites (Table 4.1).

The structure of the study consisted of three data collection stages. Firstly, an initial nested case study within College A (Study 1), followed by an interim group discussion at this college between experienced teachers of HE in FE. These activities were followed by Study 2, a collective case study involving teachers and their students from both College A and College B. Both studies adopted the principles of ethnographic research outlined by Whitehead (2005) and Wolcott (1995) with data being collected *in situ* through an iterative process of planned formal events and other, informal events. Erickson (1986) commends ethnographic

methodology to the educational research arena as it brings to it an emphasis on culture (Eisenhart, 2001).

Table 4.1 College learning sites

College	Foundation Course	Degree	Teacher(s) (pseudonyms)	Involvement in Study		
				Study 1	Interim Group Discussion	Study 2
College A	FdA Design		Sofia,	No	Yes	Yes
	Head of Department		Rob	No	No	Yes
	FdA Graphics		Billie	Yes	Yes	Yes
	FdA Art		Tom	Yes	No	No
	FdA Merchandising		Alice	No	Yes	Yes
	FdA Business		Julia	No	Yes	Yes
	Head of HE		Stella	No	Yes	No
College B	FdA Business		Barbara	No	No	Yes
	FdA Fashion		Theresa	No	No	Yes
	Head of Department					
	FdA Graphics		Lance	No	No	Yes
	FdA Illustration		Lance	No	No	Yes

An ethnographic approach enables the development of an holistic appreciation of the physical and sociocultural contexts, processes, actions, intentions and interpretations of the participants and the identification of cultural patterns. Wolcott (1995) explains that the detailed fieldwork undertaken in ethnographic studies is more than a choice of method, because fieldwork essentially anticipates that the interpretation of a particular situation can vary because of a range of factors. It also anticipates that the interpretation is an intersubjective product constructed between the researcher and the researched. For me as the researcher, this process of discovery necessitated the development of a highly flexible, creative and interpretative stance underpinned by sound reflexivity, thorough field notes and interpretations and appreciation of my own possibilities for subjectivity and bias in order to be able to create a valid representation of *'what is going on here?'*

Following these 3 stages, the data was integrated to enable analysis which could identify patterns within and across the learning sites. Use was made of Cultural

Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) to identify and explain the active processes taking place.

4.2.1 Study 1

Study 1 (Table 4.2) consisted of an intrinsic case study of two learning sites from College A, both part of an integrated suite of Foundation Degrees associated with the Creative Industries. These sites were chosen because of their history of involvement in higher education courses, the experience of the teachers and the teachers' willingness to be engaged in a research process. The two cases represented FdA Art and FdA Graphics, taught by Tom and Billie respectively.

The aims of Study 1 were;

1. *To investigate the learning culture within the teachers' own settings at the beginning of a course.*
2. *To explore the teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and how they were influenced by context.*
3. *To undertake research with two participant teachers of HE in FE*

Following the agreement of the two teachers to be involved in the research process, a joint meeting took place between myself the researcher and the two participants. At this meeting it was agreed that the focus of the study would be the first six weeks of the Foundation Degree course, as during this time the teachers anticipated a focus on developing or reinforcing the learning culture associated with their learning site. As well as making use of informal opportunities for data collection through activities associated with my professional role, data would be collected *in situ* through planned field visits to the learning sites. The field visits would be reinforced by the production of detailed field notes, recording recollections of any conversations with the teachers or their students, exchanges between the teachers and their students, socio-cultural dynamics, use of space and any impressions made. These notes would include a record of quotations from informal conversations occurring, providing a resource for later data analysis.

Table 4.2 Study 1

Research activities	Study 1 College B with Tom: FdA Art Billie: FdA Graphics	
Study 1 start-up activities	June /July 2008 Obtain permission from key gatekeeper, Head of HE at each College Publicise investigation and invite interest from possible participants Recruit college teachers	
Shared activity	July 12 th 2008: Initial introductory and planning meeting September 16 th 2008: Planning meeting	
	Learning sites	
	FdA Art: Tom Year 1 students: 8 Year 2 students: 12	FdA Graphics: Billie Year 1 students: 32 Year 2 students: 19
Opportunities for informal data collection (professional role)	College visits (Sept-Dec 2008) 28.09.08 University induction 24.09.08 & 2.11.08 Programme development meetings (Cross-consortium) 07.12.08-14.12.08 study visit to New York with creative industries students (72) and teachers, College B (participant observation)	
Field visits	20.10.08 (all day) Classroom observation	21.10.08 (all day) Classroom observation
Personal research journal: Field notes	Descriptive observations Impressions Teaching activities Exchanges Conversations Mapping of physical space of HE studio and social space Maps of visual communication Use of space	Descriptive observations Impressions Teaching activities Exchanges Conversations Mapping of physical space of Year 1 studio, Year 2 studio, staff space and corridor area Maps of visual communication Use of space
Personal research journal: Conceptual development	Conceptual development using analog drawings, visual metaphor, concept mapping	
Informal conversations with students	Observational visit 20.10.08 University induction/registration New York visit (07.12.08-14.12.08)	Observational visit 21.10.08 University induction/registration New York visit (07.12.08-14.12.08)
Participant journals	Yes	No
Interviews with teachers	12.12.08 (43 min)	9.01.09 (45 min)
Agree transcripts of interviews	Word-processed transcripts of individual interviews sent to teachers for checking/modification/agreement	
Preparation and agreement of case notes	Word-processed case study summaries sent to teachers for checking/modification/agreement	

Wolcott (1995) explains that fieldwork is an iterative process and a form of inquiry that requires the researcher to be personally immersed in the social activities of a group, and stresses the importance of the researcher spending time with the group as they carry out the routines and activities that are relevant to the study. In addition to the formal, prearranged observational visits, informal data collection including informal conversations with students took place during other events including meetings, induction visits and a week-long study visit to New York and was recorded in a personal research journal. It was agreed during the start-up phase that the two participating teachers would aim to keep personal reflective journals during the research process alongside my own.

Planned, semi-structured individual interviews were held with the teachers after the observational visits and the New York trip. The transcripts of the interviews were sent to the teachers for checking, and finally detailed case notes were prepared for each of the learning sites and sent to the teachers for comment and agreement.

4.2.2 The group discussion

Following Study 1, an hour-long group discussion with an invited group of experienced HE teachers took place at College A. This provided the opportunity for a purposeful conversation around the development of the conceptual framework arising from the integration of data from Study 1 and my on-going reading. A group discussion was chosen over other group techniques, for example a focus group or a group interview, as it could make the most of group dynamics and individual perspectives (Cohen et al, 2007). These could be used to enable the emergence of different points of view and of consensus.

The participants in the group discussion are shown in Table 4.1. Prior to the event, a preparatory document entitled '*Agents provocateurs: towards developing transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education*' (Appendix 5.1) was circulated together with a series of guiding questions (below).

1. *What factors influence the type of learning culture ('the way we do things around here') you feel you are able to develop for your programme?*
2. *What approaches do you use to make students aware of the way they are approaching their studies? In promoting the 'will to learn', what approaches do you feel are 'permitted, promoted, inhibited, ruled out' by the learning culture you are able to develop?*
3. *Can you identify ways in which the students become influenced to reflect upon and change or re-justify their approach to their studies? Are there key times when change is more likely to take place?*
4. *Accepting the central role of the teacher in deciding and developing approaches to learning, could you identify why you might approach your teaching in a way which aims to be transformative? Is an approach which aims to address issues behind student attitudes to their study and their 'will to learn?'*
Why do you work in this way....
5. *Could you suggest any staff development opportunities which might help to develop a transformative learning culture for the students on your programme?*

4.2.3 Study 2

The third stage of the research process involved a second case study. Study 2 (Tables 4.3 and 4.4) consisted of a collective case study involving experienced HE teachers from College A and College B, representing courses in Business and Design. The original seven participants were selected purposively based on the view that they could represent a group of individuals who actively aimed to provide their students with a developmental experience in higher education. This group became nine with the involvement of two heads of department. As a collective case study, Study 2 aimed to identify cultural patterns associated with the creation of intentionally developmental learning environments. Rogoff (2003)

suggests that identifying patterns helps make sense of the cultural aspects of human development, and in case study research, pattern identification enables comparisons to be made with other contexts. Therefore this collective case study aimed to provide “*provisional truths*” (Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2000:12) regarding the creation of learning cultures associated with student development. Further research could enable these provisional findings to be supported or refuted.

The study had five aims;

1. *To identify the intentions and actions of the teachers towards their students*
2. *To identify how the teachers created a learning culture that put their intentions and actions into practice.*
3. *To identify how the students experienced and contributed to their learning cultures.*
4. *To identify the nature of students’ change and development and factors influencing it.*
5. *To identify opportunities and constraints offered by particular learning and teaching contexts.*

This case study had an expansive and constructivist approach to data collection and interpretation, adopting a qualitative, ethnographic stance and a naturalistic design to enable an interpretative, iterative approach. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 summarise the construction of the study and the data collected in College A and College B respectively. Although the original plan submitted for ethical approval included the intention to use an end of year questionnaire with the students, based on the Learning Activities Survey (King 2009; Brock 2010) to explore the incidence and extent of transformative learning within the student groups, this was not included in the study. This was because of practical reasons associated with the changed relationship between the university and the colleges and conceptual reasons associated with exploring the socio-cultural context.

Table 4.3 Study 2 in College A

	Learning sites			
Participating teachers	FdA Design: Sofia Head of Dept: Rob	FdA Graphics: Billie	FdA Merchandising: Alice	FdA Business: Julia
Personal research journal	Yes			
Participant journals	No			
Opportunities for data collection	09.10-10.10 Registration and induction activities Weeks commencing 15.11.10 & 22.11.10 planned field visits 05.11-06.11 End of year exhibition 04.11 & 07.11 planned feedback meetings 04.11-07.11 On site 2 days per week			
Personal research journal: field notes	Descriptive observations Impressions Teaching activities Exchanges Conversations Mapping of physical space of HE studio/classrooms and social space (twice) due to relocation Maps of visual communication Use of space			
Personal research journal: conceptual development	analog drawings visual metaphor concept mapping 'In the bubble' (18.11.10) Activity triangle (from 03.11)			
Photographs	Studio activities Tutorial activities Employer presentations (08.12.11) End of year exhibition: preparation and event Student groups Informal activities Physical spaces incl staff rooms Planning meetings for 2011-12 academic year			Classroom activities Tutorial activities Student groups Informal activities Physical spaces incl staff rooms
Field visits Weeks commencing 15.11.10 & 22.11.10	17.11.10	18.11.10	16/22.11.10	15.11.10
Interviews with year 1 students	17.11.10 12 min (3)		16.11.10 26 min (10)	15.11.10 21 min (7) 27 min (8)
Interviews with year 2 students	17.11.10 14 min (5)	18.11.10 15 min (12)	16/22.11.10 19 min (3) 15 min (12)	
Interviews with teachers	Sofia 18.11.10 22 min Rob 04.02.11 59 min	22.11.10 27 min 19.01.11 33 min	16.11.10 15 min 21.11.10 25 min	22.11.10 54 min
Opportunities for informal data collection	Studio observations Employer presentations Final year exhibition (prep and event) 05-06.2011 Transition interviews for progression to final year of BA (Hons) courses at university (04-05.2011) Programme development meetings for 2011-12 academic year(07.11)			Transition meeting at university (Year 2)
Agree transcripts of teachers interviews				
Preparation and agreement of case notes				

Table 4.4 Study 2 in College B

	Learning sites			
Participating teachers	FdA Business: Barbara	FdA Fashion: Theresa Head of Dept	FdA Graphics: Lance	FdA Illustration Lance
Personal research journal	Yes			
Participant journals	No			
Opportunities for data collection	11.01.11 tour of new building with Head of Department 04.11-.07.11 On site 2 days per week			
Personal research journal: field notes	Descriptive observations Impressions Teaching activities Exchanges Conversations Mapping of physical space of HE studio/classrooms and social space Maps of visual communication Use of space			
Personal research journal: conceptual development	analog drawings visual metaphor concept mapping 'In the bubble' (18.11.10) and Activity triangle (from 03.11)			
Photographs	Classroom activities	Physical spaces incl staff rooms Studio activities Tutorial activities Student groups Informal activities Physical spaces incl staff rooms Tutorial activities End of year exhibition: event Planning meetings for 2011-12 academic year		
Field visits Weeks commencing 15.11.10 & 22.11.10	12.01.11	03.02.11	03.02.11 10.02.11	
Interviews with year 1 students				
Interviews with year 2 students	12.01.11 21 min (10)	03.02.11 10 min (5)	03.02.11 16 min (6)	03.02.11 18 min (3)
Interviews with teachers	15.02.11 30 min	03.02.11 45 min	03.02.11 (failed) 10.02.11 53 min	
Opportunities for informal data collection		Programme development meetings for 2011-12 academic year(07.11) Final year exhibition (event) 06.2011		
Agree transcripts of teachers interviews				
Preparation and agreement of case notes				

4.3 Additional methods supporting data collection and knowledge generation

As a researcher carrying the responsibilities of accurately reporting and interpreting the worlds of others to the higher education community, it is important that I identify the means for data collection and knowledge generation that suited both the researched and the researcher and which also communicates the lives of others to the wider higher education community. The following two chapters discuss more extensively ethnographic approaches to educational research because as Eisenhart (2001) indicates, the researcher's stance influences how research is done, what is learned and how it is communicated. She suggests that non-textual methods need to be found to supplement more familiar ethnographic approaches of observing and interviewing, particularly if the aim is to find out about cultural patterns, rather than specific groups. Eisner (1991) and Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest that educational researchers can benefit from acknowledging the limitations of language and develop approaches in qualitative enquiries which are based on the processes, forms and structures of artistic practice, something that Pink (2007) reinforces by indicating that art, drawing and photography may be used in understanding the social and cultural world.

Approaching the research of learning cultures with the aim of interpreting the meanings given to acts by their participants meant trying to gain an “*‘objective’ analysis of..... ‘subjective’ meaning*” (Erickson 1986:127). Claxton (2006b:353) describes the processes involved in developing ideas as “*soft creativity*” and I found methods associated with visualisation particularly useful for this. Competing theories jostle for position in discussions regarding visualisation in research (Mitchell et al, 2011) but visualisation techniques are particularly helpful for generating data and communicating to a wider research audience. Cousin (2009) considers that visualisation should not just been seen as a research accessory, as it may provide a way of interpreting the world in its own right, something which Pink (2007) commends in the practice of ethnography. I chose to use visualisation to generate data and to interpret it, and within the research process I used two main visualisation methods to support data collection and knowledge generation; a personal research journal that incorporated drawing and photography. The following subsections explain how these methods were used, how they interacted

and contributed to the findings and how they have been used in the presentation of the thesis. A full, reflexive account of the decisions associated with choosing and using these methods is provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.3.1 Use of a personal research journal

In order to support the iterative nature of this qualitative, interpretative case study research it was essential to maintain detailed, reflexive records in order to track and maintain the developing conceptual framework, record explanations and locate myself in the study (Jones, 2002). Although having a commitment to depicting the world of others, it was essential to recognise, as Krieger (1991) explains, that my biography acts as the mediator between what I am researching and what I present to the reader. Hartley (2008:39) considers that “*personal journalism*” provides a “*window into the soul of the writer*”, showing something of the writer as well as something of what is being written about. Being aware of and making public my own history, beliefs and values has therefore been an important underpinning feature of this research process (Section 5.6), acknowledging that these issues provide the foundations for all that is presented here.

A series of personal, reflexive research journals which made use of visualisation techniques alongside more conventional text were an essential part of this process, as they provided the means for stabilising what I was thinking at any one time, creating a permanent record for myself and for others. These journals enabled the interaction of data from different sources and provided the means for developing a conceptual understanding of myself as the researcher; my intentions, history, biases and so on, as well as providing the means for developing a conceptual understanding of the research sites. The journals used consisted of spiral-bound hard-backed notebooks with plain paper and made use of visualisation by drawing as well as more conventional written entries. For example, visual metaphor, colour, space, shape, image, lettering and diagrams provided the means to use visual language to explore, summarise, reflect upon, interpret and integrate data from reading, research activities and personal reflection.

During the research process I used a variety of visual methods to generate and analyse data. These included visual metaphor for self-analysis and to represent ideas (for example, Illustrations 5.5 and 5.7), analog drawings (Edwards 1996/2008) for interpretation of situations (for example, Illustration 5.4) and diagramming (Hyerle, 2009) to integrate concepts from different sources (for example, Illustration 6.2). This data contributed to the integrated analyses described in Section 4.5. Extracts from the personal research journals are part of this thesis, and illustrations have been chosen which represent both the methods adopted and the subjects involved. A reflexive account of the use of a visual journal and drawing techniques is presented in the next chapter.

4.3.2. Use of photographs

Photography has been used within this thesis as a means for data collection and as a means for communication. A full, reflexive account of this process is provided in Chapter 6. In Study 2, photography provided a means for data collection through recording physical and psychosocial environments at different times and during different events. An image provides invaluable source material for a thick description of a context, and in line with Harper (1998) and Pink (2007), I used photography as a form of visual ethnography, to survey, map and communicate material culture and social interaction, maintaining the research questions and the emerging conceptual framework in my mind. They were also used during the teacher interviews to generate data through photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002). As the interviews occurred after the field visits, this approach provided the means for finding out about the situations which the teachers had been involved in, the actions and interactions of the students and also the nature and influence of the physical environment.

These strategies supported the use of photographs as part of the documentation of this thesis because they provide a means for communicating the world of others to the educational research community. Because all of the images included have culturally specific meanings (Weber, 2008) I can only justify using them because of the involvement of the teachers in their interpretation and by having a good common-sense and theoretical understanding of what they depict (Harper, 1998).

Using photographs as part of the *vignettes* which illustrate and explain individual situations and cultural patterns acknowledges the limitations of language when describing a physical and socio-cultural setting (Eisenhart, 2001). These *vignettes* have been developed through the integration of data from different sources and through the use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1987). The language that accompanies the photographs either suggests that they are part of an on-going reality or a specific “*photographic moment*” Pink (2007: 150). Photographs have also been presented as a series of uncaptioned images, the purpose being to give the reader the opportunity to connect them to the overall story and develop their own interpretations (Berger and Mohr, 1989).

The thesis also contains photographs of the research process; extracts from my personal research journals, extracts from a journal produced in Study 1 by one of the research participants, reflexive visual analyses of researcher positionality in research and visual analyses of data from the research sites. These last two examples make use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1987). Examples of analyses of positionality are shown in Illustrations 5.1 and 5.2, and of data from a research site in Illustration 6.3.

4.3.3 The selection of images for use in this thesis

Banks (2001) explains how incorporating images in academic work can present difficulties, as the research audience may bring their previously accumulated social and cultural understandings of their use to their interpretation. He also considers that guidance on the use of images in ethnographic research is well documented, but scattered. Including these visual forms within this thesis acknowledges my purpose to invite a wider community of educational researchers to engage in its interpretation. The photographs of the research sites included in the thesis were selected in consultation with the research participants in order to clarify meaning and interpretation, and are used to illustrate an element of the pedagogical pattern. Photographs used that illustrate the research process have been selected as the means for appropriately illustrating the concept being discussed. The choice of photographs recognises that interpretation of a particular context should not just rest in the pen (or keyboard) of the researcher, and that

the representative form of a study can restrict understanding. Eisenhart (2001:220) suggests that there is a need for “*powerful*” modes of what educational researchers know about the world. The photographs included in this thesis have been chosen as a powerful means of communication, “*transparent, public and capable of evaluation*” (Agar 1996:13 in Eisenhart, 2001:220) capable of instructing the reader, but not controlling of their informed interpretation.

For these reasons, a rationale for the selection of an indicative sample of the images included in following chapters of this thesis is summarised in Table 4.5. A complete rationale for all of the images included in the thesis is available in Appendix 8. These tables also indicate the sources of the images, the reason for their production and their nature. However, it must be pointed out that any ‘meanings’ ascribed are not fixed, but will continue to be actively constructed as they are encountered in the thesis by the reader and negotiated in the “*conceptual triangle*” of the researched, the reader and the author (MacDougall, 1978:422 in Banks, 2007:140).

Table 4.5 Rationale for the selection/use of images in the thesis [Indicative sample]

Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
Table					
4.6	87	Interaction of methodology	Thumbnail images	Photographs, journals and data analyses	To support explanation of integration of data
Illustrations					
4.1	85	Analysis of Business data: College A	Photograph of analytical drawing using CHAT	Research analysis (29.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of CHAT analysis
5.3	114	Drawing practice	Photograph of practicing drawing	Personal research journal (29.05.10)	Example of the process of developing visual literacy
5.5	121	What makes me tick?	Photograph of a drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis	Personal research journal (20.09.08)	Example of use of a drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis
5.6	123	Not so good Friday	Photograph of journal entry made during process of redundancy	Personal research journal (31.07.09)	Communication of questioning of professional identity
7.1	165	Tom's journal	Photograph of an entry in research participant's journal	Photograph of Tom's research journal entry (21.10.08)	Indication of the participant's use of a research journal showing his professional experience
7.6	196	Developing an opinion	Photograph of analytical drawing using 'bubble'/holding environment	Photograph of personal research journal (06.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of data from interview with Lance integrating 'bubble'/holding environment with tutor-lead interventions

Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
9.3	253	Focus on the product of higher education	Digital manipulation of photograph taken at College A	Field visit to College A (17.11.10)	Integration of photographic evidence with drawn conceptualisation of 'the bubble'
Vignettes					
6.1	138	The corridor leading up to the merchandising studio	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (16.11.10)	Supports interpretation of the physical space outside the Merchandising studio Used for photo-elicitation with Alice
7.1	183	'In the bubble'	Digital drawing of research data	Paper drawing made by Billie (18.11.2010)	Reproduces the drawing made by Billie during a research interview
7.3	188	1-1 with Julia for a Business student	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Supports interpretation of 1-1 'appraisal' with a student Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Julia
8.4	214	The end of year exhibition	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit to end-of-year exhibition (06.10)	Supports interpretation of end-of-year exhibition as rite-or-passage
8.6	221	Studio space vs classroom space	Photographs taken at College A and College B	Field visits to College A (Business: 15.11.10/Merchandising:16.11.10) and College B (Business:12.01.11/Graphics:03.02.11)	Supports interpretation of studio spaces and business classrooms at College A and College B

Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
8.7	223	Business students: finding the right time for confrontation	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Supports interpretation of Julia's intentions and actions Used for photo-elicitation during interview
8.8	225	No hiding place	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (17.11.10)	Supports interpretation of student data and teacher data (Sofia)
Photo-stories					
6.1	141	The Merchandising studio: college A	Photographs taken at College A	Field visits (16.11.10/22.11.10/08.12.11)	Introduces the reader to the use of the space inside the merchandising studio Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Alice
7.1	184	The Graphics' students comments at the final year exhibition	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit to end-of -year exhibition (06.10)	Introduces the reader to data collected by Billie and student perceptions of their experiences
7.2	187	Julia's Business class in action	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Introduces the reader to the use of the classroom space in Business Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Julia

4.4 CHAT analysis

Palmer (1998:62), paraphrasing Niels Bohr, considers that “*truth is a paradox of apparent opposites*” and points out the value of being able to “*think things together*” and “*stand where opposites intersect*”. A socio-cultural approach to researching the situations of others supported the integration of research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. In particular, the activity system, the “*object oriented, collective and culturally mediated human activity...consisting of object, subject, mediating artefact (signs and tools), rules, community and division of labour*” devised by Engeström (1987:72) explained in section 3.7.4 and depicted as a triangular model (repeated in Figure 4.1, below) provided the means for integrating and interpreting situations using multiple sources of data. As explained in Chapter 3.0, it is the resolution of tensions between the different elements of an activity system that provides the driving force for change and development. It is relevant to note again at this point that Leiman (1999) considers that the transitional object or transitional experience described by Winnicott (1965) may be considered as equivalent to the mediating tool or sign described by Vygotsky, and therefore the model helps with locating systematically how dispositions mediate and influence outcomes (Roth, 2009; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

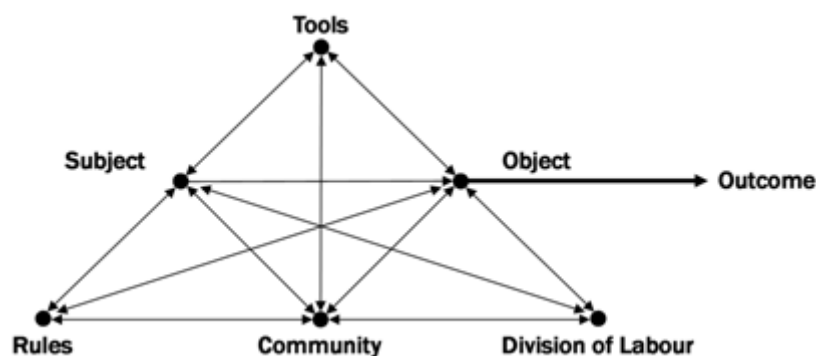
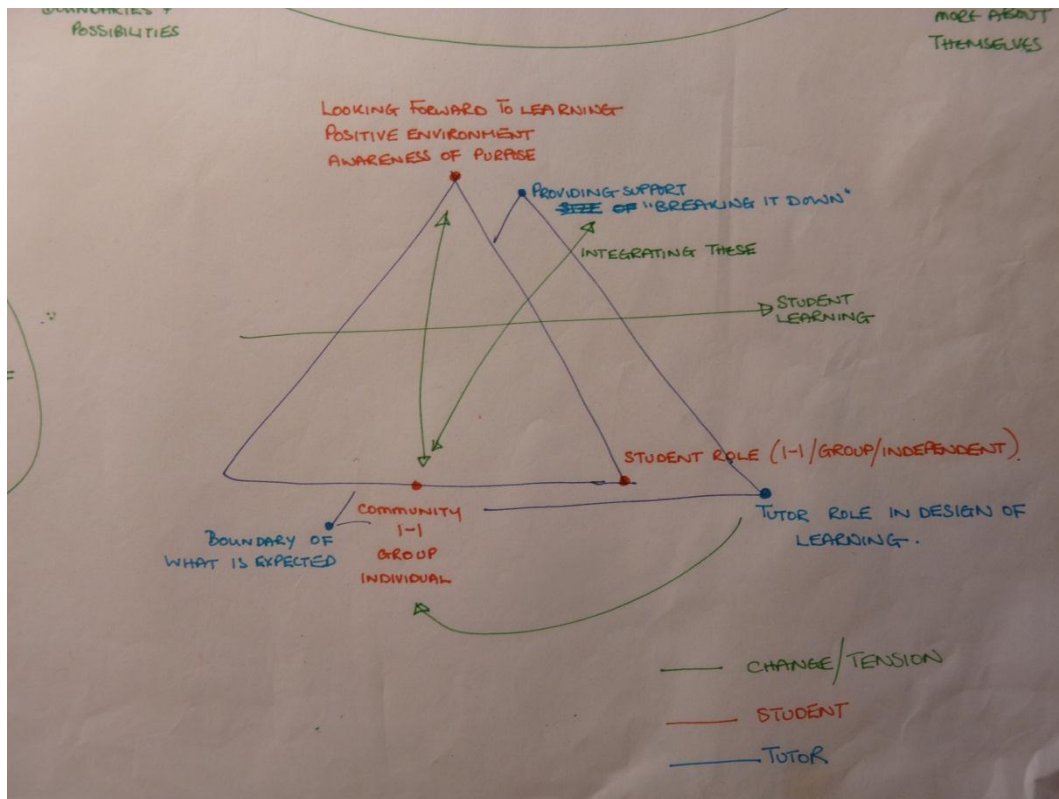


Figure 4.1 The components of an Activity System (based on Engeström, 1987:78)

Illustration 4.1 CHAT analysis of Business data: College A



The overlapping triangles represent the activity systems of the student (above) and the teacher (below). Student data is in red, teacher data in blue and indication of tension and its resolution in green. The data relates to the start of the course and uses field notes, interviews and photographic evidence.

In her interview the teacher (Julia) indicated that she devised the activities to promote student learning and development. She anticipated her role as the module tutor to involve providing a firm boundary to the course and providing support to the students by breaking down the expectations of being a higher education student and the course content. She also actively influenced the development of the community, resolving tensions resulting from student expectations or behaviour. Observational data and photo-elicitation in the interview reinforced identification of these intentions

In their interview, the students indicated that they felt in a positive environment, that they could look forward to learning, and had awareness of purpose. They appreciated that they had roles which involved them in working 1-1 with their tutor, in a group and independently. During the observation, Julia made active use of the class community to encourage the development of these mediators.

Following Study 2, the data accumulated through the whole research process was used to hand draw analyses using the triangular model around instances when purposeful 'activities' could be identified. This approach was supported by the


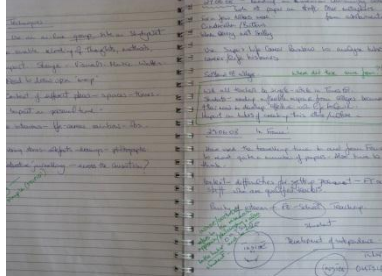


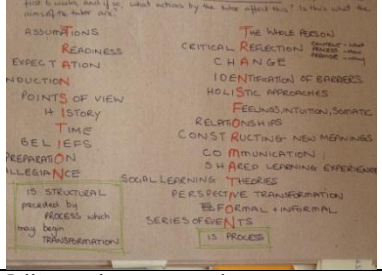
development of confidence in drawing, visual literacy and other forms of visual communication throughout the research process. CHAT provided the vehicle for converting the multiple sources of data which contributed to identifiable, purposeful ‘activities’ into visual forms, which could then be converted into explanatory text or ‘mini-stories’. Rather than using the small pages of journals, large sheets of paper were used which enabled the incorporation of different types of data, the visual representation of tensions and written interpretation of their implications and the addition of explanatory text. An example of an analysis of Business data from College A is shown in Illustration 4.1.

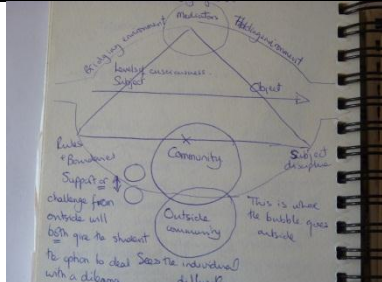

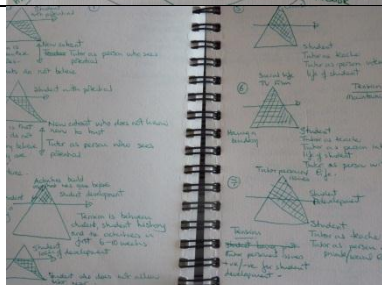
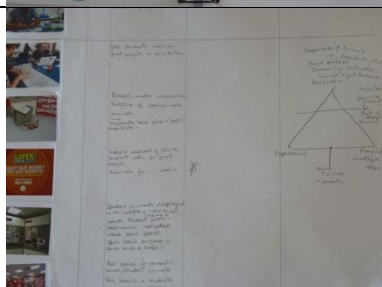
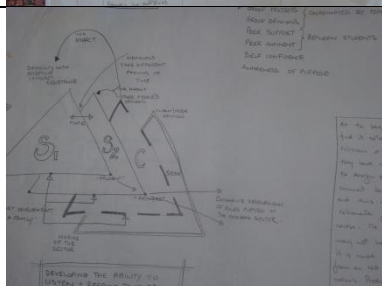
Development of these mini-stories with their visual and written components created an effective means for interpreting complex situations and for grouping into themes, for example, change over time, and identify cultural patterns occurring across the research sites which contributed to student change and to their development. Examples of visual analyses are shown in rows 15, 16 & 17 in Table 4.6 below.

4.5. An integrated approach to knowledge generation

During the process of this research, understanding of the research sites was developed through the active integration of empirical and conceptual data. An indicative sample of how the methodological elements interacted is the subject of Table 4.6 which uses thumbnail images to take the reader through the process of the research, including the use of a journal, field visits, photographs, interviews and a CHAT analysis. A full explanation is available in Appendix 9.

Table 4.6 Interaction of methodology [Indicative sample]

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
1. Journal 0 23.05.08		Once I had located a focus for the first part of the research process, first steps involved reading, reading and more reading, all recorded in a dated and annotated reading diary. This was kept updated throughout, revisiting and re-reading texts along the way; a spiral activity, enabling connections to be made between previously unconnected ideas.
2. Journal 0 27.06.08		I tried keeping a digital record by using EndNote and a 'conventional' written research diary but these did not work for me. I could not 'see' what was there. I needed to find a better way of supporting myself during the process of connecting empirical research with developing conceptualisation.
3. Front cover of Journal 6 14.04.10- 12.06.10		I knew that I had a strong visual sense, therefore chose to use visualisation as part of my methodology. Working with artists and designers had introduced me to the use of a journal or sketchbook, so I chose to include a personal research journal in my methodology which made active use of visualisation through drawing. The journal provided a place where I could make sense of complex ideas
4. 'Creative thinking: reimagining the university'. NUI, Galway 10th-11th June 2010.		Drawing practice and photography helped with the development of visual literacy. Visual metaphor provided a means for understanding myself, for converting concepts into memorable form, and for understanding the context
5. Journal 1 23.02.09		Analog drawings provided a way of diagnosing and interpreting conceptual struggles, and other approaches using space, shape and colour created memorable records which aided researcher development
6. Interview with Billie 09.01.09	Billie: and you try and create a vehicle that is going to do all of those things, that is going to challenge them, but make them feel safe, give them the opportunity to fail but in a safe environment, to make them work in different ways- so that every task you give them you make them work in different ways.	Interview data from the teachers and students was integrated with notes from field visits and informal conversations. This provided direction for reading and a developing conceptualisation of the research sites

<p>13. Journal 9 28.03.11</p>		<p>So I turned to CHAT for help. Kegan and Engeström both talked about the driver of change being the resolution of contradictions, so I visualised the two concepts together.</p>
<p>14. Journal 9 24.03.11</p>		<p>Data from the teacher interviews indicated the interweaving of emotional issues in the activities they formulated over a period of time, so I began to visualise these together too</p>
<p>15. Journal 10 21.05.11</p>		<p>CHAT provided a means for analysing transcript data to identify tensions and their resolution, firstly in a journal and then on large sheets of paper, and I annotated the drawings using interview data and field notes.</p>
<p>16. Analysis of end of year exhibition photographs College A June 2011</p>		<p>This process was supplemented with analyses of the photographs taken using CHAT and more conventional analytical methods.</p>
<p>17. Analysis of 3DD College A 'Developing the ability to listen and respond to other people's beliefs and opinions' June 2011</p>		<p>The analyses were built up to form mini-stories. These were then collated by theme to identify a pedagogical pattern associated with the creation of a transformative learning culture and along with photographs of the research sites, used to form vignettes in the thesis</p>

4.6 Conclusion to Chapter 4

This Chapter has presented a summary of the research methodology. Chapter 5, *A reflexive account of purpose and methodology* and Chapter 6, *Putting purpose into practice* expand this summary, providing a reflexive account of how this methodology developed through undertaking the combined activities of reading, reflection, research design and data collection.

Chapter 5

A reflexive account of purpose and methodology

5.0 Introduction to Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents a reflexive account of the purpose of the research and the methodology adopted in relation to exploring the creation of transformative learning cultures in higher education. As Van Maanen (2011) indicates, research that aims to depict the culture of others carries with it considerable moral and intellectual responsibilities, and through this reflexive account I aim to demonstrate that I have approached it in a way that makes the claims made valid.

The discussion in this chapter is centred on the principle that learning and research are both cultural activities. This means that the research needs to be designed to suit the cultures being investigated and also to suit investigating learning cultures. These issues provide a particular advantage in locating issues associated with validity and reliability, as they permeate planning, the methods adopted, implementation and the communication of findings (Cohen et al, 2007). During the process of undertaking the research I have needed to be able to locate my own presence, so that I may identify my own experiences and biases that have influenced it (ibid). This chapter provides a reflexive account of how these issues were approached. It opens with a discussion of the purpose of the research, and then continues to consider learning and research as cultural activities, introducing the use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory, CHAT (Engeström, 1987) as a means for learning about learning cultures, and as a means for learning about undertaking research. In this two-way view, it considers the value of researching learning cultures when considering student development, and how researching itself is a cultural activity involving participating in different communities. The discussion moves on to reviewing the available research approaches suitable for researching learning cultures, and then introduces case study research as a means for building understanding about this particular topic.

As indicated above, researching the cultures of others carries with it considerable moral and intellectual responsibilities (Van Maanen, 2011). Therefore, as well as finding a suitable methodology for researching learning cultures in higher education, I have needed to find methodologies for personal reflexivity that suit my preferences in terms of knowledge generation, and ways of communicating the knowledge generated about the research communities accurately and fairly (Cohen et al, 2007). A significant influence on the undertaking of the research has been the visualisation of ideas as, like Hunt (2006), I realised a long time ago that I 'see' myself into understanding, often using metaphor when I am teaching to convey complex ideas. For this reason, this chapter also considers the place of creativity in research and discusses drawing as a research tool. It closes with a review of the making of my professional identity, the influences on it and how these in turn have influenced this research.

5.1 Restating the research purpose

In Chapter 1, I indicated that in undertaking research for a professional doctorate, I aim to re-emphasise my own commitment to the transformative potential of education through policies associated with widening participation, and actively integrate my own experiences as an educational practitioner with the subject of the research (Burgess et al, 2006; Wickes et al, 2008). This research asks '*what is going on here?*' in higher education contexts that appear to have a focus on student development, and explores the creation of intentionally transformative learning cultures from both the teachers' and the students' perspectives. The research aims to develop knowledge about an under-researched sector and provide higher education teachers with the opportunity to be involved in a research process.

I came to undertake this research as someone with experience of higher education in general and of HE in FE, and therefore as Savin-Baden (2004) emphasises, I need to acknowledge that my self-perception and my view of the world influences the process and the outcome. I do not regard myself as an educational expert, but the diversity of my career has lead me ask whether different educational contexts, sectors and

subjects may learn from each other. For example, could discussions concerning employability and skills development in higher education be illuminated by learning about intentionally transformative pedagogies. Rogoff (2003) considers that differences in perspective help with understanding, and that communication between different cultural groups about how individuals develop through participating in and contributing to the traditions within their cultural communities can help answer previously unasked questions. Although Diamond (2008:2) indicates that FE colleges have a “*unique importance in British life*”, they have been under-researched, possibly because of the lack of a research tradition. To suggest that practice in HE in FE might be useful to a wider higher education landscape also involves getting beyond a narrow view which perceives that there is only one way of undertaking ‘proper’ higher education, and puts a particular responsibility on the researcher in identifying what to research and how to communicate findings. As Rogoff (2003) comments, people often view the practices of other communities as barbaric, therefore as I am suggesting that there is validity in learning from the practices in HE in FE, I need to go beyond simply presenting the localised details of the research sites in terms that make sense to those involved, and find ways of presenting them that make sense to a wider higher education community. Maintaining a focus on these aims helps to keep research into practice linked with practice itself, and avoids the separation that Schratz and Walker (1995) consider has affected research into learning and teaching.

Therefore, looking at how student development is approached in a context that is firmly in the centre of the government’s employability and skills agenda can make a unique contribution to discussions regarding higher education. It will help illuminate how the same purpose may be achieved differently, and how similar ways of doing things may achieve different goals. Looking at another community’s ways of acting may reveal what is missing or differently arranged elsewhere (Rogoff, 2003), but may also arouse feelings of threat or conflict. This study does not intend to suggest that there is ‘one right way’, but does require an open-minded attitude and suspension of value judgements by those unfamiliar with and mistrustful of a different educational sector.

The research also aims to create a space for knowledge generation and exchange through involving HE in FE professionals in research about their own practice, and for communicating those findings in an accessible form to the higher education community. This is supported by including arts-based research methods and by making use of a theoretical perspective that encourages visualisation.

5.2 A cultural view of learning and research

Rogoff (2003) suggests that individuals develop because of their changing participation in cultural communities, which also change. This study proposes that taking a cultural view of learning can help with understanding how students develop and change by participating in higher education, and also with understanding that research itself is a process of participating in a cultural community. Using 'culture' as an underpinning factor in this way provides an integrated and interactional way of exploring and interpreting the subject of the research and the way it is carried out. It assumes a non-dualistic ontology and makes particular demands on the researcher.

During the process of this study I have become an apprentice member of the research community, participating and contributing to its authentic rituals, relationships, artefacts and products, whilst committing myself to telling the story of the experience of others. Therefore, taking a cultural view of undertaking the study highlights the constructed nature of the research process, and brings reflexivity explicitly into focus (Roth and Breuer, 2003). It reveals the constant changes involved, helps with locating my position, the influences on it and how tensions were resolved during the process. Engeström (1987) considers that contradictions are the drivers of change, and therefore they are inherent to the growth of knowledge and the identity of researchers (Engeström, 1999). Using participation as a focus makes me the researcher, the purpose of the research and the subject into an indivisible unit open for scrutiny and interpretation.

Chapter 3 introduced Cultural Historical Activity Theory, CHAT (Engeström, 1987) as a means for understanding the creation of transformative learning cultures, and as

Yamagata-Lynch (2010) points out, it is one of several theoretical approaches that are appropriate for interpreting learning environments. However, it has particular advantages because it helps with managing complex data, capturing its 'essence', so that researchers can interpret individual activities and relate them to history, purpose, context and other events or situations. It also enables incorporation of personal dispositions alongside more structural mediators (Roth, 2009); therefore CHAT may be used in qualitative research for interpreting the subject of the research, the actions of the researcher, and enhance communication to an audience by the use of visual models as well as written descriptions.

Yamagata-Lynch (2010) comments that the principles underpinning CHAT and the languages it uses are too difficult to learn, suggesting that this is a barrier to its use in research. I came to it as a theoretical and practical proposition because I found the approaches I was using to analyse my data and interpret my actions as a researcher too 'flat', that they did not reflect the richness of the stories being constructed. Understanding CHAT was certainly a challenge, but I had the advantage of familiarity with the work of Lev Vygotsky, (for example, Vygotsky, 1978; Miller, 2003) because of my experience in working in early years' professional education (outlined in Section 5.6, this chapter), and the process has had a significant impact on my development as a researcher and my confidence as a professional practitioner in education.

5.2.1 Researching learning cultures in higher education

Prior to starting the research I had become aware that each one of the courses I was involved with had its own identity, constraints and opportunities. My role for the university involved crossing organisational and subject boundaries, helping to make collaborative programmes operate cohesively. I had many opportunities to consider the differences and similarities between subjects, settings, individuals and outcomes. James and Biesta (2007) point out how many factors, dimensions and influences shape learning opportunities for students, and how learning cultures, the social practices through which people learn, are affected by the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants.

Reports from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (for example, QAA, 2004a; 2006; 2007; 2010), highlight good higher education practice in colleges, however I realised from my cross-institutional role, that what was possible in one arena could be impossible in another due to a whole range of factors. As Biesta (2007:1) comments, “*what works*” in one context won’t necessarily work in another, despite calls for the identification and transference of good practice. However, Nash et al (2008) considers that contemporary issues affecting HE and FE, wherever they are taught, have considerable potential for each other, but understanding context, and the internal and external influences is essential. Although developing more knowledge about particular HE in FE contexts might contribute to local knowledge and practice, it is through the identification of patterns that a contribution to HE teaching may be made. Rogoff (2003) considers that identifying patterns helps make sense of the cultural aspects of human development; they have an identifiable shape, help with creating a shared language and for making sense of similarities, differences and significant features. For example, in relation to Foundation Degrees, Beaney (2006) has indicated that because they often include innovative forms of learning, the pedagogical and curriculum practices adopted could prove useful to a wider HE audience, and making these explicit will help with this.

A significant feature reported on in the literature is the supportive nature of HE in FE, particularly in relation to the relationships existing between staff and students and the provision of a personalised, nurturing environment (Parry et al, 2003; Harvey, 2009). However, as I carried out my role, I realised how differently this mediator of student development could be conceptualised by different individuals, subject areas and organisational groups. For example, what was regarded as helpful and necessary in one context could be regarded as ‘spoon feeding’ in another, and that the support provided to help develop a meaningful vocational identity could be personally challenging to the student. By researching practice in specific HE in FE contexts, I aimed to find out more about the teachers’ intentions, what they were influenced by and how these intentions were enacted and received in practice.

In their study of learning cultures in FE, James and Biesta (2007) indicate the value of looking at culture as a research approach, as it provides for different levels of focus, and also enables the complexity of learning and development to be studied. This approach accepts that *“learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilisation of cultural resources”* (Bruner, 1996:4). A cultural view of learning supports the development of an integrated research design, data collection and analysis. It anticipates that a study should include teachers and their students, teaching and learning, and take into account physical, psychosocial and contextual elements. It enables the complexities of these issues to be highlighted, including how individual constraints or opportunities affect outcomes. Although these are demanding and challenging factors to integrate and interpret, they make research interesting and enlivening, something essential if the process is to be sustained. Undertaking a research degree alongside full-time work and family life is not easy, and I have found exploring the diversity and richness of ‘culture’ a very useful mediator.

5.2.2 Research as a cultural activity

This study concerning learning cultures aims to contribute to the debate concerning student development in higher education and to enable HE in FE practitioners to participate in research. Professional practice research in higher education promotes the notion of being a dual professional, with academic staff developing a research profile in learning and teaching alongside specialist subject knowledge. However, professional development in further and higher education has followed different pathways (Brand, 2007), with Young (2002) and Feather (2011) commenting on the frustrations of HE in FE teachers in their inability to participate in scholarly activities.

Taking a cultural view of undertaking research helps with identifying and responding to the tensions involved in the process. In researching the cultures of others I need to acknowledge my privileged position for undertaking something that is denied the research participants. Kreber (2007) considers that scholarship in learning and teaching, and its intention to balance caring about the subject with caring about what

is important to the student constitutes authentic practice. To research a culture which expressed the intention to care about the outcomes for the students, and to not include the researched in the research process would constitute inauthentic practice. Denzin (2001: ix) indicates that undertaking educational research with a moral purpose means acknowledging that it is not "*innocent practice*". In order to demonstrate my authenticity as an educational researcher and reveal suggestions of bias, I have needed to make clear to myself and to others the purpose and influences behind my work. However, I do not want to cover up my own identity in this research, and develop as an "*inauthentic*" researcher, one who does research for its own sake (Kreber, 2007:31), nor as one who is unable to demonstrate individuality. I want to be able to celebrate the unique experiences that I have had and the ways in which they have helped me to develop my own insights, plus demonstrate my own predispositions as a researcher and learner. Labaree (2002) and Pillow (2003) both indicate that if a research text is to be taken seriously by the academic community, then it should be possible to properly locate when the author is present, where and to what degree. Pillow (ibid) states that self-reflexivity is the basis upon which awareness of self in the research process is built, addressing, in part, accusations of voyeurism and self-centeredness.

Therefore, a major responsibility on my part throughout this research has been to acknowledge my position in relation to myself and my beliefs, to the subject, the subjects, the organisational contexts and policy developments in HE, and how these have influenced my participation in the research process. These have been complex issues needing active consideration, especially as my relationship with the research sites changed during 2009. Le Gallais (2008) considers that it is essential that researchers be vigilant to the need to identify boundaries, and be aware of personal involvement and proximity. Labaree (2002:100), in discussing "*insiderness*" and "*outsiderness*", indicates that definitions of position relate to an epistemological principle based on access, defining an insider as,

“an individual who possesses intimate knowledge of the community and its members due to previous and ongoing association with that community and its members”.

However, he also points out the difficulties associated with regarding position as an insider-outsider dichotomy, as researchers may be multiple insiders and outsiders within the same study. Rogoff (2003:26) points out the limitations of having a perspective of position that focusses on “*membership*”, being ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ a particular community, and instead suggests “*participation*” to be more appropriate, so using an activity theory perspective enabled me to identify how participation in a research community and the related work community intersected during the research (Illustration 5.1), giving the opportunity for tensions to be revealed. For example, my research role gave me access to privileged information provided by the research participants which went beyond the boundaries of my work role. This information gave me a more authentic view of the influences on the development of the learning cultures, but had the potential to be at odds with my professional role. Therefore, undertaking the research made me think carefully about my work role, not just to maintain a duty of care to the research participants and their organisations but also to clarify how to manage partnership between two educational organisations.

Although at the start of the research process my knowledge of a range of college environments, subjects, individuals, groups and organisational influences gained through my experiences appeared to privilege me as a researcher, this advantage needs to be clarified. It could be said that by researching HE in FE that I was researching my own kind (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). However, I had left working in a college and was now aiming to develop an academic identity, so from another perspective, I could be perceived as wanting to undertake research in order to progress my own career. As Savin-Baden (2004) points out, acknowledging how multiple identities across time and space influence research and its interpretation contributes to the honesty of the process, and using an activity theory perspective helped me to identify where these interacted (Illustration 5.2). For example, I was

familiar with developmental curricula and Lev Vygotsky from my work with the early years' sector. I brought this mediator into the research process which in turn influenced the development of my identity as a researcher and my ability to contribute to understanding learning cultures in higher education.

Illustration 5.1 Participating in cultural communities

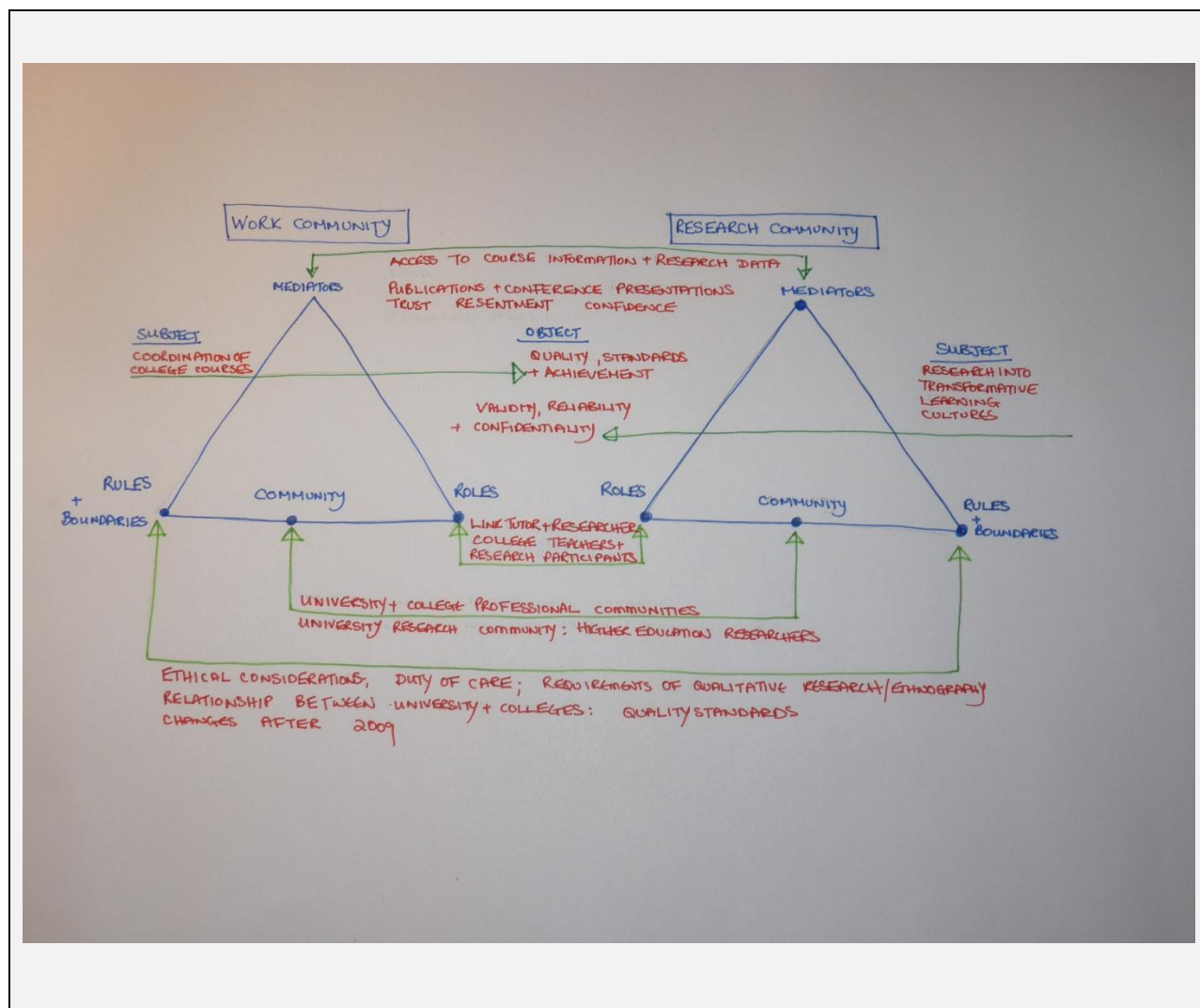
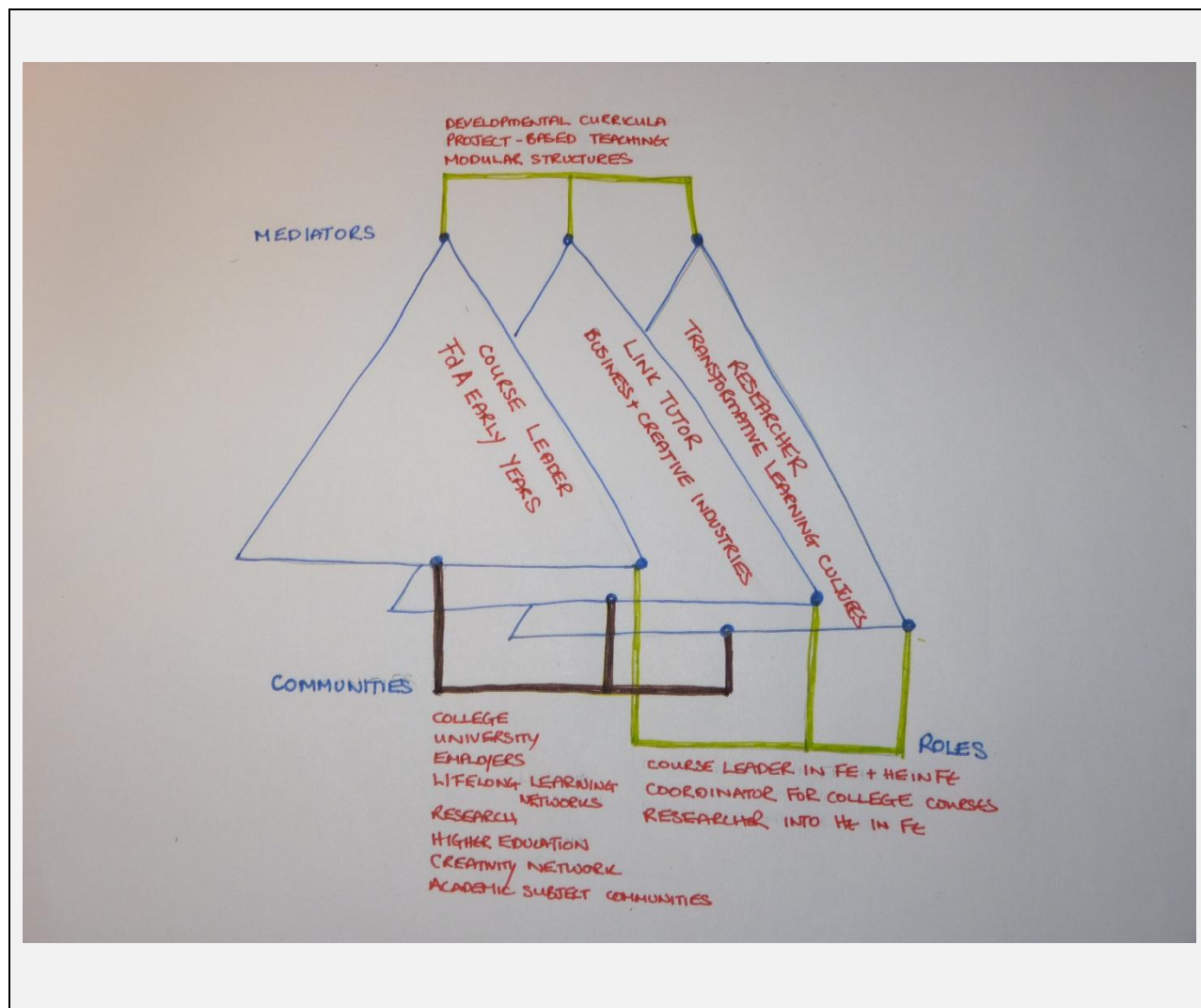


Illustration 5.2 Interaction of multiple identities across time and space



Although I aimed to contribute to higher education and involve the college teachers in research about their own practice, it was my responsibility as a researcher to create for myself a new psychological space where I could distance myself, recognise and make use of my multiple allegiances and experiences. Labaree (2002) comments that in his own research he decided to research about the academic community of which he was a member in order to improve practice-based governance in higher education. He demonstrated his own authentic identity as an educational researcher by firstly identifying this as the issue that deeply mattered to him (Taylor, 1991), and then finding ways of authentically continuing by finding ways to resolve

and represent the tensions involved in being an insider participant observer (Labaree, 2002).

I embarked on this research with something approaching evangelical zeal. Like Moore (2007:28) I wanted to “*shine the light of truth*” on HE in FE, to reveal more about my colleagues’ working situations as well as about their working practices. However, although this might have been personally rewarding (Neufeld and Grimmet, 1994) to be regarded as an authentic educational researcher, I needed to acknowledge the tension for me at being at the intersection between research about a community that I identified with, and being able to speak objectively and coherently about it (Kahuna, 2000). Illustration 5.2 gives the opportunity to surface these issues and shows how the relationship between my intention to develop an academic identity, and my existing identity interacted. Although Hall (1992) considers that involving teachers in research and then making the work available in an accessible form supports meaningful connections to be made between a policy initiative and those not in a position to research about it themselves, my own authentic identity as a researcher and my scholarship are also judged on my ability to analyse meaningfully a community that I identify with. The activity theory approach gives me a way of shifting from a position of knowing, to a position of not knowing (Lueddeke, 2003), and a way of entering the research sites as if for the first time (Labaree, 2002).

This research adopted a naturalistic design (Cohen et al, 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the advantage of this being the ability to follow new directions and opportunities, whilst still maintaining the purpose of the investigation. However, when I started out, I did not anticipate that a major change would occur in my relationship to the research sites. The naturalistic design enabled me to respond positively to this change, but it was one of the occasions when acknowledging my changed position was crucial. Fine and Torre (2008) indicate that researchers need to be careful about who might be vulnerable and to take into account the political context and implications of their research. Therefore, perceiving my position as an authentic professional and research as participation in complex, interrelated

environments, helped to identify and if possible avoid any unexpected tensions. For example, the change in the organisational relationships contributed to my decision to place the organisational issues impacting on the teachers' practice in the background, rather than exploring them directly. However, these issues have emerged as significant in the creation of transformative learning cultures, and it is important that they become available for discussion.

5.3 Researching the experiences and situations of others

At the beginning of the research process, having identified that I wanted to research learning cultures, I turned to finding a means for researching the experiences and situations of others which would be accessible to me practically as well as philosophically. Through my reading, I learnt that research is founded on conceptions of social reality, and how knowledge is constructed. I had made a commitment to working with rather than on others, not just because I acknowledged that the teachers and their students knew more about their own situations than I did, but also that it would be morally wrong to exploit their situations for my own ends. I anticipated that between us we would surface the knowledge that existed in their communities, and create new knowledge that could be communicated to others. In researching learning cultures, I wanted to find out about qualitative issues, 'how?' and 'what?' and 'why?' rather than 'how much?' or 'how many?' Although I did reject a quantitative stance, it could be useful in the future for further explorations of '*what is going on here?*', by, for example, surveying all the students in a cohort at different times in their programme.

Merriam (1998) explains that the characteristics of qualitative research include eliciting meaning and using fieldwork to create richly descriptive findings. As Laws and McLeod (2004) explain, qualitative research anticipates taking an holistic rather than a narrow view of what is being studied, and seeks to understand the perspective of those involved, making use of first-hand experience to provide meaningful data. The validity and reliability of a study of learning cultures would be judged on my capabilities as the primary instrument of research design and analysis. Therefore, I

needed to understand my own subjective position, understand why I felt I needed to take this approach, and consider more deeply my own core beliefs, values and attitudes to the world.

I fundamentally believed it to be unethical to exploit my HE in FE colleagues as tools for my own ends. However as the researcher I was in a position of power in deciding what should be researched, how it should be interpreted and who would hear about any findings. In aiming to create a collective, egalitarian and an emancipatory approach, (Cohen et al, 2007), I needed to ask myself, '*for who's benefit am I doing the research?*', '*who will it have an impact on?*', '*am I aiming to be empowering for my HE in FE colleagues?*' and '*do they need/want to be empowered?*' I turned to the report of an extensive study of FE colleges for help. The Teaching and Learning Research Project reported on by James and Biesta (2007: xii) aimed "*to research with rather than on FE*", but was a much larger study, adopting quantitative as well as qualitative methods. I had identified my commitment to the emancipatory possibilities of education (for example, Freire, 1988/1970; hooks, 1994), and wanted to research with rather than on my HE in FE colleagues (for example, Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Mention in the text of research participants and research fellows from FE working alongside university researchers lead me into exploring research approaches from a participatory perspective, and to explore methods which would be non-exploitative, not requiring significant involvement on the part of the teachers involved, but would also offer something back.

Although at the beginning I could have been said to be demonstrating a "*halo effect*" towards the participants and the subject of the research (Cohen et al, 2007:189), it was helpful as a beginning researcher to have identified 'participation' as a core principle. This narrowed down the research traditions available to me, and I could find my way amongst the background discussions provided in the literature (for example, Heron, 1996; Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) describe participatory research methodologies as reflexive, flexible and iterative and through reading, I became aware of "*the participatory worldview, with its emphasis*

on the person as an embodied experiencing subject among other subjects” (Heron and Reason, 1997:12), and the holistic, egalitarian nature of participatory research (Reason, 1994). Heron (1996) describes this world view as one which involves the co-creation of knowledge through participation and through experience, and at this point, this felt, just right. However, as Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) point out, if research involves ‘participation’, what is it that makes it ‘participatory’? They indicate that the most important distinctions involve by and for whom the research question is formulated, and by and for whom are the research questions used, and suggest that greater and lesser ‘participation’ occurs at different stages of the research process.

At the beginning, locating ‘participation’ still presented me with a bewildering array of definitions and approaches which needed understanding if I was to both design my research and evaluate it. If I wanted to make reasonable sense of the situations I explored with others, I was acknowledging that a reality of the world could exist because of the interpretations the teachers and I created between us, rather than the reality being imposed on us from some external entity. This, in research terms, is the *“interpretative paradigm”* (Cohen et al, 2007:21). I also needed to design my research so it could be naturalistic (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), able to interpret reality by following multiple possibilities and interconnections. However, not only did I need to be aware of my own presence in the research when researching with others, I also needed to acknowledge myself as the director of the research and as a research instrument (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), as my biography and my skills and actions associated with interaction and interpretation would have an impact on process and outcomes (Cohen et al, 2007). Acknowledging these, and developing skills associated with awareness and reflexivity would have a considerable impact on the quality, validity and reliability of the study.

Loose, qualitative research designs are suitable for those studies which are investigating a new field (Cohen et al, 2007), but are challenging as they require a

sound understanding of research methodologies. My original research question was quite broad;

‘can participatory research support the development of transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education?’

but progress occurred as I responded generatively to themes emerging from reading and empirical data. It is accepted that if a study is undertaken from a naturalistic perspective, then multiple interpretations of reality may be anticipated (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), presenting the researcher with choices about which route to follow. Undertaking an expansionist study like this would be a voyage of discovery, with patterns and interpretations emerging, providing new insights along the way. This was a suitable approach if I wanted to bring about a more “*just and egalitarian society*” (Cohen et al, 2007: 26), as it could provide ways for democratic inclusion of the subjects, responding to their interpretations as well as my own.

Interpretative, ethnographic research aims to see situations through the eyes of the participants, to identify their intentions and to record their interpretations of their own situations (ibid). The advantage of qualitative, naturalistic research which is also interpretative and adopts ethnographic techniques, is that it can respond generatively to questions emerging from the study, make changes and put in place methods appropriate for the situation. Ospina et al (2008), commend this multi-modal form of research as it is inclusive, enabling participant involvement in the research process, and it provided a suitable way for me to approach my study.

Ethnography provides a way of studying and reporting on the culture of a particular group of people (Eisenhart, 2001), but Wolcott (1995) is keen to point out that the term ‘ethnography’ refers to a research process as well as to a research product. Although I knew that it would not be practically possible for me to undertake a full ethnographic study, which requires the researcher to become part of the research site for an extended period (Cohen et al, 2007), it was appropriate for me to use

ethnographic techniques to find out more about learning cultures and “*what is going on here?*”

Ethnographic techniques include direct observation, eliciting the views and interpretations of the participants, using multiple methods to record the same situation and awareness of the ethics involved in undertaking the research. However, as Van Maanen (1995:2) points out, this goes beyond a simple “*look, listen and learn*” approach, especially as it is through the actions of the researcher through fieldwork and then writing up, that the reader gains access and a personal acquaintance with the world under scrutiny (Arnold, 1994). Krieger (1991) considers that the biography of the writer is the mediator between the world of the researched and the product presented to the reader, and according to Harper (1998) the tale that is created always contains the point of view, the voice and the experience of the author. Being aware of and making public my own history, beliefs and values has therefore been an important underpinning feature of this research process (Section 5.6), acknowledging that these issues provide the foundations for all that is written here.

Although I did not undertake an action research study, appreciating and including the principles of participatory research proposed by, for example, Reason and Bradbury (2008) was appropriate in this study. Cooperative inquiry (CI) (Heron and Reason, 2001) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Grant et al, 2008) are both forms of participatory inquiry, action research approaches that follow the principle ‘together we shall find out more’. CI recognises that individuals are self-determining and responsible for their own actions, and the process involves groups of individuals reflecting on their experiences in a series of cycles (Heron, 1996). PAR aims to address power imbalances and oppressive social structures, often researching with groups that are either under-represented or less knowledgeable about research processes (Grant et al, 2008). CI uses a particular research approach by adopting what Heron (1996:52) calls an “*extended epistemology*”, a multi-dimensional account of knowledge creation, and Grant et al (2008:590) explain PAR as providing a opportunity to develop new knowledge through iterative cycles of research, reflection

and action, with the purpose of “*emancipation, empowerment and participatory democracy*”. The principles underpinning these research methods helped with devising this study and in informing its evolving, naturalistic design.

5.4 Case study research

Interpretative research does not aim to test a generality, but to build understanding about a particular situation and can involve case study as a methodology (Merriam, 1998). Stake (2000) indicates that embarking on case study research should first be about a choice of what is to be studied, rather than the methodological choice and Yin (2009) considers that it is suitable for interpretative research because it anticipates that contextual conditions are highly pertinent to the issue being studied. He emphasises its distinctive features as an intention, a process and a product, and suggests that it provides the means for researching something occurring in real time and in its real life context. However, it is an approach that demands particular technical requirements, including making use of multiple sources of evidence and development of a conceptual framework to guide data collection and analysis. Choosing case study as a methodology for this research into learning cultures provided the means for exploring a particular issue which did not have clear boundaries, for being expansive, identifying patterns (Rogoff, 2003) and to follow trails and emerging conceptualisations.

Stake (2000) indicates that the researcher needs to recognize that a case is a specific, integrated system with functioning parts, linked to its social, historical and personal environments (Cogill, 2008). This is particularly important to note when investigating educational environments (Chickering and Reisser, 1993), and as Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) point out, this makes case study particularly suitable as it may contribute to policy and practice. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) commend case study research for investigating learning cultures in the learning and skills sector, however, it is also necessary to consider its shortcomings. These include the difficulties associated with representing complex situations and the demands on the

objectivity of the researcher, especially as one of its strengths involves researcher expertise and intuition.

Stake (2000:437), suggests that a case study approach can serve more than one purpose. Undertaking an “*intrinsic case study*” is suitable for exploring a particular case for its own value, and is a useful starting point for exploratory research. An “*instrumental case study*” is suitable for exploring a situation that could have relevance to something else, whereas a “*collective case study*” may be used to develop a view of a particular issue by studying more than one case. As Stake (ibid) points out, to be an effective study, each of these purposes requires different methods, for example, an intrinsic case study requires approaches that explore issues emerging from the case itself, and not others that are imposed by the researcher. He considers that although an intrinsic case study might not be undertaken as Yin (2009) proposes, with a detailed, preconceived conceptual framework to guide data collection, through observation and reading, the researcher would approach the study with an emphasis on progressive interpretation, working out the meaning of events and developing research approaches to explore a developing conceptual frame. By identifying that I intended to undertake a case study approach to the research, I committed myself to developing a conceptual framework throughout the whole process of the research, from its inception to its completion. As Yin (ibid) indicates, this distinguishes case study research from alternative methods, for example ethnography and grounded theory, although ethnographic methods may be used in the collection of data. However, rather than theory providing something to be tested, in case study research, the method provides the opportunity for it to be developed.

Stake (2009) suggests that a qualitative case study researcher has six conceptual responsibilities; creating a boundary to the case, selecting the research questions to pursue, looking for patterns in the data to help develop the issue under investigation, triangulating findings by using multiple sources of data, considering alternative explanations and developing generalisations. All of these responsibilities guide research identification and design, data collection and analysis and interpretation and the possibility for generalisations to be made. As Rogoff (2003) suggests, identifying

patterns helps make sense of the cultural aspects of human development, and in case study research, pattern identification enables comparisons to be made with other contexts. Stake (2009) indicates that a case study researcher needs to make decisions about whether to explore the particularity of an individual case in detail, or to generate a wider understanding capable of contributing to generalisations. He also points out that “*petite generalisations*”, can be made throughout a case study, and that “*grand generalisations*” may be modified by a case study (Stake, 1995:7). However, Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001:11) indicate that they prefer not to think about generalisations because of the statistical connotations of the term, instead preferring to propose that new thinking can be transposed to other settings, particularly if it “*rings true*” to the reader, and that a study may provide “*provisional truths*” if there has been little theorising within the field of study, with further research enabling provisional findings to be supported or refuted. Although based on a relatively small study of HE in FE, as this area is under-researched and because research concerning student development and employability is an emerging field, I should like to ask, as Hodkinson and Hodkinson (ibid:12) suggest, that it’s worth be judged through the careful thought and active engagement of the reader asking,

“Do the stories told ‘ring true’? Do they seem well supported by evidence and argument? Does the study tell us something new and/or different, that is of value in some sort of way?”

Arts based research methods have a developing profile in educational research (Eisner, 1981; 1991; 1993; 1997; Leitch, 2006b), and have a particular role to play in ethnographic, case study research. They enable diverse modes of personal expression, opportunities for flexibility in the conduct of research and support the development of different perspectives through the ways in which knowledge is represented. As indicated earlier in this chapter (Section 5.0), I made a clear decision to collect and create visual data in undertaking this research, which as Weber (2008) points out, provides an invaluable source for developing a thick description. However, he also emphasises the need to make research accessible, and to find ways of having an impact on the communities interested in it. Artistic forms of representation provide a

refreshing and necessary challenge to the generally used forms of communication of academic communities, and using accessible images can provoke discussion and thinking as well as communicate research to a broader audience. As Kennedy (1997) states, educational practitioners complain that they do not feel connected to research that is being carried out, but it is possible that they may engage with the products of research if it is displayed in a more visual form (Weber, 2008).

Yin (2009) suggests three purposes for case study research, for explorations, for descriptions and for explanations. As one reason for using a case study approach is for gaining an holistic view, because a straightforward cause and effect is unable to explain complexity (Stake, 2000), these three purposes all had a part to play in my study in order to answer the question, '*What is going on here?*' By undertaking firstly an exploratory case study and then a collective study I could generate some explanations for the case of HE in FE in its own right, and then present these findings to a wider audience for them to decide if they say something of value to higher education in general.

5.5 Creativity and visualisation in research

The need for the development of creativity through education is acknowledged by many authors including Claxton (2006b) and Robinson (2001/2011). Creativity for the research community is promoted by Byron (2009) who provides practical suggestions to help with opening up a research question, with the development of insight and to provide more avenues for exploration. Eisner (1991) commends the use of arts-based research in qualitative enquiries because as Barone and Eisner (2012) suggest, educational researchers can benefit from acknowledging the limitations of language and develop approaches based on the processes, forms and structures of artistic practice. As a researcher carrying the responsibilities of accurately reporting and interpreting the worlds of others to the higher education community, it is important that I identify the means for data collection and knowledge generation that suited the subject of the research and me as the researcher.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) point out that although visualisation through print and digital means are essential communication media in society, with multimodal texts communicating through complex interplay between images and text, learning how to create and use this visual literacy is poorly developed in the education system. They comment that the dominance of one form of visual communication, writing, has led to other visual communication forms being seen as 'childish' or the domain of experts.

I tend to use visual imagery to explain complex ideas, something that Hunt (2006) also describes, indicating how she struggled with the inadequacy of words. Sinner et al (2006) indicate that visualisation can be used as part of the inquiry and in the final representative form, and I chose to do both. Within the research process I made use of visualisation in three ways; through drawing, using photography and by using a personal research journal, with all three methods helping with the generation of data and the development of knowledge. In this chapter I introduce visualisation, and in particular drawing. The use of photography and a personal research journal will be presented in Chapter 6.

Byron (2009) and Cousin (2009), acknowledge the richness of visualisation for generating understanding, as well as for providing complementary evidence alongside text. Margulies (2002:12) suggests that the sensation of "*knowing*" often precedes the ability to verbalise, something that Eppler and Burkhard (2004) identify in their summary of visualisation methods. For example, in talking about the use of photographs, Pink (2007) indicates that written text cannot communicate information in the same way and explains that a photograph can be part of the construction of meaning between an author and a reader. This is a relatively new departure for the Western tradition of research, but as Maynard (2005) indicates, Western spoken and written language traditions are not well developed in relation to expressing what is seen and felt compared to the languages of art and poetry. Using visualisation challenges the dominance of text as a communicative form, enabling the researcher to prompt a form of understanding in the reader, or provide a way of illustrating a point beyond the capability of words.

I want my research to be accessible to educational practitioners, and through visualisation I have provided an immediate resource for myself and others. It has been useful for undertaking research with others, for the conversion of complex ideas into text, for following the development of the conceptual framework, for understanding more about the purpose and development of the researcher and for recording and communicating the learning cultures being explored. As Weber (2008) comments, the photographs I have taken and used, and the drawings I have made say as much about me as they do about the situations or ideas depicted. They have provided me with useful vehicles to support this research, and because, as Kingman (1978:24) points out, “*the essential function of art is to change or intensify one’s perception of reality*”, provide cultural forms in their own right, accessible and available for critique by a broader audience.

5.5.1 Visualisation by drawing

Because I am using drawings in this chapter, I am introducing visualisation through drawing at this point, as it enables me to justify it as a research tool, and to communicate how it has been used to make sense of myself, and make sense of ideas. Finding ways to justify drawing by hand as a research tool involves exploring the nature of visualisation by drawing, and identifying ways to re-explore this familiar act in a research context (Mitchell et al, 2011). Visualisation studies and the conversion of complex issues into accessible, visible explanations is an emergent discipline (Eppler and Burkhard, 2004; Lengler and Eppler, 2007) and its use is commended by Byron (2009), and more inventively by Cameron and Theron (2011) and Cousin (2009) who talks about the possibilities of creating cartoons. As McKenzie (2008) emphasises, drawing is not just the preserve of artists, because as Edwards (2008) indicates, it may show process and explain ideas where words are inadequate. This is something that is pointed out by Orland (2000) who recommends line drawing for all stages in the research process, particularly in complex contexts that may be personally ‘charged’.

Maynard (2005) suggests that the purposes of a drawing, and the interpretation of it as a representational form are parallel activities. Perhaps, because drawing is often regarded as a childish activity, often superseded now by computer-aided drawing technologies, the technique is seen with less gravitas (Eisner, 1997). However, it has the ability to convey both simplicity and complexity, and when I began my career as a biologist, value was placed on the ability to re-present through diagramming, field drawings, and so on. Drawing provided a language and a process to link the means of representation, with what was being drawn and the person doing it. Although drawings are often presented as finished products, the activity of drawing by hand goes beyond the use of visual imagery to express ideas, because it is the ideas of the researcher that are being represented (Maynard, 2005).

In the graphic design industry, there is a move away from visualisation that uses digital perfection through computerised technologies. For example, the typographer Perry (2007:2) promotes working by hand as it allows him to reflect while he is working, and show his own 'DNA' in his illustrations. Heller and Illic (2004) talk about the self-control needed by the graphic artist who works by hand, and the ability of the medium to depict emotion. Returning to working by hand has provided me with the opportunity to take responsibility for decisions, rather than have them controlled by a computer programme, and also provides the opportunity to make mistakes without having them buffered by technology. This challenge to the predictable conformity of modernism works comfortably alongside naturalistic approaches to research that emphasise unpredictability and evolution, and enables me to 'draw myself in' to the research process.

By making a commitment to using visualisation, I made a commitment to developing visual literacy. Clarke (2009) describes how adults can be reluctant to draw, being self-conscious about their (lack of) capabilities. Having a visual toolkit helps with confidently using methods either deliberately or spontaneously (Knowles and Sweetman, 2004). Sonneman (1997) indicates that to become at ease with drawing it is essential to practice, therefore, I have developed the habit of drawing every day,

using objects to hand, photographs, the environment and printed media as sources (Illustration 5.3). I had not drawn deliberately since I had left school, and I followed the advice of Edwards (1986; 2008) and Gregory (2006) in trying to develop my skills and confidence, becoming aware of boundaries, spaces and shadows. I adopted pens and pencils as tools and developed a simple style, which concentrated on figures, line, shape, perspective, shadow, space and colour. I learnt about visual metaphor and semiotics (Edwards 1996/2008; Eisner, 1993; Fletcher, 2001; Gregory, 2006; Hall, 2007; Hyerle, 2009; Margulies, 2002; Margulies and Valenza, 2005; Sonneman, 1997) and found that the feel of the paper under my hand and the touch of the pen as it smoothly ran across the paper helped me to develop my ideas in ways which manipulating computer software did not.

Illustration 5.3 Drawing practice



5.5.2 Visualising the Self

Acknowledging and surfacing the presence of the Self in qualitative research, although challenging, is an essential part of becoming aware of factors that may

contribute to personal influence and bias (Marshall and Mead, 2005). Wickes et al (2008) point out the importance of actively integrating experiences in order to make sense of the present, and drawing has provided an invaluable tool for this process, something that has helped to enhance my personal characteristics as an effective naturalistic researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Drawing has helped with developing a deeper understanding of why the research has been undertaken, how it has progressed and then interpreted in the way that it has. Sikes (2007) suggests that surfacing these issues is particularly relevant to practitioner-based educational research, because the experiences, beliefs and values of the researcher will have influenced the ways in which they have constructed their own situational identities, which in turn influence the way they engage with all aspects of the research.

Pithouse (2011) explains how drawing can be used to develop self-awareness, particularly in relation to professional history and experience, but does point out the challenges of adopting it as a reliable research method. She suggests that developing confidence in its ability to contribute to insight is important and emphasises that it is the process, not the product that has the most relevance. However, if the purpose of the research is in part to communicate with others, then product also has relevance. Drawing has provided a space for scrutinising how my personal concerns associated with the personal and professional potential of education relate to research practice, and how my life and career experiences have interpenetrated to influence my changing understanding of the purpose and process of learning. It has helped with conveying how diversity of experience organises a body of professional knowledge, and an identity which has continued to develop through my career (Groundwater-Smith, 2006).

Understanding the Self may be helped by undertaking a self-study (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001; Feldman, 2003) which systematically explores previous experiences and behaviours. Helpful advice for self-studies comes from genres associated with autobiographical, biographical and life history research, and as Marshall and Rossmann (1999) indicate, these approaches can help understand the complex

relationship between an individual's understanding of the world and the world being lived in. These genres tend to be text-based, and finding ways of visualising a varied life and career has been interesting and illuminating. Pithouse (2011) commends using arts -based methods alongside text to explore particular events, histories and experiences. Denscombe (2007) considers that a self-study may focus on a long period of time or a short interval, and Cresswell (1998:5) indicates particular events or "*epiphanies*", significant stories or stages in the life course can also be helpful.

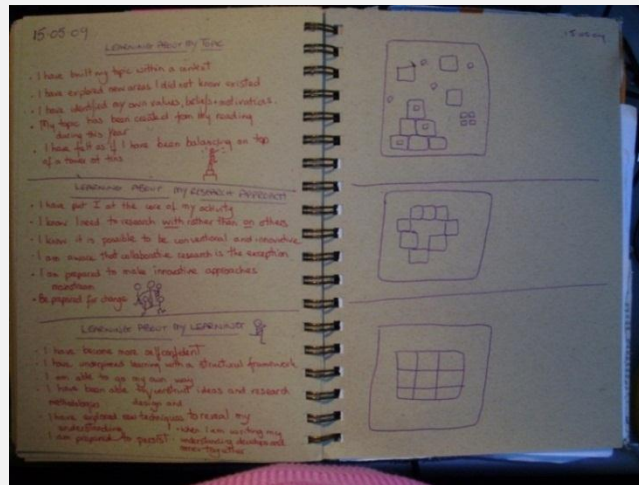
I have made use of a variety of visualisation methods to provide me with evolving, long-lasting representations showing patterns and relationships that would be difficult to express in words (Hyerle, 2009). Examples are part of Section 5.6, and this approach has helped me identify how my professional identity has developed, and Elliott (2005), based on the work of Foucault and Derrida, puts this interpretation within a post-modern conceptualisation of the Self. This conceptualisation sees the Self as continually under construction, which contrasts with the humanist view, which sees the Self as a fixed set of characteristics. I know that at times, synergies, tensions and ambiguities have existed in my life, and I also know that acting on these has changed the way that I see the world. By asking myself detailed questions, I have gained more insight into the meaning of significant events in my life and career, including those where I have been put in situations where I have felt uncomfortable with the set-up, and have experienced myself as a "*living contradiction*" (Whitehead, 1999:1).

5.5.3 Visualising ideas

I also made use of drawing to help explore and concretise complex ideas that developed from the interaction between my reading and the data collection during the process of the research. For example, I made use of "*analog drawings*" (Edwards, 1986:66) which do not use pictures or symbols, but just marks, shapes, space and boundaries (Illustration 5.4). The aim of these drawings is to make subjective thought objective, by first giving it a visible form, and then recording alongside drawings the resulting understandings as text.

Illustration 5.4 Analog drawings

Journal 1 entry, 15.05.09



Learning about my topic

- I have built my topic within a context
- I have explored new areas I did not know existed
- I have identified my own values, beliefs and motivations
- My topic has been created from my reading during this year
- I have felt as if I have been balancing on top of a tower of tins

Learning about my research approach

- I have put I at the core of my research activity
- I know I need to research with rather than on others
- I know it is possible to be conventional and innovative
- I am aware that collaborative research is the exception
- I am prepared to make innovative approaches mainstream
- Be prepared for change

Learning about my learning

- I have become more self-confident
- I have underpinned learning with a structural framework
- I am able to go my own way
- I have been able to design and construct ideas and research methodologies
- I have explored new techniques to reveal my understanding
- I am prepared to persist
- When writing my understanding develops and comes together

In her discussions of children's concept development in primary science, Harlen (2006: 165) wonders whether terminology is just a layer of "verbal wrapping paper" concealing conceptual understanding. Drawing helped me to develop and make

sense of complex ideas, rather than trying to stabilise them in the wrapping paper of text. Illustration 5.4 gives an example, showing how I used analog drawings to surface and concretise my own learning about my topic, about my research approach and about my own learning.

Drawing was also essential to my use of activity theory, as I used the triangular model developed by Engeström (1987) as a reflexive tool as I participated in the cultural activity of undertaking research, and as an analytical tool with regard to interpreting the learning cultures of the research sites. These drawings provided a means by which I could develop understanding for myself, integrate data from different sources and also communicate understanding to others. Examples of how this was used appeared in Chapter 4, earlier in this chapter, and will appear again in Chapter 7.

5.6 The making of a professional identity

When I began this research process, I used Super's life-career rainbow (Super, 1980) to provide myself with a tangible record of my life and career. I have always worked in education, and I have managed to develop a career across four decades that has involved compulsory, post-compulsory and voluntary education, spanning early years' primary, secondary, further, adult and higher education. As I look back, I wonder what has enabled me to be able to successfully span this range, and also to develop from being a secondary science teacher to now being a senior lecturer in a university business school. Palmer (1998) considers that good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher, and I can identify times when I did not feel comfortable with my professional role, when I felt that my integrity was being challenged, and my identity damaged. Secondary teaching was 'not me'. As a young woman teacher in large secondary schools I did not feel safe, valued or encouraged. It was not until I went to work in a small village school when my daughters were small that I found out that educating one child involved a whole community, and that teaching could be fun.

The term 'career trajectory', implies that a career is a projectile, hurtling through space on a planned, and straight course. As a working mother in a rural community, I

had to take opportunities that were available, rather than working with any kind of plan, and maintaining trajectory took initiative, self-confidence and courage. However, as I look back, this has provided me with some distinct advantages, and also significantly influenced the way that I see the world. It was not until my daughters had left home that I could consider working in a university, the closest one being too far away to also be able to do the school run. However, I could work in an FE college, and in my first experience of doing so I taught school dinner ladies for their professional catering qualifications. This was my first opportunity to link real work with learning for a qualification, and was quite a milestone. Although my first degree in Applied Biology had been work related, there was little mention of how the subjects being studied would relate to working contexts. As time progressed my daughter joined the college kindergarten and enjoyed cookery sessions with the student nursery nurses, whilst I at times seemed to be in the type of environment depicted in *'Wilt'* by Tom Sharpe (Sharpe, 1976/2002). Teaching Catering 3 for 3 hours in a lecture theatre on a Friday afternoon could be quite a challenge.

Another milestone occurred when I returned to further education following several years teaching in a village primary school. This time I joined a department responsible for childhood studies and health. Originally employed to teach health related subjects to school leavers, I soon learnt that further education was like a roulette wheel, that things changed frequently, and I became responsible for accredited courses in childcare. I was involved in detailed curriculum planning, observation of the students on placement and the integration of college and workbased learning. Further education was a very challenging environment to work in; however it offered me considerable career development opportunities, the most significant of which involved higher education courses for early years' professionals.

During the 1990's, because of changes in legislation relating to child protection, better awareness of good practice in early years' education and political and economic demands for a better educated and better paid children's workforce, new higher education programmes became available for experienced practitioners in the

early years' sector. I had been involved in initial teacher education courses earlier in my career, but this experience was totally different.

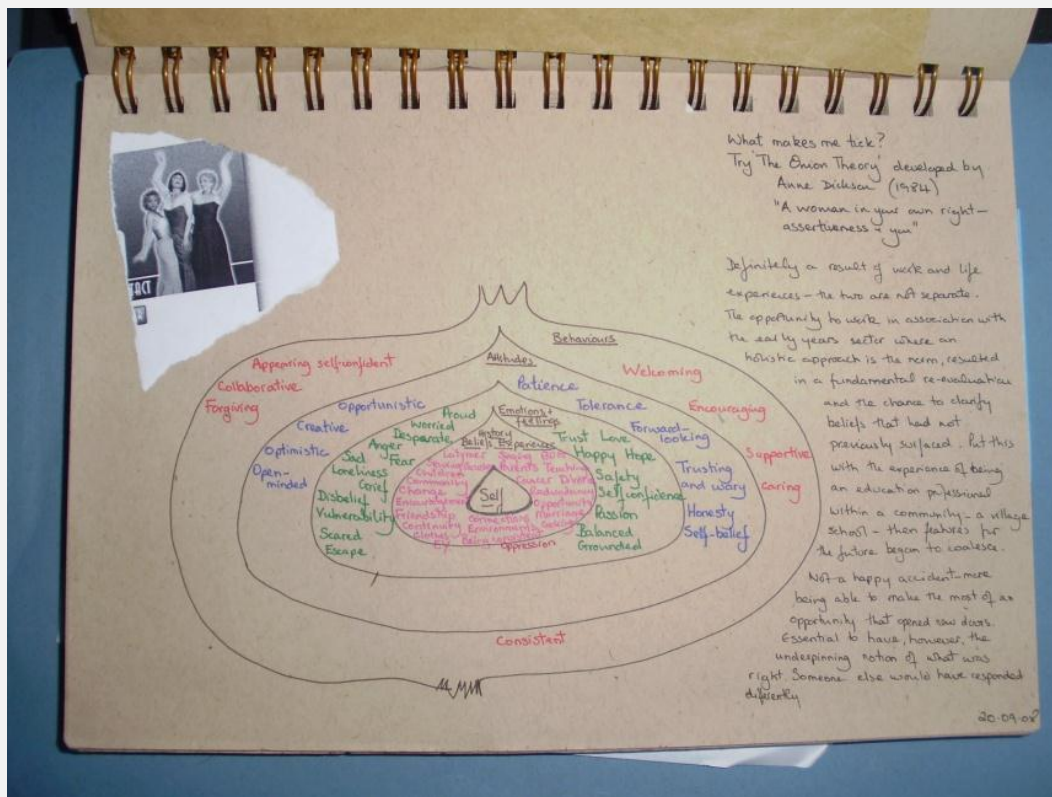
As I became involved in the development and delivery of degree-level courses for early years' professionals, I realised that my own identity as a teacher was transforming as I was forced to confront and articulate my own values and expectations to do with higher education (Illustration 5.5). As someone who had left a grammar school to go to university, I had no experience of part time higher education, especially one where the (mainly female) students collaborated as a hopeful, anxious, vocal and determined cohort.

As time progressed, the students learnt from each other and I learnt a huge amount from them, realising that my role on the early years' programmes entailed facilitating learning, not directing it. The anxiety, nervous anticipation and proud achievements of the women on the programme all became markers on a shared journey of emerging complexity relating to our change and development. As Claxton et al (2003), suggest, because of differences in background, this situation could have resulted in a culture clash, resistance, subversion or opposition, but by working together we each became familiar with each other's worlds, and allowed them to become part of our own, redefined understandings.

An additional milestone in my career came in 2007, when I joined a university as a senior lecturer with responsibility for developing, coordinating and monitoring a range of the University's higher education courses taught in the local partner colleges. I was part of a small team, looking after courses in computing, business, the creative industries and construction. I left behind involvement with courses for early years' professionals, and had to learn very quickly what made each course and each subject unique. Despite the best intentions of the original partnership agreement made between the university and the colleges, what worked in one context could be quite impossible in the next.

Illustration 5.5 What makes me tick?

Journal 1 entry: 20.09.08



Using Dickson (1982)

What makes me tick? Definitely a result of work and life experiences- the two are not separate. The opportunity to work in association with the early years' sector where an holistic approach is the norm, resulted in a fundamental re-evaluation and the chance to clarify beliefs that had not previously surfaced. Put this with the experience of being an educational professional within a community- a village school- the features for the future begin to coalesce. Not a happy accident, but someone else may have responded differently, based on their histories, beliefs and experiences, the resulting emotions and feelings and then the attitudes and behaviours they demonstrated.

This brief summary of my career provides the background from which I began this study associated with the creation of transformative learning cultures in higher education. My own experience had involved working across levels, subjects and institutions, responsibility for curriculum delivery and development, quality

monitoring and programme support, undertaking observation of practice and interacting with children, students, professionals, employers and teachers. When I began to work across institutions and subject areas I observed profound differences in practice and student experience. In some contexts the students were seen as tiresome, draining and of low quality. In others, the focus seemed to be on support, encouragement and high expectations. It led me to ask, through undertaking this research as a doctoral student, '*what is going on here?*' and I began to explore what might be involved in making a difference to the students.

Although this could be the end of the story, in July 2009 there was another milestone as my Faculty was closed by the University, and I was made redundant. This was an extremely difficult time, especially the final few days, when I came to question my own identity and purpose within higher education (Illustration 5.6). In the first weeks of unemployment, I did not know if I still belonged in the education community at all, let alone in a research community. However, my former colleagues and research participants in the FE colleges indicated that they wanted to continue with the research if possible. When I returned to employment, it was to a business school, which proved to be unexpectedly advantageous. The business school culture was very different to those I had worked in previously, and this helped me to look at the subject of my research with new eyes.

As I was confronted with a prevailing culture of separation and independence, I realized I had to develop my own sub-culture of connection and collaboration if I was to survive. Being confronted with something completely different enabled me to identify what I valued. I obtained Higher Education Academy funding for a collaborative research project, and worked with 3 colleagues as an action learning set to review the implementation of new Level 4 modules, making use of my new knowledge of activity theory in the analysis (Messenger et al, 2011). Originally recruited for a 6 month contract, I eventually stayed for almost 2 years, and am currently a senior lecturer specializing in action research and work-related learning in the business school of a London university.

Illustration 5.6 Not so good Friday

Journal 4 entry 31.07.09



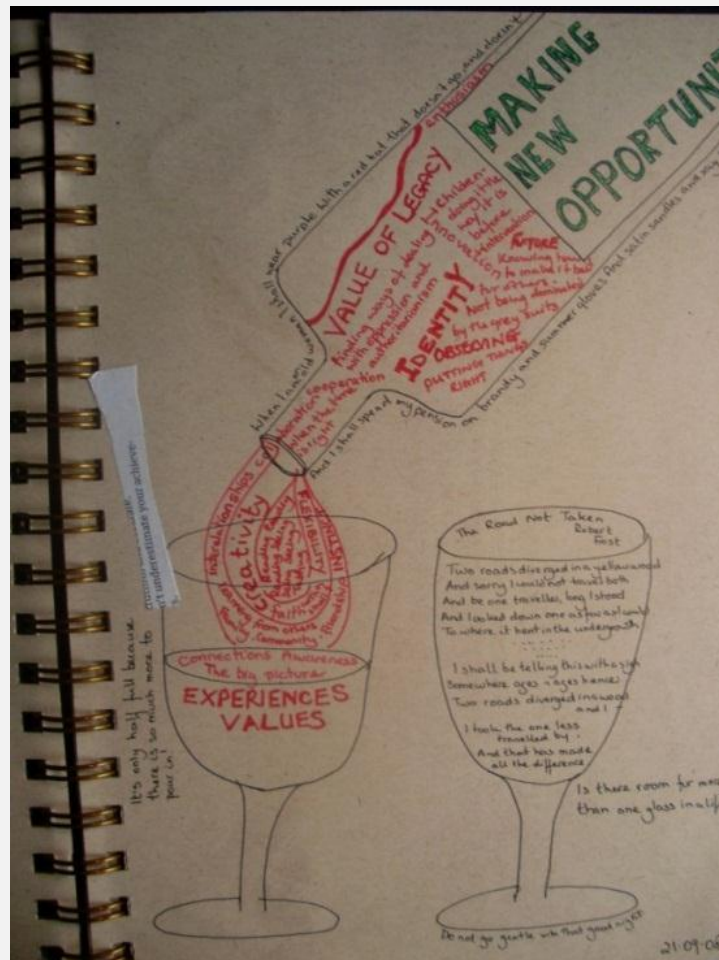
From mid-July until November 2009, I kept a separate journal, one that charted my experience of being made redundant and the process of finding a new post. I made use of my new confidence with drawing to depict how I was feeling, and urged myself to be self-confident, to see future possibilities rather than present losses. I needed to support my two daughters and I needed to be bold and strong for them as well as for myself. Income was very important, but I knew I wanted to retain my beliefs and values, as well as my status; they were two sides of the same coin. I was angry at being put in this situation, at being 'left out in the cold', but also frightened, sad and hurt. I had reinvented myself before, but this time not only were there so many more responsibilities, but also I had my own identity as a higher education professional and researcher to consider, neither of which I wanted to lose. I wanted to 'survive and prosper without selling my soul' (25.07.09). I felt that I had been given a ticket for a journey without being asked if I wanted to go

Visual metaphor and visual narrative have given me the opportunity to be playful with representing how these experiences have shaped the way that I see the world (Illustration 5.7). Although not as talented as Sanders (2010), who uses these techniques to report upon a university learning and teaching project, they have helped me to answer the existentialist question '*has my experience and my way of seeing things ever influenced my professional life*'.

To paraphrase Palmer (1998), these strategies have helped me to identify the place within me from which I engage with this research, and the place towards which it is aimed.

Illustration 5.7 Is there room for more than one glass in a life?

Journal 1 entry: 21.09.08



5.7 Conclusion to Chapter 5

Chapter 5 has involved the reader in discussions regarding the influences that have shaped the approach taken to this research. It has included a discussion of the reasons why I started the research in the first place, the factors I have needed to take into account in navigating the relationships involved and the foundations for the research design. Chapter 6 takes the reader into the experience of putting the influences into practice through case study research in two FE colleges.

Chapter 6

Putting purpose into practice

6.0 Introduction to Chapter 6

Chapter 6 considers the design, redesign, evaluation, and continuation of the study, and represents an impressionist tale (Van Maanen, 2011), one which records my progress in finding out about ‘*what is going on here?*’ By undertaking this process of “*braiding*” (Elliott, 2005:166) I place myself, the researcher in the story as one of the key players, acknowledging that the way that my professional identity has developed and my personal preferences influence the process and the outcomes

Firstly, the chapter recaps and expands the process through which the final structure of the research, initially outlined in Chapter 4, developed. This is followed by a discussion of the researcher’s toolkit, the methods adopted during its progress. Detail of the two main studies undertaken follows and how an interim discussion group created a bridge between them. Taking a cultural view opens up the process and the topic of the research (Roth and Breuer, 2003) and this strategy enables the relationship between reading, the research approaches adopted, claims being made and my development as a researcher to be available for discussion.

6.1 The structure of the research

A research timeline is available in Appendix 1.1 showing the chronology of the two case studies (Studies 1 and 2) and the interim, bridging stage involving a discussion group. Study 1 (2008/9) consisted of an exploratory, intrinsic case study (Stake, 2000) designed to find out about the learning cultures of two HE in FE courses within the same college. An interim bridging stage, an invited group discussion, followed in 2009. Study 2, a collective case study, designed to expand knowledge regarding learning cultures took place between 2009/10. This research did not occur in a vacuum, as I was able to use my prior knowledge of the research sites in planning, design, and

interpretation. This knowledge provided the foundations, and then learning from Study 1 influenced the group discussion and both influenced the creation of Study 2. It is important to note that in line with the principles of case study, reading and research went hand in hand. Prior to the start of Study 1, I devised a tentative conceptual framework, which developed progressively to enable further research activities and data collection, and finally, an interpretation.

Following these studies, the data was re-viewed, and I made use of activity theory (Engeström, 1987) to support an integrated analysis and the identification of patterns across the research sites

6.2 The sites and subjects of the research

The research reported here involved teachers and their students in two FE colleges in South East England, a summary of which are available in Table 4.1. The organisation of the courses as a Consortium of four colleges and a validating university lent itself to a case study approach, as an exploratory and then a collective case study could be used to gain a better view of the same bounded issue across a number of sites (Stake, 2000). I was able to use a successful, established working relationship to gain access to the sites for the research, and to support the collection of data. The soundness of the relationship proved invaluable, as I was able to maintain access to the sites as a researcher beyond July 2009, when I no longer had a formal role to play with the Colleges.

6.3 The researcher's toolkit

When discussing case study research Stake (2000) indicates that methods included in a research design should expand knowledge of the case and fit within the opportunities available. Ethnographic case study research involves collecting and interpreting multiple sources of data in order to develop as good an understanding of the case as possible, and provides a suitable way of exploring the richness and complexity of a learning culture. By adopting a loose, naturalistic design I recognised the value of this

approach for investigating this new field (Cohen et al, 2007), but the approach is challenging as it requires a sound understanding of research methodologies and methods.

In adopting this approach, my responsibilities included the development and demonstration of a 'researcher toolkit', plus a sound reflexive approach to understanding how my own relationship with the sites, subjects and interpretation of the data developed with time, experience and increased knowledge. My 'toolkit' consisted of activities to support reflexivity, skills associated with undertaking field visits, observations, conducting interviews and group discussions and the visualisation techniques of drawing and photography.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasise that a qualitative, naturalistic, interpretative researcher needs to acknowledge their own presence in the research, their preconceived ideas, flaws, and limitations as they are the instrument that devises the study, collects, and interprets the data. At the beginning of this research process, I felt profoundly inadequate, unable to participate in the research community, especially when presenting my ideas in the presence of eloquent and experienced colleagues. McDermott (1988:24) comments that inarticulateness is a "*systematic outcome of a set of relations among a group of persons bound by a social structure*", and for a long time I felt like an imposter (Clance and Imes, 1978). However, at the same time I was developing a different relationship with the research participants, one where they perceived me as the expert as I was the one developing a new identity as a researcher.

Hodkinson (2004) suggests that researchers should be perceived as learners who are learning about the process of research and about how to participate in the authentic practices of the research community. I gradually learnt that I did have a place in the research community through, for example, presenting papers at conferences and gaining research funding (Appendix 2). Heen (2005:265), describes this process as "*imprinting*", implying a social and emotional relationship between the researcher,

the research subject and process and eventually, with the wider academic and professional communities. Being part of the supportive and challenging environment of the EdD group provided me with the consistent critical friendship I needed as I crossed and re-crossed the boundaries involved in this process (Marshall and Mead, 2005).

The following parts of section 6.3 and Section 6.4 discuss the methods that I learnt to use for collecting data through Studies 1 and 2 and the group discussion. Firstly, obtaining access and making observations, secondly, conducting interviews and group discussions and finally making use of visualisation.

6.3.1 Access, field visits and observations

Clearly, researching a learning culture involves collecting data *in situ*. Gaining and maintaining access to a site are essential activities, as are undertaking and recording observations. However, as Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) suggest, rather than thinking of these as just methods, researchers should think of them as contexts for active interpretation. I had the advantage when I commenced the research of having good working knowledge of the sites, their histories and locations, and a good working relationship with each of the participants. This was very helpful in being able to identify patterns, because, as Rogoff (2003) points out, making comparisons across communities involves taking into account the degree to which comparability is possible, and understanding the meanings ascribed to cultural issues by the community itself.

Although normal access to each of the sites was something that I had as part of my professional role, gaining 'access' for research purposes was something different. This did not just mean getting in the door, but as Williams (1993) indicates, involved a process which started with identifying the purpose of the research to myself, communicating this to key gatekeepers and explaining the research process. Firstly, I approached a key gatekeeper, the head of higher education for each of the colleges, to ask if I could research the HE in FE in their colleges, include their teaching staff

and students and visit over a period of time to make observations, interview and take photographs. By giving their informed consent, including awareness that ceasing involvement at any point to be part of the agreement, the senior staff acknowledged the developmental opportunity that being involved in research provided. I followed this up with gaining formal permission from each of the teacher participants to observe their practice *in situ*, both at their own settings and during events in other contexts, for example, study trips. Students were also invited to participate by their teachers in advance and signed letters of consent during college visits (Appendix 3).

Researching learning cultures meant that having access to the research sites at different times and during different activities contributed to the validity of the claims made. Plans of Studies 1 and 2 are shown in Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, indicating planned visits to the research sites, formal and informal events occurring as part of the running of the courses, overseas and employment-related visits. These events gave me a wide ranging view as I was able to incorporate prior knowledge with observational information about the course learning cultures, including the physical environment, the characteristics of the individuals present, the interactions occurring between individuals and the characteristics of the particular programme involved (Cohen et al, 2007).

Undertaking observations meant that it was necessary for me to prepare for the types of data that I wanted to collect, and to understand I could influence the practical activity of observation and the psychological activity of its interpretation. Both the teachers and their students were used to my visiting as the University's representative, and used to being observed as part of the quality monitoring processes of their colleges (Ofsted, 2009), therefore I needed to make it clear that I was visiting for a different purpose. As a "*participant observer*", I was part of the social life of each of the settings, but recording what was happening for research purposes (Peberdy, 1993:404). I negotiated the visits in advance with the teacher, clarifying that they were not being undertaken as part of my professional role, enabling them to discuss the visit with their students. I made it clear to the students

that it was their choice to participate or not, and that they could withdraw at any time (Appendix 3).

Rogoff (2003) describes how different cultural communities respond to being observed, but because of my prior knowledge of each of the sites I was able to ascertain if what I was observing constituted normal day-to-day activity, or whether it was put on for my benefit. During visits I made “*descriptive observations*” (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez 2000:677), detailed field notes and sketches in my personal research journal. In Study 2, I took photographs of each of the environments during different events and over a period. I typed up my field notes as soon as possible after events or visits, including impressions as well as records of more tangible occurrences like conversations.

As the research progressed I needed to be constantly aware of my own multiple identities (Reid and Frisby, 2008), and aware of my ethical responsibilities when developing new relationships containing privileged information (Brydon-Miller, 2008). As Foucault insists, power is not something to have, but something that is exercised in relationships between people (Grint, 2003). Being given continued access to the research sites helped me to develop a more complex interpretation of the learning cultures. However, as Fine and Torre (2008) emphasise, the tensions involved in these relationships required constant vigilance on my part. Although I aimed to be non-interventionist, teachers and students did engage me in conversation around the course and other areas of mutual interest. As Fontana and Frey (2000) point out, being in the field does bring with it opportunities for unstructured data collection. As time progressed, and as my relationship with them changed, the teachers behaved more like informants, giving me access to sensitive information regarding working in their organisations. The students would ask me about the progress of the research and its findings, and I learnt from them about their progress and aspirations for further study and employment.

6.3.2 Conducting interviews and group discussions

Face to face, semi-structured, conversational interviews were carried out with all of the teachers involved in Study 1 and Study 2, and semi structured group interviews with students were also part of Study 2. Between the two studies, an hour-long invited group discussion took place. With a commitment to democratic inclusion of the research participants in knowledge creation, awareness of the tensions involved in these activities was something I needed to take into account, and part of my responsibilities as an interviewer.

Cohen et al (2007) describe interviews as purposeful conversations, providing a multisensory means for exchanging views on a particular topic, with human interaction at the centre of the knowledge production. My research agenda initiated and orchestrated the interactions, therefore it was essential that I had a clear idea of purpose, and communicated this effectively to the interviewees. Although Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe interviewing as ‘mining’ to surface information, or ‘travelling’ round to create it, being a researcher committed to finding out about the cultures of others I was committed to both. My interviews needed to surface information that only existed within others, and create understanding through integrating observations, theoretical developments and so on. Because of these factors, I needed to be aware of my own interpersonal skills to develop a rapport with the interviewees, encourage their responses, maintain a focus on the purpose and direction of the interview, and actively link the conversation with other sources of data. Yin (2009) for example, comments that listening involves more than just the physical act of hearing the response to a question or an exchange between individuals, as the researcher needs to connect what is being heard, to who is saying it and how, and then to all the other sources of information available. I needed to be able to listen and think at the same time, making connections and plan for the next question or comment.

As I progressed with the research and remained as a familiar figure at the Colleges, albeit with a different role, I noticed how many of the teachers came forward asking

to be interviewed, or started to talk as soon as I walked in the door. Sometimes it was as if floodgates opened, and I almost wished I wore a concealed microphone. I realised that I had tapped a well of feelings, particularly in relation to the teachers' perceptions of their organisational situations. This carried with it huge responsibilities, and although the knowledge I gained in this way added to my knowledge of the context, in this research it was something that remained at the edge, rather than being in the centre. The organisational influences on the creation of transformative learning cultures would be an interesting focus of a follow up study. Interviewing the students also developed as the research progressed. At the beginning it had a formal edge, with the students careful and polite in their responses. Later interviews or conversations were more inclusive, relaxed, funny, and spontaneous.

The hour-long invited group discussion occurred between Study 1 and Study 2, providing the opportunity for a purposeful conversation around the development of the conceptual framework arising from the integration of data and reading from Study 1. My commitment to involve others in research remained, so as Denscombe (2007) indicates, I needed to select a group technique suitable for empowerment and learning, not just learning. A group interview was not appropriate, as although it may have provided a useful way of exploring the complexity emerging from Study 1, it would have been me, the researcher at the centre orchestrating direction, rather than the participants. A group discussion on the other hand, could make the most of group dynamics, and I could question and probe to enable the emergence of different points of view.

Cohen et al (2007) comment on the importance of an interviewer or group facilitator being neutral and non-judgemental, to have a clear idea of purpose, and to have enough knowledge about the issues being explored to conduct the process successfully. I brought the knowledge that I was developing to each of the interviews and discussions, using the accumulation of understanding to inform each one progressively rather than sticking to a fixed agenda. The interviews and group discussions were all recorded using a digital voice recorder which meant that I could

directly download them to my computer, save and listen again to the conversations. I used headphones to concentrate on the words and inferences, the computer software giving me the ability to stop and re-listen when necessary. I handwrote each transcript into a notebook first as I am not an audio typist, and then typed the data into a Word document. This was undertaken as soon after the events as possible, in order that non-verbal as well as verbal communication could be recorded, capturing the essence of the event as well as the words. I sent the transcripts of the teacher interviews and the group discussion to those involved for member checking, and following agreement the transcripts were printed. As well as being able to use these transcripts iteratively for analysis and preparation for the next data collection event, they also provided me with the means for seeing clearly where I did not allow the discussion to flow by interrupting prematurely, or suggested that an issue deserved further exploration, and then did not do so. Doing this gave me the chance to go back to the interviewee and ask them again about a particular topic, and be more aware of my own skills in conducting the next face-to-face session.

6.4 Visualisation

I introduced the use of visualisation in research in Chapter 5. This section continues with the discussion, introducing the use of a visualisation in a personal research journal and photography.

6.4.1 Making use of a personal research journal

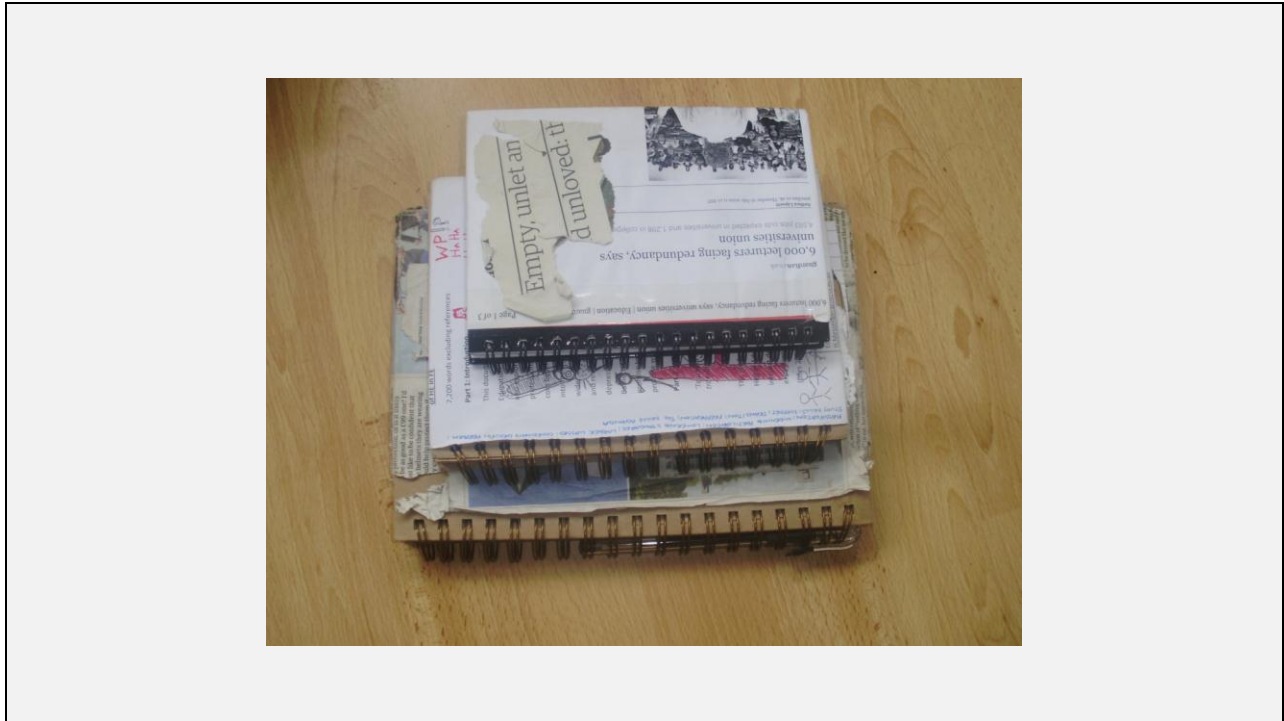
Like many professionals, I make use of notebooks to help myself deal with complexity of my role (Cooper and Stevens, 2006), but as a case study researcher, undertaking the concurrent activities of developing a conceptual framework and explanations of data collected, I needed to find a way to make connections, record insights and plan developments (Jones, 2002). Designers support themselves in the design process by using a personal journal to track ideas and insights, and Pigrum (2007) explains how they contain work in progress as well as abandoned directions. New (2005:8) describes journals as “*the working stiff of creative life*” and I made an

early decision to adopt a personal research journal which incorporated visualisation as a research tool. This journal would provide opportunities for reflexivity, for recording ideas and developments, to track reading and to be to hand for recording the unexpected in unexpected situations.

In line with my research philosophies, I decided that anything recorded in this communicative space would be open to scrutiny, so the “*visual intimacy*” of my developing thoughts would be open to all (Brereton, 2009:6). Burgess et al (2006) comment that making public the practical issues associated with research methods can be useful to fellow researchers, and although it was not difficult to gain some insight into the use of journals in research (for example, Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Hiemstra, 2001; Cooper and Stevens, 2006), finding guidance for use of a visualisation in a journal was less easy. Visual journaling is often associated with personal development (Ganim and Fox, 1999) but this process had more in common with addressing a design problem. Greenlees (2005) emphasises the close link between the outcome of a project and the book used for reflection, recording and analysing the research process, and Margulies (2002) considers that lined paper and its association with linear thought inhibits creativity. I deliberately rejected lined notebooks, and opted instead for spiral-bound journals with plain paper, realising, like Baldermann (2009) that I needed somewhere to keep a pen. The blank cover of the first journal was quite intimidating, so I decided to personalise it (Illustration: 6.1). This strategy provided a turning point, the books then became my own, and I could relax in the knowledge that they provided a pleasurable tool for freedom of expression.

Barone (2001) comments that some researchers are predisposed to more open-ended research and use arts-based research methods as they are useful for challenging or disturbing the familiar and for portraying new understandings. My journal became a place for embodied thought and I began to look forward to opening the pages, looking back over previous entries, and looking for ways of recording new ideas.

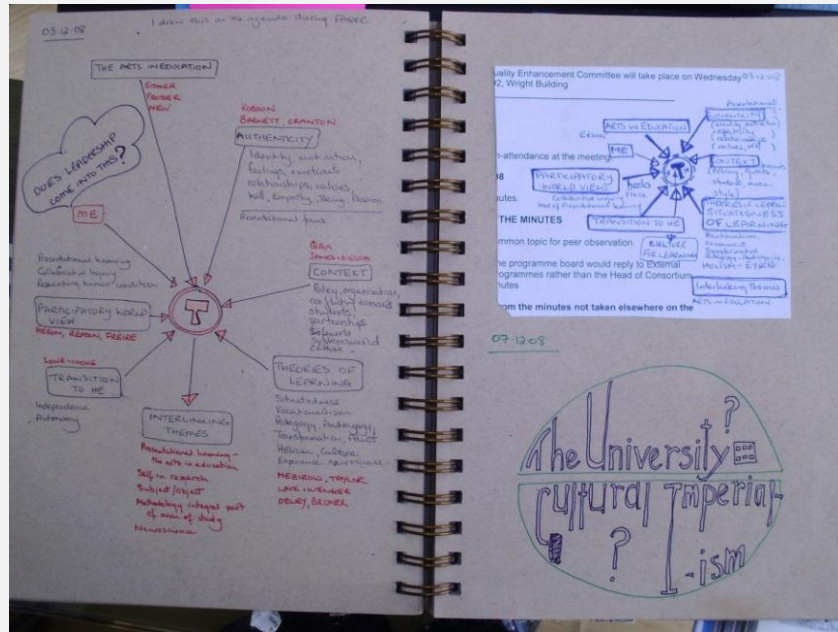
Illustration 6.1 Personal research journals



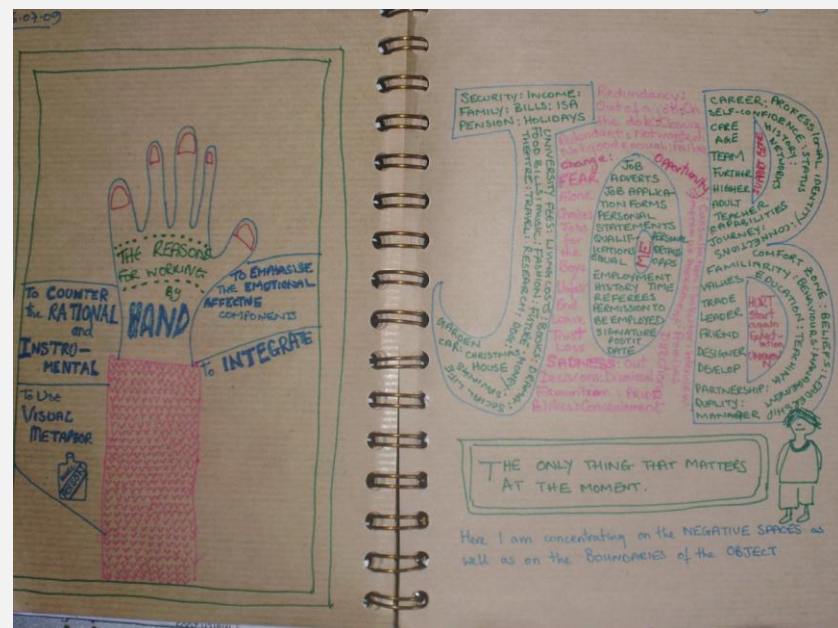
In a study of journals kept by a variety of professionals, New (2005:10) summarises four purposes; “*observation*”, both of the self and of the natural world, “*reflection*”, “*exploration*” and “*creation*”. At the beginning, I had no preconceived notions about how I could use the journals, so it is interesting to look back over them. The entries may possibly be classified as observation/reflection and exploration/creation (Illustration 6.2), although this might defeat the object of being more playful in research design (Byron, 2009), especially as the definitions overlap.

Illustration 6.2 Exploration/Creation and Observation/Reflection

Exploration/Creation (Journal 1 entry, 03.12.08)



Observation/Reflection (Journal 2 entry, 26.07.09)



6.4.2 Visualisation through photography

Rogoff (2003) shows how she uses images to depict cultural aspects of development and taking photographs gave me a number of opportunities. I could pay attention to detail within each of the research sites, manipulate the photographs to focus on particular conceptual issues and take photographs of drawings and models in order to be able to communicate with them. Photographing the research sites gave me the ability to re-view the familiar and consider the relationship between the image and the research question (Vignette 6.1).

Vignette: 6.1 The corridor leading up to the merchandising studio



On one side of the corridor are the FE mini-windows, on the other, the board marketing the HE course. At the end of the corridor is a large practice window created by the FE students, regarded on this occasion by the HE teacher as of a poor standard. This is the first thing that both the HE and FE students see when they come for interview. Turning left here leads to the HE studio, right to the FE studios. The College management wants the FE students to progress to the HE course, so marketing the course in this space is encouraged.

For some of the HE students sharing the space with the FE students creates a dilemma. They are resentful that they pay a lot more for their course, but are treated in a similar way to the FE students. They also believe they should be given the chance to learn about making a display rather than making models of displays.

An image provides invaluable source material for a thick description of a context, and in line with Harper (1998) and Pink (2007), I used photography as a form of visual ethnography, to survey, map, and communicate material culture and social interaction, maintaining the research questions and the emerging conceptual framework in my mind. However, I needed to be aware that the same image or photograph could carry different meanings according to the way it was viewed, by whom and for what reason. For example, Vignette 6.1 describes ways of interpreting the entrance corridor to the merchandising studio in College A, indicating how students, teachers and managers might view the same space.

I took photographs because of my decisions as a researcher, privileging and excluding at the same time (Cousin, 2009). Deciding how to use or manipulate the photographs involved more choices, and as Prosser and Schwartz (1998) point out, understanding the use of photographs in the research process involves acknowledging the researcher's epistemological and methodological assumptions. The photographs in this study provided a means for capturing, interpreting, and communicating the worlds of others, and Cappello (2001) describes how photographs may be data themselves and stimulate the creation of data. As explained in Chapter 4, in line with my aim to develop understanding of the learning cultures with the participating teachers, I adopted photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002) as a technique during interviews and informal meetings following research visits, and at conference presentations regarding research findings.

In choosing which photographs to include within this thesis, I acknowledge my purpose to involve a wider community in educational research and its interpretation. Pink (2007) indicates how photographs may contribute to the authenticity and authority of the author, and how the reader receives this. However, it is important to realise that photographs are the result of the researcher choosing to use a potentially intrusive device, a camera, within the research setting. This is far from being a value free activity, requiring the same degree of reflexive engagement as the interpretation and presentation of any other form of data.

Banks (1998) points out that a photograph is a material object, with form as well as content, and with digitalisation, this object has become something that may be easily created, communicated and manipulated. All of the images taken had culturally specific meanings (Weber, 2008) and I can only justify using them by having a good common sense and theoretical understanding of what they depict (Harper, 1998). This is particularly important if they are used in a publication, and Pink (2007: 150) discusses how the language that accompanies them can suggest that they are part of an on-going reality or a specific “*photographic moment*”. Alternatively, photographs may be presented as a series of uncaptioned images (for example Photo-story 6.1) giving the reader the opportunity to connect them to the overall story and develop their own interpretations (Berger and Mohr, 1989).

In my observation visits to the research sites, I gained permission via a signed agreement from the teachers and their students to take photographs. In order that I could obtain comparable photographs across sites, I adopted a general strategy, taking un-posed photographs that depicted environments, groups and individuals. I also took photographs of anything that appeared interesting, because, as Cousin (2009) points out, although direct relevance may not be apparent at the time, it is in the re-viewing that connections may be made or conceptualisations developed.

6.5 Study 1

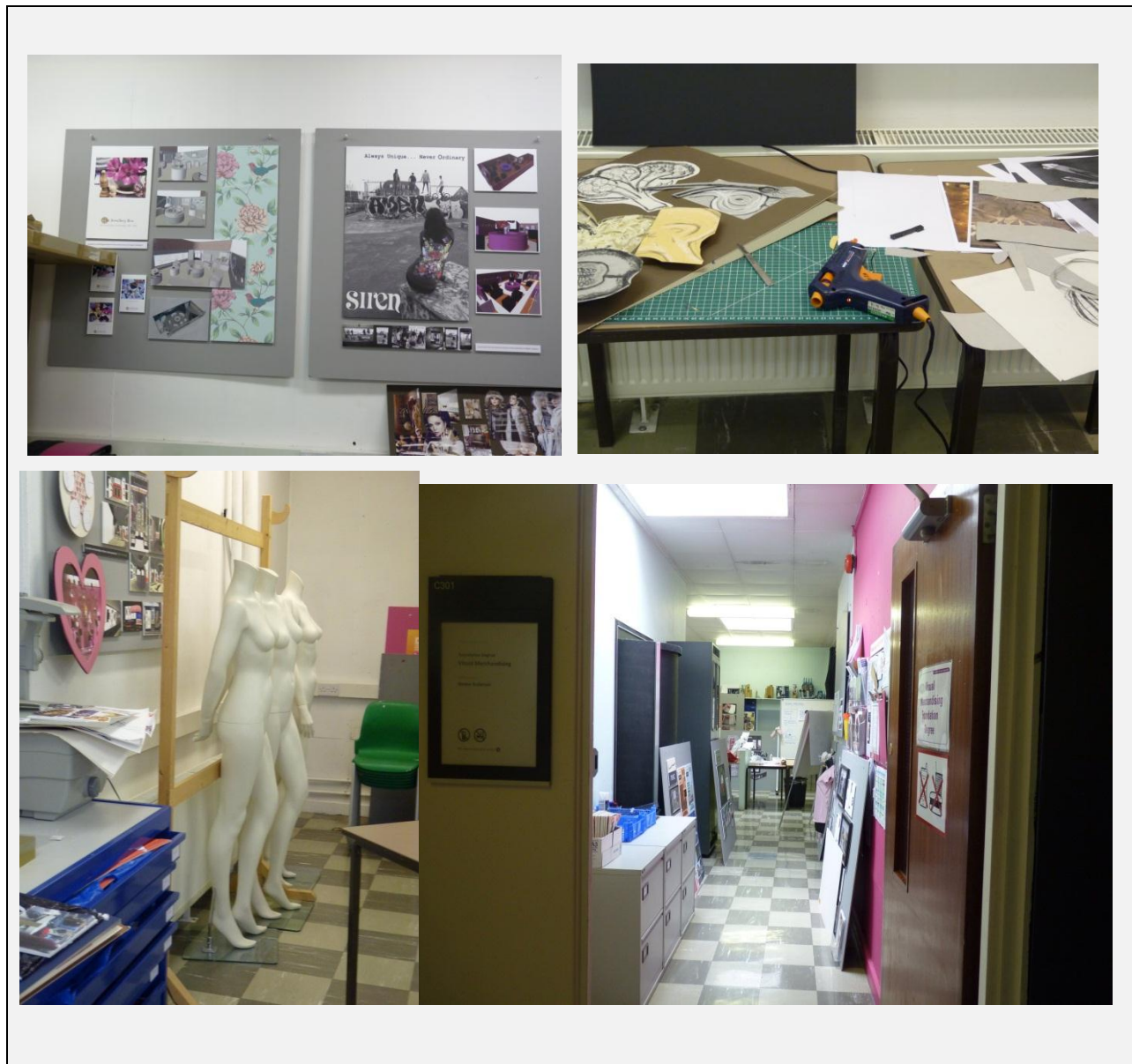
At first I felt like Goldilocks, trying out the beds in the three bears’ cottage. Nothing felt comfortable, until I started to read about participatory research, and that felt ‘just right’.

Journal 1 entry: 20.01.09

Although Denscombe (2007) indicates that decisions about the strategy and methods of a social research project are usually made at the beginning, at the start of this research project I did not have a detailed plan. The selection committee for the EdD had agreed that HE in FE was a valid subject for study, but although they acknowledged my enthusiasm, they were concerned at my lack of specific focus. Ely

et al (1991) comment that some of the difficulties faced by social researchers relate to positivist views of truth and knowledge that have historically predominated in research, and my challenge was to persuade the panel that an iterative study emerging out of the simple question, *'what is going on here?'* was a realistic possibility.

Photo-story 6.1 The Merchandising studio, College A



As I was in a position of “*not knowing what is not known*” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:235), justifying and discussing my proposal with more focussed and answer-driven researchers was very helpful, enabling us to locate the study within the actions of HE in FE teachers and the responses of their students. This led to the identification of the first research question;

‘can participatory research support the development of transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education?’

6.5.1 Identification and aims of Study 1

Discussions with my supervisor identified Study 1, an exploratory case study (Yin, 2009) involving two Foundation Degree courses in College A. The primary unit of analysis in each case was a Foundation Degree course, the teacher, their students, and the environments within which the teachers engaged with their students during the first term. Stake (2000) indicates that creating a boundary to a case is one of the first responsibilities of a case study researcher and by identifying this, I could identify the context and implications of the research, and clarify ways for democratic inclusion of the subjects. The courses were in the same college and in the same department, (Creative Industries), which helped with developing a sounder basis for the conceptual boundary (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The two teachers were both course leaders, but the subjects, Graphics and Art had very different histories and purposes so enabled contrasts to be made. The physical boundary included induction and registration at the University and a study visit to New York. Yin (2009) indicates that case study researchers need to be open minded and adaptable because few research studies progress as initially planned, and the overseas trip was not included in my initial design but being invited to participate gave me the opportunity to support my original study aims and I was confident that the revision was acceptable.

Help with the aims of Study 1 and with research design came from *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education*, (James and Biesta, 2007). This report emphasised many of the individual issues I had encountered in my reading, in particular learning

as a cultural activity, the impact of contextual culture on learning and the significance of teacher conceptions of learning and teaching. Although a much larger study, it also adopted a case study approach but did not explore HE in FE courses.

The first aim for Study 1 was identified as;

1. *To investigate the learning culture within the teachers' own settings at the beginning of a course.*

My reading had also indicated the significance of a teacher's conceptions of their role and learning and teaching (Hargreaves, 2003) which helped to identify the second of the study's aims;

2. *To explore the teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and how they were influenced by context.*

The third of the study's aims arose from my intention to research 'with' rather than 'on' my colleagues in FE;

3. *To undertake research involving two participant teachers of HE in FE*

I knew from my own professional experience that the start-up period of a course was an intense period of activity for staff, involving recruitment, registration and induction processes, finalisation of module guides and assessment briefs, and teaching. Both of the teachers were also managers and course leaders, teaching across HE and FE programmes and organisational influences would be significant during this period, something that James and Biesta (2007) indicate to be an important influence on the creation of learning cultures.

Heron (1996) indicates that in participatory research the position of the participants should always be taken into account. Therefore when I put out an "*initiator's call*"

(ibid:38) in June 2008, I needed to appreciate my responsibilities towards the teachers, the significance of the start-up period of a research process, and the pressure on both of them in the first 6 weeks of the course. I had to create clarity about the purpose of the research and be flexible, so that the teachers became participants in the inquiry from the outset. Walmsley (1993) reflects on the significance of explanation, indicating its importance in negotiating clearly with others. As I found myself translating my readings into more accessible language and making my understanding relevant to the context, I realised that not only was I explaining to the teachers but also to myself, and that I would later explain to a wider academic community.

6.5.2. Recruitment of participants for Study 1

My dual role, as researcher and university employee, was one of the ethical considerations that bounded Study 1, and the relationship with the research site and the purpose of the research needed to be transparent from the outset (Brydon-Miller, 2008). Heron (1996) indicates the importance of the initiation procedures for research, so I discussed the purpose and potential benefits of the study with the HE manager at College A when I approached her for permission to research with the HE teachers and students at the College. Transparency and honesty are factors which Bryman (2001, in Burgess et al, 2007) regards as key principles in social research, and it is important to note that these ethical considerations continued to be central to the research process following the initial stages.

Stella, the HE manager at College B gave her permission, and I commenced a study, which would focus on the first 6 weeks of the degree courses. Selection of the participants was undertaken informally, a commonly adopted method for initiating research involving others (Heron, 1996). I made it known at meetings and other events that I was starting a research study, which I framed at this point as involving the experience of being a teacher of HE in FE. At the end of a cross-college development meeting for the Creative Enterprise suite of programmes, I indicated

that I should be interested in talking to anyone who would like to participate in the initial study.

The first mention of the idea of being involved in a piece of research that involved their own experience produced an immediate and expressive response. 'For a Few Dollars More!' said Billie, immediately, followed by 'Montagues and Capulets' from Tom. 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly', came next, and then with much laughter, 'Jeux sans Frontieres!'

Journal 0 entry: 23.06.08

Clearly, there was much feeling embedded in this subject area. Tom and Billie approached me after the meeting indicating their willingness to participate in the study as part of their own professional development. Both had been involved in running higher education programmes for a number of years (in Art and Graphics respectively), but had little opportunity to be involved in educational research. As indicated earlier, further education is an under-researched sector (James and Biesta, 2007), with practitioners having fewer opportunities to engage in research than their professional colleagues in other sectors (Feather, 2011; Young, 2002). By adopting a participatory approach, I aimed to make a small step in challenging the inequities embedded in the sector (Grant et al, 2008), but unlike James and Biesta (2007) did not have the capacity to create long-lasting practitioner-based research capacity in FE.

6.5.3 Development of a conceptual boundary for Study 1

The initial foray into promoting and recruiting for Study 1 occurred in June, and we agreed that I would contact the teachers again at the end of August following the summer break. During this time, I embarked on reading to develop a conceptual boundary within which I could devise research questions and a research design, something that Yin (2009) indicates is an essential part of case study research. As indicated in the Introduction to Chapter 3, because HE in FE is an under-researched area it was necessary to spread my interest quite widely. I realised that I could take the study into multiple directions, but the range of my reading provided me with a better grasp of issues surrounding HE in FE. It indicated that the transition to higher

education, the first semester of an undergraduate programme and the nature of the learning culture were significant for student retention and success (for example, Dfes 2003a; James and Biesta, 2007; Lowe and Cooke, 2003). These issues provided a suitable focus for a small-scale study beginning to explore the creation of learning cultures.

I became familiar with concepts associated with transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) and its promotion (Cranton, 2006a), but it was through conversations with colleagues that I was introduced to the notion of the “*will to learn*” (Barnett, 2007:2) and the developmental framework proposed by Kegan (1982; 1994; 2000). I felt rather swamped by the wealth of knowledge available, and turned to poetry and comedy to help explain how I felt; at times inadequate,

*“Man, with farther to travel from his simplicity,
From the archaic moss, fish, and lily parts,
And into exile travels his long way.”*

**Extract from ‘Message from home’ by Kathleen Raine (2008)
Journal 1 entry: 04.10.08**

lost,

*“Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers.....
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.”*

**‘Lost’ by David Wagoner (1999)
Journal 1 entry: 30.11.08**

and also bruised by all of the ideas.

“Unfortunately the barrel of bricks was heavier than I was, and before I knew what was happening, the barrel started down, jerking me off the ground. I decided to hang on, and halfway up I met the barrel coming down, and received a severe blow on the shoulder”.

**Extract from: ‘The Bricklayer’s Story’, Gerard Hoffnung (1954).
Journal 1 entry: 18.12.08**

Research and the design process are not dissimilar (Lawson, 2005) and my preparatory reading certainly gave me enough to material work with. However, as Jones (2002) warns, this was not a straightforward process. Yin (2009) emphasises that this is all part of case study research, and I found that my research journal was invaluable in helping me to keep track of the way my ideas developed.

6.5.4 Design and implementation of Study 1

Yin (2009) indicates that a researcher needs to make sure that research evidence addresses the original research questions(s), and I needed to plan a manageable research design with the original study aims in mind. Grant et al (2008) indicate that it is important for researchers to be aware that their own enthusiasm for participatory research may not be reflected completely in others, and discussing the degree of participation was important. Part of the reason why HE in FE is under-researched is because of the time constraints on the practitioners involved in it; therefore, I aimed to produce an integrated, but feasible, approach to the study.

Activities were devised to help me enter the world of the two participating teachers and their students. The research design is summarised in Chapter 4, Table 4.2. I had made a clear decision that my research would be with others rather than on them, and shared planning with the teachers involved supported this, and the agreement to use journaling as a reflective tool. This type of journaling is a recognised means for developing shared understanding, for example Alterio (2004) uses it as a professional development tool. Stein (2003) suggests that the workplace may be imaginatively

investigated through arts based research methods, so I anticipated that as both Tom and Billie were involved in the creative industries that the journals would help me access their working experiences.

Our first meeting took place in July 2008 (Chapter 4: Table 4.2) away from our main site of work; somewhere comfortable, where a small-scale piece of research could be developed. Grant et al (2008) note the significance of the importance of building relationships in participatory research, and at this initial meeting agreed that the focus of the study would be how the two teachers created a learning culture during the first 6 weeks of their courses, and the factors that influenced it. When I invited them to participate in the study, I framed the research as involving the experience of a teacher of HE in FE rather than being directly concerned with the experience of the students. We continued with this aim, with the focus on each of them, and the influences on their actions, feelings, and motivations.

I also planned to undertake full day observation visits to the two sites while the teachers were teaching, make field notes of the physical and psychosocial environments and have informal conversations with the students. There would also be opportunities to gather data at less formal events, including the visit to the university for registration and the study trip to New York. All of these opportunities helped me to add to my established knowledge of the research sites, and obtain more than a snapshot view of the relationships between the teachers and their students. Seeing them in different places and at different times contributed significantly to the development of a conceptual framework.

Following these data gathering events, I planned a semi structured, conversational, face-to-face, recorded interview with each of the teachers. The data collected from the observations supported the semi- structured interviews and also would provide a reflective experience in themselves (Roth and Bradbury, 2008). After agreement of the transcript of the interview a set of case study notes for each site would be

created. These would be discussed at a final participants' meeting where we would review the experience of participating in educational research.

Both Billie and Tom taught their subjects within defined studio environments and I arranged to spend a day with each of them whilst they were teaching. During my visits, I maintained a focus on the first two research aims;

“to investigate the learning culture within the teachers' own settings at the beginning of a course”

and,

“to explore the teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and how they were influenced by context”.

I recorded the physical space inside and immediately outside of the studios as detailed drawings and field notes in my journal, and observed and recorded conversations and teaching-learning exchanges. Each of the studios contained a wealth of artefacts and memorabilia, and Pigrum (2007) explains the significance of the artists' workplace as a place for learning, one that involves the ability to respond to unpredictability, complexity, and change. He indicates that it can also provide information about work in progress, evidence of previous years' studies and norms of the sector, each significant in taking a cultural approach to understanding learning (James and Biesta, 2007).

Following the visits, I arranged to interview Tom and Billie individually. We had agreed the purpose of these interviews prior to the start of the research process, and they aimed to explore all three of the research aims. Therefore, they considered the purpose and nature of the learning culture being created, the teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and how they were influenced by context, and the experience of participating in research. The interviews were semi-structured, aiming to provide a conversational means for sharing information and observations, in order to create knowledge.

6.5.5 Learning from Study 1

First thoughts on undertaking research

1. Research is hard
2. Feedback to me- very positive
3. Choosing a recording method for someone else is very difficult
4. The first 6 weeks are key-but time is very pressured
5. Lightbulb feeling a bit dimmed

Journal 1 entry: 26.11.2008

Participatory research is an emerging discipline and practitioners are encouraged to be creative within sound philosophical and theoretical perspectives. Understanding this helped me feel more confident with “*making the road while walking*” (Wickes et al, 2008:12). However, although I aimed to work alongside Billie and Tom, aiming to provide them with a professional development opportunity, it was my learning to be a researcher that benefited more. As Lasky and Tempone (2004) point out, participatory research methods are useful as professional development tools as the process can result in change for those involved, and for the area being investigated. My development was enabled by working with people with whom I already had a good working relationship, and I developed useful knowledge of the learning cultures to inform future study. However, as Burgess et al (2007) indicate, involvement in research develops new relationships and can also change established ones, and undertaking this research was not easy. Like Grant et al (2008) point out, I know that my enthusiasm for participatory research was not completely reflected in the teachers and as Hardiman (in Reason 1994:3) comments,

‘It’s much easier to be fascist about research, to decide what you want to know, to design the methods, recruit the subjects, run the experiments, draw your own conclusions and to write up your own results’.

The field visits and the trip overseas were successful in that they provided a considerable amount of varied data. Each of the hour-long interviews with Billie and Tom provided the opportunity to reflect on this data and gain new understanding by a process of consensus building (Mash and Meulenberg-Buskens, 2001). However,

developing a shared understanding was not so successful. Each of us involved in Study 1 had a different idea of the purpose of the research, the degree of commitment involved and the expectations of participation. Resolution of these tensions gave me a number of choices regarding the future direction of the study and its design.

Tom had completed a journal, but Billie said that she had really found it very difficult, and would have preferred to do 'stand up'. I had made the assumption that because I was keen to use visualisation, and because both Billie and Tom taught visual subjects, that they would be keen too. Both of them expressed the desire to talk about the results of the research process independently, and did not want each other to be party to the discussions. However, in line with the requirements of a case study researcher, I needed to be able to absorb these setbacks in the way I progressed the research process.

The detail of the analysis of the data and how it lead to the production of two sets of case study notes (Appendix 4.1 and Appendix 4.2) is presented in the next chapter. The findings enabled me to pursue a research agenda that explored the intentions of HE in FE teachers and the creation of learning cultures which aimed to encourage student development.

6.6 From evangelical zeal to defined purpose and process

At the end of Study 1, I entered a period of uncertainty. In January 2009 the prospect of redundancy loomed, which became a reality in July 2009. The EdD structure and process provided me with a personal and professional constant during times when I wondered if I would be involved in higher education again. The redundancy affected me profoundly, professionally and emotionally, resulting in great feelings of loss. It was imperative that I obtained employment and I had to think long and hard about why I was undertaking the research and whether I wanted to keep going with it.

Qualitative research is not for the faint hearted, its emergent, fluid nature means that the researcher needs to be able to accept and welcome the uncertainty which is part of the depth and complexity of the social world. I had not anticipated that it would be my own uncertainties that might affect the research, but the changes had unexpected outcomes. I had time to pay close attention to connections and developments emerging and respond appropriately with my reading and research design (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). When I returned to employment it was to a university's business school, an environment with a very different culture to my former faculty, and to the HE in FE contexts that I was researching. Being in this environment provided an unexpected advantage, a unique opportunity to consider the differences and similarities between my working context and the research sites, and to be able to consider whether comparability was possible. This would prove to be very helpful in identifying patterns and generalisations that could prove useful to a wider higher education community.

Despite the difficulties and changes in the university's relationship with the colleges outlined in Chapter 1, the HE in FE teachers let me know that they still wanted to be involved in research. This was a very positive outcome, and reflected the change in my relationship with them from being someone with a formal role doing some research, to being a researcher. I also recognised in myself a shift, from having an evangelical zeal for giving voice to 'the underdog' to developing a research identity relevant to purpose and context. The next part of the study built on my learning from Study 1 and reading of the literature. Using ideas developed by Barnett, (2007), Baxter Magolda and King (2004), Costa and Kallick (2008), Cranton (2006a; 2006b), ELLI (2007), Kegan (1982; 1994), Lucas (2007), Mezirow (1991), Mulgan (2007) and Portnow et al (1998), I planned to explore the intentions of the HE in FE teachers and the creation of learning cultures with development and transformation of the student in mind. I chose to invite a group of experienced HE in FE practitioners to engage in a group discussion about their students and their intentions and actions towards them.

6.6.1 The group discussion

Profiles of each of the members of the group discussion are available in Table 4.1. I had worked with each of the contributors for some time, and because of this felt that their opinions and experiences could be valuable to discussions on how teachers approached learning and teaching to promote student development, something that both Tom and Billie had indicated to be the central purpose of their practice.

The teachers each had course or module management roles, and represented the Business and the Creative Industries departments in College A. The group included Billie, who had been a participant in Study 1 and Stella, the College HE manager. Denscombe (2007) suggests that a group may be selected purposively, using criteria that fit the participants to the subject under scrutiny, and that some kind of stimulus can be used to set the tone of the session. Prior to the meeting, I had circulated a discussion document entitled,

“Agents provocateurs: towards developing transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education”,

(Appendix 5.1)

Which included the comment,

Approaches to teaching and learning may need to go beyond aiming to rectify shortcomings, and instead address issues associated with student attitudes behind their approach to study.

However, I had received feedback from the group, indicating that it was not as clear as I had intended and that some had not had time to read it. I had become so immersed in my subject; it had become so central to my day-to-day life, that I had forgotten that others would see it differently. Kennedy (1997) suggests that as researchers become involved with their topic, they become less engaged with the day-to-day work and language of practice, and it was at this point that I realised that

I was developing a new relationship with my research, and with the participants. I was working to integrate some very sticky theories, but the knowledge that I was creating was fragile, and had little identity beyond my own thoughts.

I had chosen to use the term '*Agents provocateurs*' to suggest that teachers had an active role to play in creating meaningful change in their students, but the document was not an effective mediator between us. It went into too much theoretical detail and did not relate to day-to-day practice. This shortcoming needed addressing, and if I were to undertake a similar activity in the future I would probably use a visual form of presentation instead.

I started the meeting with a short talk about what I had found out so far, current thoughts about the purpose of higher education, learning as a cultural activity and introduced the five questions that would guide the discussion. Details of the questions are available in Appendix 5.2, and they dealt with the factors that influenced the ways the teachers approached learning and teaching on their programmes, how they encouraged their students' approach to their studies, the teachers' awareness of change in their students and their reasons for working in the way that they did. To conclude the discussion, I asked the teachers to suggest ways that staff development opportunities might help with the development of transformative learning cultures.

It was important that everyone in the group felt at ease, able to explore freely and frankly their approaches to their work. I ensured that everyone agreed from the outset that the discussion remained confidential, any revelations stayed private, and that everyone felt safe to challenge a comment and express their beliefs and feelings. I used the knowledge I had gained from Study 1 and my reading to guide the discussion (Marshall and Rossman, 1999), acting as a "*moderator*", trying to "*read between the lines*" where necessary (Denscombe, 2007:179). To maximise exchanges occurring between the members of the group, I adopted different roles as the discussion progressed, something that Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicate to be an essential part of effective data generation in the qualitative interview process.

Reading over the transcript, I can see how my involvement changed, at first encouraging and leading, stepping back as the group developed its own discussion, helping it by joining in, and without overtly appearing to, ensuring that everything remained on track. One particular exchange required careful intervention as the newly appointed HE manager and a teacher with long history at the college explored barriers to designing learning opportunities, and revealed issues that had not surfaced before. There was a risk of a negative atmosphere developing, so I took the discussion on to consider the influence of students, rather than allowing the discussion to ‘close down’ at this early stage. However, despite this, the discussion progressed well, with the group moving easily through the guiding questions which I had constructed carefully from the emerging conceptual framework, and the conversation flowed naturally from one to the next, without my needing to direct. I recorded the discussion, then transcribed it by hand before typing up. Once I was happy that it represented the full discussion, I sent it to each of the members of the group for comment before proceeding further.

6.6.2 Learning from the group discussion

The analysis of the group discussion is presented in the next chapter, but the findings from it, and from Study 1 were central to the aims and design of Study 2. The discussion itself had proved to be successful, lasting for just over an hour, and the teachers commented afterwards how although they worked for the same organisation and were often at meetings together, it was rare for them to discuss their beliefs about learning and teaching, and how they worked with their students.

The similarities of purpose but the differences that different subject areas offered helped me to identify Business and Design as the two subject areas to be the focus of the next part of the study. The findings from the group discussion and Study 1 helped me to revise the research question to,

“How are transformative learning cultures created in higher education courses taught in further education colleges?”

6.7 Study 2

Study 1 had adopted an exploratory case study approach in order to begin the research process, researching one college and two courses within the same department at the start-up of the course. In order to explore more intensively the intentional creation of transformative learning cultures and to justify the validity of any claims made it was necessary to expand the range of the study. Study 2, a collective case study involving the full academic year aimed to find out about the pedagogical patterns associated with transformative learning cultures by identifying reasons why the teachers aimed to bring about change and development in their students, how they went about doing so, influencing factors and the perceptions and responses of their students.

6.7.1 Identification and aims of Study 2

I had identified that Business and Design offered suitable areas for study, and developed research questions relating to the teachers and their students on Foundation Degree courses in these subject areas. The study had as its foundations a cultural view of learning, that learning occurs through social practices, and individual environments provide particular opportunities or constraints for change and development.

The first and second of the study's aims related to the teachers;

1. *To identify the intentions and actions of the teachers towards their students*
2. *and how they created a learning culture that put these intentions and actions into practice.*

The third aim related to the students;

3. *To identify how the students experienced and contributed to their learning cultures.*

The fourth aim related to change and development;

4. *To identify the nature of students' change and development and factors influencing it.*

The final aim related to the particular context;

5. *To identify opportunities and constraints offered by particular learning and teaching contexts.*

6.7.2 Recruitment of participants for Study 2

Study 2 commenced in June 2010 with the purposeful recruitment of the “*Magnificent 7*”, seven teachers of HE in FE who I considered appropriate because of their ability to contribute effectively to the subject in question (Cohen et al, 2007). The seven worked for College A and College B and represented collectively approximately 150 years of working in HE in FE. Their details may be seen Table 4.1, and they adopted their title when we met together at a launch event, creating another research community and another professional community in which to participate. As was explained in Chapter 4, their number expanded to nine with the inclusion of two heads of department.

At the initial meeting, I presented the research to date and provided an outline of the research design for Study 2. Although in Study 1, the research design had been agreed with the participating teachers, I was much more “*fascist*” (Hardiman (in Reason, 1994:3) with Study 2. This represented another turning point in the progress of the study. The exploratory nature of Study 1 and the group discussion had provided me with the material to develop a conceptual framework regarding the creation of transformative learning cultures. If I wanted to be able to suggest that the findings from this research could be relevant to a wider higher education community, I needed to explore comparable issues relating to this conceptual framework across the

research sites. These in turn needed to be comparable with issues in other higher education contexts, and these factors helped me approach this study with more confidence than I had Study 1.

6.7.3 Developing a conceptual framework for Study 2

I commenced Study 2 with an interpretation of a transformative learning culture as a “*holding environment*”, a physical and psychosocial environment which provided a protective and empathic space from which development could take place (Kegan, 1982:115). The teachers’ intentions towards their students influenced the creation of this culture, which in turn had multiple influences. These included the teacher and their community, subject specialism, the physical environment and its possibilities, organisational issues, the students’ expectations and dispositions and the relationships between all those involved. I did not regard this as a fixed conceptualisation, and it was through undertaking successive observational and interview activities, plus further reading that the framework developed. For example, in their definition of a holding environment, Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010:45) emphasise its role in the development of identity, suggesting that it may act as an “*identity workspace*”, a safe container for “*identity work*”, explaining their use of the term ‘workspace’ to mean a “*physical as well as a social and psychological space*” (ibid :46). This conceptualisation was particularly helpful for researching a context concerned with student change and development, as it acknowledged that development involved exploring current beliefs and behaviours and could be a difficult process.

6.7.4 Design and implementation of Study 2

Although the author of the design for Study 2 I continued to aim to take the situations of the participants into account and to generate and share knowledge with them. The methods used in the research design related to learning as a cultural activity, and therefore involved observational visits to research sites whilst the teachers were teaching, observations of the wider context, group interviews with the students and formal interviews with the teachers. Where possible, I visited the research sites over

a period of time and for different events. I also anticipated being able to be involved in unplanned events if invited to do so. A summary of the research is available in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

The first field visits to observe classroom practice took place to each of the research sites between November 2010 and February 2011, planned in consultation with each of the teachers. Additional visits to College A were undertaken to the end of December 2011, and these included observing the preparation and implementation of the end of year exhibition for the Creative Industries courses and observing student presentations to employers. Interviews with the teachers took place on a day after the visits, which gave me time to transcribe the student interviews and re-view my field notes. I used the photographs as part of the teacher interviews in order to ask questions about my observations and the developing conceptual framework. The interview questions I formulated for the teachers and the students provided a framework to guide the discussion (Appendix 6) and all participants gave informed written consent for involvement (Appendix 3).

6.7.5 Learning from Study 2

By the end of Study 2, I had accumulated a considerable body of varied data, including interview transcripts, observations, field notes and drawings, notes of interviews and informal conversations and photographs. The data involved people and places, represented different subject areas, events and institutions. Information came from students, teachers, managers and course developers, and the next challenge involved integrating the richness of the data into a coherent explanation about how transformative learning cultures are created. As I looked back over the data I realised that the active processes being reported were not adequately represented by the existing conceptual framework. Earlier in my career I had been involved in early years' education, where an holistic view of child development provides the foundation for pedagogical processes. It was for this reason that I turned to the ideas of Lev

Vygotsky for help (for example, Vygotsky, 1978; Miller, 2003) and eventually to Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987).

6.8 Conclusion to Chapter 6

Chapter 6 has presented the way in which the purpose of the research was put into practice through undertaking Study 1, an exploratory case study, then the facilitation of a group discussion between experienced teachers of HE in FE, and finally Study 2, a collective case study involving two colleges and six subject areas.

The following chapter details the approaches taken to the analysis of the data. It also explains how the data collection methods, the data itself and my actions as the researcher combined to develop a conceptualisation of the creation of a transformative learning culture as an identity workspace.

Chapter 7 Data analysis and interpretation

*If I could see, not surfaces
But could express
What lies beneath the skin
Where the blood moves
In fruit or head or stone,
Then I would know the one
Essential
And my eyes
when dead
Would give the worm
No hollow food.*

Mervyn Peake
Shapes and Sounds, (1941:31)

7.0 Introduction to Chapter 7

This chapter discusses the analysis of the data through Study 1, the group discussion and Study 2, and then the integration of the data to achieve a final interpretation. Reading, data collection, interpretation, planning and data analysis characterised each stage forming the basis for the continuation of the process. As the research aimed to identify the creation of transformative learning cultures, the analysis aimed to go beneath the surface and achieve an holistic, dynamic view, rather than one that was reductionist and static. Mervyn Peake's poem above provides an eloquent summary of this purpose, and by adopting different approaches and taking different perspectives at different times, I placed myself as an active participant in this analytical process. This chapter demonstrates how this process changed over time as the conceptual framework and my understanding developed.

7.1 Analysis of Study 1 and conceptual development

Study 1, an exploratory case study, aimed to investigate the learning culture within the teachers' own settings at the beginning of a course, explore the teachers'

conceptions of learning and teaching, identify contextual influences, and provide an opportunity for teachers of HE in FE to participate in research.

My observational visits and my experience of the research sites provided me with information regarding history and nature of the courses, the physical environment, the characteristics of the individuals present, and the interactions occurring between individuals. As indicated earlier, qualitative, naturalistic ethnographic research is not easy, so as Elliott (2005) advises, in this early stage of research I used my professional experience and my intuition to analyse the data. I had not made comparisons across sites before, so adopted strategies that enabled me to identify comparable features, and then used them as a basis for the interviews with the teachers.

7.1.1 Comparable features of the study sites

Following the visits to the study sites, I created bullet points using my experience, field notes and observations, summarising the history of the site, the space, visual display, methods of communication and student comments. Developing these descriptions of the physical and psychosocial spaces provided a starting point to the analysis of the case (Yin, 2009). For example, for the physical space I noted,

- The classroom space
- The corridor space
- The staff space

These categories enabled comparable features to be aggregated, which gave me the opportunity to look for patterns and differences. However, as Rogoff (2003) indicates, making comparisons between different communities involves not just identifying features that appear comparable, but also understanding their meaning. For example, the Art studio contained evidence of organisational issues, past course events and student involvement;

- *Noticeboard with group lists, staff lists, information about New York trip*
- *Postcards from students,*
- *Exhibition posters, student entitlement statement, health and safety notice*
- *Artefacts, paints, jars, tins, easels, canvases, bicycle*
- *Shared social area.*

The Graphics studio contained similar features, particularly in relation to administrative issues;

- *Instructions, administration, calendar, timetables, meeting notes, schemes of work, projects*
- *History of course, poster of previous year's show, photos of graduation, and overseas visits*
- *Photos taken by students of things that made them laugh*
- *Student work.*
- *Staff office space.*

However, the arrangement of the space was different, as the Art studio had individual student work areas, personal 'cubbies' and shelves of artefacts and materials, whereas there was a greater emphasis on humour and contemporary culture in the Graphics studio. I sent summaries of these comparable features to the research participants for review prior to their interviews.

7.1.2 The students

During Study 1 student data was obtained through observation and informal conversations, in the UK and in New York. The individual presence of the students was apparent at each of the study sites, shown through photographs, artefacts, music and so on. Communication between the students appeared easy and informal, and the teachers communicated with a mixture of formality and informality. Students came and went freely, pursuing activities in other parts of the campus, and year groups mixed through the studio spaces. During the New York visit, the students indicated how much they appreciated the efforts of their teachers, and that I should 'tell the university'.

During the day that I spent with the Graphics course, a group of 2nd year students ran a workshop on a software program for the 1st years. The students worked independently on projects, and each had a one to one tutorial with one of the teachers present. In Art, the students worked in pairs and small groups, discussing the development of their placement projects while Tom caught up with administrative issues.

Student comments included, *'this is good'*, *'it's different'*, *'I feel I can get on'*, and *'there's pressure, but in a good way'*. These observations and the comments provided preparation for the teacher interviews and the preparation of the case study notes.

7.1.3 Teacher interviews

As purposeful conversations, the interviews provided the opportunity to develop more understanding of the influences on the learning cultures that each of the teachers aimed to create in the first 6 weeks of their course.

Tom had produced a visual journal throughout the 6 weeks, and I read through it before the interview with him, but did not analyse it in detail. He had produced 40 days of entries, only one of them with a positive perspective, a reflection on the pleasure of a teaching experience (Tuesday 14.10.08). The focus of his journal was his organisational situation, indicating that he was under pressure with multiple tasks and multiple responsibilities. It also showed his difficulties associated with the use of the studio space as his conceptualisation of contemporary fine art practice differed to that of his managers. (Illustration 7.1). I summarised the text from each of the pages as a word-processed file, however, this did not give the opportunity to see where he had interspersed text and images, or used text style to add emphasis. His journal appeared angry, expressing deeply felt emotions, something that both Edwards (1995) and Ganim and Fox (1999) recognise as a strength of visualisation.

He was short staffed as a key member of his teaching team had resigned, he needed to find cover for himself in order that he could accompany his students on the induction trip, was teaching twice his normal workload and under pressure to

relinquish the Foundation Degree studio. When I had initiated the study I had indicated that I wanted to research the experience of being a teacher of HE in FE.

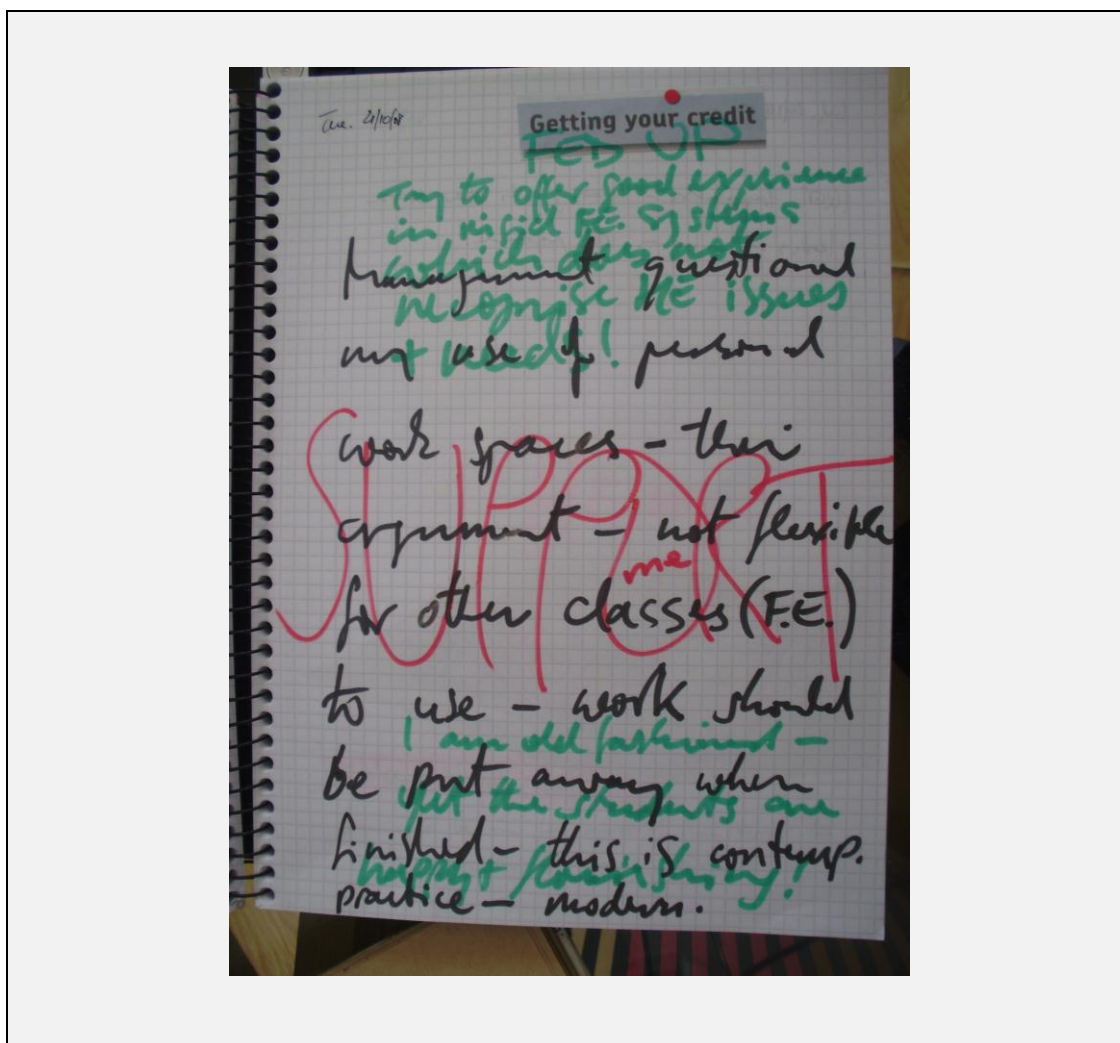
'For a Few Dollars More!' said Billie, immediately, followed by 'Montagues and Capulets' from Tom.

Journal 0 entry: 23.06.08

This experience was the focus of Tom's journal. During his interview, Tom commented on working in HE and FE,

Tom: *The negative is that the HE in FE kind of sheer across each other and you have to be piggy in the middle- the conduit- to make it all work to keep both sides satisfied.*

Illustration 7.1: Tom's journal: 21.10.08



Although I could have continued the interview to consider the HE/FE situation, I wanted the focus to be on the HE course and how a learning culture was created,

HM: *But in those first 6 weeks with the new one's on board - the need to start motoring with the new 2nd and 3rd years....*

Tom: *Definitely... I need to set the scene for how the first year should operate- how the second year should operate- I need to support and induct the staff about that - a very crucial time- it's essential to set the scene.*

In his response Tom indicated that his focus was not just on the students, but on the staff team as well, and the need to develop a shared philosophy. This was something that would also come up later in Billie's interview. Both Tom and Billie had indicated strong feelings about the delivery of HE in FE when they volunteered to be part of this exploratory study, and although I prompted Tom's answer by suggesting that 'caring' was a key part of his work, his remarks indicated the strength of his beliefs, but how he was frustrated in his role by what he regarded as surveillance and monitoring.

HM: *And caring is what it's all about in terms of the students. You have to care that they achieve.*

Tom: *Yes of course! We're not in this for the money! HA HA. 'Cos why do we do this- why do we go through all these systems- all these rigorous checking systems. It's self torture in a way isn't it.*

Tom closed his interview with remarks about how he understood learning and teaching as a trusting relationship between people.

Tom: *You have to be a bit of a performer as well- the students are people and if you are robotic they [the students] will see it, they want to engage with the person, and teaching involves trust- and if there is no trust then all the teaching in the world won't get anywhere.*

Tom's journal and the interview had provided the opportunity to learn more about the creation of a learning culture at the start of the Art course, a significant feature of which had been the influence of the organisational situation. They had also revealed much about Tom's feelings of frustration, and in producing his

journal, he had provided me with a window into his inner life. This provided me with a problem, as although I cared about Tom, I did not want to undertake research in order to provide a release-valve for work-related stress. Although Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicate that interviewing can produce knowledge and help with overcoming suffering, this was not the focus of this study. As I progressed with the research I decided to focus on Design and Business subjects as they had factors in common with each other, and although I did not include Art I acknowledged the value of the knowledge that Tom had provided. He had clearly indicated restrictive organisational influences during the first 6 weeks of the course, and that these influenced not just what he wanted to do, but what the organisation expected him to do. This information would prove helpful to future data analyses.

I interviewed Billie after Tom, which gave me time to think about what he had said and about my observations in his studio. A significant proportion of his cohort had been mature students; the environment had been informal, with his conversation including enquiries about student welfare and their families, advice on project work and comments about exhibitions. Each student had his or her own personalised space, which was under threat from the College management, plus space to work together, relax and socialise. The majority of Tom's remarks and reflections had related to working in a systems-dominated environment,

'We're highly educated people- we're dealing with intelligent people every day of our lives and we have all the checking systems..',

but we had not talked much about the students. This was an omission on my part, due my being such a novice researcher, and unsure about what I wanted and how to get it.

Therefore, having had some time to think, I initiated the interview with Billie with a remark about the students, their transition to higher education, and whether it could be seen as making an adult choice.

HM: I think there are students coming at 18 who are taking responsibility, and you could say that taking a decision about a course of study in terms of career is making an adult choice

Billie: *I agree, yes, yes*

HM *And there are others who aren't*

Billie *Yes, yes*

Yin (2009) indicates that case study researchers need to be alert to bias, particularly if using an established conceptual framework, as the temptation to reinforce it can restrict data collection and analysis. I found that although I did develop an interpretation of the cases under investigation, this was an iterative process as I returned to the data again and again, as my own reading and understanding of the literature progressed. As Stake (1995) comments this may be deeply subjective, but at this point with Billie I used my professional knowledge and reading to directly interpret the data, rather than looking for preconceived categories or themes.

Billie had told me before the interview that she had not had the time to do the journal, so we had confirmed by email that the purpose of the interview would be to discuss the students, and her approach to teaching. I used my experiential knowledge to carry on with the interview,

HM: *When I watch you and be around you I get the feeling that you have values that are about helping every single person make the best of themselves- do you think that is right?*

Billie: *I'm flattered that you've said that, that's what I'm aiming for.*

HM: *Good, have you always thought that?*

Billie: *Yes, I think that there is good in everybody and everybody has potential.*

Although my interview with Tom had been characterised by my lack of confidence in what I wanted to achieve as a researcher, I did have confidence in my professional knowledge as a teacher. I felt I was on firm ground in making this bold remark because of my own experience, and because I had been working with with Billie for some time. My purpose for undertaking the interviews with Billie and Tom

was to understand, from them, how they approached their learning and teaching at the start of a course, and what influenced it. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) might comment that by starting the interview in this way I was putting my own interpretation on Billie's world, but I needed to start somewhere, and I did so from my own professional knowledge.

I had initiated the research in the first place because I felt that some of the HE in FE contexts that I worked with intended to bring about change in their students. I used my developing knowledge of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1985) and its promotion (Cranton, 2006a) to continue the conversation.

HM: *Do you think they know that- the students?*

Billie: *Know how I feel?*

HM: *No- know that they have potential*

Billie: *No.*

HM: *Do you think that part of what you are trying to do- intentionally or unintentionally is to help them see things differently?*

Billie's response confirmed this intention, and although this question could have closed down the discussion, she spontaneously took it on a stage.

Billie: *Yes- I think I do- I think part of that is that they don't know how to trust so even if I am saying it they don't necessarily believe it. It can take a long while and sometimes it doesn't happen at all where students do start believing.*

Undertaking an interview and analysing afterwards are two different tasks. Tom had also ended his interview with a remark about trust,

they want to engage with the person, and teaching involves trust- and if there is no trust then all the teaching in the world won't get anywhere,

but it wasn't until I read through the transcript that I noticed it. It was through reading the transcripts that I realised that both included a view that trust was

multidimensional, involving the historical, *'they don't know how to'*, personal, *'they don't believe it'*, relational, *'even if I say it'* and reciprocal, *'then all the teaching in the world won't get anywhere'*.

In my interview with Billie, I continued the conversation to comment on the length of time she had with her students, her response reinforcing her understanding of her students, and the possibility for their change and development based on their previous or new experiences.

Billie: *..but with some students you are switched on to it or you are building upon what they have already and you can see results literally within weeks, and I can think of some examples in the first year who have changed radically in the first 6-10 weeks of the course- but there are others who I kind of suspect I am not going to get near but maybe the experience they've had here they will think about in the future*

Looking back, it was quite a profound moment to hear spontaneously in words the ideas that were part of my emerging conceptual framework. Stake (1995) explains that analysing these moments are part of the nature of naturalistic case research.

James and Biesta (2007) consider that the accumulated dispositions a student brings to a site of learning influence the type of learning that may be achieved, and Billie's remarks, *'switched on to it'* and *'building on what they already have'*, suggested her preparedness to acknowledge the dispositional starting points of her students, and her acknowledgement, *'changed radically'*, for these to be changed. She also indicated the personal relationship she felt was involved in this, *'I'm not going to get near'*. When I reviewed her remarks later, I turned to Kegan (1982:115) and his conceptualisation of development as a continuous settling and resettling of an individual in an environment to understand her purpose as the creator of a safe but personally challenging *"holding environment"*. Billie acknowledged her students' needs and situations from the start of their involvement with the course, and was personally active in promoting their change and development.

The interview continued by exploring influences on the learning culture that could be created at the start of the course, and Billie, as had Tom, indicated the

significance to her of working with someone with the same attitude towards the students' potential,

Billie: That person... has a different background- but just happens to believe - I don't know how to describe it- but has a positive outlook that there is good and potential in everybody and it is my job to extract that- that is my job.

Because of what Billie had said earlier in the interview, I returned to the ideas that I was developing about transformative learning and teaching (Kegan, 1982; Mezirow, 1985; Cranton, 2006a), and although her responses to my direct questions were short,

HM: So the students need to explore themselves and they do that by being confronted? - Yes- exposed? Yes- introduced? Yes challenged? Yes,

it was her follow-on remarks that again made me sit up and take notice.

Billie: Yes- you do that by creating the vehicle- the subject scheme of work, the qualification is just the vehicle, and you try and create a vehicle that is going to do all of those things, that is going to challenge them, but make them feel safe, give them the opportunity to fail but in a safe environment, to make them work in different ways- so that every task you give them you make them work in different ways.

HM: So it doesn't matter what they are doing- it is the way it is approached

Billie: I love Graphics- I have a real passion for design and graphics- but I think what I do should apply to any subject- and broadening their horizons

These remarks regarding safety and challenge, reinforced the remarks she had made earlier about her actions and intentions. However, by also saying that the environment also gave the students the opportunity to fail and to work in different ways, she also gave details of strategies adopted. Shortly after these comments, Billie indicated her own emotional involvement with her role, her intention to create an environment where the students wanted to be, and how it related to the

conceptualisation of learning and teaching by her organisation and her relationships with her colleagues.

Billie: It feels like because we all working for the same organisation, we should all be operating like robots.... I've always argued that the reason my course is successful is not because it is Graphics but it is because I am creating an atmosphere to draw students in where they feel happy and safe, and they want to work with me and they like me and I like them...

Billie: And I am not religious at all but I believe that my role in life is to be here doing this. I am getting all teary, this is ridiculous!.... I wholeheartedly believe that. This is my thing. Every new student that walks through the door- I am looking forward to everything that they show me or share with me in the short time that they are here, and I know my- it's very difficult talking to colleagues about this- because I do fill up with it and I was so excited at coming back to work on Monday that I couldn't sleep on Sunday night- I was thinking about all these things I had to show them- I hadn't seen them for a month. I realise that I am very lucky that I enjoy my job so much- but there are only certain staff that you can discuss it with at that level because people don't want to talk about it.

This hour-long interview with Billie provided a foundation to regarding HE in FE as intentionally transformative, aiming to bring about change and development in the student. When I asked her to be part of Study 1, I had anticipated that travelling with her on a research journey could prove to be an interesting process. As a researcher I noted here that Billie was discussing issues that she clearly felt would be impossible not only to discuss elsewhere, but also would not be received well either. The personal interaction between us, as researcher and interviewee, had been established from a good professional relationship and what she was saying demonstrated trust. We maintained a conversational style during the interviews, and I acknowledge that a different interviewer may not have had the same responses. Billie was a significant factor in my development as a researcher, as she helped me to become a researcher-as-traveller (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), finding out much about myself during the process of the research as well as finding out about others.

During the rest of the interview, Billie returned to the nature of the students' dispositions, how these influenced learning, and how their development was not necessarily acknowledged by the formal assessment procedures.

Billie: *There are those that are not willing to give of themselves- and there are some students will never give themselves wholeheartedly, trust the environment, there is very little you can do if they are not prepared to take the steps...there are certain ways that students learn that can't be pigeonholed in that way and there are students that make great leaps and bounds in their awareness and learning which so far as the curriculum is concerned isn't measured, but I know that when I have a conversation with them about topics.*

I had observed Billie interacting with her students on a number of occasions, including during weeklong trips to New York and Amsterdam. She had an informal but direct style, something that later in the research programme she would tell me that her managers had told her to change.

Billie: *Teasing them, being close enough with them so that you can take the piss out of them and they can take the piss out of you.*

We talked about the significance of her personal style during this first interview, and the impact that it could have on her students,

HM: *And when the students first come in some of them must find that quite disorientating*

Billie: *They do to start with, but that's good, you want them to be knocked off their feet. This is new, this is fresh, it is different to everything that has gone before that didn't work for you- you can start afresh here.*

The points raised by Billie, many of them spontaneously, made me feel as if I was on the right track. Although this felt very satisfying at the time, it was quite a dangerous situation, because as Yin (2009) remarks, a case study researcher must be careful not to simply reinforce an established conceptual framework. However, I need to remember how much I did not know as I undertook Study 1, and it is only by looking back and seeing how by repeatedly looked one way at the data, and the other way at the literature, that I have been able to create this conceptualisation.

Stake (1995:76) describes himself as an analyst who wanders “*left and right*”. I was an analyst creating a figure-of-eight with a sparkler, going backwards and forwards over the data and over the theories, each informing the other to develop a coherent shape.

I have reported Billie’s interview in some detail, as her comments had a significant impact on the direction of the research. However, this was just one teacher, one course and one college. I needed to expand my database and explore whether these ideas resonated elsewhere. Although the study had considered the intentions of the teachers and the nature of the physical and psychosocial learning environments, it had paid only a small degree of attention to the students. Therefore, finding out more about the students, and how they influenced and experienced the learning cultures would be essential parts of the next steps.

The analysis of the data from Study 1 took into account the first two of the research questions;

1. *To investigate the learning culture within the teachers’ own settings at the beginning of a course.*
2. *To explore the teachers’ conceptions of learning and teaching and how they were influenced by context.*

In line with the definitions of learning cultures proposed by James and Biesta (2007) and Bruner (1990) the history, environments and normal practices of these communities were summarised as follows,

- The course: its history and purpose and nature of the student cohort
- The physical space: the nature of the physical learning and teaching spaces
- The psychosocial space: the nature and opportunities for social engagement and communication between students, students with staff, staff with staff
- Student comments: in classrooms and during visits

For the second of the research questions which related to the teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching and contextual influences, firstly relevant comments and observational data was summarised, and then I used a combination of a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2003) together with an a priori approach (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) to identify themes. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) advise looking at data as a whole first, and this approach allowed me to connect an emerging conceptual framework with the empirical data. By using a process of reading and re-reading the data, the following themes were identified; teacher purpose [TP], student response [SR], support provided [SP], challenges faced [CF] and organisational issues [OI]. I coded the interview transcripts and the observational data and then used this analysis to prepare final case study notes for each of the sites, which were sent to Billie and Tom to have a look through and comment upon (Appendix 4.1 and Appendix 4.2).

Billie and Tom had expressed the desire to review their own contexts individually, rather than with each other present. Therefore, although we had planned that these notes would form the basis of a shared discussion, this was not possible. Instead, they provided me with the basis for the continuation of my research.

7.1.4 Re-viewing Study 1

The questions guiding Study 1 provided the opportunity to begin to explore the nature of the learning cultures and whether they had the potential to be transformative. Participating with Billie and Tom had given me access to their intentions and experiences, their classrooms and their students, and the opportunity to develop an evidence base for interpreting these higher education contexts. However, I realised that if I wanted to claim to have an authentic approach as a researcher, it would be important to expand the time frame and subject base beyond Art and Graphics in order to ascertain whether the conceptualisations expressed, in particular by Billie, could relate to another subject area.

By the end of Study 1, I had two sets of case study notes and a developing conceptual framework regarding the potential for the learning culture of HE in FE

to be regarded as transformative, capable of bringing about change and development of the students. My evangelical zeal for starting the research in the first place had developed into an awareness of the teachers' intentions to influence their students' possibilities for the future through development of a safe, but challenging, learning environment. This involved a combination of their own actions, team work and the creation of the physical and psychosocial environments, all influenced in turn by organisational issues and the students themselves. At this point, I could have taken the research direction to focus on the organisational context, especially as Tom had indicated this was a significant issue influencing his practice, but this was not an appropriate path to follow as my situation and the college-university relationship had changed. However, the study with Billie and Tom had highlighted the links between purpose, action, and outcome. Therefore, I went back to my reading to find out more about the process of learning and development, transformative learning, and about unlocking learning's power to transform, including, for example Barnett (2007), Baxter Magolda (1999), Costa and Kallick (2008), (2006a), James and Biesta (2007); Kegan (1982;1994), Lucas (2007), Mezirow (2000) and Vital Partnerships (2010).

As a researcher, I had expanded my theoretical understanding of the concept of transformation, had experience of undertaking qualitative research in the field, and of working with others in order to find out about their conceptualisation and experiences of HE in FE. I was ready for the next stage.

7.2 Analysis of the group discussion

The participants in the invited group discussion were all experienced teachers of HE in FE representing different subject areas (Table 4.1). During Study 1, Billie had provided a particularly strong conceptualisation of learning and teaching in HE in FE, and I wanted to find out if her ideas, my interpretations of them and the developing conceptual framework could be generalised in other contexts or with other teachers. Although all of the participants in the group discussion worked for College A they spent little time together and had few opportunities to talk about their practice. Therefore, the purpose of this discussion was to obtain their points of view, and in line with the participatory nature of the project, for them to

engage in the points of view of each other. To identify if the possibilities for identifying HE in FE as a transformative learning culture existed beyond the boundaries of Study 1, I chose to use the themes “*permitted, promoted, inhibited and ruled out*” created by James and Biesta (2007:38) to locate patterns in the data. These themes related well to those used in Study 1, and reflected the development of the conceptual framework. I expanded these terms to create clearer definitions, indicating that the issues could relate to the influences of the context, the subject or to individuals, and coded the transcripts accordingly.

- Permitted [PER]: *Permitters, permitting, possible, allowed, allowing,*
- Promoted [PROM]: *actively promoted, intentional, encouraged,*
- Inhibited [IN]: *inhibitors, inhibiting, prevented, preventing, reduced, discouraged,*
- Ruled out [RO]: *forbidden, impossible.*

For example, the teachers were very clear that their organisational context could inhibit or rule out strategies that they would like to adopt in their teaching, particularly to help the students manage their own learning. These included timetabling, the primacy of FE and lack of flexibility. Julia, from Business, emphasised the difficulties associated with having to fit around the needs of the FE courses. She had to adhere to regular timetabled classroom slots running across the academic year, when she really wanted to be able to respond more flexibly to the needs of individual students.

JULIA: *..it's well we have to.... in Business we have to fit in with FE, because FE courses come first. So for instance, there are no computer rooms so if I want the flexibility to put them in a computer room there isn't one available.*

Both Billie and Alice, from Design, reinforced lack of flexibility as a factor affecting them,

BILLIE: *So they have a regular amount of time per week throughout the year when they really need time at the beginning. So that can be difficult*

ALICE: *Rigid.....*

Tom in Art had also identified problems with timetabling and lack of flexibility in his journal and interview. Billie and Julia came from Graphics and Business respectively, two different departments operating in different parts of the College. Later, although the discussion identified why they felt more flexibility would support their students develop the skills to manage their own learning from the start of the course, the teachers acknowledged that they did not have the staffing or the time to plan how they could reorganise their courses in this way.

ALICE: *They do need some skills to manage their own learning, that's what we need to give them*

BILLIE: *..we've discussed this before, before they actually start the course, if they had a 2 week intermediary course to show them how the course is going to be, to prepare them*

SOFIA: *Learning various skills in the beginning ready for the modules*

STELLA: *OK, I'm going to be devil's advocate here, why don't you do that*

ALICE: *Because you can't fit it all in*

BILLIE: *You can't timetable the rooms and we don't have enough time to do that or the staff to do that. The time to plan it. There isn't even enough time to plan something like that. It's time.*

In these courses, 'skills' referred to the practical techniques that would be used in projects. By listening again to the recording, re-reading the transcript and using my knowledge of the contexts, I was able to get a sense of the influences on the learning cultures. I coded the transcript according to whether there was general agreement [ALL], an influence on a particular subject area, (Business [BUS], Design [DES], Merchandising [M], 3D Design [3DD], Graphics [G]), or by a particular individual (by pseudonym). In order to do this I needed to be aware of the meaning ascribed by an individual or a subject area, otherwise comparisons or interpretations would be meaningless. For example, in Design, permitted and promoted factors included the ability to develop a sense of community by the use of the physical environment, getting to know the students prior to the start of the

programmes, a shared staff philosophy and all day teaching in a studio environment, all of which were inhibited or ruled out in Business.

HM: So students get to know about the ‘way we do things around here’ simply by walking in...

JULIA: the room. We’re not allowed to put anything on the walls- at all. [BUS]
LAUGHTER

JULIA: We have a noticeboard and that’s it, we have been told that we are not allowed to put anything up [BUS]

BILLIE: So how do you kind of build...[DES]

JULIA: ...we don’t [BUS]

BILLIE:the community? [DES]

JULIA: We don’t [BUS]

Coding the data in this way enabled a display of the factors influencing the learning culture to be developed.

The comments made by the teachers indicated that all of them actively aimed to develop a trusting environment, between themselves and their colleagues, with their students and between the students themselves. The analysis identified evidence of the personal meaning that the teachers brought to their roles, why they used the strategies that they did, evidence of their relationships with their students and the emotional impact on them as individuals. It showed treating the students as individuals, and ways in which they aimed to maintain student wellbeing, even when confronting them with difficult issues about themselves. However, they indicated that many of the students found feedback difficult to deal with, and that helping the students make the most of their potential and become aware of what they needed to change was an important part of their role as teachers. This, they felt, was becoming more difficult, with personal emotional consequences; particularly as the students did not appear to know what to do with the support they were being given.

Julia: *It's the level of the students that are coming*

Stella: *Do you think it's their level or their background?*

Alice and Sofia [in unison]: *Both*

Sofia: *Definitely both, we're giving more and more...going back ten years it weren't like that...you gave a lot...but the thing is you're giving a lot more now, but they're not doing anything with it*

Julia: *They don't know what to do with it*

Sofia: *You give so much to them, but it just don't connect*

They saw student development as being part of the development of a whole community, not just in college, but outside as well, and felt confident in the strategies they adopted, particularly role modelling, encouraging talk and reflection, and making the most of transitions. The opportunity to provide events for the students to participate in was a significant part of the discussion from the Design teachers, but not from Business.

At the end of the group discussion, the subject turned to the teachers' views of opportunities for staff development. The comments were not very complementary about formal training events, or about events that they had been invited to at the university. They indicated that work shadowing, or team teaching had provided them with their best opportunities and suggested that university teachers could learn from shadowing them.

When all of the data had been coded, I created a data display (Appendix 5.3) using the subject areas to show what factors were permitted, promoted, inhibited and ruled out.

7.2.1 Learning from the group discussion

The purpose of the group discussion had been to explore whether the intention to create a transformative learning culture in higher education existed beyond the boundaries of Study 1, and if so, what factors influenced it. Each of the teachers presented their own ideas, and in line with the suggestions made by Miles and

Huberman (1994), their responses helped with developing knowledge about factors affecting all of them, and a more robust conceptualisation of a transformative learning culture. It reinforced the findings from Study 1, and provided more information about the students, and how their dispositions influenced outcomes. However, although there were generalizable issues concerning teacher intentions and student dispositions, how the teachers approached their work could be affected by organisational context and subject specialism.

I went into the next stage of the research with the intention of finding out more about the creation of transformative learning cultures in Design, Business and a Design/Business hybrid, Merchandising. Study 2 had a two-way focus, aiming to find out about the teachers' intentions and actions in creating transformative learning cultures, and their students' experience and contribution. It also aimed to identify factors associated with student change and development, and the opportunities and constraints offered by different learning and teaching contexts.

7.3 Analysis of the data from Study 2

Study 2, a collective case study, involved teachers and their students, and represented Business, Design and Merchandising taught at College A and College B. Details of the participants are in Table 4.1, and the guiding questions for the collection of data are located in Appendix 6.2. As Billie, Julia, Sofia and Alice all agreed to be part of Study 2 I was able to incorporate data from Study 1 and the group discussion into my preparation and analysis.

My conceptual framework considered that a transformative learning culture could be regarded as a holding environment, a physical and psychosocial environment which provided a protective and empathic place from which learning and development could take place. The creation of this culture was influenced by the teachers' intentions towards their students, and affected by the teacher and their community, subject specialism, the physical environment and its possibilities, organisational issues, the students expectations and dispositions and the relationships between all those involved. The environment provided a workspace to support the development of a more integrated and purposeful sense of identity

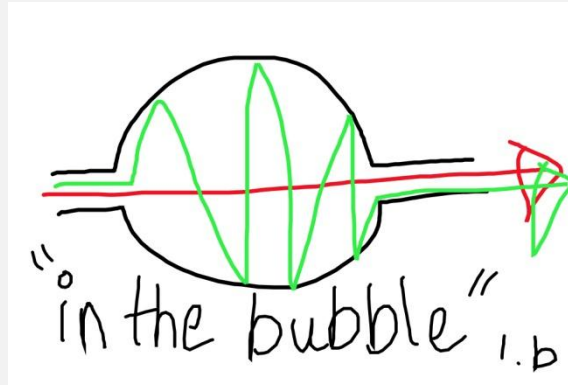
by providing recognition of the needs of the students, containment for the difficulties associated with confrontation with established sets of beliefs and behaviours, and then the challenge to change them.

The analysis of the data from Study 2 involved looking within each case and then across the cases for pedagogical patterns and significant issues. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, this enables individual detail and recurring themes to be identified and displayed. Rather than applying an analytical structure at the beginning, I considered the cases independently at first, repeatedly looking at teacher-data, student-data and context-data for patterns, synergies and discrepancies. Following this, the data was coded, collated and displayed in order to make comparisons across the research sites. I revisited data in the light of new findings, and in this way, a final analytical model was developed which could be applied to all of the data.

Prior to reporting the main data analyses, it is worth noting here the interview with Billie, the first in the series, as it provided a very powerful set of data (Vignette 7.1), and appreciating the significance of these analytical moments is one of the requirements of effective case study research. Billie's response and her drawing gave me a way of continuing with the development of the conceptual framework, and the creation of a transformative learning culture as an identity workspace. It also helped with visualising as part of the approach to analysis, interpretation and communicating in an accessible format. Unfortunately, the interview with Billie's students did not record properly, so I needed to rely on my notes, observations and subsequent evidence to create a comparison of the student data with her responses. For example, later on in the year, the students made their own comments about their experiences (Photo-story 7.1) and displayed them as part of the final year exhibition.

Vignette 7.1 In the bubble

Billie: Graphics teacher [interview 18.11.2010]

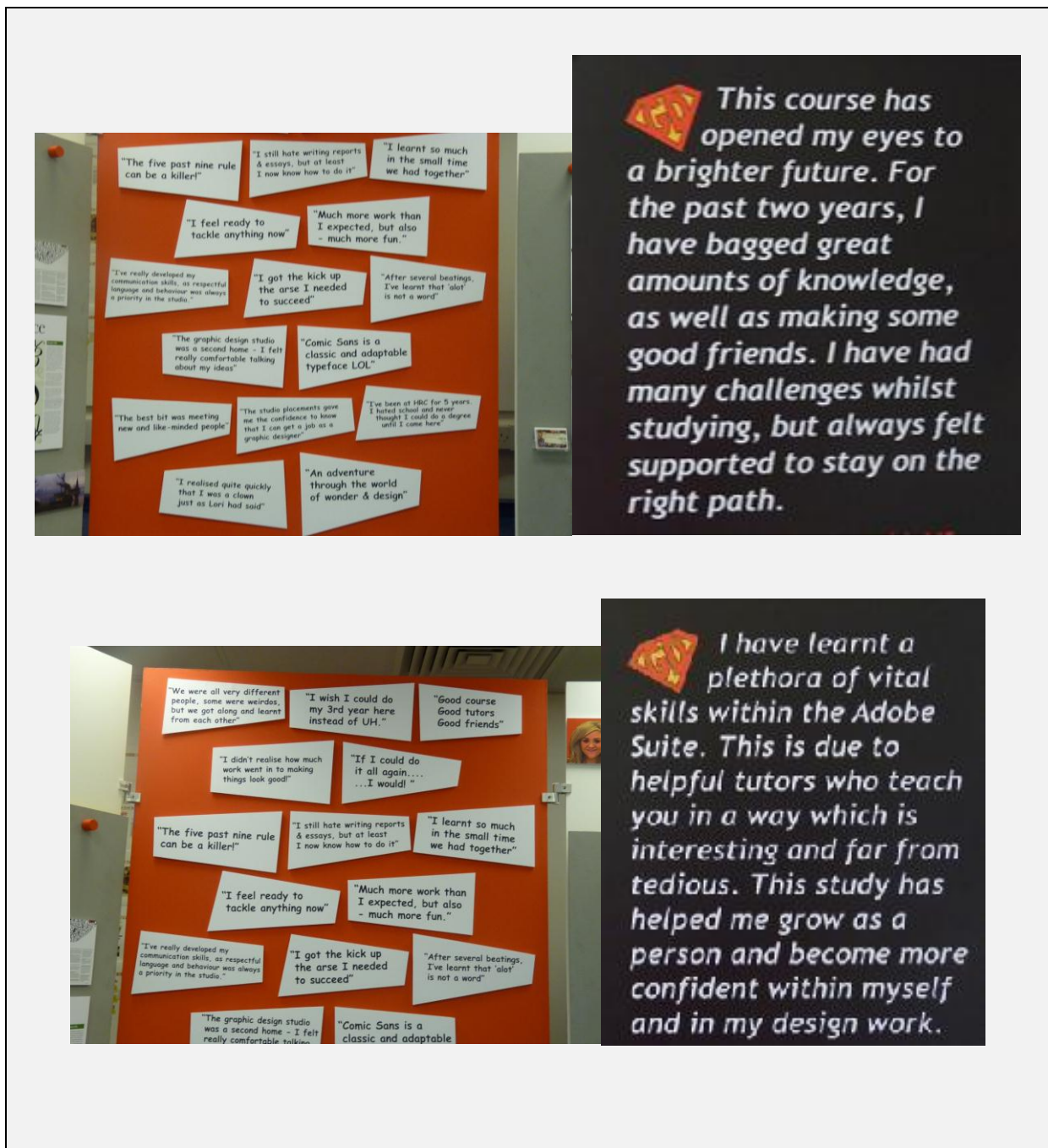


I met Billie at the end of a busy day, and at first she seemed reluctant to engage in the interview, but when I asked what her students were like, she explained how worried they were about not fitting in with their friends, worried about what was going to happen to them on the course and scared of feeling differently.

She explained how she worked hard to make them feel safe, to realise that becoming a designer took time and that they should wait for it to unfold.

She drew a circle on a piece of paper, then an arrow through it in a straight line, then added another, but this time zig-zagging it, so that it hit the sides of the circle, before it came out the other side (Illustration) and explained that it was a design model that she taught her students about. She described how a designer's aim is to spend as long as possible in this bubble, working out lots of different ways of approaching it, and how the students at first went as quickly as they could to the solution with the first idea that came into their heads. She explained that it was scary being in the bubble for a long time, because the students wanted to get to an answer, and finish it. As she finished speaking she said how she used it all the time with the students, saying to them *"what haven't you done?"* and they say *'stayed in the bubble'*, and I reassure them because *you've got to make them feel safe in that bubble, however disorientating it is, and I reassure them..it's alright..it'll be fine, it'll be fine you know, you've got time, you've planned it you know you'll only stay in the bubble til Tuesday next week and then you are coming out of the bubble."*

Photo-story 7.1 The Graphics students' comments at the final year exhibition



However, for the first analyses of the data I adopted a more traditional approach. As an example, in November, two months after the start of the course, I spent a day with Julia and her Business students at College B, observed three of her classroom sessions, totalling five hours, interviewing 15 students in two groups for a total of 48 minutes. I interviewed Julia for 54 minutes two weeks later. I added

the data I had obtained from Julia in the group discussion, and my knowledge of the course, the college environment, and awareness of our previous conversations.

When I analysed the physical environment, I created a summary showing;

- **Classrooms:** *bare walls, noticeboards with FE class work, separate computer room, round tables, seating, interactive whiteboard*
- **Corridor space:** *noticeboard with administrative information, timetables, noticeboard with student posters, college TV screen*
- **Staff space:** *communal staff room through two security doors*

I used the photographs that I had taken to create expanded explanations of particular features (Vignette 7.2), and a summary of the nature of the physical environment by collating photographs together (Photo-story 7.2). I used these during the teacher interviews as prompts for interpretation of what I had observed (Vignette 7.3). These modes of data display enabled consideration of comparable issues across the research sites.

The purpose of the first analysis of the student data was to establish how the students experienced their learning environment, how they contributed to it, their interpretation of Julia's intentions and the challenges they faced. It also aimed to identify features of their development. Julia had stated during the group discussion that as well as promoting trust and a professional work-like environment, she aimed to create a culture, which helped students to settle in, promoted expectations and made students aware of their capabilities

Vignette 7.2 Corridor outside the Business classroom



I took this photograph when I visited Julia and the Business students. I did not think much about it at the time, my aim was to develop a portfolio of images that depicted the physical and the psychosocial environments. The display frame was in the corridor outside the teaching room, and it was where the students had their mid-session break.

The posters in the display frame were from the previous year. They were part of the Year 2 work based learning module, each student needing to summarise their projects in this format. By displaying them, they give the first year students some idea of what is coming up for them in their second year.

However, the format of the display does not appear to give their content value. All are partially obscured, particularly the ones presented at an angle, and their purpose is not made clear.

The Business department of the college only permitted display or use of wall space in frames or on designated boards.

The students reported that it was a *'nice environment'* and that Julia was *'approachable'*. They saw it as different to university where people were *'not welcoming'* and *'did not know you'*, *'didn't know your personality'*, saying that they *'preferred to learn in here'*. During my observations I noted that Julia spoke to each of the students by name, whether inside or outside of the classroom. She asked them about the health if they had been absent, and welcomed late arrivals. The students reported that Julia had made them set their own goals by *'presenting my options to me'*, and expected them to *'do the job, and do even more'*. If they

were late, then she did not *'get mad'* like school, but expected them to be aware of the ramifications.

Photo-story 7.2 Julia's Business class in action



When asked if they thought that their relationship with Julia had any impact on their development, they clearly indicated that it did, *'because it is easier to learn with someone you are comfortable with than it is with someone you are not comfortable with'*. The students appreciated that they got more support at college than if they were in lectures at a university, but also considered that *'we're no dumber than university students'*, and that the college experience *'helped build up my confidence, showing me that I can achieve more... to keep on moving up the ladder rather than staying on one level'*.

Vignette 7.3 1-1 with Julia for a Business student



This photograph is taken during an afternoon session for all of the Business students. This is a first year, first semester module and Julia regards it as crucial to their overall progress.

I have met with and observed all of the students with Julia already today. Julia teaches a specialist module as well as this one.

The students have been working in groups, undertaking a range of tasks that link to understanding how teams work. Julia has been doing 1-1 'appraisals' during the first half of the session, and carries on while the group have a break.

She indicates in the interview that she is concerned about this particular student as his attendance is poor. During the time with him, she asks him about his reasons for coming on the course. She finds out that he thought he was going to be at the University, and is disappointed that he is at a College, as he has just left one. They talk about why he thinks he didn't get the grades to be at the University. Julia describes him afterwards as one of her 'naughty boys', but says she is pleased that he has decided to sit on his own in the Friday class, so he can concentrate more.

The rest of the group are in the corridor outside, standing around as there is no seating.

Following reading and re-reading of the data, I used four themes to code the transcripts and to analyse the observational data and photographs, the environment [ENV], interpretation of the teacher's intentions, [INT], the challenges the students faced and were made aware of [CHAL] and their observations about their development [DEV]. A display of the data may be seen in Appendix 7.

After analysing the student data, I did the same for my observations of Julia and the interviews with her, also making use of her responses in the group discussion. I read and re-read the data before identifying the themes that were complementary to the student data; teacher intentions [INT], the environment [ENV], challenges faced by students [CHAL], teacher actions [ACT] and student development [DEV]. I added organizational issues [ORG]. With her data, I also analysed it in a similar way to Study 1, to see what was,

- Permitted: *permitters, permitting, allowed, allowing*
- Promoted: *actively promoted, intentional*
- Inhibited: *inhibitors, inhibiting, prevented, preventing, reduced, discouraged,*
- Ruled out: *forbidden, impossible.*

A display of the data for Julia and the Business students at College B is available in Appendix 7.

Similar analyses were undertaken for all of the course sites, firstly looking at the students' data and then at the teacher's data, then looking at the two sets together, with my field notes, observations and photographs. Where appropriate I incorporated any relevant data from Study 1 and the group discussion.

7.4 Creating an integrated data analysis

Although the analysis of the data after Study 2 provided a systematic way of identifying teacher intentions and actions, challenges faced by students and evidence of their development, it was reductionist, only scraping the surface of the complexity. Having been immersed in the study and the data for some time, I was very disappointed. Many of the key issues were blurred, making it very difficult, for example, to show the integrated nature of 'support' and 'challenge', and the way in which dispositions, roles and relationships interacted. It did not show how the students participated in their culture and how they contributed to it. For this reason, I looked to finding a way of reflecting the richness of the data, one

that looked beneath the surface, enabled analysis of individual events as well as making comparisons and telling a broader story.

The first analysis had identified that the teachers had empathy with their students and their needs, and showed a clear feature of the teachers' intentions, to develop trusting relationships on which they could base their actions to bring about purposeful change and development. However, a major shortcoming of the previous analyses had been the removal of the interactive, individual stories that had been a feature of much of the data and the sterilisation of the influence of dispositions and experiences. Cleaning the data in this way had enabled comparisons to be made within and across cases, but what was apparent was that the task of 'transformation' involved not just the influence of the teacher on an individual student, but also the subject, the roles played, student and teacher dispositions, relationships, histories and intentions. For example, as a Business student from College B indicated,

'It's the level and the mind and everything like attitude as well and you make your own conclusions because you work with some of the other people here, or work with Julia'.

With a background in early years' education, I was familiar with an holistic understanding of child development, one that did not separate the child from their relationships or environments. It was for this reason that I turned to a theorist that I was familiar with, Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky,1978; Miller, 2003) to help with understanding the data, and through a process of determined reading and reflection felt confident that his ideas could be used alongside the conceptual framework I had been developing.

Yamagata-Lynch (2010) suggests that traditional methods of analysis are systematic, enabling themes to be identified, but not systemic, saying little about interactions, tensions, and developments. She suggests that CHAT (Engeström, 1987) can help take analysis from being systematic to being systemic. When I first looked for an approach that could capture the complexity of the data, I did not know that CHAT existed. Yamagata-Lynch (ibid:29) considers that a major barrier

of the theory is that many researchers find it “*too difficult to learn*”, and getting to grips with it did present a challenge. However, I became confident that if I used the concept of an activity setting (Engeström, 1987) I could integrate the data, and have a way of communicating more effectively the creation of an identity workspace, a transformative culture, which encouraged student development.

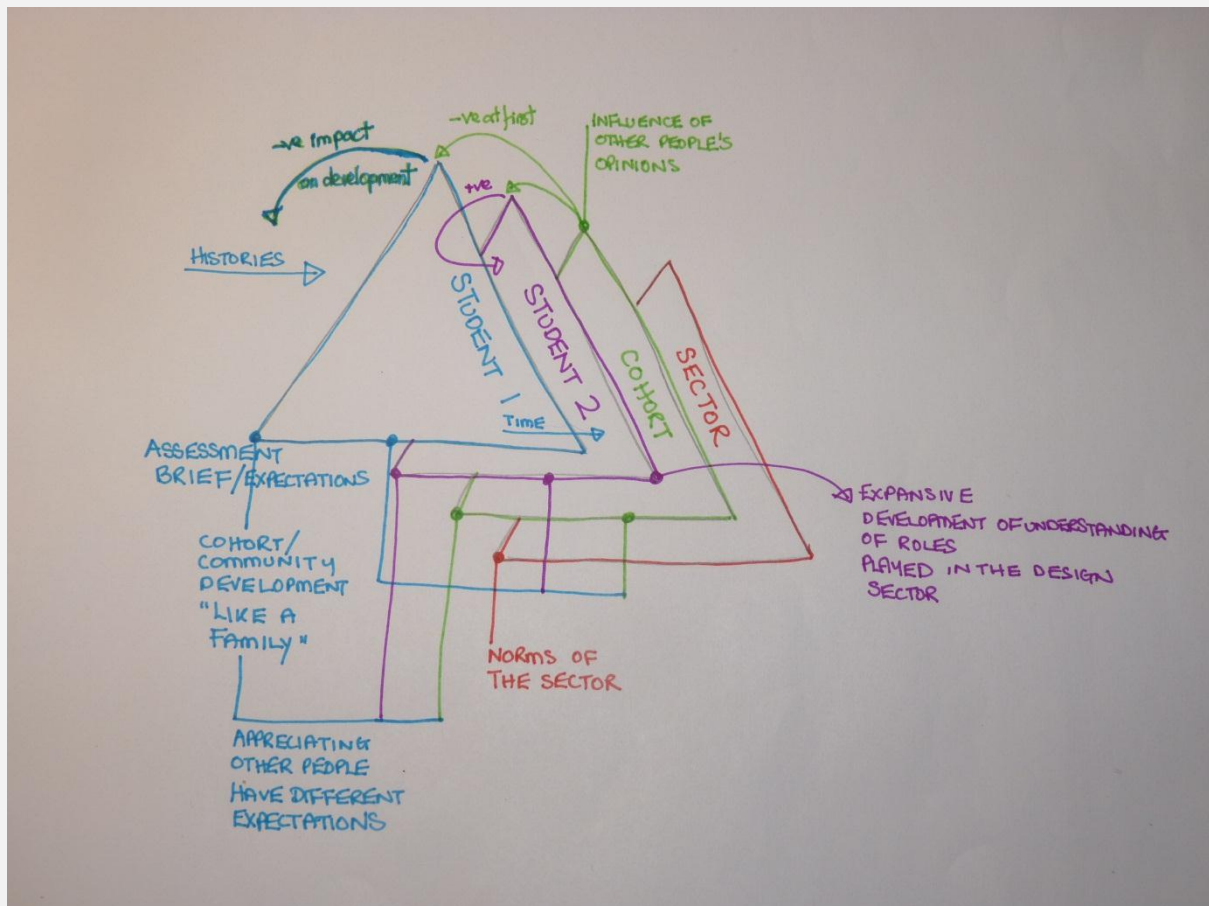
However, unlike Hardman (2007:57) who analyses “*evaluative episodes*” in a classroom, and Mwanza (2001) who uses CHAT in a structured, systematic way, I had not planned the studies with this in mind. Therefore, my first approach involved the analysis of the mini-stories told by the teachers and the students in their interviews. Because I had adopted a semi-structured conversational style these stories were a significant feature of the responses. I used the triangular model developed by Engeström (1987) to analyse data directly from the interview transcripts, making sketches in the margin alongside a mini-story told by the respondent. I then expanded these mini-stories, using additional data from within the transcript, or from another source, for example another interview, observation or photographs (Engeström, 2008). I used drawing by hand to develop these mini-stories, using my own style of layering and annotating with notes and arrows. In this way I could use the features present in the activity system, the roles, community, boundaries plus physical and psychological mediators, and represent ways in which the teachers’ intentions and their student responses interacted. I gave each mini-story a name, and then told the story in text beside it.

Illustration 7.2 shows how I visualised ‘*Developing the ability to listen and respond to other people’s beliefs and opinions*’, a story told by Sofia about her 3D Design students. She indicated that this process took different lengths of time for each student, but was an essential feature of the sector. She designed group projects involving the need to express group opinions, and encouraged peer support and comment so that the students developed understanding of the purpose of the process, confidence in their own part in it and the resilience to accept other people’s opinions on their work.

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Illustration 7.2 Developing the ability to listen and respond to other people's beliefs and opinions

Sofia and 3D Design students: College B

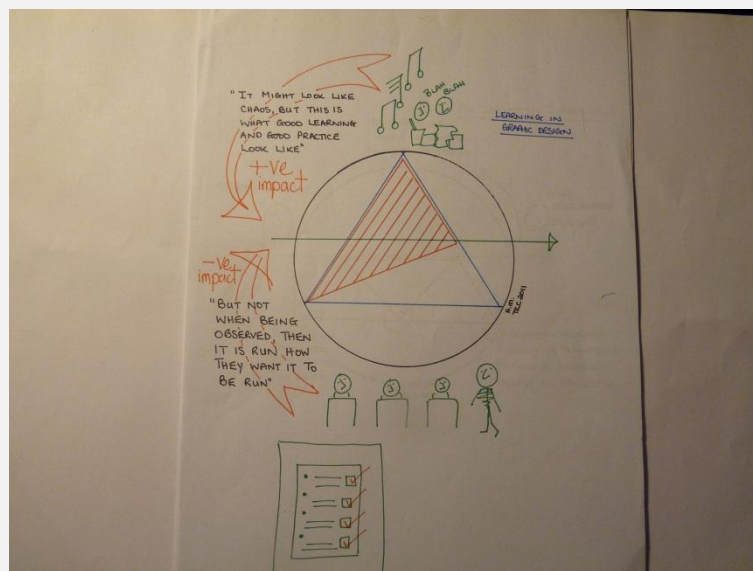


Students in the early stages of their course are represented as Student 1, and Student 2 represents them at a later stage. At the beginning of the course the students (S1) find it extremely difficult to accept criticism or comment on the work that they have produced. This has negative feedback on their development. It is a norm of the design sector (Sector) that peer or client (Cohort) comment be part of the design process, and this is a major part of the rationale for its inclusion in the course. The students' prior experiences may not have included this practice, so they are not used to the rules or norms of the sector. Producing a design or a product is something that can become 'public property' even though an individual has created it. The individual is putting himself or herself on display, and criticism can personally hurt because of the presence of the self in the work. Playing the role of 'designer' instead of 'student' helps the purpose of the activity become expansive, as the students' attitude to feedback changes over time (S2), so that they actively seek each other's opinions on their work.

In creating these mini-stories I adopted an approach similar to the one I had developed with analog drawings (Edwards, 1986), and wrote a detailed narrative of the story after the diagrammatic analysis. The drawings indicated visually the

impact of student dispositions on development, where change occurred over time and how teacher intentions interacted with student response. They also showed the influence of context, and gave the opportunity to be more playful (Illustration 7.3). As the stories developed, I identified themes within them. For example, Illustration 7.2 includes change over time, the impact of the cohort and the professional community and personal dispositions. As the stories accumulated so the themes they contained accumulated, enabling them to be grouped

Illustration 7.3 It might look like chaos.....

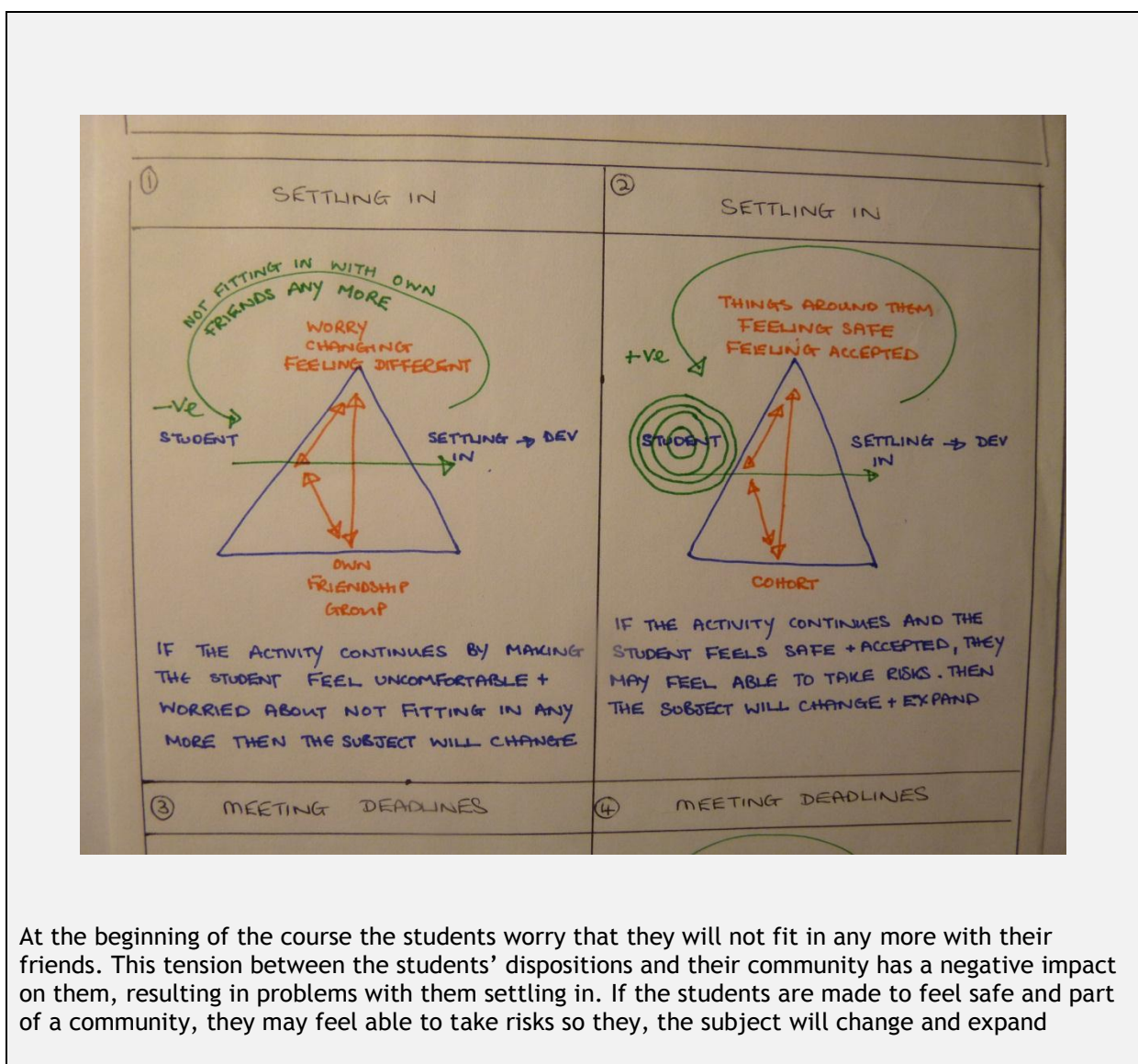


Lance indicated the restrictive influence of Ofsted-style observation on his practice, explaining how he changed what he did during these events so that 'it was run in the way they wanted it to be run'

In order to create a more detailed and systematic analysis of these themes I then adopted the approach developed by Mwanza (2001) who suggests analysing the data by asking a series of structured questions based on the object of the activity. For example, this enabled me to isolate the student dispositions in the data and identify when they were influenced by containment and interpretation (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010). I first asked the question, 'how do the students' dispositions influence the object of the activity, student development?' This

resulted in a structured series of analytical drawings and Illustration 7.4 shows how the student dispositions at the start of their course interacted with their sense of belongingness to a community and how their teacher acknowledged this, resulting in an expansive developmental outcome. The second question, ‘*how do the roles played by the students influence the object of the activity, student development?*’ isolated roles played and indicated how the students’ dispositions and the norms of the sector interacted with it, and how change occurred over time (Illustration 7.5).

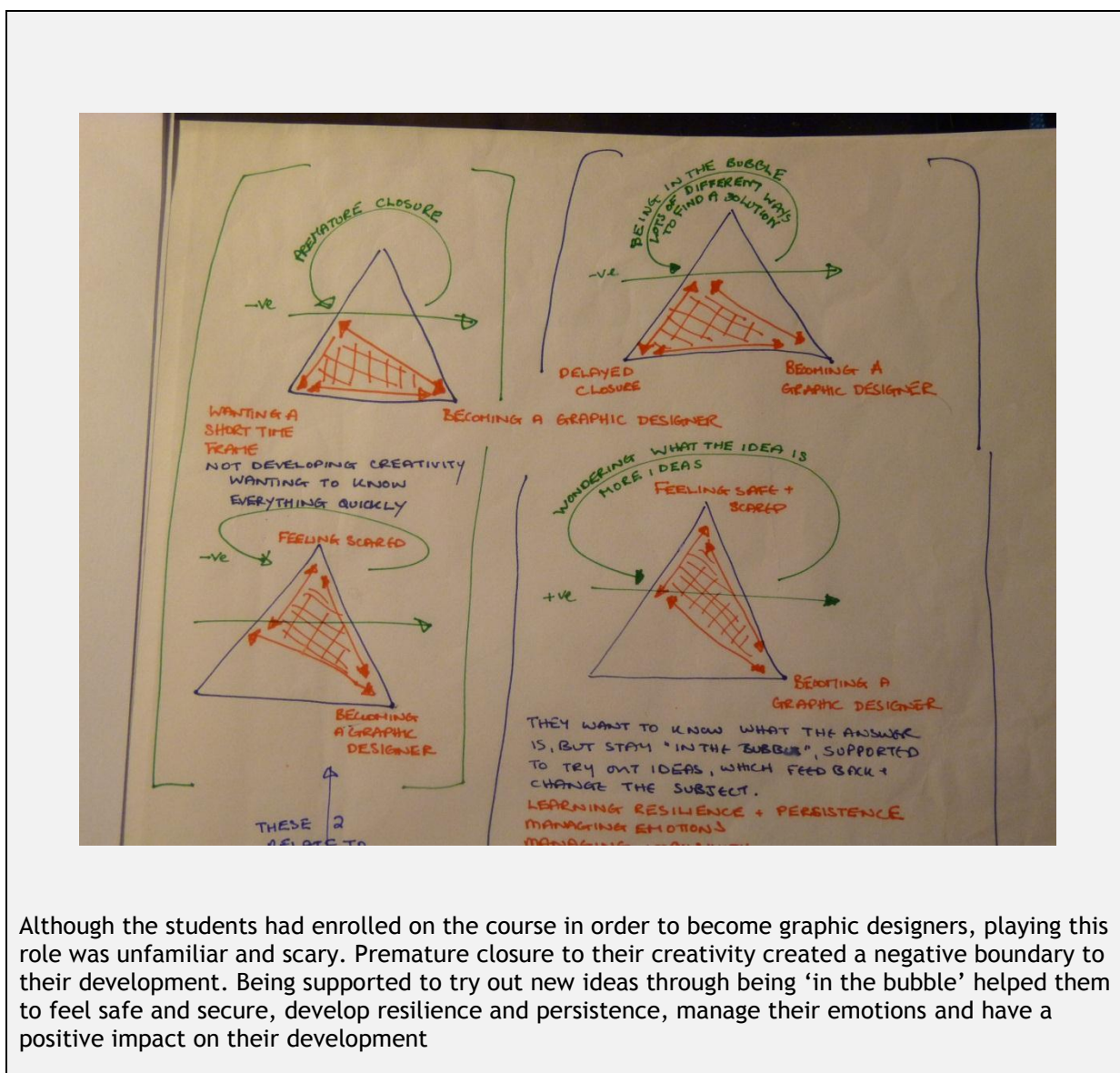
Illustration 7.4 Settling in



Other questions included ‘how does the physical environment influence student development?’ and ‘how does the organisational context influence the teachers’ ability to promote student development?’

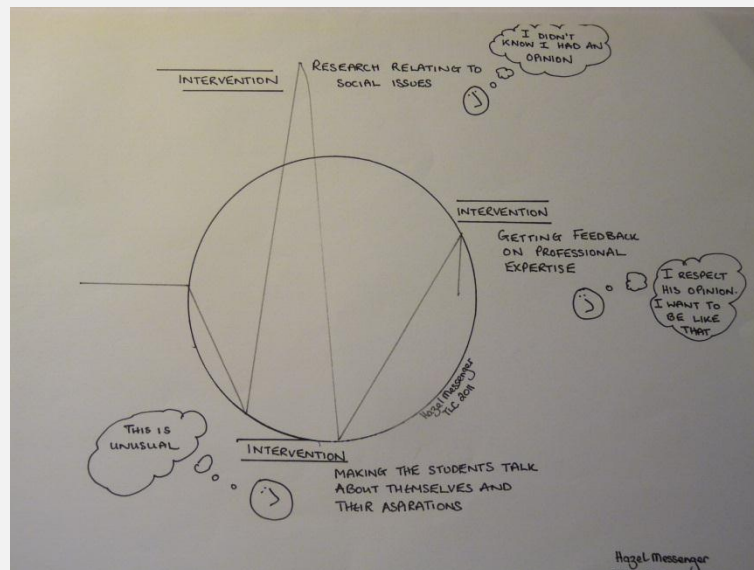
The final form of analysis involved adopting the ‘in the bubble’ model which had been part of Billie’s data. This simple model enabled me to visualise interventions and experiences which presented the students with issues that they needed to resolve or justify, and therefore had the potential to be transformative (Illustration 7.6).

Illustration 7.5 Becoming a graphic designer



Although the students had enrolled on the course in order to become graphic designers, playing this role was unfamiliar and scary. Premature closure to their creativity created a negative boundary to their development. Being supported to try out new ideas through being ‘in the bubble’ helped them to feel safe and secure, develop resilience and persistence, manage their emotions and have a positive impact on their development

Illustration 7.6 Developing an opinion



Using the 'bubble' model enabled the display of interventions adopted to help the students become aware that they were allowed to have an opinion, and also to comment on the students' response through using cartoons. This illustration shows how interventions were adopted that came from outside of the students' experience, helping to provide them with an expansive experience.

These forms of analysis, used alongside the themes identified within the mini-stories and the data displays from the two studies and the group discussion enabled a picture to be built up of the intentions and actions of the teachers, their students' response and contribution plus the influence of organisational context.

Visual, structured data displays accompanied by qualitative descriptions based on the method proposed by Mwanza (2001) enabled isolation of features and comparisons between contexts, and the identification of how HE in FE provided a transformative and developmental opportunity, an identity workspace. The mini stories enriched these displays, with the themes showing the intentions and actions of the teachers, change over time and the interaction between students, teachers, and context. Using these strategies it was possible to identify a pedagogical pattern associated with the creation of transformative learning cultures; the foundation provided by empathy, the development of trust, the influence of roles, relationships and community, confrontation and challenge and the significance of

time and space. The pattern told the story of the students and the story of their teachers.

7.6 Conclusion to Chapter 7

Chapter 7 has demonstrated how the data from Study 1, the group discussion and Study 2 was analysed, independently at first, and then integrated to provide an interpretation of higher education as an identity workspace. By taking a case study approach, a conceptual framework was developed through the process of undertaking the research. The following Chapter provides a discussion of the findings through themes identified based on this conceptual framework.

Chapter 8

Presentation and discussion of findings

“Stories are the most important thing in the world, without them we wouldn’t be human at all. There is a hunger for stories in all of us, we need them so much that we’re even prepared to read bad books to get them, if the good books won’t supply them”.

Philip Pullman (1996:1)

8.0 Introduction to Chapter 8

Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the findings of this research. Through adopting a case study approach a conceptual model for the creation of a transformative, person-forming learning cultures in higher education has been developed. By adopting a cultural theory of learning (Bruner, 1990, 1996; James and Biesta, 2007; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) the discussion considers how the actions, dispositions and interpretations of those participating in particular learning cultures influence the development of students towards them having a more purposeful and integrated identity. It conceptualises this type of learning culture as an ‘identity workspace’ and the pedagogical patterns associated with it acknowledge the significance of student dispositions, because development is disruptive, involving constant settling and resettling in an environment and re-examination and change of established beliefs and behaviours. The comment made by Philip Pullman (above) suggests that individuals need to create their own stories, and will go with whatever is on offer, whatever its quality or relevance if that is all that is available. This discussion suggests that teachers have a significant role to play in helping students develop their own purposeful story through the creation of pedagogical patterns that acknowledge the fragility and vulnerability of students as they undergo change and development. It also sets the discussion within the context of contemporary concerns regarding the development of employability (Hinchcliffe and Jolly, 2011; Pegg et al, 2012). These debates consider that employability should not be regarded as skills acquisition, but related more closely to character building, maintenance of wellbeing and development of personhood.

Taking a cultural view of learning demanded an holistic view of the contexts under scrutiny. This was supported by a rich and varied approach to data collection, which resulted in rich and varied data. The process of analysis identified a number of overarching themes and a pedagogical pattern associated with teacher intention. The pattern reflects the active demonstration of empathy, with the data also recording the experience of students in a transformative learning culture and the experience of teachers working with developmental intentions. This discussion of findings aims to present a language and a vocabulary through which the creation of an 'identity workspace', a transformative developmental learning culture might be explored. It is not suggested that what is discussed might represent a recipe for action, but as Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001:12) suggest, the reader is asked to decide whether what is presented might "*ring true*" and be helpful to other contexts.

The chapter opens with a discussion of the intentions of the teachers involved in the study, how they saw 'development of the person' as their key purpose. This is followed by a discussion of how the teachers put their intentions into practice through an integrated pedagogical pattern associated with the active demonstration of empathy with the needs of the students. It is important to note that the pattern consists of four integrated elements, each with its own characteristics, but not operating in isolation. The first element of the pattern is the significance of the development of trust. The second element is the part that roles, relationships and a sense of community play in the creation of a transformative learning culture. The third, how empathy is demonstrated through confrontation and the final element, the significance of pedagogical time and space.

The discussion continues with consideration of the students' experience of being part of a learning culture which intends to bring about change and development, and ends with the teachers' perspective of working with developmental intentions. The findings include evidence of the opportunities and barriers offered by subject disciplines and the influence of organisational issues, as well as how barriers are overcome.

8.1 Teacher intention: the development of the person

[I'm] 'really rather more interested in the person, giving them, I don't know, the ability to be able to look at things and debate things, different points of view, allowing them, not expecting to change their point of view, but allowing them, giving them the liberty to think beyond, generally speaking, the circumstances they found themselves in'.

Rob: Head of Department and Design teacher

I began this research because I had perceived differences between the various higher education sites that I had responsibility for, with some making more of a difference to their students' learning and development than others. Despite acknowledging that the college provision was not always positively regarded by my university colleagues, I also began it because I thought that opening up the purposes and practices of HE in FE practitioners may have something to contribute to a wider higher education landscape concerned with the development of employability.

These issues lead me to ask the question, '*what is going on here?*' and to recruit the teachers for this study purposively as I wanted to find out more about why they acted as they did, how their intentions were put into practice and the impressions and responses of their students. Therefore, it was not altogether surprising that the teachers clearly expressed intentions which went beyond developing subject expertise, indicating their primary intention of developing young people who could make the most of themselves, not just in employment, but in the rest of their lives as well.

For the teachers reported on in this study, their involvement in HE in FE began long before the introduction of Foundation Degrees, with the participants in Study 2 representing approximately 150 years of higher level teaching, none of this occurring in a university setting. For them, teaching with developmental intentions was not something new, their involvement in Foundation Degrees only occurring because of changes in government and organisational policies. Their higher education teaching often involved working with students with lower entry qualifications than their university counterparts, or with those from backgrounds less represented in higher education. However, these were not necessarily seen as

a disadvantage, instead, they could be framed as an opportunity to bring about change and development, based upon the intention to have a meaningful, long lasting effect on the potential of the students. Rob, a very experienced head of a design department, regarded '*deficiencies*' as a positive advantage, as it gave him something to work with. Stella, responsible for higher education at College A, felt that the college staff preferred working closely with students, rather than '*teaching large groups in lecture theatres*'.

Research by Wilson et al (1974) and Cox et al (2010) indicate that the way in which teachers engage with their students in the classroom gives an indication of their overarching purpose and more recently, Yorke and Knight (2004) highlight how teacher attitude can have a significant impact on student potential. Interestingly, although Hussey and Smith (2009:103) suggest that the processes of transformative learning proposed by Mezirow (1985) and others could provide a "*sensitive pedagogy*" (Hussey and Smith, 2009:103), their language implies the intention to carefully rectify shortcomings, rather than an active and positive process towards a better future. In this research, the creation of a transformative learning culture appeared to be based on a positive foundation, that there is potential in everyone.

Jephcote et al (2007) indicate that teachers in FE colleges often show consistency between their values and their actions, and in this study, this was apparent in all of the teachers involved, whether related to joining a vocational sector, or to the belief there is potential in everyone. Consistent themes penetrating all of the findings related to the demands and expectations of the vocational sector and of becoming a higher education student. Like Pegg et al (2012) suggest, rather than seeing the degree process as the simple acquisition of skills, the teachers helped their students become skilful, able to be confident in their decisions and about what to do and how to do it. They also recognised the need to help their students develop the identities and dispositions expected of their sectors, realising that they would not survive if they did not. As Colley et al (2003) indicate, the demands on young people of entering a vocational sector are not always recognised; however, although this was recognised and acted upon, I realised that there were subtle differences in the teachers' intentions. Although these were based upon firmly held convictions regarding the potential of young people, these were

expressed differently. Lance, an Illustrator, felt that his own degree experience had not prepared him for employment, whereas Billie, in Graphics, felt that her role was to help young people make the most of their lives, and her subject was the vehicle by which she did this.

Possessing these intentional qualities for higher education teaching is emphasised in the recent report of the *Dispositions to Stay and to Succeed Project* (Harding and Thompson, 2011), who recommend that organisations should place more emphasis on them in the recruitment and development of their staff. In expressing their intentions, the teachers demonstrated empathy with the needs of their students, whether to do with their immediate employability in a vocational sector, or to help them make the most of themselves in the whole of their lives. The next section discusses how the teachers demonstrated empathy actively as a process underpinning their practice. Mills (2002) recognises that ‘empathy’ is a difficult and contested concept, but suggests that in teaching it is founded on attunement and responsiveness. Demonstrating empathy as a proactive and at times provocative process is used as an over-arching concept in this discussion of a pedagogical pattern associated with the creation of transformative learning cultures.

8.2 The demonstration of empathy

‘We forget what it is like to be a teenager, their priorities are part time job, boyfriend, what you’re wearing to the party, and college is, even at HE level, somewhere down the bottom’.

Billie: Graphics teacher

Development of the whole person has become a core feature of recent publications concerning the purpose of higher education and also the development of employability (Pegg et al. 2012). However, as Hagar and Hodkinson (2009) are keen to point out, this is not something that should just focus on the individual, as developing a ‘whole person’ involves understanding their social existence, seeing the world from their point of view, being empathic with their needs, and being able to respond to them. A cultural view of learning supports this approach, taking into account how participation in a culture contributes to its development, at the

same time as appreciating how it contributes to an individual's development. In this discussion of the active demonstration of empathy, a pedagogical pattern involving four elements; the development of trust, creating relationships and a sense of community, confrontation and pedagogical time and space are identified as themes involved in the creation of an 'identity workspace', a transformative, developmental learning culture.

None of the teachers involved in the research saw being empathic with the needs of their students as an easy process, but for them it was the only option, demonstrated from the outset by creating an environment with trust at its core.

8.2.1 Trust

'I don't think many of our students have had a good experience with their teachers before. Or if they have, then they haven't recognised it. Sometimes I think they think I'm having a laugh'

Rob: Head of Department and Design teacher

The students embarking on their Foundation Degree courses came from a range of backgrounds, but the majority were 18-25 years olds. The teachers recognised that their students started with a range of characteristics, including being excited, disappointed, nervous and unsure, some of these the result of their previous experiences and achievements, others an expression of uncertainty about their own futures. They aimed from the outset to acknowledge these dispositions, and create a supportive 'container', a physical as well as a social and psychological space where students were welcomed and encouraged to participate and to develop trusting relationships, with each other and with the teachers themselves. Trust, and the acknowledgement of the students' often conflicting dispositions, provided the foundation to the overarching pedagogical pattern. However, responses by Billie, Tom, Rob and Lance indicated that they recognised that 'trust' had multiple dimensions. Bain (2004) describes trust as something that is realistic and honest, involving teachers in having a deep and sophisticated understanding of the factors that influence student success. In this study, it involved acknowledgement of relationships, histories and individual interpretations.

Although Brookfield (2006:67) indicates that students who see their teachers as trustworthy regard them as “*allies in learning*”, comments made by students and teachers indicated that the students had not necessarily experienced this before, even seeing a teacher as someone who was not necessarily on their side. From the teachers’ point of view, acknowledging this was an important part of developing a learning culture that was future-focused, with development in mind. To bring about change, they needed to take steps to disrupt the status quo, and be able to present their students with challenges, about themselves as well as about the subject. In order that the students felt capable of confronting the vulnerability that these challenges would expose them to, they needed to feel that they were participating in a culture where teachers had their best interests at heart.

Giddens (1994:14) describes “*active trust*” as trust which has to be won rather than achieved because of a pre-existing role. These teachers often needed to be able to develop a different type of teacher-student relationship with their students to the types that had seemed to serve the students adequately in the past. They needed to help the students believe that they were capable of change, so for the students this meant letting go of expectations, trusting themselves to try out new roles and relationships, and testing them to see if they worked. However, not all of the students would risk letting go of themselves in this way, particularly at the beginning of the course, and being nervous, unsure and defensive could persist longer in some students than others. Chickering and Reisser (1993) explain how observing dispositions associated with resistance is helpful, as it shows the teacher that the students have something to deal with. To overcome resistance, and the “*pull of the familiar*” (ibid:211), meant that the teachers had to persist in their intentions, demonstrate consistency in their actions and be resilient to obstacles. Being trustworthy and a resilient and strong catalyst for change (Bond, 2007) was supported, if possible, by sharing the responsibility with like-minded colleagues, so that the students experienced a patterned recognition of their needs wherever they were and whoever they were with. Rogoff (2003) explains how mutual involvement in shared endeavours is a key feature of development, and being in a college environment meant that creating trusting relationships could be difficult, as outside of their classrooms or studios the students often felt that they were

treated like the younger students, a one-size-fits-all approach. Although the teachers aimed to create a particular type of culture for their course and in their teaching areas, the students needed to operate within multiple cultures, not all of them conducive to their development. They acknowledged the fragility of their students' progress and the difficulties were issues that the teachers felt could be resolved, or impossible to overcome, depending on how they felt their college managers empathised with their students' needs.

Although the teachers clearly expressed their intentions to create trusting relationships, they acknowledged that some students would never be able to trust wholeheartedly. Seeing the development of trust as a reciprocal relationship helped the teachers to feel a little better if their efforts went in vain, commenting that there was very little that could be achieved if the students were not prepared to make the steps themselves. Rogoff (2003) considers that mutual involvement using shared sociocultural activities helps to bridge different perspectives. Teaching to bring about change is not an easy process because as Brookfield (1995) indicates, students will not necessarily interpret their teachers' actions in the way that they are intended, particularly if they have anticipated a different type of experience. However, although some students did put up resistance, these were not the only barriers that the teachers faced. Others included the recruitment and development of a staff team with a shared understanding of aims, administrative demands on students and teachers, the primacy of FE structures on the creation of timetables, the particular opportunities provided by the different subject areas and, for those involved in Clearing, it involved uncertainty about who was being recruited.

The Design subjects felt that they had an advantage with developing trusting relationships with their new students, as for them recruitment involved a face to face interview, rather than just being an administrative procedure. Brookfield (2006) considers that students want to feel that it is worth their while to be associated with a particular course and to invest their time and energy into it, and in Design, more of their students also progressed internally, from an FE course. Both of these issues meant that teachers were able to help their students believe

that they could trust them, by for example, maintaining email contact and inviting them to visit the end-of-year exhibitions to see the type of work that they would be involved in (see for example, Vignette 7.4).

Business teachers did not have the opportunity to get to know their students prior to the course commencing, as the majority of these students were recruited through Clearing, meaning that their teachers started from scratch. Many of the students were disappointed at first that they were not at the university, some commenting that they had just left one college environment to go to another. For these students, their experience of college had resulted in a failure to achieve what they wanted, entry to university. Acknowledging this meant that establishing firm but trusting relationships as quickly as possible was essential, in order that the students felt that they belonged to an environment that was going to help them achieve what they wanted, progression to the university at the end of the two years. Palmer (2010:46) explains how a community with “*relational trust*” can be a significant factor in improving performance, something that Julia demonstrated in her early strategies with her students (Vignette 8.1).

Vignette 8.1 No escape

Julia stated that it was very important that she got to know the first year students names as quickly as possible, playing a game with them to prove she knew them so that the students felt that there was ‘*no escape*’. Whether in the classroom or corridor she referred to each of them by name, enquiring about their wellbeing and during her teaching explicitly linked the coursework requirements on ‘motivation’ to the students’ personal experiences. She felt that they did not really know why they were on the course, and needed to develop an identity as business students if they were to succeed in a business or a higher education environment. By creating an environment where the students felt comfortable and enabling them to set their own goals, Julia expanded the boundaries of the students’ opportunities for learning, something they described as ‘*bringing a bigger world to the lectures*’.

Julia behaved no differently in class to how she did at any other time, and she indicated her intention to treat the students as she would like to be treated, something that Palmer (2010:1) calls “*teaching from within*”. Being able to be consistent is a key part of working with developmental intentions, and observing the practice in the different settings demonstrated that this first element of the pedagogical pattern was not just a nice feeling, demonstrated by welcoming

activities at the beginning of a course, but persistent coherent actions, providing the foundations for continued change and development. Wilson et al (1974) indicate that students are able to interpret coherency of actions by the teacher as a signal of their intentions, and Taylor (2006) suggests that signalling positive intentions indicates being fully present in a relationship. Julia's students described her as '*someone they could connect quickly with*', indicating their awareness that being taught by someone they felt comfortable with made learning easier. Although Julia considered that the students found her personal approach '*a bit daft at first*', she indicated that the change came when the students realised that through harnessing their own dispositional energies, they would be able to take control and rewrite the impact of the past.

Long-lasting trust was also demonstrated through on-going rituals with collective social significance (Vignette 8.2), something also recognized by Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) with regard to the creation of an identity workspace. For example, in order to develop their identities as illustrators, the students described in Vignette 8.2 needed to have the opportunity to demonstrate their own choices, and to participate authentically in the illustration community. This provided the students with a significant personal challenge, as they needed to be able to integrate their knowledge of the subject with the requirements of their client and the expectations of the professional community. Right from the beginning of the course, Lance ran a weekly 'group crit' when the students would get comment on their work, from him and from their peers. They had to get used to being resilient to critical commentary, a norm of the design sector. When they began to undertake freelance work the students created their own challenge, the ability to operate as professional illustrators, and it was trust in Lance that made it work. The students' freelance work existed at the intersection of the student world, and the professional world of illustration, and Lance straddled both, as their teacher and a highly-regarded comic book artist. They knew he did not appreciate poor standards or poor effort and could be very straight-talking. However, because of their on-going experience his students saw him as 'straight', and worthy of their respect.

Vignette 8.2 The group crit

in the crit situation it's supportive but it should also be a situation where they are allowed to hear 'no' or 'that's wrong,' ... they may have missed the point of what the client would want, so there are constraints, but again I think it is just as important to hear 'no' as it is to hear 'yes'

Lance: Illustration teacher, College A

'And even if it was freelance, you could say to Lance, 'What do you think of that?', and he would say 'Shut up! Do it again!' LAUGHTER

'He's straight.'

'Yes very straight'

Illustration students, College A

From the beginning of the course, the students had been involved in the 'group crit', a regular group session where they were encouraged to critique each other's work, and defend their own. As a freelance artist himself, Lance expected high standards, and he had a consistent approach, pointing out clearly when standards were not adequate, but always finding something to praise. As the students progressed through the course, they began to undertake freelance work, becoming more confident in their own abilities to act as illustrators. Lance encouraged them to bring their drafts to him to review, which they willingly did in the knowledge that they could trust him to tell them honestly when something was adequate, and when it was not.

Acknowledging that the students' ongoing development was fragile and required constant vigilance was a consistent theme in the data, but this did not mean that the teachers or their students continued to act in the same way because each were constantly influencing the environment they were in. As time progressed, the trust demonstrated by the teachers expanded to the second element of the pedagogical pattern, the creation of a trusting community where the students were encouraged to adopt different roles and relationships, progressively adopting the expectations of their vocational sectors, be aware of their own and others' dispositions and acting to encourage each other to meet the demands that were confronting them.

8.2.2 Roles, relationships and a sense of community

Because of the smaller size of their cohorts, the teachers recognised that they had an advantage in creating effective relationships compared to their university counterparts, as they were able to get to know their students as individuals and create cohorts where it was easier to help the students get to know each other. Barnett (2007), Cranton (2006a), Brookfield (2006) and Parks (2000) all recognise

the significance of creating environments which support the development of students and through being able to see their students participating in activities and interacting with others formally and informally, they had more of a chance of understanding why each behaved as they did.

Mahn and John-Steiner (2002:49) consider that a teacher's ability to appreciate the students' "*perezhivanie*", the process by which each individual student experiences and processes the emotional aspects of the same situation, contributes significantly to their ability to engage students in meaningful, purposeful education. In order to prompt transformative development it is necessary to confront individuals with new challenges and experiences, situations that demand resolution of the difference between their existing state and what is required by the new situation (Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Engeström, 1987; Kegan, 1982;1994). A persistent theme in the findings from the research associated with this element of the pedagogical pattern related to how the teachers devised activities with multiple purposes, enabling the students to participate in different ways and play multiple roles. This helped with learning more about the students' dispositions, how individuals responded to different situations and to reveal their habitual mind-sets (Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Mezirow, 2000). Open plan teaching areas helped, as did the accessibility of other members of staff, because shared perceptions of the students could be developed.

As an example, Julia considered that some of the Business students arrived in 'short trouser mode', finding it difficult to take responsibility. She needed to help them become more focussed and self-aware so that they could maximise their chances for succeeding on the course, and devised group activities which required the students to take turns at leadership. Rather than being concerned with the outputs of the group, she focussed with each individual on their own outcomes, linking the role being played and the tasks set to the feedback and perceptions she had already shared with them. Their ability to tackle the challenge was influenced by their own dispositions. However, for these students, trying out new roles or working in different collaborations did not always go smoothly. For some of them, the experience of being asked to undertake a leadership role produced too much

discomfort and their vulnerability to the experience was expressed as they chose to absent themselves, something which because of the way the learning activities were arranged (Photo-story 7.2), became immediately apparent. Chickering and Reisser (1993) explain how crises can be very informative, and Mahn (2003) considers that being aware of the tension between expectations and an individual's personal resources can help with overcoming them. Although Julia acknowledged that her colleagues thought that she 'mothered' the students, she worked hard in the first Semester to create a firm boundary to the course, to help the students learn about the expectations of higher education and about themselves. She appreciated that the students' existing dispositions meant that they did not yet have the resources to manage the cultural expectations of higher education, but she made these explicit and then confronted the students with the ways in which they needed to work to achieve them. Her students acknowledged that it was a 'flight or fight' situation and they indicated, with good humour, that she kept 'on at them', just like their mothers.

Although each of the teachers clearly indicated that they had a personal commitment to the development of their students, the evidence suggested that they realised that this was too complex for them to achieve alone. Although their strategies included working with like-minded colleagues, a significant feature of this element of the pattern involved giving the students the opportunity to belong to a community where they could support, encourage and challenge each other. Kegan (1982; 1994) indicates that young adult development is characterised by wanting to be connected and to belong. However, as Chickering and Reisser (1993) point out, peer relationships are more influential to young adults than those between the teacher and their students. As Julia indicated in her responses, if the students did not find something to relate to in the course and cohort, they would find something else, which could have a detrimental effect. It is through their peer relationships that students will make sense of their experiences, and the students' own culture can affect the development of identity. Therefore, orchestrating the development of a culture which encouraged relationships between the students which could promote individual development was seen to be crucial at the start of the course. This was approached differently according to the

subject specialism, and appeared to be easier in Design because of the culture of the sector (Vignette 8.3).

Vignette 8.3 Induction week activity for Design: College B

The Design subjects had a history of taking their students away for a residential induction trip, and had been surprised at the impact on the development of the cohort of being unable to do so because of changes to college policies. They did not feel that the activities planned by the college were a suitable substitute, so devised their own week-long 'Dragon's Den' type competition for all of the 1st and 2nd year Design students, culminating in a shared and very noisy presentation session. In Design, collaboration between different professions and specialisms is the norm, and this activity helped the students get used to playing different roles in the design community, and to each other's ideas and opinions, as well as supporting the development of a good humoured and cheerfully competitive group.

At a time in their development when belonging to a group could either reinforce or threaten the students' sense of themselves (Bracher, 2006), the teachers needed to demonstrate both credibility and authenticity in their actions and intentions in order that the students felt it safe to invest themselves in the expectations. Brookfield (2006) indicates that this is necessary for meaningful learning to occur and having and demonstrating professional credibility was a distinct advantage. This element of the pattern was helped by having a professional community to relate to. The students had a clear focus for their development, but, as indicated previously, developing a vocational identity makes great demands on young people. When Billie and Sofia asked their students to adopt different roles (Vignette 8.3), they were asking them to develop identities and dispositions derived from the expectations of the design culture and community, something that they and the rest of the staff team needed to model. Baxter Magolda (1999) considers that modelling the processes of learning expected by a discipline to be at the heart of a developmental pedagogy, enabling connections to be made explicitly between the subjects, the self and the discipline's community. In the studio environments the teachers had the advantage that established students provided this model as well as the staff team, something much more difficult in Business, as the students were taught in defined classrooms without any connections with each other, and with little evidence of the business sector (See for example, Vignette 8.8).

Although the students had chosen to undertake a vocational degree, and therefore had already made a decision to join a professional community, it took them time to appreciate the purpose of their teachers' actions. Lance explained how his students saw him as mad at first, but he felt that the turning point came when the students managed to overcome their attitude to the subject being flippant and to take it seriously, seeing that joining the professional illustration community could be a real possibility for their own futures. It was the constant and consistent mediation by Lance that reinforced this possibility, helping the students create a realistic purpose for being on the course, a connection between themselves and their careers (Vignette 8.2). However, although they acquired technical and social skills associated with the industry, it was not until they mastered themselves and could imagine themselves realistically into their own futures that real development occurred. At the beginning of the course, the students were not lacking purpose, but they were not able to be purposeful because they delivered products to someone else who would judge their value. The change came when the purpose for creating illustrations became aligned with the one that Lance had been promoting since the start of the course, and they began to judge their own products against the professional standards of the illustration community, and to see them as worthy. In this way, their illustrations were both "*material*", products in their own right and "*ideal*" (Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009:132), as they enabled the students to reconceptualise their identities towards being illustrators.

This was not an isolated example, and teacher and student purposes converging could be seen across the research sites. In Business, the students' futures rested in the short term with their becoming part of the University community, and to facilitate this Julia made the students talk about how they operated in different situations and how this influenced their outcomes. Increasing the students' self-awareness in this way particularly enabled the young male students to develop the ability to work effectively with others, rather than fooling around. As Kegan (1982) points out, being able to work collaboratively is an important developmental step and by operating in the "*zone of mediation*" (ibid:2) Julia helped the students create meaning from their behaviours and identify what they needed to do in order to change.

In their discussions of an identity workspace, Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) explain that having rites of passage enable individuals to have their changing identities publicly recognised. The Design students had many more opportunities to demonstrate this as all of their work involved the public recognition of their developing identities and membership of their vocational community. This was particularly demonstrated as they needed to design, build and participate in their end-of-year exhibition (Vignette 8.4), an event that contributed significantly to the college calendars, with invitations extended to the senior management, the validating university, families, students and employers. As Engeström (1999) points out, it is quite difficult to focus simultaneously on individual development and the development of the environment in which it takes place. Creating this exhibition involved the student in crossing physical and social boundaries, being confronted with new problems to solve and roles to play along the way. It involved them in being in their futures, as they created an authentic activity of their vocational sector, a transitional experience, representing a significant mediator of their own development.

This element of the pedagogical pattern involving the students playing different roles, developing new relationships and participating in the authentic activities of their communities all gave the teachers the opportunity to identify how they behaved in different situations. This then helped with learning more about the students' dispositions and how these dispositions might be challenged and changed.

Vignette 8.4 The end of year exhibition



8.2.3 Confrontation and challenge

'Getting used to criticism from clients is part of the culture of the business...important in student development, they have to get used to changing things and that is how you learn'.

Lance: Graphic Design teacher

'He needed a lot of serious discussions. Serious with a big 'S' on it, so he decided to work rather than put up with serious conversations, found something he was good at and succeeded'

Rob: Head of HE Department and Design teacher

Although each college prospectus emphasised that the course involved the acquisition of skills for employment, the teachers indicated that these capabilities developed in the students because high standards were consistently emphasised, and that it was the students' personal development and self-belief that helped them to be achieved. With awareness in recent publications that employability involves personal development and the maintenance of wellbeing, not just skills acquisition, this element of the pedagogical pattern provides an interesting discussion point, a chicken-and-egg situation.

In the Design subjects, where skills were an essential part of the whole course, the teachers emphasised that students needed to understand how to use them, rather than just what they were. This involved trial and error and being able to personally acknowledge when further practice, or a different approach was necessary. However, this was not the end of the story, as once the students had confronted the challenge of learning how to do something they could anticipate being confronted with criticism, not just from their teachers, but from their peers as well. In these subjects, having the dispositional energies associated with being able to persist and then tolerate criticism after having apparently mastered something was a public event, part of the norms of the sector. This was not something the students found easy, (see for example, Illustration 7.2.), but an essential part of their ongoing identity development.

Cole and Gajdamashko (2009) point out how an adult's beliefs create a cultural teleology, and with a responsibility for her students' futures Sofia gave plenty of

opportunities to give and receive criticism in a supportive atmosphere. However, she also adopted a challenging approach, with her students regarding this as a ‘*good thing*’, that she picked out the ‘*bad points as well as the good points*’. This could even be a telling off, but one commented,

‘I’d much rather she told me when I did something wrong rather than letting me get away with it. Otherwise I’m going to be lost, just doing my own thing. She makes us toe the line sometimes.’

Mezirow (1991) regards it as unethical for teachers to aim to foster transformative learning if they are unwilling to support students during the process. Although the students did report that their teachers were helpful and supportive, being open and honest was also appreciated. Both Julia and Billie described calling ‘*a spade a spade*’ as part of their practice, however Billie did recognise the emotional implications of feedback, especially if a student had failed an assignment. She managed this part of her role by being very matter of fact about assessment, but clearly recognised the difficulty in maintaining the paradox of being a supportive but challenging teacher and a formal assessor. If education has a developmental purpose, then managing and integrating this tension becomes a key challenge for educators (Robertson, 2001), and although recent documents (for example, Harding and Thompson, 2011; HEA, 2011) encourage the development of closer relationships between staff and students, this may not be something that all teachers feel comfortable with and has implications for staff recruitment and continuing professional development.

Brookfield (2006) suggests that many students feel like imposters, unsure that they should be studying for a degree, and failure in formal assessment or public criticism could reinforce this. The teachers involved in this study integrated multiple roles to maintain and build the will of their students to continue to improve, as experts in their fields, supportive teachers and fair assessors. Perhaps the most demanding and significant of them was that of ‘*agent provocateur*’, continuing to confront the risky business of developing their students and absorbing the difficult emotions of their students along the way. All of the teachers

acknowledged that this approach was exhausting and demanding, but also developed their cohorts' abilities to be confrontational, as well as themselves.

Cranton (2006b:164) considers that not only can a group provide a "*protective and supportive blanket*", but also a place for expressing and accepting others' opinions. For Julia, business seminars provided this opportunity, and for designers the 'group crit', but this was not an easy experience for the students. For example, in *Merchandising* the students acknowledged that they feared others would steal their ideas (Vignette 8.5), but as time progressed realized that each one of them had their own 'voice', and confidently commented on each other's work, something that Drago-Severson et al (2001:5) suggests relates to a student's stage of development. As Parks (2000) points out, young adulthood is a time of tentatively trying out new things to see if they work, and realizing that their peers could give meaningful, trustworthy feedback and help them develop their own identities was part of the developmental process associated with linking their personal understanding to the wider world.

In a developmental environment, helping students be aware of each other's development is as significant as being aware of their own, and this is another challenge that confronts those developing pedagogies for the future. In the smaller cohorts involved in this research, helping the students to find out how they could use each other was manageable, and this would be much more difficult with larger numbers. However, for this to be successful, the students first needed to have the confidence to perceive themselves being capable of being successful, and being able to acknowledge that relationships with others were part of the process. This was a particular issue for the Business students, where a move away from an emphasis on learning as an individual, to learning interdependently challenged the ways that they had operated up to that point. Even though they had not had much individual success they needed to realise that working with others improved their chances, rather than taking away from them. However, as Kegan (1982) emphasises, this is a developmental process rather than the acquisition of a new set of behaviours. Students entering higher education are often confronted with mixed

messages, there is often an emphasis on independent learning as well as interdependent learning through groupwork. In order to help students manage both it would help if teachers appreciated the developmental processes involved, rather than seeing them as sets of skills.

Vignette 8.5 Merchandising students developing their own voice



In the public space of the Merchandising studio, the students were surrounded by the work of their peers and of former cohorts. The students came from a variety of backgrounds, with many never having studied a design subject before. Merchandising is a hybrid subject, one that incorporates psychology and retail management with design and creativity. At the start of the course, the students were scared that their ideas would be 'stolen' by their peers, and were very reluctant to undertake peer presentations. By the end of the course, they described how wrong they had been, indicating how each one of them had their own personal authority, expressed through their own style and interpretation of the tasks set. Each one of these enabled the students to demonstrate their own 'voice', with the learning outcomes providing them with the opportunity each time to demonstrate their own development, enabling them to use the conventions of their subject area to present their academic assessments.



As Mezirow (2000) indicates, if an individual is given the opportunity to critically reflect on the assumptions that are used to interpret their experiences, then it is possible to challenge those assumptions when the reasons for them are exposed. For these students, reflection allowed them to talk about how they had perceived learning in the past, and if they did not feel successful because they were doing a Foundation Degree, the opportunity to reframe the course as an opportunity rather than a rejection. As they said *'we are no dumber than university students,'* seeing the experience they were having as *'just like developing yourself and setting yourself up for life like what you are going to be like when you are older.'*

Another finding from the research demonstrated the teachers' commitments to their students that went beyond the immediate confines of the course, and how they could use it to develop their students' awareness of the world. The close physical relationship between the teachers and the students, particularly in the studio environments of the Design subjects, gave the teachers the opportunity to get an idea about the students' attitudes and beliefs beyond an immediate teaching and learning context. Lance considered that the A level curriculum did not give his students enough opportunities to develop their own opinions and think independently and Rob stated that if the students were given *'permission to think'*, then 2 years later they could have *'thrown the book'* away and taken charge of their own development. However, this responsibility was not taken on lightly, and Lance made it very clear that he did not put *'his own spin on it'*. He believed that creating projects based on real world issues, like international healthcare, enabled them to integrate the beliefs they were developing into the design products they were making, and also become a lot more interested in the world around them because they have had to engage with it. Allen (2002) uses a similar approach to help students develop an integrated identity. By first recognizing the presence of opinions and then enabling critical engagement, reconsideration and justification of them through an authentic design activity, Lance acknowledged his students as capable of creating knowledge, anchoring his practice in *'who the person is right now'* (Kegan, 1982:115).

8.2.4 Pedagogical time and space

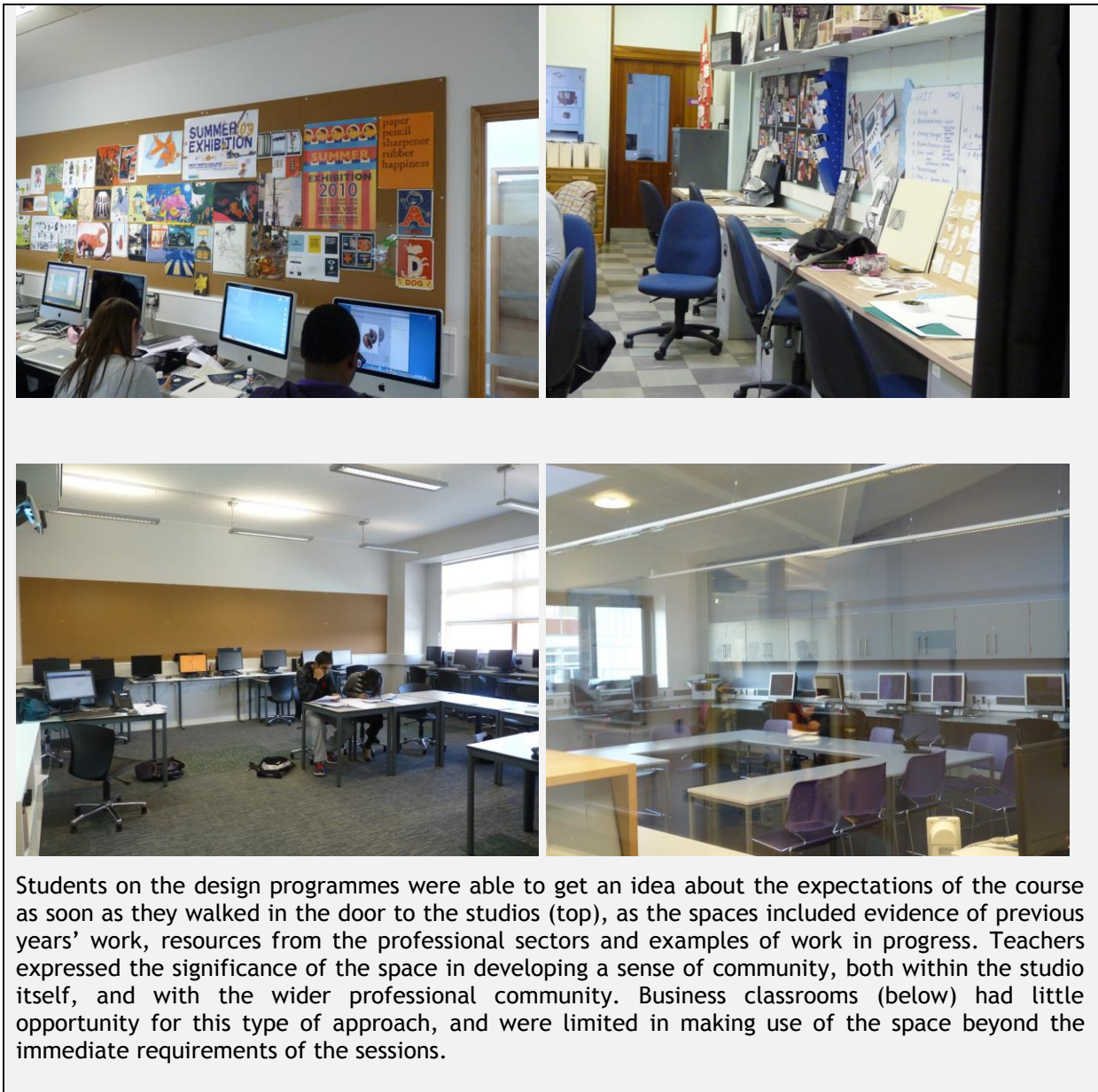
The final element of the pedagogical pattern identified how teachers used both time and space, where possible, in order to maximise the developmental opportunities of the students. In his discussions of space and risk Barnett (2007:146) eloquently explains how the “*spirit of space*” permeates a higher education with genuine developmental intentions, and one of the most notable differences between the Design and the Business courses was the way in which curriculum space and physical space was owned and controlled. In Design, and in Art, the curriculum was open ended, with students developing their own responses to the tasks being set, deploying practical skills as they saw fit. In Business, it was largely the other way round, with curriculum content and the skills necessary for its delivery or assessment fixed, the students’ achievement being measured against predetermined outcomes. I could understand how the Head of Higher Education, Stella, a scientist used to closely defined learning outcomes could find the Design courses quite worrying. She felt that there was little control, that the students were being self-indulgent, and that the teachers did not have enough to measure the quality of the outcomes against. However, the significance rested with how the process of learning and developing evolved in the spaces available.

In Art and in Design, the students had ownership of their physical spaces, even to the point of having individual areas, with records of work in progress, lasting collaborations and abandoned ideas immediately apparent. They inhabited their spaces, reaching into every corner and covering every surface, choosing the music to be played and the pictures on the walls. This was a not just a physical take-over, but a continuing story, as the students contributed to the history of their subject areas and the creation of their own futures.

By contrast, the Business areas appeared sterile, and although both Julia and Bridget tried on a session-by-session basis to breathe their own welcomes into the classroom spaces, there was little lasting evidence of the processes the students were going through or stages being reached (Vignette 8.6). It made me wonder what the impact might be on the Business students if their course and their

learning spaces were constructed more like those in Design, created around self-defined solutions to a problem, rather than around ‘coverage’ and ‘delivery.’

Vignette 8.6 Studio space (top) vs classroom space (below)



As Barnett (2007) points out, working to find space whether intellectual, practical or developmental, is an essential responsibility of higher education. This implies that space is also time, and Yamamuzi (2007) explains that developmental, spiral time exists somewhere between the linear time of the adult, and the circular time of the child, providing a zone to be dwelled in and explored. In courses that were planned in linear time, with inflexible timetables, and the achievement of students

each Semester being an end product, achieving developmental spiral time was difficult, addressed by individual designs of learning and teaching activities.

Each of the teachers expressed their desire to have more flexibility with timetabling, also commenting that there were key times in the year, for example entering the second year, or returning from work placement, when they needed to ensure that they remained a firm anchor for the students' continued development. They acknowledged that their students' motivation would be different at different times on the course, and Julia, for example, indicated that finding *kairos*, the right time to offer support was important. She needed to create a trusting environment first, because the challenge for the students was acknowledging that they would benefit from the support on offer, something that they could perceive as a threat to their identity if introduced too early (Vignette 8.7).

This type of “*rector*” activity (Japiassu, 2008:393) acknowledges student dispositions and is one that is chosen to suit a particular type of development. Julia worked hard to find out what her students were good at and encouraged them to take responsibility, and understand what it was that they needed to do to change. In this way, she enabled them to consciously integrate their desire to achieve progression to a University course with the need to master themselves and new areas of knowledge. The students saw this as positive, ‘*integrating the level and the mind and everything like attitude as well*’, therefore enabling them to identify their own dispositions, get a sense of their own development, and realize how they could use and develop their own dispositions to achieve what they wanted.

Julia had created a secure boundary to the learning environment, creating a consistent and reliable world of shared reality where the ‘work’ of being a student could be explored. In this space the students were able to create a different meaning to the experience of accepting support than previously. As Bruner (1990) points out, meaning is not a fixed commodity, and Julia gave the students the opportunity to reframe their previous experiences, giving the course the

opportunity to be expansive as development could occur as targets for improvement were jointly identified.

Vignette 8.7 Business students: finding the right time for confrontation



The majority of Julia's Business students had been recruited through Clearing, and were taking a Foundation Degree because they had not achieved the grades necessary for a University course. Julia regarded actively confronting their self-belief and challenging them to change to be a major part of her role, indicating that it was essential that she taught two modules in the first Semester, as it gave her the time and opportunity to do this. She aimed to eventually make herself redundant by providing them with evidence of what they needed to change, giving them copious written feedback on an assessment undertaken in the first six weeks of the course, meeting them afterwards at an 'appraisal' where they needed to present their plans for development to her. She indicated the importance of this occurring when the students were ready to hear what was said; otherwise they would feel that their sense of identity was under threat.

This was not an isolated example, and all of the teachers, in different ways, worked with their students like the Trojan horse described by Perry (1970), developing their trust and then finding the right time to be more confrontational and provocative. By creating a feeling of safety, and then gradually taking a more challenging stance the teachers were able to expand the potential of their students, something that Winnicott (1965) considers to be a key feature of a developmental space.

Perhaps one of the clearest representations of developmental time and space was made by Billie (Vignette 7.1). She used a visual model, '*in the bubble*', to help her

students make the most of their time. However, this was not as straightforward a strategy as it appeared, because she deployed it for a number of reasons. It could be interpreted as a practical response which encouraged critical reflection, helped the students develop their creativity and use their time more effectively. However, Billie used it because she acknowledged the anxiety, distress and fear that existed in her students, as they wondered if they would lose their friends, be incapable of becoming graphic designers and wanting to be given the answers, rather than finding them for themselves. Bracher (2006) recognises that if learning is experienced as something that threatens an existing identity then it may be resisted. Billie clearly recognised the personal risks her students felt, and the ‘bubble’ metaphor was very useful in conceptualising a transformative, developmental workspace. However, it did not remain fixed, because when Lance became familiar with the idea, he suggested that the ‘bubble’ needed to be porous, connecting with the outside world. Finding a language to describe pedagogical time and space for student development is a challenge, particularly as the linearity implied by “*Foundation degrees are vocationally focused and equip learners with the skills and knowledge relevant to their employment and the needs of employers*” (College B prospectus) inadequately describes the complexity of the process.

8.3 The identity workspace: no easy place to be

‘I don’t think the core of the person changes,...but I think it’s probably confidence. Recognising their own abilities and achievements.. confidence...that’s the thing that changes most and a much more focused application on their work because they suddenly realise what they can do’

Alice: Merchandising teacher

‘I grew up in that class [FE] now I’m having to grow up again because I feel like a kid again...you felt like a kid again when you were doing that, now I feel like a kid again when I’m doing this’

‘Originally I felt like an adult when I left that [FE] now I feel like a baby just born’.

1st Year Design students: College B

The previous section discussed the four elements of an integrated pedagogical pattern associated with a transformative, developmental learning culture. The students involved in this study talked clearly about being in welcoming environments, where good relationships with the teacher and their peers were promoted. They described it like being like a family, but like many families, the culture was not a soft option, as they saw themselves as being in a more difficult place than their peers were experiencing at university, because they saw their being *'no hiding place'* (Vignette 8.8). For students progressing internally, this could be a particular challenge, as they anticipated that they would simply experience a transition from one course to another. However, this was not the case (Vignette 8.9), as this represented a boundary to be crossed.

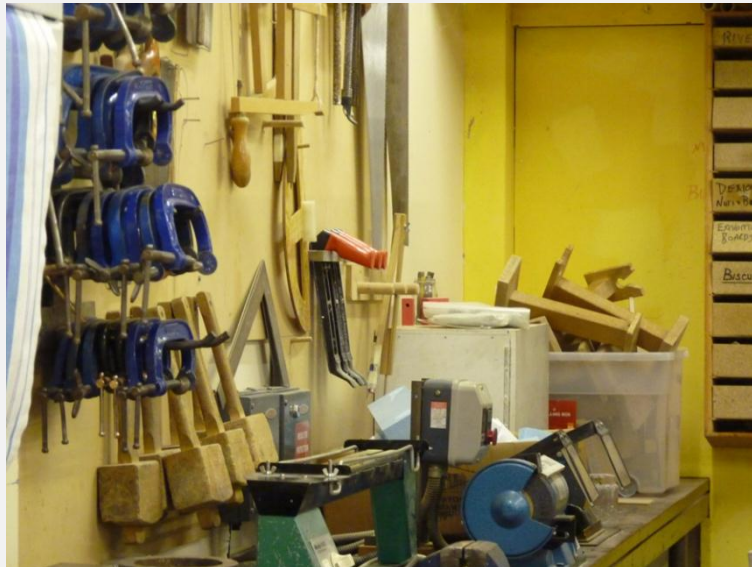
Vignette 8.8 'No hiding place'



The 3D Design students described Sofia as someone who *'confronts you with what you have done'*, believing that they had a more difficult time than their peers at university. They realized that they needed to sort out ideas for themselves first, before approaching Sofia for help, because *'she's not going to give it to you on a plate'*. They recognised that they had to learn to 'read' her, as although acknowledging her as *'brilliant'*, they knew she had her own way of conveying to them her responsiveness. *'... she like, everyone gets like worried, because she sometimes, she has her own.... I'm not bothered.'* She was very aware of this, *'...they know me as a person, they can tell from my posture, from my body language...what they are going to get, to be honest, and they know when I'm serious and when it's time to have fun.'*

Hagar and Hodkinson (2009) criticise ‘common sense’ views of learning that imply that achievements in one context may be easily transferred to another. In FE colleges, there is often an emphasis on internal progression, from FE courses to higher education courses, but Sofia’s students all acknowledged that working with her from FE level to achieving their Foundation Degrees was a considerable challenge. She maintained a confrontational stance throughout the course, replacing each challenge successively, providing the students with an evolutionary bridge, a “*tricky transitional culture*” (Kegan, 1994:43) for developmental transformation. Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that development consists of disrupting the status quo, a continuous process of unsettling and resettling. When higher education has a developmental purpose, appreciating this is important.

Vignette 8.9 ‘Like a baby just born’



The 3D Design students saw the course as ‘*a big leap, more demanding*’ with the need to work differently ‘*straight away*’. These students had progressed from a National Diploma course taught in the next room’ and were used to being taught by Sofia and sharing the same workshop space as the HE students. However, they described feeling like ‘*being a kid again*’, and ‘*being a baby just born*’, indicating that they had grown up on their FE course, and now felt the vulnerability again that they thought they had left behind.

As Barnett (2007) indicates, learning in higher education requires courage, and these young men (Vignette 8.9) seemed to have lost the feeling that they were in control when they made the transition from one side of the corridor to the other. For them, an anchor of secure peer relationships from which they could begin a new stage of their development was encouraged by a close team of teachers, all intent on making the most of them as individuals. Many of the students described having to ‘do it, and do some more’. Sofia’s students demonstrated their ability to maintain their own development as they acknowledged that a project was never ‘finished’, that it was not possible to achieve an end point. Important in managing this process was the support of their peers, as they each confronted the need to keep persevering.

8.4 On being a ‘Good Enough’ Teacher

The thing I love more than anything about my job...is seeing young people come in and feel that I have been a part of moving them on..and seeing them achieve and grow...when we get tired, we can think ‘oh well’ and the bar gets lower...and that demotivates the students...but we say to the students you can get there it’s a long or it’s a short journey but you can get there ...when they fail it is like failing ourselves , we haven’t done enough.

Alice: Merchandising teacher

Developing the person not given the level of importance it deserves

Rob: Head of HE Department and Design teacher

Bracher (2006) explains how teachers’ identity needs are expressed in their pedagogical practices, and all of the teachers in this study appeared to demonstrate congruence between their values and their actions. The pedagogical practices they enacted to enable their students’ identities to develop also helped them to develop themselves (Vignette 8.10). None of the teachers thought that the change process was going to happen quickly, even recognising that it might not happen whilst they were students on the course. As Mezirow (2000) points out, transformation is not a given even if the environment is set up to promote it, but this purpose provided the foundations to the teachers’ practice.

Vignette 8.10 And therein I found myself

Rob, a head of department who had been in teaching for over 30 years, explained that he regarded his subject as *'the sweetie bag'* because his main interest was in *'permitting the students to achieve'*. He expressed his concern that education was going in the wrong direction, that it was *'not what it was'*. He explained that it was through teaching that he had *'found himself'*, through building relationships that helped young adults develop. In his role as a head of department he described how the teachers who had a hard time were usually trying to do it *'by the book'*, and encouraged them to relax, to be themselves.

However, just as the identity workspace was not always an easy place to be for the students, similarly being *'good enough'*, a significant integrating feature for the students' development was not always easy for the teachers. Maintaining the tense balance between promoting student learning and development, and the responsibility for assessment of students would have been easier if the students were held at arm's length (Palmer, 2010a; Robertson, 2001). Although the design teachers at College A explained how they were a close knit, supportive group sharing the same values and actions, on the other side of the campus Julia knew that her Business colleagues saw her actions as *'mothering'* the students, but she took no notice of them. However, the commitment to the creation and maintenance of a facilitating environment meant that this tension had to be managed. Billie critically reflected on her actions,

'...I constantly try to think about am I just doing this to self-indulge or is it having a benefit? What bits am I doing just for myself to say that I am a good person, and what bits for the College?'

Although Brookfield (2006) considers that classroom-based research is part of the armoury of being a skilful teacher, none of the teachers in this project felt that they had the opportunity or time to carry it out. Kreber (2006) sees the engagement with the scholarship of learning and teaching as authentic practice, and one that is particularly relevant in the current educational climate. The emotional commitment to the teachers' approach to their work came across in terms like *'frustrating'*, *'exhilarating'*, *'teary'* and *'exhausting'*, and Rob indicated that he felt *'sorry for others who have not experienced the deep joy of developing the person'*. Although new policy initiatives in education may be seen as an interruption, they may also be seen as an opportunity. Rob saw them as

opportunities that had given meaning to his career, and celebrated himself as being eccentric and subversive, enacting a '*quiet revolution*'.

Challenges associated with working in HE in FE did not just come from the students, as the teachers sensed that their intentions were not always supported by the management procedures of their organisations. Being in a closely monitored environment was not welcomed, particularly, as Alice indicated, '*... we would all work just as hard as we always work even if we weren't monitored because it's the students that would push us*'. As a group of very experienced teachers, they felt they were being expected to adopt a set of rules for teaching, that when enacted would result in predictable outcomes with the students. As Brookfield (2006:11) suggests, truth is a "*slippery little bugger*", and working to rules did not sit comfortably with any of them.

During the research process, I realised the personal nature of the learning-teaching relationship in HE in FE was something that the teachers preferred, and that it was a significant part of their expression of themselves as teachers. Not being able to work in this way would have been regarded as personally damaging, something that became apparent through comments made regarding organisational expectations and the monitoring of teaching quality. Lance commented how he changed his practice when he was being formally observed, normally running the studio so it felt like an authentic work experience, but changing for his classroom observation because '*management don't understand it*'. As I write, I know that Lance has chosen to leave teaching, the tension between the organisational expectations and how he expressed his professional identity being incompatible.

Although developing subject expertise and encouraging the personal and social development of the students was included in each college prospectus, appreciating the implications of this was not always apparent. Having a developmental purpose presents any education context with a challenge, because although these empowering intentions are laudable, and have been the focus of considerable comment (for example, Barnett, 2007; Freire, 1996/1970; hooks, 1994; King, 2009; Shor, 1992) they carry with them responsibilities, requiring something more of

teachers and organisations than the transmission of knowledge or the development of skills. Ecclestone (2008) recommends that FE college structures should develop a much better understanding of the contexts in which their teachers and their students work, but in organisations having multiple purposes, creating an integrated approach presents quite a challenge. However, as explained by Palmer (2010b), if the intention of education is to encourage subject expertise and personal and social development, then having collaborative conversations are essential. One of the aims of this research was to enable the teachers to have a small opportunity to engage with each other in exploring their intentions towards their students, something that was not normally available to them. Providing the opportunity for individuals from different departments to talk with each other did reveal a shared purpose and considerable empathy with the needs of the students, recognising the personal, practical, academic and financial challenges being faced.

However, in this study, the teachers were finding it much more difficult to put their intentions into action, not just because of bureaucratic demands, but also because of tensions between the interpretation of 'support' by them and by the support services in the colleges. They aimed to draw their students into the process, adopting a pro-active, at times provocative stance, challenging their students to overcome difficulties for the benefit of their own futures. Harding and Thompson (2011) recommend that organisations should emphasise the difficulties and challenges associated with higher education, as well as the more positive aspects of higher education. Resolving this issue emerged as a tension, not between the students and their teachers, but between the teachers and their college support services, with some students playing one off against the other when faced with difficulties.

Having a shared understanding of intentions towards students, and how they operate in practice is of key concern when there needs to be collaboration between different services. The support services worked mainly with 14-18 year olds and vulnerable adults, and this was one example in the study where the FE structures and policies and the requirements of the higher education courses could have difficulties, with the HE teachers left playing piggy-in-the-middle. Fuller and

Unwin (2008) describe how an apprenticeship may be seen on a continuum from expansive to restrictive depending on the organisational focus, and many of the teachers found that their opportunities to develop their students were restricted by organisational issues. These included the time they had available to devise new ways of working, timetabling, the ability to develop a shared staff ethos and the way FE requirements dominated the HE courses. Taking a cultural view of learning in this research has enabled some of these issues to be clarified, and the implications to be exposed. Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that educationally powerful environments are systems of interacting parts, and that in many institutions different parts conflict with each other. For the teachers in this study, one of their key roles involved absorbing the difficulties that were presented to them in order to minimise the impact on their students, something that could be exhausting and demoralising.

8.5 Conclusion to Chapter 8

During the preceding discussion the answer to the question ‘*what is going on here?*’ identified an integrated pedagogical pattern associated with the creation of an identity workspace, a transformative learning culture designed to encourage in the students the development of a more purposeful and integrated identity. It is essential to note how the pattern was based on the teachers’ intentions and without this authenticity teaching for transformation might be regarded as unethical. The environments created provided an “*inviting force*” (Zinchenko, 2002 in Cole and Gajdamashko, 2009:132), integrating support and challenge as a whole.

The learning culture acknowledged the fragility of the process whereby students developed the ability to become purposeful, and central to the pedagogical pattern created is appreciation of the significance of the students’ dispositions, and the roles these played in transformation of the individual. To create this type of transformative environment, teachers needed to maintain a paradox, being both supportive and challenging, a continually changing process as students changed and influenced the environments within which they were learning and developing. Therefore, in this type of pedagogical culture the teacher’s dispositions also played

a central role, requiring a durability that might not be so important in an informational as opposed to a transformational higher education. Finding an appropriate language for this type of pedagogy which has developmental intentions is not easy, but is necessary if the development of the whole person is seen to be relevant to contemporary purpose of higher education.

The final chapter discusses the contribution that this research makes to practice in contemporary higher education and also to my own personal and professional development.

Chapter 9**Conclusion: Contribution to practice in higher education and personal learning**

“We think we know what we are doing. We have always thought so. We never seem to acknowledge that we have been wrong in the past, and so might be wrong in the future. Instead, each generation writes off earlier errors as the result of bad thinking by less able minds, and then confidently embarks on fresh errors of its own”

Michael Crichton (2002:ii)

9.0 Introduction

The quote above from Michael Crichton (2002) indicates the limitations of considering that what may have been adequate in the past will be suitable for present and future situations. It suggests the importance of acknowledging the possibilities that new perspectives might bring. This study provides evidence of the value of researching a contemporary issue of international significance within contexts which have a long and successful record of promoting student change and development in higher and other forms of education. This final chapter claims that transformative as opposed to informative learning cultures are capable of promoting student development alongside subject development, therefore making a significant contribution to contemporary discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st century. These learning cultures provide an ‘identity workspace’, promoting relationships and opportunities that are at once supportive and challenging, and importantly, are founded on the teachers’ pedagogical values in order to produce a higher education that is developmental and purposeful.

This final reflexive chapter provides a self-critical review of the findings and of the whole research project by considering the original contribution that it makes to contemporary discussions regarding higher education, the limitations of the study and areas for further exploration. It draws the strands of the thesis together and also recognises the silent voices of those it represents (Schratz, 1993) through the

development of a qualitative methodology which involves visual analyses and records of the social contexts in which educational practices take place.

Contemporary discussions regarding qualitative research in the social sciences stress that knowledge “*cannot be separated from the knower*” (Steedman, 1991:53) and qualitative researchers go to extensive lengths through reactive and proactive reflexive practices to demonstrate the situatedness of claims being made and the limitations of these claims (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). I began the research from the experience and the assumption that the environment in which learning takes place is a complex organism, not external to the individual, but one which involves the whole person in a process of participation. My own experience of the personal and professional changes occurring within groups of mature women students provided a background to the study and recognising this provides something of what Miller (1995:22) describes as “*the autobiography of the question*”. For this reason I have needed to be self-critical throughout this research and in the presentation of its findings.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009:313) describe reflexive approaches that identify the problematic as “*D-reflexivity*”, indicating that these help the research community identify the limitations and uncertainties of the situations that lie behind the apparent stability and coherence of the representational text. However, they also propose that “*R-reflexivity*” (ibid) enables the researcher to add something creative to the arena under investigation, to bring new insights through, for example, reframing data or avoiding premature closure by introducing new theoretical perspectives or making suggestions for follow-up work. They suggest that reflexive researchers should aim for a confident approach which moves between the apparent paradox of D- and R- practices, necessarily pointing out weaknesses or premature claims to truth, but also being able to point out opportunities and new avenues to follow. Whilst undertaking this research I have tried, like Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) suggest, to be aware of limitations but also to be aware of opportunities. An essential part of identifying the pedagogical pattern involved using CHAT (Engeström, 1987) alongside other qualitative analyses which provided the confidence to “*think things together*” and “*stand where*

opposites intersect” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). Conceptual and visual strategies enabled the integration of theoretical perspectives, different sources of data, awareness of interpretative dimensions at several different levels, holding different perspectives in mind at once and being able to work with ideas emerging from the relationships between them. Pascale (1978:156) terms these spaces “*white spaces*”, indicating that being able to value the unknown, those areas not clearly perceived, helps with developing a unity of vision and the ability to identify fertile interpretations, ones that will break new ground. I have found support for this approach from commentators like Finbarr Bradley (2010) who when talking about the value of local culture, points out the relevance of acknowledging ‘*the fuzzy bits*’, those areas not quite tangible. In this research, finding strategies to integrate data from different sources has aided the identification of the ‘fuzzy bits’ associated with transformative learning cultures and the identification of a developmental pedagogical pattern.

This final chapter draws the strands of the thesis together and the following subsections identify four themes through which I am making a significant and original contribution to higher education theory, research and practice associated with the creation of transformative learning cultures. It also considers how the study will have been influenced by my own experiences and predispositions and how it now might now be undertaken differently.

9.1 Pedagogical contribution

The first theme that this thesis argues for is that a higher education which has a transformative intention, one that increases knowledge and a student’s sense of themselves as meaningful and purposeful, does so by creating an ‘identity workspace’, represented by a pedagogical culture created through teachers’ intentions and actions towards their students. This culture is value-based, helping students to develop their own coherent, purposeful story and is represented through an integrated, pedagogical pattern. This pattern is based on the pedagogical values of the teacher and through four integrated elements represents the active demonstration of empathy. These four elements are; (i) the development of trust, (ii) the creation of collaborative and supportive

communities where students have the opportunities to play different roles, (iii) active confrontation and challenge and (iv) the effective use of pedagogical time and space. The cultural patterns involved in these four elements acknowledge the fragility and difficulty for students of developing more complex and purposeful identities.

The pedagogical pattern identified provides a vehicle for developing a pedagogical language for a new (un)orthodoxy from which contemporary higher education may learn and benefit. This is an original contribution, and the thesis strongly suggests that an integrated '*provocative pedagogy*' has the potential to develop a '*purposeful student*' who possesses the sense of being personally meaningful. Rather than seeing student development as the elephant in the room, to be ignored at all costs, or a new hobby horse to be mounted like a charger to enter the battle of the problem of student employability, it is seen as the norm. This type of culture provides opportunities for students and teachers alike and provides the foundations from which students will contribute meaningfully to their societies.

For contemporary higher education this new (un)orthodoxy involves guided participation in shared and mediated cultural endeavours. Constructive and challenging spaces with forward momentum provide students with expansive, transformative opportunities, enabling them to redefine themselves and their futures. This language and this approach may present a challenge to traditional higher education classroom cultures which have a different developmental purpose, celebrating piecemeal academic development and independent success. This needs acknowledgement if higher education is to help to address the challenges of the current era, because it will influence identification of the nature and purpose of higher education. The research goes beyond key texts that provided the foundations to this thesis, and makes a valuable contribution to the suggestion made by Barnett (2009) that higher education needs to develop a revised purpose to enable students to cope with unpredictable futures.

The identification of 'learning cultures' and 'pedagogical or cultural patterns' as relevant to studies associated with developing the whole student provides the means for integrating how a student's dispositional energies (described by Barnett, 2007:102, as *dispositions and qualities*) both influence and may be influenced by learning experiences. As Rogoff (2003) points out, different outcomes may arise from similar processes, and vice versa, but it is through the location of patterns that routes for development may be identified. If the intention of higher education is to be 'transformative', rather than 'informative', that is to increase knowledge and a student's perspective and understanding (Portnow et al, 1998) then it must take into account the processes through which it is expansive, enhancing an individual's ability to understand themselves, their world and their experiences. This will help with answering the question posed by Kreber (2010:1), "*how do degree programmes prepare students to confront the challenges of complexity, change and uncertainty?*" The theories of Kegan (1982, 1994) and Engeström (1987, 2008) both identify the significance of dispositions in the rolling process of development, involving cycles of challenge and response as individuals encounter and interpret new experiences. They emphasise the significance on outcomes of the socio-cultural context and the mediation of experiences, with mediation being provided by the meaning given to experiences by teachers, the students' dispositions as well as local and wider contexts. Consequently, a transformative higher education essentially needs to take into account the nurturing of the dispositional energies involved in students' learning, not just as an outcome, but as an essential part of purpose and process.

Further study is called for to identify the link between dispositional energies and the nature and purpose of pedagogical patterns in higher education. Accepting that 'transformation' and becoming purposeful involves difficulty and upset anticipates that maintaining learning and development requires particular dispositional energies and particular approaches on the part of the teacher. These approaches are very different to those involved in the 'informational' higher education of previous eras and pedagogical patterns encouraging 'transformation' anticipate a qualitatively different "*will to learn*" (Barnett 2007:25) on the part of the student. In these situations durability should not be taken for granted and

there are many avenues available for future research to follow, including the identification of existing pedagogical patterns, how similar purposes may be achieved differently and the significance of the intentions of higher education teachers.

This research provides a valuable contribution to discussions that imply a separation between studying a subject and studying for the ability to contribute to society through employment, claiming that this is an artificial divide. Instead, it proposes that the creation of an 'identity workspace' has the potential to enable students to have the developmental requirements necessary to become active citizens in the 21st century. This is an integrated, patterned approach based on the values of the teacher and their empathy with the needs of students, providing an expansive opportunity where students are encouraged to make sense of their experiences, re-examine beliefs and behaviours and become more self-aware and purposeful, as opposed to 'employable'. This thesis serves to provide one answer to the question posed by Parks (2000:207), "*does contemporary culture serve today's young adults as a worthy mentoring environment?*" by identifying four integrated elements for a developmental pedagogy. This integrated approach relates to the suggestion made by James and Biesta (2007) that organisations should look to increase the functional synergies and decrease the dysfunctional tensions surrounding teachers' and students' experiences. Therefore organisations would find value in investigating how local contexts create pedagogical patterns that promote identity workspaces, identifying what is "*permitted, promoted, inhibited and ruled out*" (ibid:34) in relation to student development. A transformative learning culture, an identity workspace has to, by definition, take account of student dispositions. Therefore, identifying ways in which student dispositions may be "*confirmed, developed, challenged or changed*" (ibid:33) in higher education would also provide value, and also contribute to what Barnett (2007) comments is the limitations of vocabulary available. Although some research associated with dispositions has occurred recently (for example, Harding and Thompson, 2011), these researchers report that they had limited success with identifying particular dispositions and how they might be addressed. The concept of an identity workspace and pedagogical patterns takes the issue of 'dispositions'

away from the individual and towards the context, enabling policy makers, organisations and teachers to identify mediators for development including desire, passion and ambition.

This research has been undertaken in contexts that are firmly at the centre of policy associated with employability and has identified the difficulties associated with a developmental approach. It indicates the centrality of the values of the teacher and provides an excellent foundation for further research into cultural patterns; for example at the micro-level, how teachers convey their intentions and their students' perceptions of them; or the macro-level, how institutional policies and procedures support a provocative pedagogy. It does not claim to promote a pedagogical recipe, because as James and Biesta (2007) point out, learning cultures are unique, as they exist through the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants. However, by identifying the purpose of 'development' it has been possible to identify how cultural processes can fit together to create contextual patterns, providing a link between research and practice.

Although the findings in this research may be useful to contexts which see the purpose of higher education as 'development of the person' it must be noted that the pedagogical pattern identified is value-based, an active and integrated expression of empathy and it would be unethical and dangerous not to consider it in this way. The risks associated with this thesis exist in it being adopted without full appreciation of its complexity. For example, to isolate and impose the third element, 'confrontation and challenge' would in itself be immoral. Pascale (1978) talks about the risks involved in American managers adopting approaches used by their Japanese counterparts, without the understanding of the cultural underpinnings to their meaning and background. The identification of cultural patterns does not provide a reductionist recipe for action, as promoting student development is subtle. It involves subtle ways of dealing with others, allowing for ambiguity and anticipating that the resolution of the tensions resulting from confrontation and challenge and increased self-awareness will promote development. This has implicit implications for higher education and the necessity

to provide an explicit place for the exploration of the unknown (Pascale, *ibid*). For higher education teachers, it involves having a new threshold of consciousness and requires a multiple frame of reference, the ability to tolerate and encourage, whilst providing the time and space for situations to take clearer shape and reach their own conclusion. What has been described is an ontological education, a practical project to build a student but not an instrumental project, one that may be implemented at any cost. This research anticipates that policy makers, organisational leaders and teachers ask themselves, '*what are we for?*' and '*how should we achieve this?*' rather than '*what skills should our students develop?*'

This study, undertaken in my own changing professional context, identifies how student development is promoted by teachers who have the explicit intention of 'developing the person'. It did not include a substantial organisational perspective, which showed itself to be significant factor influencing the actions of the teachers. The reason for this related to the changed relationship between the university and the colleges. If I were to undertake this research again without this influencing factor, then this aspect would be a key feature for investigation. Similarly, I did not look into the learning cultures of teachers who lacked a developmental intention. This too would provide a valuable subject for further empirical research, as would the experience of students as they entered and navigated different learning cultures.

9.2 Conceptual contribution

As I look back over the texts that started this research process, I realise that I could think that I have gone full circle, "*there and back again*" as Bilbo Baggins might say (Tolkien, 1937/1991:1), but I have not landed up in the same place that I started. The second theme that this thesis argues for relates to the scholarship of integrating theoretical perspectives and the way in which a contribution has been made to conceptual understanding regarding the creation of transformative learning cultures in higher education, those that promote student development alongside subject development. It is important to note that during the time the research has been underway discussions regarding 'student development' have gathered momentum. For example, Harding and Thompson (2011) strongly suggest

that higher education should take responsibility for delivering a transformative experience, one that facilitates self-understanding, personal growth and a process of becoming.

Although founded on well-established and significant bodies of literature, the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 represents a significant extension to current knowledge because of the unique way in which it integrates concepts from different sources including learning as a cultural activity (for example, James and Biesta, 2007), the developmental theories of Bracher (2006), Chickering and Reisser (1993), Kegan (1982; 1994), Rogoff (2003), Cultural Historical Activity Theory (for example, Engeström 1987), the transformative learning theory of Mezirow (1991) and the promotion of the ‘will to learn’ in higher education (Barnett, 2007). This is an original framework, and forms the basis from which to identify that a developmental form of higher education involves participation in a culture which is intense, integrated, sustained, challenging and active and therefore takes explicit account of the involvement of dispositions in learning. In addition, a new departure is to introduce the concept of an “*identity workspace*” (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010:45) to higher education more widely. This workspace acts as an invitation for change and development by providing a mediated space where students are encouraged to become aware of the meaning of their experiences. This concept deserves further research in a diverse range of higher education contexts to discover how students are supported and challenged to experience the disruption associated with the deep shifts involved in developing more integrated and purposeful identities.

As indicated in the previous section, this research could have taken other directions if key texts had not been suggested to me. When I began the research process I did not know where it would take me, and like Robert Frost (BBC, 1996), I regret that I could not travel in more than one route. However, as I read the texts that began the journey I realised that there were significant synergies between them, although they had not been integrated before. As already explained, the main texts explored were *A Will to Learn: being a student in an age of uncertainty* (Barnett, 2007), *In Over Our Heads: the mental demands of modern life* (Kegan,

1994) and *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education* (James and Biesta, 2007). The connection between them came with the significance of dispositions to learning, the importance of the intentions of the teacher and the learning environment and the encouragement to interpret experiences. These texts provided a significant challenge to a beginning researcher, but it was as I explored concepts associated with ‘transformation’, (for example, Mezirow, 1991; Kegan, 2000; Cranton, 2006a) that I began to feel more confident that I was ‘on to something’. However, I also recognise that although they were unfamiliar to me at first, they sat within my own “*horizons of significance*”, those issues that I felt strongly about (Taylor, 1991:39). Although I do not have any overtly political axe to grind, I have identified in myself the view that education offers opportunities and the value that a rich and diverse experience offers to individuals of all backgrounds. This permeated the research process; it drew me to particular theoretical concepts, drove the purposeful selection of the participants, which in turn influenced the integration of theory with empirical evidence. Other researchers would probably have approached the topic in a different way, but for me an holistic, almost ecological approach was the authentic way to progress. Through my own experiences I had become fundamentally aware of what might appear obvious, how opportunities provided and the nature of the learning environment influence developmental outcomes of students. To paraphrase Miller (1995) these concepts represented the autobiography of the theory.

As time progressed with my reading, I journeyed into the realms of feminist literature (for example, Belenky et al, 1986; Gilligan, 1982), literature associated with curriculum development (for example, Baxter Magolda, 1999; Baxter Magolda and King, 2004; King, 2009), education and identity (for example, Chickering and Reisser, 1993) and views of higher education and learning for the 21st century. It incorporated spiritual dimensions (for example, Noddings, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Palmer and Zajonc, 2010; Parks, 2000) something that may appear to be a long way from discussions associated with ‘employability’, but involved issues that became more relevant to discussions about the nature and purpose of higher education as the research progressed. This is an important factor to point out because as Quinlan noted in 2011, there is less of a focus on research relating to

higher education purpose and student development in the UK compared to the USA. I demonstrated that adopting activity theory (Engeström, 1999) need not necessarily be a barrier as Yamagata-Lynch (2010) claims, but an effective means for integrating and communicating the nature of complex, developmental learning environments. Adopting this theoretical perspective enabled me to take individual, situational and organisational characteristics, to isolate and integrate them and demonstrate how each interacts and mediates outcomes.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009:305) commend research that has “*richness in points*”, that which promotes creative, inspired interaction with the empirical material. This type of research takes interpretation beyond the face value of the empirical material and has the ability to provide insights, appearing reasonable in relation to the empirical material, but not needing strong support from it. The depth and range of my reading provided me with the confidence to gain insight and by identifying for example, the conceptual connections between activity theory and the developmental framework proposed by Kegan (Leiman, 1999) the opportunity to bring a new perspective to higher education research.

Linking the big ideas that started the research process with those relating to student development, the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st century and those associated with a cultural view of learning came like touching fingertips, and they warrant explication, particularly in relation to UK higher education. Although I successfully integrated these concepts during this thesis, their integration would benefit from more work, particularly in relation to the way in which internal mediators, or dispositional energies influence possibilities for a transformative higher education. However, rather than seeing these dispositional energies in isolation or in the isolated context of ‘employability’, this research proposes that they be explored in the light of the cultural patterns surrounding them and the possibilities for overcoming the fragility of the will to learn (Barnett, 2007). There would be value in exploring conceptions of what it means to become purposeful and personally meaningful through engagement in higher education, and the part that dispositions and qualities (Barnett, *ibid*) play in creating purposeful integrated identities. Making these discussions explicit will

reveal the 'hidden agenda' of individual contexts and enable discussions regarding the fragility and courage involved in a transformative higher education. It will contribute to the part that policy makers, organisations, curriculum developers, teachers and students may have in the process.

9.3 Methodological contribution

The third theme that this thesis argues for relates to the methodology adopted. Researching learning cultures anticipates the collection of rich and diverse data, but the real value of research comes with its interpretation and with the way it is conveyed. Finding a way of converting the information gathered into forms that would prove to be meaningful to the higher education community involved at first the practical activities of coding and categorising data from teachers, students, observations and from photographs. Although this helped me to feel as if I was 'doing the right thing' according to the handbooks, it provided an interpretation of the data that was extremely dissatisfying. I had to go beyond this approach, and find a way that would include the voices of those being researched, something that the original analysis effectively silenced.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) consider that if researchers limit themselves to interpretations that are based on what everyone already agrees on, then it is difficult to say anything new or original. Although I was researching a context out of the scope of the work by James and Biesta (2007) and Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010), in order to say something innovative I needed to go beyond the suggestions made by these two studies. Integrating the data and using an activity theory approach to its interpretation (for example, Engeström, 1987, 2008; Engeström and Sannino, 2010) provided the springboard for this type of generative opportunity. Using this approach supported a rich and visual interpretation of the whole of the data, and developing the capability to use it in my repertoire was a profound and valuable step.

Asplund (1970 in Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009) aligns undertaking and interpreting research with the writing of a detective story, where the writer formulates the problem, creates the characters and solves the mystery. This research had these

characteristics; certainly it was about telling a story. However, it had more dimensions than a straightforward detective story. Philip Pullman in the trilogy '*His Dark Materials*', describes the existence of parallel worlds, with some individuals capable of moving from one to the other;

"There are invisible places in the air ... gateways into other worlds. We can see them, but you cannot".

(Pullman, 1995/1997/2000/2002:443)

For Pullman's characters, finding a way of connecting with another world comes with the confidence to handle '*the subtle knife*',

"It's not only the knife that has to cut; it's your own mind. You have to think it. So do this: put your mind out at the very tip of the knife....you're looking for a gap so small you could never see it with your eyes, but the knife tip will find it if you put your mind there. Feel along the air till you sense the smallest little gap in the world..."

(Pullman, 1995/1997/2000/2002:476).

The act of interpretation of complex data is found in the field of tension between skilful empirical contact, imaginative handling and the depth and breadth of the interpretive repertoire (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). Schratz (1993) encourages the development of methodologies that keep authentic voices alive and well, but points out the difficulties associated with systematising qualitative methods with this aim. It was not until I had explored and digested a considerable body of literature, realising the connections between diverse sources that I became capable of handling my own '*subtle knife*' and enabled the creative interaction with the data and the opportunity to look at things in a way that enabled new understanding. It took almost three years of reading and empirical research to reach this exciting point, a point where things began to 'come together' and it was through an approach that involved visualising data that I was able to make this concrete.

One of the criticisms of social research is the difficulty associated with making the steps of the research process visible, and it was through making annotated

drawings that I was able to do this, first to myself and then to the wider research community. Making conference presentations and formulating papers during the process of the research (summary in Appendix 2) provided a valuable experience. Rich and varied data including photographs, a substantial conceptual framework and confidence to explain ideas through drawing interacted, enabling me to develop visual explanations for the stories being expressed. At the beginning of the research process the techniques described in Chapter 5 were used to visualise ideas, and later, through the analytical drawings based on CHAT analysis (Chapters 4 and 7), a more systematic approach provided a detailed way of integrating data from different sources and times. These have invited the reader to look over my shoulder in my research workshop and share in the development of understanding which cannot be conveyed in words alone. Unfortunately, this thesis can only use a small proportion of the analytical drawings within its text, and further work is called for to develop this approach with the research community, possibly through workshops. Other researchers would probably not have approached the analysis in this way, but as indicated earlier I wanted to be able to be authentic as a researcher, and express my own predispositions, as well as my awareness of them.

Visualising in this way may be out of the traditional channels of academic inquiry, but as Walker (1993) points out, the visual imagination is an important part of problem solving and theorising. He also highlights the value of using photographs in educational research to capture those aspects of educational life that cannot be conveyed by language. Researching 'learning cultures' may be reported by using text alone, or may be effectively supported by the introduction of photographs. However, as Walker (*ibid*) points out, it is the way in which photographs are used that provides real value to a research project. In this thesis they are used alongside the text, not as an end in themselves. Trying to tell the complete story of a culture will always fail, but adding a visual dimension makes the inevitable shortcomings more interesting (Harper, 2012). A greater use of photography in higher education research, particularly to do with learning cultures may provide ways to explain the richness of different contexts and the cast of characters involved. This may disrupt anticipated patterns of research, but will provide the

opportunity to engage audiences in different ways and prevent attempts to come to a single interpretation (Walker, 1993). It will also provide an explicit way of including all participants in the higher education experience in researching about it, making the contract between the researcher and the researched a vital and visible agreement (Loizos, 2000).

9.4 Contextual contribution

The final contribution that this thesis argues for relates to context. This is a significant and original piece of work which is of crucial importance at a time when the higher education community is actively concerned with the nature and future purpose of its structure and its role (for example, Quinlan, 2011; Kreber, 2010). Although the claims associated with creating a transformative learning culture may appear to be associated with practical outcomes, because they are based on a value system they have significant implications for higher education as a whole and are relevant to policy makers, organisational leaders, curriculum and staff developers, teachers and students. It invites extension through undertaking further fieldwork in a diversity of contexts.

Interpretative-reflexive research emphasises the precarious balance between knowledge that exists 'out there', its interpretation and its representation (Alvesson and Skölberg, 2009). To manage the instability of the relationship between this study and the external landscape, I have needed to locate an interpretation of the contexts researched, the flaws and alternatives to this interpretation as well as identify where this interpretation 'fits' in order that it may contribute to future studies. It is important to note the historical context of this research, as it has been accompanied by the growth of publications regarding the nature and purpose of higher education and an increasingly loud chorus of disapproval surrounding claims that higher education should produce an 'employable graduate with a set of skills' (for example, Pegg et al, 2012). Significantly, publications by Quinlan (2011) and Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2011) which emphasise the value of developing the 'whole student' with a meaningful and purposeful identity have significant relevance to how this research could contribute to future studies.

If I were to undertake this work again, my own tentative departure into finding out about the learning cultures would be accompanied by the debates that have emerged during the progress of the research, offering the opportunity from the outset to clearly pursue the nature and purpose of student development in UK higher education. However, researchers do not carry a crystal ball, so this research developed during a period of time when the political and social situation has seen a dramatic increase in tuition fees and an increase in concerns regarding the economy, jobs and prosperity. Literature that would inform the study was published during its progress enabling increased focussing and the opportunity to return to and reconsider data accumulated in the early stages of the research process. It is essential to note that these societal changes were also accompanied by changes to the research arena, with the relationship between the university and the colleges fundamentally altered; policies, personnel and roles changing, and my own redundancy. Although these may be seen as negatives, and ideally would not have happened, as I look back I believe that they did provide advantages, especially to my own development as a researcher as I was able to use the vantage point of a new role in a business school to review the situation with new eyes.

This study was undertaken in HE in FE and contributes to the under-representation of these contexts in higher education research. As indicated earlier in this thesis, at the beginning of the research process I could be accused of bias through exhibiting a “*halo effect*” towards the participants (Cohen et al, 2007:189), wanting to tell their story of teaching in HE in FE because it had been my own. Framing the study in this way was very limited, but as it became clear from the data collected that the teachers had the aims of ‘developing the person’ as well as developing their subject knowledge and competence, the scope of the study became wider and more meaningful to higher education *per se*. The changing external landscape contributed to this changing focus and identifying the aims and intentions of the teachers involved provides evidence of the complexity of learning in higher education and how outcomes for students are influenced by what is “*permitted, promoted, inhibited, or ruled out*” within their learning context (James and Biesta, 2007:22).

The findings indicate the pivotal role of the teacher in creating learning cultures that see holistic ‘development of the person’ as the essential foundation for skilful practice in a particular subject area and for future engagement in society, rather than putting an overt emphasis on skills development by working from the ‘outside in’. For these teachers this involves having a foot in two worlds but living an integrated, single life (Rogoff, 2003). Their conception of employability and related pedagogies appears to be wider and deeper than that of their organisations, as they create supportive but challenging and provocative environments that encourage the holistic development of their students. These issues contribute significantly to discussions regarding the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st century and shows how a marginal higher education, despite its sharper policy drivers, promotes holistic development of the student and how transformational learning cultures are created.

Rogoff (2003) indicates that understanding the variations across and within communities is valuable, as it contributes to shared concerns associated with human development, and provides resources and information about alternative possibilities. The findings indicate that higher education is diminished if it does not find ways of collaborating with professionals across the sector who profess to promote student development. Such collaborations will support exploration of the nature and purpose of higher education especially when human development is an identified goal. This research demonstrates how the development of trusting relationships between different cultural communities and the suspension of value judgements provides a way of researching those who cannot research themselves, and creates a way of revealing and communicating the lives of others. It demonstrates the value of involving marginalised groups in higher education research and the contribution that this makes to discussions regarding higher education policy and practice.

9.5 The limitations of this research

This final chapter has highlighted how my own predispositions and bias have steered this research. These limitations have involved the scale of the study, its location and the selection of participants who have the explicit intention of

‘developing the person’. This study did not research the practice of teachers who lacked this intention, nor did it measure systematically the developmental changes in the students. These would be relevant for future studies.

Although one of my aims related to enabling HE in FE practitioners to be involved in the research process, this became limited due to practical constraints, changes in my employment position and the requirements of the research degree process. Another key point that needs to be raised in this final chapter is my own naivety in assuming that all of the participant teachers would be comfortable sharing their experiences openly with each other. This was certainly an issue early in the study, although those selected for later involvement appeared very open with each other. What was revealed through all of the stages of the research was the impact of the organisational situation and the wider positioning of higher education courses in FE colleges on the way the teachers carried out their work. I identified difficulties and tensions associated with these factors with regard to the relationship between the teachers and their organisational contexts. I chose to follow a path that did not exacerbate this, and importantly, which would later provide me with continued access after my professional role changed. This is a significant issue to acknowledge. Other researchers may have progressed differently, and this would be a valuable subject for a future study.

9.6 Suggestions for future investigations and implications for researchers

This final chapter has provided a self-critical review of the research, but has gone beyond identifying the problematic through D-reflexivity (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009:313) by opening up new vistas for future research. As has been indicated throughout this thesis, the nature and purpose of higher education in the current era is the source of lively debate and discussion. That debate would surely benefit from endeavours which take a cultural view of learning and development and which explore patterns, regularities and variations into what ‘student development’ means in different individual contexts. Research into the holistic development of students in higher education would benefit from collaboration across the sector to develop awareness of how different students develop in

different contexts, how values guide intentions and how the process of being 'good enough' plays out in an organisational context.

This is not a simple process, and researchers would benefit from awareness of research processes which have this aim in mind, including those that make use of creativity and visual methods and also ways in which findings may be communicated effectively to interested audiences. This research adopted a naturalistic approach, which enabled issues to be explored as they arose, involving teachers and students in expressing their intentions and experiences. It has been based on sound trusting relationships, and the ability to access diverse events over a period of time. However, although during this research looking at the parts, for example, individuals, contexts, and events proved revealing, it was not until they were integrated into a whole that the nature and impact of an intentionally transformative pedagogy became apparent.

As a researcher, I found it extremely useful to capture the complexity of development within cultural contexts through the use of visualisation accompanied by text. Rogoff (2003) is keen to promote visual representations of human development, as they can provide effective means for linking theory with practice. However, she points out that representations may unintentionally constrain ideas and considers that it is important to show how cultural and personal processes create each other. This research suggests that although development is fragile, and can involve students in disruption and discomfort, to conceive of it as a simple process of progression or as an individual activity, isolated from context is inadequate (Illustration 9.1).

Similarly, Rogoff (*ibid*) suggests that arrows on a diagram indicate influence, rather than acknowledging that development occurs in mutually constitutive sociocultural settings. Although this research identifies that development is too complex for one person to undertake, the drawing shown in Illustration 9.2 is also an inadequate representation because of the use of unidirectional arrows, and its separation from context.

Illustration 9.1 Development out of context

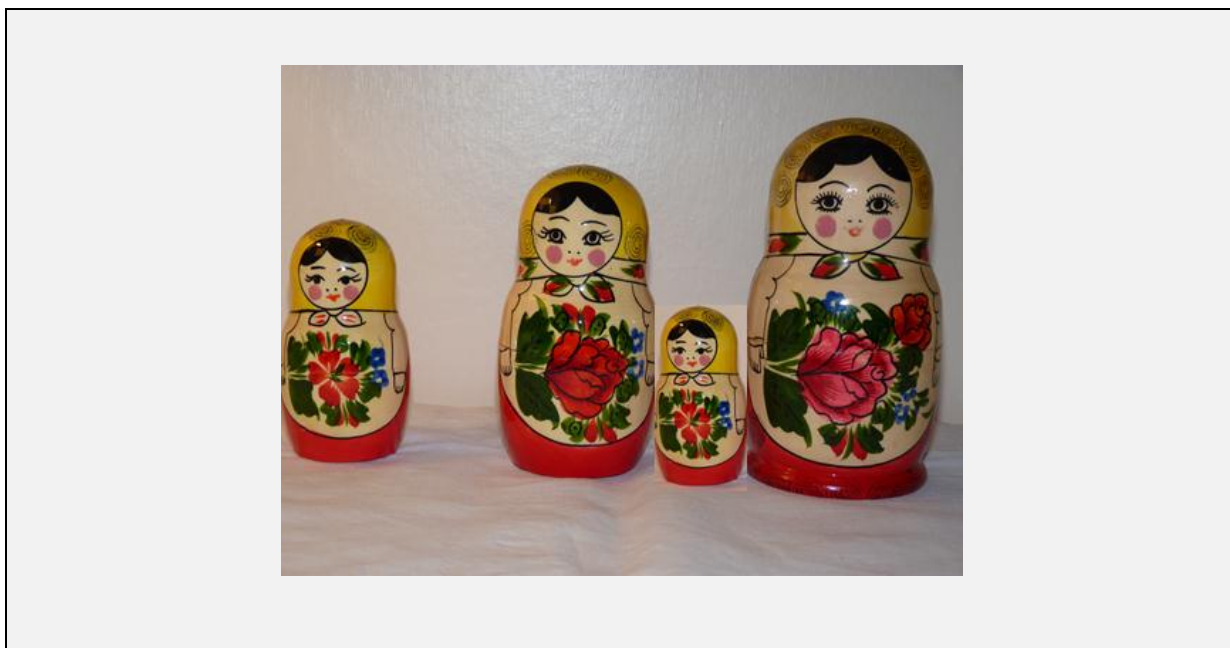
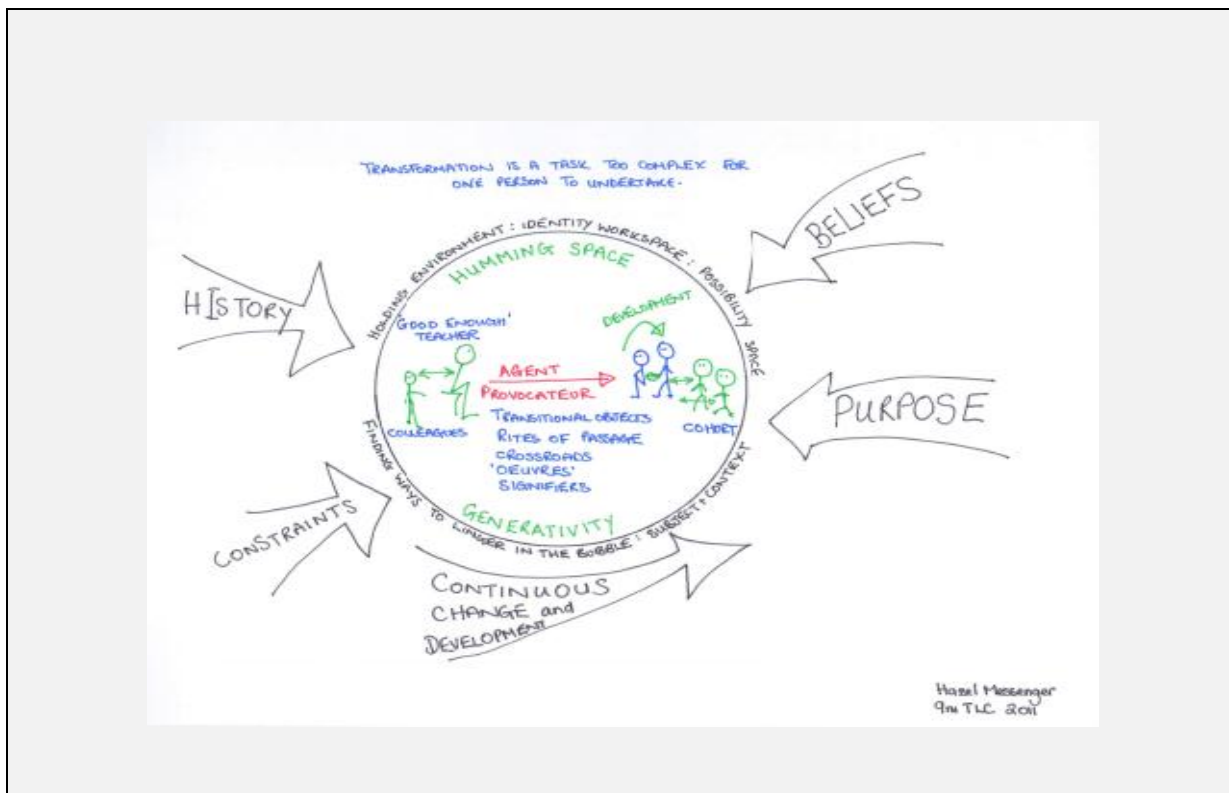


Illustration 9.2 Transformation is too complex for one person to undertake



These illustrative representations seem to reinforce a fragmented view of human development, however integrating photographs of cultural contexts with conceptions of processes for human development enables different questions to be asked and alternative representations to be constructed and communicated. For example, Illustration 9.3 shows a Design context and is overlaid with a representation of an end-driven process which limits opportunities for development. Conversely, Illustration 9.4 shows the same context, but overlaid with a process that demonstrates challenge and the ability to make use of time and space to contribute to development. These types of illustrations provide a resource for discussions between teachers and their students, and between higher education professionals regarding the processes and outcomes of higher education.

Illustration 9.3 Focus on the product of higher education



Illustration 9.4 Focus on the process of higher education



As this thesis comes to a close, I am mindful of other contexts where development is seen as the purpose of education. In post-war Italy, a radical revision of children's education developed in the town of Reggio Emilia, where a whole society pulled together in a strong sense of common purpose (Wells and Claxton, 2002). This local initiative has had global influence and although not anticipating that this thesis will have such profound effects, it is hoped that it will contribute to debates that see beyond a student becoming a graduate with an employable set of attributes.

9.7 Personal and professional learning

Undertaking this late career doctorate has enabled me to re-emphasise my commitment to the potential of education, to integrate previous experiences into interpreting the present and to demonstrate an authentic approach to undertaking research. It has enabled me to sustain a career in higher education and by adopting 'creativity' as part of my research methodology enabled me to participate in professional communities with an interdisciplinary focus. For me it represents the value of adopting and learning from different perspectives, developing and maintaining effective relationships and celebrating the diversity of a life-long journey in education.

9.8 Conclusion to Chapter 9

This thesis contributes to current and future debates regarding the nature and purpose of higher education, and supports the call for higher education to find a new purpose (Barnett, 2004), one that is suitable for present and future eras. Promoting 'skills' and 'employability' may be the wrong one-word answers for the wrong questions, as present and future needs demand a sophisticated, transformational response. This thesis calls for the creation of transformative learning cultures in higher education, consisting of pedagogical patterns which provide an 'identity workspace' focused on the development of the person. In this way students may be provided with the resources relevant to contributing to and participating meaningfully in society.

Undertaking research into contexts that are firmly at the centre of government policy associated with the world of work has revealed an underlying liberal philosophy associated with human development. There were other avenues that the research could have followed to answer the question ‘*what is going on here?*’ but the outcomes provide a meaningful contribution to the educational research community, and to the resources now at their disposal.

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

From ‘The road not taken’ (BBC, 1996:77).

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Appendix 1.2 University's ethical approval

The University ethical application, below, and the approval (Page 296) recognises that research is a developing process. The research question was modified to

“How are transformative learning cultures created in higher education courses taught in further education colleges?”

with the agreement of the University, supported by the original application for approval of the study programme involving human informants.

Protocol No: 09-10.25

FORM Hum Law Ed ETHICS

**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, LAW AND EDUCATION
ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Application for approval of a study programme involving human informants

Session 2010-11

This form should be completed in conformity with the Faculty's Principles for Conducting Research involving Human Informants. It should be used by individual applicants, staff or students, who require protocol approval for work which they themselves intend to carry out.

Please word-process this document.

1. Title of programme

Can participatory, collaborative methods of research support the identification of effective ways for developing transformative learning cultures?

2. Applicant's name **Hazel Messenger**

Status (delete as necessary) **postgraduate**

Scheme of study or award e.g. **EdD**

E-mail address: **h.messenger@herts.ac.uk**

Name/s of supervisor/s **Professor Mary Thornton: Professor Helen Burchell**

3. Chair of Faculty/Departmental Ethics Committee or Chair of Faculty/Departmental Research Committee

Name

4. Research aims of the programme

- **To identify effective ways for developing transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education**
- **To involve collaboration and participation in research with teachers of HE in FE (Higher Education in Further Education Colleges)**
- **To explore the relationship between the development of transformative learning cultures and teacher identity**

5. Number of informants (approximate)

80

6. Nature of informants (general characteristics, e.g. University students, other students, members of the public, primary school children, etc.)

HE in FE teachers

HE in FE students

7. Has confirmation been obtained that the informants required will be available?
Yes

8. Probable duration of investigation

from (starting date) **July 2010**

to (finishing date) **July 2012**

(The dates given here will be monitored by the Faculty Ethics Committee and investigators may need to return to the Committee if the work is not complete within the period initially stated.)

Approval must be sought and granted **before** any investigation involving human informants commences.

9. Where will the study take place?

Hertford Regional College; West Herts College: Oaklands College: University of Hertfordshire (base)

10. Describe the procedures to be used. Give sufficient detail for the Committee to be clear what is involved in the programme, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary.

- **Collaborative meeting with HE in FE teachers (7) to discuss nature of transformative learning cultures and how this relates to the nature and purpose of higher education**
- **Collaborative meeting with HE in FE teachers to agree collection of data from teachers and students relating to the nature and development of transformative learning cultures**
- **Collaborative meeting with HE in FE teachers to share data collected (December and July)**
- **Informal observation of practice and learning environments of each of the 7 teachers. [Not related to observation of quality of teaching undertaken by FE Colleges] Photographs of learning environments. Photographs of working practice in the environments including staff and students**
- **Informal conversation with staff and students during the observations**
- **Paper- based collection of data relating to planned learning and teaching activities in published schemes of work**
- **Interview with participating teachers relating to their career histories and their approach to creating and developing transformative learning cultures. To be recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed to a computer-based written document**
- **Focus group interviews with students from FdA Business, Business with HRM, Business with Travel and Tourism, Graphic Design, 3D Design, Fashion and Textiles, Visual Merchandising relating to the learning cultures in their local contexts**
- **End of year questionnaire (paper based or electronic) to students, based on the Learning Activities Survey (King 2009; Brock 2010), to explore the incidence and extent of transformative learning within the student groups.**

1.0 Brock, S.E. (2010) 'Measuring the importance of precursor steps to transformative learning', *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60(2) 122-142.

2.0 King, K.P. (2009) *The Handbook of the Evolving Research of Transformative Learning: Based on the Learning Activities Survey (10th Anniversary Edition)*, Charlotte, NC., Information Age Publishing.

(Section 3 of the research degree registration document may be attached.)

11. Might the study cause discomfort or distress of a mental or emotional character?
NO

12. If the answer to question 11 was YES:

- i) is it likely that medical, therapeutic or other aftercare may be needed by informants?
NO

13.(a) Will explicit consent need to be obtained from (or on behalf of) the informants?
YES

If the answer to question 13 is 'YES', it will almost always be necessary to gain explicit consent, and to get a consent form completed and signed by (or on behalf of) all informants. A copy of the consent form should be attached to the application.

If it is not proposed not to seek consent from the informants, explain why here. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary).

Agreement to participate has been obtained from each of the 7 HE in FE teachers. Agreement has been obtained from the HE managers of each of the colleges represented

(b) How long before they take part in the investigation will informants' consent be sought?

At the commencement of the academic year

4 of the teacher participants have been involved in data collection and discussion during the first two years of this study. On the basis of the evidence collected these 4 participants have been invited to continue to be involved in the study. This invitation was made by personal communication from the researcher. In addition, 3 additional participants were invited to be involved, in order to extend the subject and organizational base of the research. This invitation was made by, firstly, personal communication, and secondly, a face to face meeting which explained the nature of research to date and the purpose of the collaborative research in the future. Each of the participants is known to the researcher through work contact and has been aware of the project since its inception

All participants have indicated by email that they are willing to participate

At the first meeting of the research group in September 2010, the researcher will formally outline the research process as shown in this document, and ask for formal evidence of agreement to participate. Attached is an agreement form

Permission for the project has been obtained from the senior management of each of the colleges represented

(c) What will informants be told as to the nature of the investigation?

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OR TRANSCRIPT OF THE INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED

Teacher participants: First meeting will deal with this issue. This is a key part of the collaborative methodology

Student participants: attached

(d) Will informants be given an opportunity to put questions to the investigator, arising from what they have been told?

YES

(e) Will informants' consent be requested:

•

YES

14. If the informant is a minor, or otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on their own, state whose consent will be obtained (parent and/or guardian and/or head teacher and/or other (to be specified) and how it will be obtained.

15.(a) Is the investigator receiving any financial or other reward connected with this project?

NO

If YES, give details. Mention also any grant that has been awarded to further completion of the project, even if no actual reward accrues to the investigator/s.

(b) Will anyone else receive any financial or other reward connected with this project?

NO

If YES, give details.

15. Are personal data of any sort (including name, age, sex, occupation, etc.) to be obtained from or in respect of any of the informants?

YES

If YES,

(a) Give details.

HE in FE teachers

- **Age**
- **Sex**
- **Occupation**
- **College employer**
- **Career history**
- **Academic qualifications**

HE in FE students

- **Age**
- **Sex**
- **Course of study**
- **College of study**
- **Previous educational experience**

(b) Indicate what steps will be taken to prevent the disclosure of personal data beyond the immediate investigative team.

- **Names of participating teachers to be changed**
- **Names of student respondents in focus groups to be changed**
- **Names of colleges to be changed**
- **Personal data to be kept in a secure location, a password protected computer**

(c) Indicate what assurances about the security and non-disclosure of personal data will be given to informants.

- **Written assurance (see attached)**
- **Data to be destroyed at the end of the research**

16. Any other relevant matters

Students are asked on their consent form if they agree or disagree with their photograph being taken

A photograph of the learning environment may be taken which does not include students

18. DECLARATION BY APPLICANT

(i) I confirm that, in formulating the above proposal, I have complied with the following ethical code(s).

(SPECIFY HERE THE CODE(S), OTHER THAN THE **FACULTY PRINCIPLES**. ALLUDED TO ABOVE, THAT YOU HAVE ADHERED TO IN DESIGNING THE INVESTIGATION.)

- (ii) I undertake to abide by the Ethical Principles of the Faculty of Humanities and Education to the best of my ability in carrying out or supervising this programme.
- (iii) Data relating to identifiable informants will be treated as confidential and not passed on to others without the written consent of the informant. Where the informant is a minor, or is otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on her/ his own, or to receive full explanation of the nature of the investigation and its risks, *informant* in this context will be understood as referring to the person or persons having responsibility for the actual informant in the investigation (see section 12 above).
- (iv) The nature of the investigation and all possible risks will be fully explained to potential informants. Where the informant is a minor, or is otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on her / his own, or to receive full explanation of the nature of the investigation and its risks, then *informant* will be understood as referring to the person or persons having responsibility for the actual informant in the investigation (see section 13 above).
- (v) Where appropriate all informants will be informed that they
 - (a) are not obliged to take part
 - and
 - (b) may withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage, or having to give a reason.

Name of applicant **HAZEL MESSENGER**

Signature of applicant ***Hazel Messenger***

Date **22.06.10**

In the case of an individual applicant this form **MUST** also be signed by the applicant's supervisor.

19. **DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR**

I confirm that the proposed study has been appropriately vetted within the Faculty in respect of its aims and methods as a piece of research; that I have discussed this application for Ethics Committee approval with the applicant and approve its submission; and that I accept responsibility for guiding the applicant so as to ensure compliance with the terms of the protocol and with any applicable Code(s) of Practice.

Name of Supervisor

Signature of Supervisor

Date

20. **Signature of Chair of Faculty Ethics Committee**

I confirm that I am aware of and agree the above proposal.

Name

Signature

Date

March 2001

Revised March 2007

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, LAW & EDUCATION

Application for approval of a study programme involving human informants

Applicants: Hazel Messenger

Supervisors: Professor Mary Thornton: Professor Helen Burchell

Date: 27 July 2010

Title of study programme: EdD - Can participatory, collaborative methods of research support the identification of effective ways for developing transformative learning cultures?

Protocol no 09-10.25

Dear Hazel,

I am pleased to confirm that your application for the above study programme has been circulated to the members of the Faculty Ethics Committee and approved with an investigation end date of 31 July 2012.

If this investigation is ongoing as at 31 July 2012, we would like to remind you that your application should be resubmitted to the Faculty Ethics Committee for extended approval. I will contact you nearer the time asking you to confirm whether or not the investigation is still ongoing.

Kind regards

Rachel Cox

Rachel Cox

Senior Administrator (Academic Quality)

R.L.Cox@herts.ac.uk

R343 de Havilland

Appendix 2
Conference presentations and papers

2009

Using a visual journal: A beginning researcher's faithful friend, confidante and wailing wall.

Paper presented at 1st International Visual Research Methods Conference, Leeds University, September 15th-17th 2009

2010

Drawing out ideas: using a visual journal to aid knowledge creation in educational research.

Paper presented at 'Creative thinking: re-imagining the university', University of Ireland, Galway. June 10th-11th 2010.

Not just bridging the 'skills gap': Creating effective holding environments for meaningful transformations in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education.

Paper presented at the Society for Research in Higher Education Annual Conference, Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, South Wales. December 14th-16th 2010.

2011

Creating effective 'holding environments' for promoting transformative learning: an exploration of the practice of HE in FE teachers in the UK.

Peer reviewed paper presented at the 9th International Transformative Learning Conference (Europe), Athens, May 29th-31st 2011.

HE in FE as transformative education: an exploration of teacher intention and student response'.

Contribution to the symposium, 'Higher Education in Further Education Contexts: the differing perspectives of students, tutors and managers'.

British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, London, September 7th-9th 2011.

Convenor: Dr. Pete Boyd, University of Cumbria

Discussant: Dr Kevin Orr, University of Huddersfield

Additional presenters:

Collaboration and contestation in further and higher education partnerships: the influence of sector-specific cultures,

Professor Helen Colley, Manchester Metropolitan University
Higher Education in Further Education: student perceptions of the value of qualifications,
Dr Denise Robinson, University of Huddersfield

Environments for transformation in learning.

Workshop for the Learning and Teaching Institute, University of Hertfordshire,
November 22nd 2011

Environments for development and learning: making use of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to understand transformative learning contexts in higher education.

Paper presented at the Society for Research in Higher Education Annual Conference, Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, South Wales. December 9th-11th 2011.

2012

The creation of transformative learning cultures: learning from HE in FE

Paper presented at the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, London Metropolitan University, July 12th 2012.

Appendix 3 Permission Letters

Hazel Messenger

08.06.10

Dear *Head of Higher Education*,

Following the successful completion of the first two years of my Doctoral study, I am now required to obtain ethics approval for the remainder of my study, (2010-2011) and therefore permission from any organisation involved in the study. I have been exploring the transformative intentions of HE in FE teachers, how their teaching aims to bring about change in the ways students approach their learning.

I am planning to work with small groups of teachers at each of the colleges in the Consortium. This follows on from small scale studies already undertaken. The study during 2010-2011 will involve:

- Group discussion with the researcher
- Interview by the researcher
- Qualitative observation of class-based activity by the researcher
- Group discussion with students
- Photographing

The study is not based on action research, rather it has a qualitative case study approach to exploring how experienced HE in FE teachers, who have a track record for bringing about transformation in the students, approach their work.

Within the study all individuals and the organisation will remain anonymous, and participants will be able to withdraw at any time. All data will be kept securely. Student participation will be voluntary, and their comments remain confidential. Class based observation will not be a 'graded' activity; rather the aim will be, for example, to observe teacher-student interaction.

The study is being supervised by Professor X and Professor Y from the School of Education at Z

Thank you for your attention. Please contact me if the college require further details.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Messenger

Hazel Messenger

01.09.2010

Doctoral Research project: Developing Transformative Learning Cultures

Dear Student,

As a Doctoral student at the University of Hertfordshire, I am researching how higher education teachers in further education colleges develop learning environments and opportunities which can have an impact on the way students approach and succeed in their studies.

I should like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves a number of teachers and their students in different colleges to get an overview of practice across subject specialisms.

My study plans to involve students in discussions about their college experience. I plan to visit each of the course environments to observe and take photographs. This observation is only to inform the research and is not part of any other observation structure that the college may have.

Participation in this research project is wholly voluntary. Participants may be assured that:

- Participating in this research project will not be related to any formal monitoring of practice by the institution
- Permission has been given by the senior management at each of the colleges for individuals to be involved in the project
- Participants are able to withdraw from participating in the research project at any time
- The project will not publicise any personal information
- Any personal information given (for example, age, gender, history, interview data, photographs) will not be used to identify individuals, will not be stored so that it is accessible to anyone but the researcher and will be available for the participants to review at any time
- Raw data will be stored on a password-protected computer and destroyed when the research is complete. Participants will be informed when this has occurred
- Participants will be able to review data collected in their own contexts at any time
- All participants in the project will remain anonymous, so for example, any names used will be changed

- Photographs of learning environments which include students or teachers will only be taken following explicit permission given
- Video and voice recordings will only be used with explicit permission

Thank you,

Hazel Messenger (EdD Student University of z, School of Education)

I, name: _____ consent to being part of the research project detailed above. I understand the nature of the planned data collection methods. I agree/disagree to my photograph being taken as part of the data collection.

Signature : _____

Course: _____ Date: _____

College: _____

Hazel Messenger

01.09.2010

Doctoral Research project: Developing Transformative Learning Cultures

Dear Colleague,

As a Doctoral student at the University of Hertfordshire, I am researching how higher education teachers in further education colleges develop learning environments and opportunities which can have an impact on the way students approach and succeed in their studies.

I should like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves a number of teachers in different colleges to get an overview of practice across subject specialisms. By creating a collaborative approach to research and sharing knowledge, I hope to become more aware of how practice can influence the way students approach and succeed in their studies.

My study plans to involve participants in:

- Collaborative meetings with the participants
- One -to- one interviews with the researcher

I also plan to visit each of the course environments to observe and take photographs. This observation is only to inform the research and is not part of any other observation structure that the college may have.

As part of the research project, I should also like to obtain information from student groups which relates to their experience in their own subject areas. This information will be shared amongst the teachers' group and help with the planning of staff development sessions at the end of the project.

I should like to obtain information from students in three ways by:

- Engaging in conversation during my visits
- Discussing your learning environments and opportunities with small groups of students

Participation in this research project is wholly voluntary. Participants may be assured that:

- Participating in this research project will not be related to any formal monitoring of practice by the institution
- Permission has been given by the senior management at each of the colleges for individuals to be involved in the project

- Participants are able to withdraw from participating in the research project at any time
- The project will not publicise any personal information
- Any personal information given (for example, age, gender, career history, interview data) will not be used to identify individuals, will not be stored so that it is accessible to anyone but the researcher and will be available for the participants to review at any time
- Raw data will be stored on a password-protected computer and destroyed when the research is complete. Participants will be informed when this has occurred
- Participants will be able to review student data collected in their own contexts at any time
- All participants in the project will remain anonymous, so for example, any names used will be changed
- Photographs of learning environments which include students or participants will only be taken following explicit permission given
- Video and voice recordings will only be used with explicit permission

Thank you,

Hazel Messenger (EdD Student University of z, School of Education)

I, name: _____ consent to being part of the research project detailed above. I understand the nature of the planned data collection methods. I agree/disagree to my photograph being taken as part of the data collection.

Signature : _____

Course: _____ Date: _____

College: _____

Appendix 4

Case study notes

Appendix 4.1

Case study notes: Graphics at College B

The Course

1. Formerly run independently as a Dip HE with another university
2. FdA commenced September 2007
3. FdA developed collaboratively between university, four partner colleges, employers, lifelong learning network
4. FdA part of a suite of 8 Foundation Degrees in the Creative Industries, developed and monitored collectively
5. Purpose to provide progression opportunities for college students, widen access to HE, develop HE provision across the region
6. Billie part of development team
7. Graphics also taught at College A
8. Students mainly local, between 18 and 26
9. Recruitment by progression from Level 3 college course, local schools and via Clearing
10. Progression to university honours degree course final year at the end of Year 2

The Teacher: Billie

11. Has long held beliefs about human nature and potential. That everyone has good in them which can be found and built upon.
12. Believes that it is her role to help every single student make the best of themselves, to help them to believe in what they are capable of. This may take a long time, may even happen after the course has finished. This is the core of her beliefs about her job role.
13. Views this belief and the opportunity to express it in her job role as a 'gift'. That it is her role in life to be here doing this.
14. Brings powerful emotions and personal meaning to her role as a teacher.
15. Finds discussing her beliefs about teaching, her role as a teacher and her enjoyment of her job difficult to express in front of some colleagues, as not everyone sees the role in the same way
16. Able to develop a really powerful pedagogic force with a colleague who, although younger and having a different background, is on the same wavelength.
17. Finds that part of her job is getting colleagues to have a different vision, as well as doing that with students.
18. Aims to create an adult learning environment, whatever the age of the students, although some are more mature than others. She believes that if a learning environment is set up in a particular way, then everyone should be able to thrive.
19. Believes that the course is a vehicle for challenging the students' beliefs, which creates disorientation in a safe space, which knocks them off their feet.
20. Sees herself as a 'real teacher', who happens to be a graphic designer. This has changed since she first started teaching, when the identity was the other way round.

21. Believes that teaching and learning is a partnership, that there is a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the student
22. Aims to create a trusting environment where students can take safely take risks, are given the opportunity to fail, are given support, so that they can try again.
23. Believes that the subject matter is irrelevant, that the approach which challenges the students, and broadens their horizons, could apply to any subject.
24. Knows that she runs a successful course, but this is because of the way the course is run and taught, not the subject matter.
25. Believes that teaching is about personalities, relationships and communication, not a set of skills, or a robotic approach. She believes that FE is trying to take away the individuality and authenticity from being a teacher, by thinking that if everyone has the same set of skills, then the outcomes for the students will all be the same
26. Aims to develop authentic relationships with the students right from first contact, built on trust, openness and honesty. She aims to get in touch with the students personally, to find out about their lives, what matters to them , to remember significant events and recognise them.
27. Will share elements of her own life with the students, but has learnt to create boundaries between what and what not to share. This realisation has come with age and experience, and acknowledges that as she has got older, this has become easier, as the students no longer see her as being 'one of them'.
28. Indicates some students come to the course ready to build upon previous experiences, and can make leaps and bounds within the first few weeks. Others bring experiences that have not been successful. In this environment they can start afresh, are given another chance.
29. Finds that some of the students never trust the environment, and never take the steps they need to make the most of themselves, despite constant encouragement.
30. Believes that many students are making significant strides in their learning, but not necessarily in a way that is recognised by the course and its associated curriculum.
31. Feels that her role is in the studio, helping the students to achieve and grow.
32. Actively encourages the students to learn from each other, and enables different groups to form which can provide new opportunities.
33. Finds that being understaffed makes the role very difficult, as students who need support cannot get it, and they are at risk of withdrawal or failure.
34. Knows that the first 6 weeks of a course are extremely significant, and how important it is to get new staff who are on the same wavelength, which means that they need support at the same time as the students

The physical space

35. Collaborative and individual workspaces, tutor's office
36. Apple computers, guillotines, tables, stools, cupboards, clock
37. Instructions, administration, calendar, timetables, meeting notes, schemes of work, projects
38. Posters, artwork
39. History of Course, poster of previous year's show, photos of graduation, and overseas visit
40. Photos taken by students of things that made them laugh
41. Student work
42. Personal references to the tutor
43. Aims for the morning on whiteboard

44. Corridor space used for student work, administrative announcements, personal support services
45. Years 1 and 2 have adjacent studios, joined by teacher's room
46. National Diploma students along the corridor

The psychosocial space

47. Laughter, music, conversation, groups, individuals, 1-1s
48. Mix of formality and informality
49. Students listen to, talk with, tease and joke with their tutor
50. Administrative and self-management requirements reinforced
51. Jokes, asks questions about personal interests
52. Negotiates a mutually acceptable classroom environment including a shared iTunes library
53. Expectations of the employment sector reinforced
54. Students encouraged to review each other's work
55. Day starts with discussion about the day
56. 1-1, group, whole group feedback
57. Conversation between p/t tutor and Billie
58. 24/7 support for students on overseas trip
59. Staff socialise together on overseas trip
60. Multiple means for contact provided

Student comments

61. Treated as equals, spoken to like grown ups
62. We get the chance to exchange ideas with other students and the tutors, and then get feedback
63. The course helps people to get to know each other, particularly on the study trips
64. Everyone round here is friendly
65. They expect us to take responsibility
66. It is relaxed in a good way and we feel trusted
67. Everyone gets on
68. We can meet up on Facebook

Appendix 4.2

Case study notes: Art at College B

The course

1. Formerly run independently as Edexcel HND
2. FdA commenced September 2007
3. FdA developed collaboratively between university, four partner colleges, employers, lifelong learning network
4. FdA part of a suite of 8 Foundation Degrees in the Creative Industries, developed and monitored collectively
5. Purpose to provide progression opportunities for college students, widen access to HE, develop HE provision across the region
6. Tom part of development team
7. Art validated to be taught at one other college, not yet recruiting
8. Students mainly local, significant number of mature students
9. Direct recruitment from local population, Level 3 college course, local schools and via Clearing
10. Some students studying the course part-time over 3 years
11. Progression to university honours degree course final year at the end of Year 2

The teacher: Tom

12. Considers that HE and FE administrative systems work in opposition to each other
13. Believes that HEIs could learn from the practices that FECs have had established for some time
14. Anticipates and welcomes learning and teaching to change in the future, with new demands, globalisation, use of technology, more student centred approaches. Expects this to be exciting
15. Questions some terminology, HE and FE talk about the same thing, but use different languages
16. Wonders if the FE culture makes some staff wary about opening up in an HE context, that perhaps a 'them and us' culture is present
17. Feels that the tutor is like 'piggy in the middle' and has to make it all work and keep both sides satisfied
18. Has a sense of isolation in running an HE course, and time restrictions which mitigate against collaboration and meeting up with others
19. Provides support and induction to new staff, and to established staff to coordinate the course

The physical space

20. Individual work bays and central shared space
21. Coffee corner with fridge, kettle, drinks and soft chairs
22. Student pigeonholes
23. Noticeboard with group lists, staff lists, information about New York trip
24. Postcards from students
25. Files
26. Exhibition posters, bookcases, student entitlement statement, health and safety notice
27. Artefacts, paints, jars and tins

28. Sinks
29. 10.Plants
30. Easels, OHP, canvases
31. Bicycle

The psychosocial space

32. Informal style, redirecting conversations when necessary
33. Offers a student the opportunity for an informal tutorial
34. Expresses concern for students and their families
35. Chats with students about email shorthand
36. Advises on equipment
37. Introduces new concepts into conversation
38. Discusses the work of individual artists
39. Discusses gallery visits undertaken by students
40. Offers help with individual student projects by providing resources collected on another group's visit
41. Provides supportive criticism regarding a student's painting
42. Offers personal opinion in relation to people's attitudes to art, music and literature
43. Prompts students to stay focused when dealing with assessed work
44. Advises on approach to assessment
45. Praises success with student's work placement
46. Laughter

Students' comments

47. Very supportive environment
48. Relationships encouraged
49. Able to support each other

Appendix 5.0 The Group Discussion

Appendix 5.1 Preparation for Group Discussion

Agents provocateurs: towards developing transformative learning cultures in contexts associated with widening participation in higher education

In a higher education arena which needs to respond to an increasing, and an increasingly diverse student population, approaches to teaching and learning, and the intention of teaching and learning become a focus for exploration. There is a considerable body of research relating to skills development in students, but there has been no conclusive evidence as to what works best (Blackie et al, 2009). Approaches to teaching and learning may need to go beyond approaches which aim to rectify shortcomings, and instead address issues associated with student attitudes behind their approach to study.

Barnett (2007:2) in his discussions of the promotion of the “*will to learn*” in higher education shows interest in the intent of higher education teaching as something which promotes “*habits of mind*” such as “*persistence, self discipline, respect for others, self criticism, preparedness to explore, integrity, independence, courage, energy and resilience*”. He considers that a prerequisite of a genuine higher education is one which nurtures the student’s will, their drive to learn. He regards anything less as ‘doleful’.

“*Habits of mind*” are a core feature of Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 2000:16), which links approaches to learning with the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter our experiences. These habits of mind are expressed as “*points of view*” (ibid:18), sets of expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and judgements. For example, a student’s habit of mind relating to self discipline may be expressed through their attitude to themselves, to rules and regulations and taking responsibility. These behaviours may be inside or outside of their awareness, but have resulted from their own experiences and interpretations.

Transformation implies that existing habits of mind and points of view are changed by a single event, or incrementally, over a period of time. Mezirow (2000) suggests that transformatory learning approaches involve students being made aware of the sources and nature of their taken-for- granted beliefs and actions, of alternative ways of thinking and

acting and then provided with opportunities to reflect and act upon their awareness. Awareness of alternatives may result in change in behaviour or beliefs, or alternatively, re-justification and reinforcement of an approach which supports a particular outcome. The learning experience will aim to develop an informed student, and enable them to gain self knowledge, explore other ways of thinking and feel empowered (Cranton, 2006).

Barnett, Mezirow and Cranton emphasise the central role of the higher education teacher in this process. For the teacher, this approach involves finding ways to challenge the student's preconceived ideas, or their limiting attitudes in ways which have a lasting effect. It also means that the higher education teacher needs to have the attitude towards their own practice which supports and develops the student, rather than one which thinks that 'it's your own fault if you don't succeed' (Brennan and Naidoo, 2008:289) Coombes and Danaher (2006) suggest that the dispositions of the teacher and their relationship with the student are part of the transformatory process.

In their study of learning cultures in FE colleges, James and Biesta (2007:22) concluded that certain types of learning are "*promoted, permitted, inhibited and ruled out*" at individual learning sites, determined by a range of factors influencing that particular situation. They use an anthropological definition of culture, one which sees culture as a 'way of life', the normal social practices of a group of people, constituting their 'actions, dispositions and interpretations'. (ibid:23) A transformatory learning culture would be used to describe a context where there would be the intention to bring about change in the learning of those participating in it.

The aim of this research project is to identify and develop strategies for staff development associated with the development of transformatory learning cultures, where the examination of habits of mind which support a "*will to learn*" in higher education (Barnett, 2007:2) are promoted. The project involves the collaboration of higher education teachers from different subject specialisms and institutions. It is not suggested that it is possible to create 'recipes' for the creation of a particular learning culture, rather that each context has to create its own from the ingredients available. However, it is possible for teachers from different specialisms and institutions to learn from each others' experiences. This can be supported by the provision of a supportive, collaborative environment where teachers are able to reflect upon and share their own experiences of, and approaches to the creation of transformative learning cultures (King, 2004) In such an environment it may be possible to identify those practices that are "*permitted, promoted,*

inhibited and ruled out" (James and Biesta, 2007:22), and develop ideas for staff development.

References

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Appendix 5.2

Guiding questions for group discussion

1. What factors influence the type of learning culture ('the way we do things around here') you feel you are able to develop for your programme?
2. What approaches do you use to make students aware of the way they are approaching their studies? In promoting the 'will to learn', what approaches do you feel are 'permitted, promoted, inhibited, ruled out' by the learning culture you are able to develop?
3. Can you identify ways in which the students become influenced to reflect upon and change or re-justify their approach to their studies? Are there key times when change is more likely to take place?
4. Accepting the central role of the teacher in deciding and developing approaches to learning, could you identify why you might approach your teaching in a way which aims to be transformative? Is an approach which aims to address issues behind student attitudes to their study and their 'will to learn'?
Why do you work in this way....
5. Could you suggest any staff development opportunities which might help to develop a transformative learning culture for the students on your programme?

Appendix 5.3 Data display from Group Discussion

Key: BUS [Business] DES [Design] G [Graphics] M [Merchandising] 3DD [3D Design]

	PERMITTED <i>Permittors, permitting, possible, allowed, allowing,</i>	PROMOTED <i>actively promoted, intentional, encouraged</i>	INHIBITED <i>inhibitors, inhibiting, prevented, preventing, reduced, discouraged</i>	RULED OUT <i>Forbidden, impossible.</i>
ALL	Attitude of the programme manager Staff being aware of developmental theories like Maslow	<p>The teacher Teacher experience and reflection in action Role modelling all the time Promoting trust Talk in an informal way Promoting a professional work-like environment where constructive criticism is a norm</p> <p>Student dispositions Students given straight answers Separating negative feedback from who they are as people Student awareness of what they have to change Being aware that students find using feedback (+ve and -ve) difficult Give students confidence</p> <p>Team building/Cohort Student awareness of each other Students encouraged to give each other advice and feedback Students choosing who to ask for support Students working in formal and informal groups</p>	Time to rethink design Reliance on part time staff Shared philosophy Administrative support Student skills to help manage own learning	Flexible timetabling Flexibility in central planning Staff teaching on same day

	PERMITTED <i>Permitters, permitting, possible, allowed, allowing,</i>	PROMOTED <i>actively promoted, intentional, encouraged</i>	INHIBITED <i>inhibitors, inhibiting, prevented, preventing, reduced, discouraged</i>	RULED OUT <i>Forbidden, impossible.</i>
		Encourage reflection in large groups, face to face, small groups Encourage talk between with students Importance of induction activities for team building		
DES	Informal availability of art and design staff in Full day approach Studio environment Student familiarity with physical learning environment G Student familiarity with behavioural expectations of learning environment G	Wall space part of the learning environment A creatively stimulating environment Opportunity to develop relationship with students prior to start Staff perceived as enthusiastic and up to date Team teaching Setting up informal mentor group G Promotion of the 'cool course' to potential students G Making the most of return from work placement, key time for change Making the most of travel/visit opportunities away from home builds confidence Awareness of progression opportunities/requirements	Lack of staff	Pre course programme, show them what it will be like Staff availability to work alongside course leader G
BUS	Assessment hand-in at the end of the first 3 weeks Key tutor teaches 2 modules in Year 1: Semester A	Detailed and voluminous feedback provided Tutor creates culture, promotes expectations, helps students settle in Key tutor making students aware of their capabilities Feedback provided soon after hand in Feedback written in pen on the assignment F2F tutorial to analyse meaning of	Lack of room availability Classroom teaching, students move in and out of rooms every 1-2 hours Not allowed to use walls	Priority for HE courses Team teaching

	PERMITTED <i>Permitters, permitting, possible, allowed, allowing,</i>	PROMOTED <i>actively promoted, intentional, encouraged</i>	INHIBITED <i>inhibitors, inhibiting, prevented, preventing, reduced, discouraged</i>	RULED OUT <i>Forbidden, impossible.</i>
		feedback Playing the professional role as a teacher, being on time, taking note of student feedback Emphasis on helping students get to know who they are and what makes them tick Identifying what they are good at Making the most of start up for year 2 after summer break, key time for change		

Appendix 6

Study 2: guiding questions for student groups and teacher 1-1 interviews

Students

- What has it been like to be a student here?
- What types of relationships do you have with your tutor?
- How does your relationship with your tutor influence your learning experiences here?
- What are you expected to do for yourself?
- What kinds of support has your tutor provided you with?
- What challenges have you experienced since you started on this course?
- What is it like to be a student in this group?
- What type of environment is it?
- What motivates you on this course?
- What does your tutor make you aware of ?
- How are you involved in setting your own goals?
- How have your ideas about yourself and your goals developed or changed since you started on the course?

Teachers

- How might you characterise, describe, the students when they first arrive?
- What challenges do the students face?
- What do you aim for with your students?
- How do you approach the development of the students?
- If you are aiming to develop the students, towards what?
- What type of culture do you aim to create with your groups?
- What kind of influence do the students have on the type of culture you are aiming to create?
- How does the subject you teach provide challenge?
- What types of support do you provide for the students?
- Is it possible to identify key times when the students may need support/challenge?
- How would you describe how the students change over time?
- What is the relationship between what you do as a teacher and your own identity as a teacher?
- What factors have influenced your behaviour as a teacher/ students/time/opportunities/colleagues?
- How does your institutional context influence your behaviour as a teacher

Appendix 7

Analysis of data from the Business students and Julia at College B.

Theme	Student response	Observational data
Interpretation of environment	<p><i>like a family</i> <i>welcoming</i> <i>something to look forward to</i> <i>'Great'</i> <i>A bigger world, a whole experience that is much more positive than Univ</i> <i>Structured</i> <i>Different to College</i> <i>More laid back and relaxing compared to 6th form</i> <i>Something more to look forward to</i> <i>Clean, good facilities</i> <i>Interactive</i> <i>Group is important in learning subject</i> <i>Able to take the piss out of each other</i> <i>No one feels uncomfortable, everyone gets on</i> <i>Group is important in learning subject</i></p>	<p>Students chat with Julia Students talk about how they wouldn't like David Brent's style Students talk across the room to each other Students smiling, appear to be happy with each other Students prefer to learn here <i>[welcoming, clean, modern, better than a building site]</i> All late arrivals welcomed</p>
Interpretation of teacher intentions	<p><i>Supportive and helpful</i> <i>Friendly and helpful</i> <i>What you need, especially when you are new to an environment,</i> <i>Able to connect quickly</i> <i>Knows names</i> <i>Influenced learning, because it is easier to learn with someone you are comfortable with than it is with someone you are not comfortable with.</i> <i>Like knowing the fact that you have a good relationship puts you more at ease</i> <i>Like a '2nd Mum'</i> <i>Knows the line between work and friendship, Provides boundaries right from the beginning</i> <i>Have respect for J, know that</i></p>	<p>Students welcome appraisal session, think the time is right</p>

Theme	Student response	Observational data
	<p><i>the work has to be done</i></p> <p><i>Mutual respect</i></p> <p><i>J is interested in the students</i></p> <p><i>Easier to get work done in J's lessons than others, because of the relationship</i></p> <p><i>Because J does not get angry, makes St want to come more</i></p> <p><i>Talk to/phone J at any time of the day</i></p> <p><i>1 to 1</i></p> <p><i>On group activities she would kind of mix us up so that we're not sitting in the same groups all the time, so we know people</i></p> <p><i>To come to lectures because you enjoy it and if, even if you don't understand something then they will still help you to understand</i></p> <p><i>She always makes you feel like you can talk to her about any of your problems, even something small, anything to do with the course, and see her and seek help if you need it</i></p> <p><i>J expects you to do the job and expects you to do even more, she comes out very open and down to earth, you are able to understand her lessons easily but then she still expects a lot from you.</i></p> <p><i>She does it with humour</i></p> <p><i>A lot of individual work but with support to get along with it rather than being given the stuff and that's it 'bye'</i></p>	
Challenges faced	<p><i>Being set targets</i></p> <p><i>Have to use own initiative because it is HE</i></p> <p><i>All could end up in different places, not necessarily doing business</i></p> <p><i>Being made aware of what needs to be done</i></p> <p><i>Being able to get to where Univ students are in their own way</i></p>	<p>Progression to the University at the end of Year 2 made explicit, discussed</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Time of sessions does not fit with train times</p> <p>Being asked to lead groupwork</p>

Theme	Student response	Observational data
	<p><i>A stepping stone With GCSE's and A levels teachers apart from a few were always strict about nearly everything , if you developed some habits, some people did then College is a different environment so you, you are a bit more yourself, if you get late for example by a few minutes because of the train or whatever, you know that the teacher is not going to shout at you or shout at the class because you are late, you are aware that the teacher is going to say OK you are late, but the teacher might get you to realize the point and that you should be aware not to be late etc</i></p> <p><i>when I was at University 1st time it was like you get on with it, you go to the lectures, you listen to the lecturer and you go and do the work. But here you get that extra support, so I prefer it much more.</i></p> <p><i>I was a bit disappointed I'm not going to lie but now that I have experienced it, like now they have broken it down for us, I prefer it much more</i></p> <p><i>I think it's just setting us up because obviously we didn't get them grades, it's not that we're, I can't explain, it's not that we're dumber than the university students, but I think they are just setting us up, getting us ready so that we are at the level that they will be, it's not a bad thing</i></p>	
Observations about development	<p><i>It's the level and the mind and everything like attitude as well Spoken to individually about what we would like to do, our goals, she's helped me present my options to me, made it</i></p>	Students doing a Myers Briggs assessment, make confident use of the theory and vocabulary in their discussion

Theme	Student response	Observational data
	<p><i>easier for me to be able to look at it and see that this is what I am moving towards</i></p> <p><i>Expected to find out [about ourselves] for ourselves [not get told]</i></p> <p><i>You make your own conclusions because you work with some of the other people here, or working with J I think we are all looking forward to achieve our fullest potential, pushing ourselves to the limit</i></p> <p><i>For me it will help build up my confidence, showing me that I can achieve more, cos succeeding here will make me feel like if I put in this amount of work I can keep on succeeding everywhere else as I move up the stages in life, I keep on succeeding so it's like another, in a sense, it's like another obstacle to beat, to build up my confidence to keep on moving up the ladder rather than staying on one level you know</i></p> <p><i>No, I don't think it's just work obviously you gain knowledge as well but like he is saying, he is saying, like confidence, attitude towards other people, like groupwork, working as a team, just like everything, your personality as well, you develop, your people skills</i></p> <p><i>Just like developing yourself and setting yourself and setting yourself up for life like what you are going to be like when you are older</i></p> <p><i>As people, us, as a person, you always understand yourself best, so we might get some advice from J as well as background knowledge for example, Belbin's theory and so then it is our job to apply it for us to us and it is for us to draw conclusions I don't think J</i></p>	

Theme	Student response	Observational data
	<p><i>will ever do so I think you are like this or like that</i></p> <p><i>Easier to learn in one group, rather than lots of groups like 6th form</i></p> <p><i>You know at the end of the lesson you will understand more , like if you come in, she will tell you what you are going to do, this is good, do there is structure to the lesson and t the beginning of the lesson she says what you are going to be doing and at the end of the lesson you will understand a bit of it even if it's not all of it, it is a bit</i></p>	

Analysis of data from Julia's interview and observational data

Theme	Teacher response	Observational data
Environment	<p><i>Not allowed to put anything on the walls</i></p> <p><i>Lack of room availability</i></p> <p><i>Classroom teaching, students move in and out of rooms every 1-2 hours</i></p> <p><i>Lack of flexibility</i></p> <p><i>Primacy of FE requirements</i></p>	<p>Plain environment</p> <p>Materials on the notice boards from an Entry level group</p> <p>Welcoming</p> <p>Good humoured</p> <p>Relaxed</p> <p>Consistent</p>
Teacher intentions	<p><i>Asks herself, why do I do it this way?</i></p> <p><i>What is my belief system?</i></p> <p><i>Where does it come from as I don't have children?</i></p> <p><i>Is it from my experience of management?</i></p>	<p>To link the student coursework to personal needs and motivation</p> <p>To get them to think</p> <p>To be courageous (Q) , get feedback from the students</p>

Theme	Teacher response	Observational data
Teacher actions	<p><i>Self appraisal with the students</i></p> <p><i>Students appraise themselves and what they're doing [What they're doing on the course, what they are contributing, what's the value of the course, how do they get on with their tutor and nearly all of those]</i></p> <p><i>Getting them to sort things out themselves, push them to do it because otherwise they won't</i></p> <p><i>Absolutely, because you have to, because we know you know that when they come on to the Uof**** we know that we support them but we've kindof got to let go as well because they won't get that level of support. I try to tell them, but telling them is not the same as experiencing it. So first semester we look after them, nurture them. I think that is important. Now next Semester they are more on their own. You know. I don't have. At the Uof*** we know you have seminars. I don't have so many in the 1st year, it's more support workshops, bring me work well check that you're doing citing, referencing you know all those kinds of things. 2nd semester, seminar questions (Bangs table)</i></p>	<p>Welcomes students in corridor and classroom</p> <p>Welcomes by name</p> <p>Chats informally before class starts about weather, how students are feeling, asks where the rest of the group are</p> <p>Starts class by revisiting previous session on motivation, links theory to student personal motivation</p> <p>Links video [The Office] on motivation to assessment tasks</p> <p>Reminds students how to make notes</p> <p>Conversational style of questioning after video clip</p> <p>Uses student names all the time</p> <p>Tells the students that when she greets them, it is to make them feel welcome, which is motivational</p> <p>Reminds them that the afternoon session will include appraisals, to set goals and objectives for motivation</p> <p>Responds to student suggestions about putting information on the notice board</p> <p>Sits at the table with the students</p> <p>Goes through the criteria for giving a presentation, emphasizing timing, plus marking criteria</p> <p>Invites students to practice presentations during next session</p> <p>Tells students to remove earphones</p> <p>Students in teams, given time to get a team name and appoint a team leader</p>
Challenges faced by the students	<p><i>Lonely for girls because it is so male orientated...you pointed that out</i></p> <p><i>Well, usually, because it's a change isn't it...they don't know what they are coming</i></p>	<p>Giving presentations</p> <p>Progression to the University at the end of Year 2</p> <p>Student attendance made explicit</p> <p>Two students leave after being asked to be team leaders/ Julia</p>

Theme	Teacher response	Observational data
	<p><i>into. They are very quiet, very withdrawn, they don't know what's going to happen to them. It's a whole new experience</i></p> <p><i>Yes, to them it's, a lot of them don't realize it's college they are coming to a lot of them think that they're coming to the Uof **</i></p> <p><i>finances sorted, working out which bus to take, it's things like that..that they've never done before</i></p>	<p>rang them on their mobiles as soon as this became apparent</p> <p>Train times mean they want to leave earlier than the timetabled session</p>
Observations about student learning and development	<p><i>Aims to develop the person, otherwise they will go on developing themselves in the only ways they know</i></p>	<p>Need feedback at an early stage</p> <p>Asks students if new learning can be frightening</p> <p>Tells them they can stay-fight-learn or Run-panic-not learn</p> <p>Tells students they each have a unique set of gifts</p>
Organisational issues		<p>Programme provided by the College for feedback inadequate, wrong timing</p>

Appendix 8
Rationale for the selection/use of the images included in the thesis [Full version]





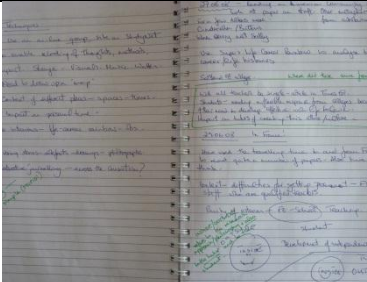
Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
Table					
4.6	87	Interaction of methodology	Thumbnail images	Photographs, journals and data analyses	To support explanation of integration of data
Illustrations					
4.1	85	Analysis of Business data: College A	Photograph of analytical drawing using CHAT	Research analysis (29.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of CHAT analysis
5.1	99	Participating in cultural communities	Photograph of analytical drawing using CHAT	Personal research journal (30.01.12)	Accessible visualisation of CHAT analysis
5.2	100	Interaction of multiple identities across time and space	Photograph of analytical drawing using CHAT	Personal research journal (30.01.12)	Accessible visualisation of CHAT analysis
5.3	114	Drawing practice	Photograph of practicing drawing	Personal research journal (29.05.10)	Example of the process of developing visual literacy
5.4	117	Analog drawings	Photograph of analysis using analog drawing	Personal research journal (15.05.09)	Example of use of analog drawing
5.5	121	What makes me tick?	Photograph of a drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis	Personal research journal (20.09.08)	Example of use of a drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis
5.6	123	Not so good Friday	Photograph of journal entry made during process of redundancy	Personal research journal (31.07.09)	Communication of questioning of professional identity
5.7	124	Is there room for more than one glass in life?	Photograph of a drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis	Personal research journal (21.09.08)	Example of use of drawing using visual metaphor for self-analysis
6.1	136	Personal research journals	Photograph of sample of personal research journals	Photograph (31.08.12)	Indication of style and personalisation of journals
6.2	137	Exploration/Creation and Observation/Reflection	Photograph of use of personal research journals	Personal research journals (03.12.08 & 26.07.09)	Indication of use of journals for exploration/creation and observation/reflection
7.1	165	Tom's journal	Photograph of an entry in research participant's journal	Photograph of Tom's research journal entry (21.10.08)	Indication of the participant's use of a research journal showing his professional experience




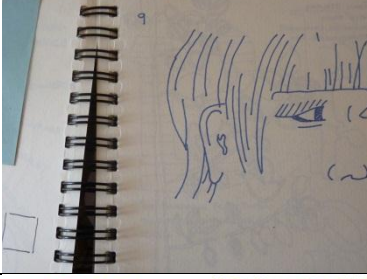
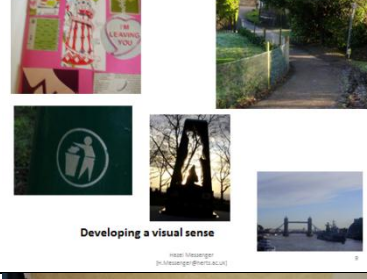
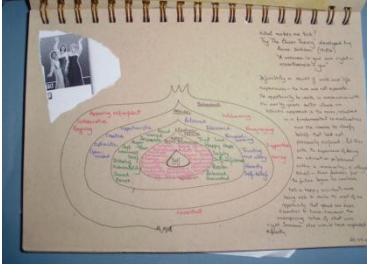
Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
7.2	192	Developing the ability to listen to other people's beliefs and opinions	Photograph of analytical drawing using CHAT	Photograph of personal research journal (01.11.11)	Accessible visualisation of CHAT analysis and creation of mini-story relating to Sofia and Design students
7.3	193	It might look like chaos	Photograph of analytical drawing combining 'bubble'/holding environment with CHAT analysis	Photograph of personal research journal (06.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of data from interview with Lance integrating 'bubble'/holding environment with CHAT analysis
7.4	194	Settling in	Photograph of analytical drawing of CHAT analysis	Photograph of personal research journal (07.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of data from interviews with Billie regarding student dispositions using CHAT analysis
7.5	195	Becoming a graphic designer	Photograph of analytical drawing of CHAT analysis	Photograph of personal research journal (06.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of data from interviews with Billie creating a mini-story about becoming a graphic designer
7.6	196	Developing an opinion	Photograph of analytical drawing using 'bubble'/holding environment	Photograph of personal research journal (06.06.11)	Accessible visualisation of data from interview with Lance integrating 'bubble'/holding environment with tutor-lead interventions
9.1	252	Development out of context	Photograph of Russian dolls	Presentation at SRHE December 9 th -11 th 2011	Accessible interpretation using visual metaphor
9.2	252	Transformation is too complex for one person to undertake	Photograph of conceptualisation	Supervision meeting March 2011	Drawn conceptualisation
9.3	253	Focus on the product of higher education	Digital manipulation of photograph taken at College A	Field visit to College A (17.11.10)	Integration of photographic evidence with drawn conceptualisation of 'the bubble'
9.4	253	Focus on the process of higher education	Digital manipulation of photograph taken at College A	Field visit to College A (17.11.10)	Integration of photographic evidence with drawn conceptualisation of 'the bubble'
Vignettes					
6.1	138	The corridor leading up to the merchandising studio	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (16.11.10)	Supports interpretation of the physical space outside the Merchandising studio


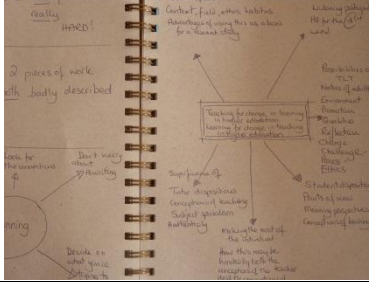
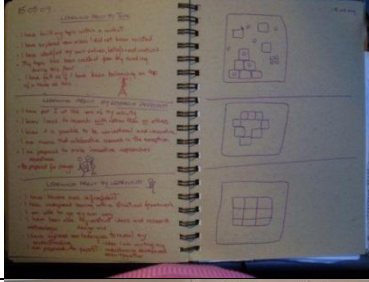

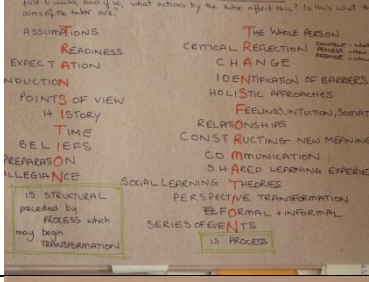
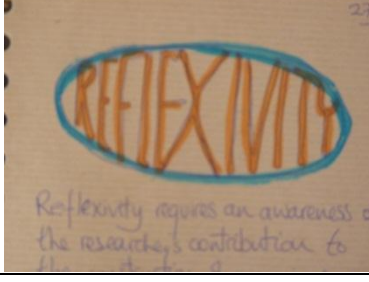
Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
					Used for photo-elicitation with Alice
7.1	183	'In the bubble'	Digital drawing of research data	Paper drawing made by Billie (18.11.2010)	Reproduces the drawing made by Billie during a research interview
7.2	186	Corridor outside the Business classroom	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Supports interpretation of the use of a display frame in the Business area Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Julia
7.3	188	1-1 with Julia for a Business student	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Supports interpretation of 1-1 'appraisal' with a student Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Julia
8.4	214	The end of year exhibition	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit to end-of-year exhibition (06.10)	Supports interpretation of end-of-year exhibition as rite-or-passage
8.5	218	Merchandising students developing their own voice	Photographs taken at College A	Field visits (16.11.10/08/12/10)	Supports interpretation of student data regarding developing their own 'voice'
8.6	221	Studio space vs classroom space	Photographs taken at College A and College B	Field visits to College A (Business: 15.11.10/Merchandising:16.11.10) and College B (Business:12.01.11/Graphics:03.02.11)	Supports interpretation of studio spaces and business classrooms at College A and College B
8.7	223	Business students: finding the right time for confrontation	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Supports interpretation of Julia's intentions and actions Used for photo-elicitation during interview
8.8	225	No hiding place	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (17.11.10)	Supports interpretation of student data and teacher data (Sofia)
8.9	226	Like a baby just born	Photograph taken at College A	Field visit (17.11.10)	Supports interpretation of student data
Photo-stories					
6.1	141	The Merchandising studio: college A	Photographs taken at College A	Field visits (16.11.10/22.11.10/08.12.11)	Introduces the reader to the use of the space inside the merchandising studio Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Alice

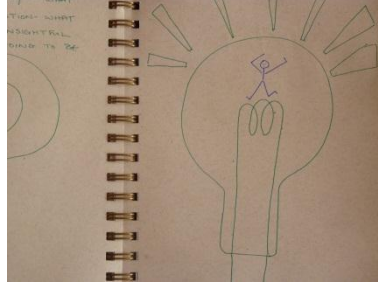

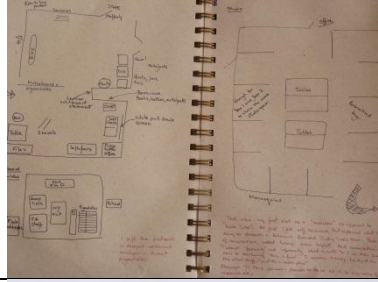


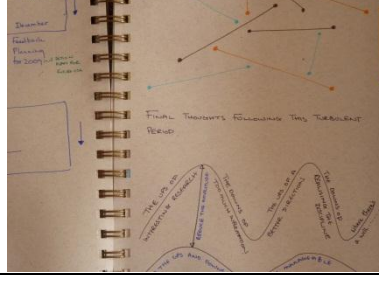
Number	Page	Subject	Nature	Source	Rationale
7.1	184	The Graphics' students comments at the final year exhibition	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit to end-of -year exhibition (06.10)	Introduces the reader to data collected by Billie and student perceptions of their experiences
7.2	187	Julia's Business class in action	Photographs taken at College A	Field visit (15.11.10)	Introduces the reader to the use of the classroom space in Business Used for photo-elicitation during the interview with Julia

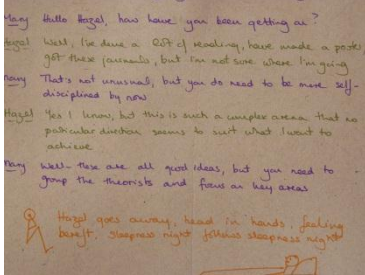




Appendix 9.0 Interaction of methodology [full version]

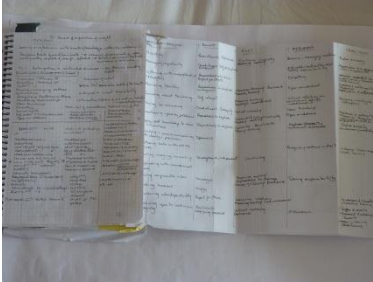
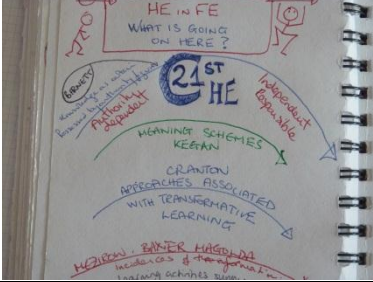




Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
1. Journal 0 23.05.08		Once I had located a focus for the first part of the research process..
2. My study 10.05.12		...first steps involved reading, reading and more reading...
3. Reading diary 10.05.12		..all recorded in a dated and annotated reading diary, kept updated throughout, revisiting and re-reading texts along the way; a spiral activity, enabling connections to be made between previously unconnected ideas.
4. My computer		I tried keeping a digital record by using EndNote..
5. Journal 0 27.06.08		..and a 'conventional' written research diary but these did not work for me. I could not 'see' what was there. I needed to find a better way of supporting myself during the process of connecting empirical research with developing conceptualisation.


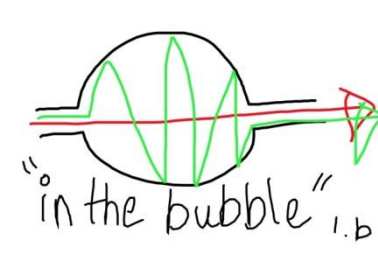
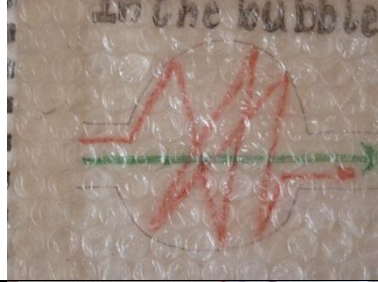
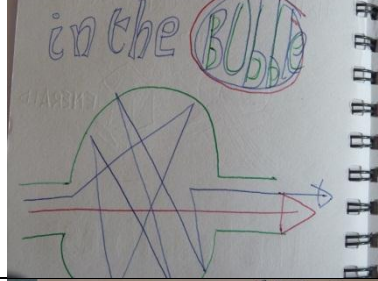
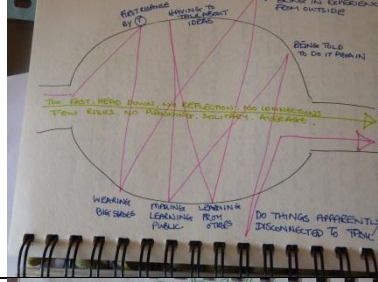

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
6. Journal 2 26.07.09		I knew that I had a strong visual sense, therefore chose to use visualisation as part of my methodology.
7. Sketchbook conference, Cambridge 19.03.2011		Working with artists and designers had introduced me to the use of a journal or sketchbook..
8. Front cover of Journal 6 14.04.10-12.06.10		..so I chose to include a personal research journal in my methodology which made active use of visualisation through drawing. The journal provided a place where I could make sense of complex ideas.
9. Journal 9 28.05.10		Drawing practice throughout the process...
10. Slide used in presentation at 'Creative thinking: reimagining the university'. NUI, Galway 10th-11th June 2010.		...and photography helped with the development of visual literacy.
11. Journal 1 20.09.08		Visual metaphor and concept mapping provided a means for understanding myself..


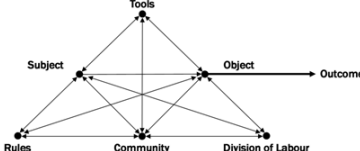
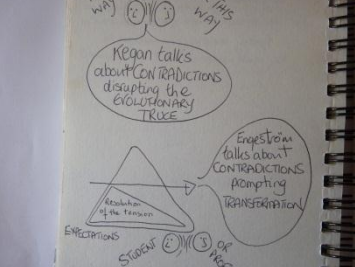
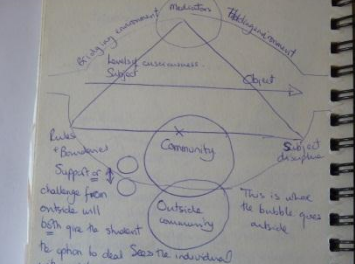


Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
12. James and Biesta (2007) Journal 2 01.12.09		..for converting concepts into memorable forms...
13. Journal 1 23.02.09		..and for understanding the context.
14. Journal 1 15.05.09		Analog drawings provided a way of diagnosing and interpreting conceptual struggles...
15. Journal 2 24.07.09		...and other approaches using space, shape and colour created memorable records which aided researcher development
16. Journal 1 16.10.08		Word diagrams helped with understanding concepts associated with 'transformative learning'...
17. Journal 2 27.11.09		..the vocabulary of research..

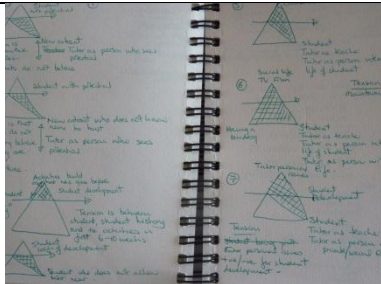
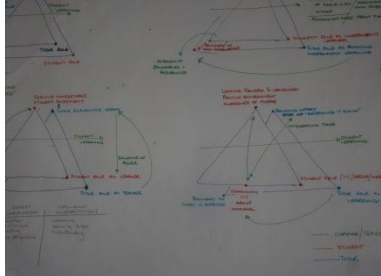
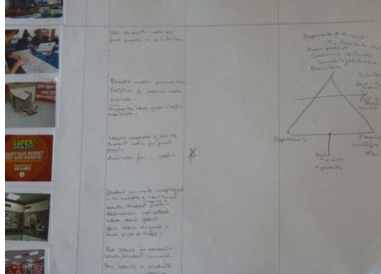
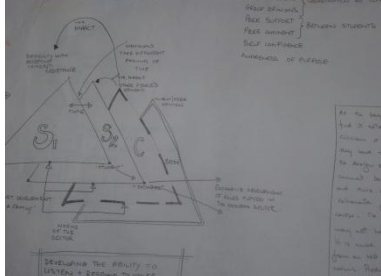
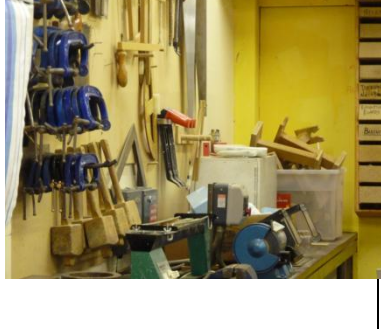
Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
18. Journal 1 01.11.08		And the visceral experience of being a researcher could be expressed, whether involving the joy of breakthrough...
19. Journal 3 04.08.09		...or the depression and anxiety of difficulties.
20. Journal 1 01.11.08		Study 1 involved 2 HE in FE contexts and the journal provided a place to keep field notes, maps, records of informal conversations..
21. Study trip to New York 07.12.08-14.12.08		..and personal photographs taken during the study trip to New York.
22. Journal 6 14.04.10 [Battery Park December 2008]		One of these photographs and the conversation that accompanied it provided an abiding record of the concept of negative or white space, something that would be valuable later in interpreting the zone of mediation.
23. Journal 1 02.11.08		The journal provided the means for acknowledging the confusion of having too many ideas with too little focus..

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
24. Journal 1 05.11.08		..and the need to be more self-disciplined.
25. Tom's journal 16.09.08		The methodology adopted in Study 1 made use of journal-keeping by one of the participants.
26. Interview with Billie 09.01.09	Billie: and you try and create a vehicle that is going to do all of those things, that is going to challenge them, but make them feel safe, give them the opportunity to fail but in a safe environment, to make them work in different ways- so that every task you give them you make them work in different ways.	Interview data from the teachers was integrated with notes from field visits, the study visit, informal conversations with students, Tom's journal..
27. Journal 7 17.06.10		..and teacher interviews providing direction for reading and a developing conceptualisation of the research sites
28. First conference paper 15 th -17 th September 2009		At the end of the first year of research, visualisation provided the opportunity to be involved with the international research community, an important step in maintaining my professional identity and self-esteem after I was made redundant.
29. Image presented by Norman Jackson at 'Creative thinking: reimagining the university'. NUI, Galway 10 th -11 th June 2010.		An unexpected impact of this was that it enabled me to enter into discussions with other academics interested in learning for a complex world.

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
30. Journal 5 21.12.09		Journals remained a faithful friend, enabling the integration of data from key authors (including Barnett, Cranton, Kegan, Mezirow)...
31. Journal 7 24.07.10		...and a developing conceptualisation of higher education for the 21 st century
32. Journal 7 05.07.10		Recruitment of participants for Study 2 was purposeful, and used an ethnographic methodology to intentionally explore the creation of transformative learning cultures
33. 3DD studio College A 17.11.10		Photographs taken during field visits provided a rich data source...
34. 3DD studio College A 17.11.10		..available for review after the event..
35. Business College B 14.02.11		..and for photo-elicitation during teacher interviews.

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
36. End of year exhibition preparation College A June 2011		Where possible, photographs were taken over a period of time and involving different events.
37. Interview with Billie 18.11.11		In the interview with Billie, she described a visual model that she used with her students to help them develop their creativity..
38 Journal 10 24.04.11-12.06.11.		..and this was such a powerful piece of data I used is for the cover of one of my journals
39. Journal 7 27.11.10		This model provided the foundations for visualising a transformative learning culture..
40. Journal 9 19.03.11		..providing the opportunity to visualise the supportive and confrontational approaches described by the teachers and their students, and observed during field visits.
41. Journal 7 08.12.10		It could also be integrated with the developmental theories of Kegan and Winnicott..

Data source	Photographic record	Interaction of methodology
<p>48. Journal 9 22.04.11</p>		<p>..and I needed another conceptualisation to help understand what was going on</p>
<p>49. Figure 3.1</p>		<p>I turned to CHAT for help...</p>
<p>50. Journal 10 20.05.11</p>		<p>..the ideas of Kegan and Engeström seemed to go well together, they both involved change occurring because of the resolution of contradictions..</p>
<p>51. Journal 9 28.03.11</p>		<p>..so I visualised the two concepts together.</p>
<p>52. Journal 9 24.03.11</p>		<p>Data from the teacher interviews indicated the interweaving of emotional issues in the activities they formulated over a period of time..</p>
<p>53. Journal 9 09.04.11</p>		<p>..so I began to visualise these together too.</p>

<p>54. Journal 10 21.05.11</p>		<p>CHAT provided a means for analysing transcript data to identify tensions and their resolution, firstly in a journal...</p>
<p>55. Analysis of Business College A 29.06.11</p>		<p>..and then on large sheets of paper, annotating the drawings using interview data and field notes.</p>
<p>56. Analysis of end of year exhibition photographs College A June 2011</p>		<p>These analyses were supplemented with CHAT analyses of the photographs taken..</p>
<p>57. Analysis of 3DD College A 'Developing the ability to listen and respond to other people's beliefs and opinions' June 2011</p>		<p>..and built up to form mini-stories. These were then collated by theme to identify a pedagogical pattern associated with the creation of a transformative learning culture, and along with photographs of the research sites, used to form vignettes in the thesis</p>
<p>58. Vignette 8.9 'Like a baby just born'</p>		<p>The 3D Design students saw the course as 'a big leap, more demanding' with the need to work differently 'straight away'. These students had progressed from a National Diploma course taught in the next room' and were used to being taught by Sofia and sharing the same workshop space as the HE students. However, they described feeling like 'being a kid again', and 'being a baby just born', indicating that they had grown up on their FE course, and now felt the vulnerability again that they thought they had left behind.</p>