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TRANSFORMING THE SELF:
A STUDY OF TRANSITION AND
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by
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to the Open University
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, September 2000
Mathematics Education

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To Hannah and Alice

ABSTRACT

Personal and professional development of teachers and trainees is studied through the training period and beyond in England. This is a study of the changing self during transition to teaching, reported through an interpretative narrative of the transitional experience.

Three contexts are used:

1. The early development of the author.
2. The author's teaching and research activities with *primary* trainees in HE.
3. A longitudinal study of *secondary* trainees.

A reflexive approach is used to discuss initial professional development, the growth of personal knowledge and the emergence of a teacher-self. Significant events are identified in the researcher's workplace: teaching episodes, informal meetings and interviews are analysed through a search for noticed themes. A single case study is piloted. Results are used to inform a longitudinal study, with data derived from semi-structured interviews and repertory grids.

Data analysis informs the construction of a narrative of transition for each participant using a psychodynamic perspective analyse the data for evidence of conscious influences and unconscious elements. The study draws on Winnicott's theory of transitional space and its application to classrooms. The construct of self is theorised from both intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives. The emerging teacher-self is evidenced as complex, idiosyncratic and partly influenced by unconscious material from childhood and adolescence. Salient features of participants' transitions are used to extend the theory and elicit an account of each transition. The findings are interpreted from a holistic viewpoint that recognises cognitive, affective and psychic influences on the development of an emergent teacher-self, viewed in terms of agency, intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions.

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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Transcription conventions used in the thesis.

- The transcript follows the spoken word as closely as possible.
- Unintelligible and omitted speech is indicated by ...
- Interjections and brief comments during what is substantially monologue are shown in brackets ().
- Words spoken by the interviewer are given in *italics*.
- Words spoken by the informant are given in roman.
- Square brackets [] denote numbered footnotes.
- Curly brackets { } are used to enclose additional commentary.
- Hesitations and pauses of up to 2-3 seconds are marked **{Pause}**.
- Pauses of more than 2-3 seconds are marked **{Long pause}**.
- No attempt has been made to indicate stresses or the varying speed of speech delivery.

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I am indebted to you all in the support you have given me and I accept as my own the shortcomings, errors and omissions that remain.

FOREWORD

This study is a series of stories. In consequence, it seems appropriate to present it as a story, and to invite it to be read as one. Like many stories, this one contains a beginning, a middle and an end. I begin with a review of my own development as a teacher since this reflexive process has helped me to understand the stories that other teachers can tell about their development and provides an articulation of my perspective through which the other studies will be viewed. The middle is an exploration of other *people's* stories, gleaned from my professional work over several years. I end the study by theorising the transitional experience that leads to the emergence of a professional teacher-self.

I believe that the research process should fashion the methodology rather than the reverse, and so this study could not and does not slavishly follow a pre-determined formula. Instead, there is a dependence on chronological flow and personalised accounts. If the study has strengths, these are due partly to the development of an idiosyncratic method which has been fashioned to serve the telling of the story, and the yielding of answers to the puzzles that I set myself. I am encouraged by Jerome Bruner who writes:

In the first quarter of this century, something crucial happened to thinking people. Let us call it "the interpretive turn." The turn first expressed itself in drama and literature, then in history, then in the social sciences, and finally in epistemology. It is now expressing itself in education. The object of interpretation is understanding, not explanation; its instrument is the analysis of text. Understanding is the outcome of organizing and contextualizing essentially contestable, incompletely verifiable propositions in a disciplined way. One of our principle ways of doing this is through narrative: by telling a story of what something is "about." (1996: 90)

Of course, it is still appropriate and necessary to refer to the relevant literature, to discuss it critically and to draw on it. I have done this, for example, in relation to the self: a concept on which much of this study depends and which needs discussing prior to the development of the thesis.

One view of self that I have found productive is that of Mead (1934). He argues that language plays an essential part in the development of a self. According to Mead's view self does not exist at birth but 'arises in the process of social experience and activity' (p.135). Mead sees the self as containing a vitally distinctive quality. It has 'the characteristic that it is an object to itself'. (p. 136). Thus self can be both subject and object. Mead identifies a generalised other that is also objectified by the self. According to Mead, a "me" arises out of our ability to interact socially and take 'the attitudes of others'. (p. 174). It is our reaction to the "me" that invokes the "I". Other denotes both *an object* to the self, in the reflexive sense, as well as in the non-reflexive sense. What I claim for Mead's viewpoint is the usefulness of his ideas in exploring notions of self and other when analysing the data presented in this thesis and when theorising the emergence of a teacher-self.

Jung offers a structure of the *psyche*, which was the subject of his *psychological* studies, that contains Ego, Shadow, the Syzygy (Anima and Animus), and Self. Jung uses these terms in specific ways but he often nurtures a certain obscurity rather than providing sharp definitions. In *Aion*, Jung (1968) draws on many historical sources to indicate the longevity of the construct. He refers to ancient Gnostic and Indian texts in order to illustrate a mystical sense of self which he finds useful:

Yajñyavalkya defines it [self] in indirect form in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "He who dwells in all beings, yet is apart from all beings, whom no beings know, whose body is all beings, who controls all beings from within, he is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal..." (p. 223)

Jung argues that the evidence drawn from a range of ancient writing is for a self which is 'an archetype of wholeness'. (p. 224).

My conceptualisation of the self has been aided by these two contrasting viewpoints. The process of interpretation of the data contained in the thesis relies on an understanding derived from these preliminary explorations.

Tony Brown September 2000

INTRODUCTION

I set out to study the personal and professional development of beginning teachers starting with their college-based training and following them into school settings after they qualified as teachers. My specific goal was to enhance my knowledge of transition to teaching and to produce an interpretative narrative account of their transitional experience. I started with a general question that may seem naïve: 'How can I narrate what happens to people who undergo a course of initial teacher education?' This led me to a number of research puzzles which I tried to investigate. I began my investigation by writing a series of questions.

Question 1. Is it possible to construct an interpretative account of the experience of transition in dynamic terms, using a psychological perspective on individuals' current and past experiences as potent sources of influence?

Question 2. How can reflecting on one's own experience as a developing teacher be used to inform our understanding of the process of transition in more general terms?

Question 3. Do teachers develop a teacher-self?

Question 4. Is it possible to produce a valid narrative account of transition that presents the transitional process and the acquisition of a teacher-self in ways that make sense to a professional readership?

Question 5: Is it possible to theorise the process of transition to a teacher-self as a dynamic life-course event?

I then addressed these questions as five conjectures which I investigated by conducting research in three areas.

1. I began with a reflexive study of my early professional development as a teacher.
2. I used critical incidents that I had identified from my work with *primary* education trainees in a higher education setting. These students were following a four-year course and this allowed me to work with individual trainees over a relatively long period.
3. Later I began a longitudinal study of *secondary* trainee teachers who were following a one-year course. This shorter training period enabled me to interview trainees in the college-based setting and then follow them relatively quickly into their respective workplaces.

In part one, I have explored significant events from my early professional life. Selected episodes are presented and analysed through a search for emergent themes. I have used a reflexive approach to discuss early professional development, the growth of knowledge and the emergence of a teacher-self.

In part two of the research I drew on significant events from my work in primary teacher education and training. I developed a method of data analysis based on teaching episodes, informal meetings and interviews. I analysed data through a search for themes. I have included a single case study that I used as a pilot. I used the results from the pilot to review my thinking, to test certain procedures that I had adopted and to inform the overall organisation of the longitudinal study, which is contained in part three.

The third part of the research spanned three years. I collected data from eight longitudinal case studies of secondary PGCE students of which three are reported. The data were derived from semi-structured interviews and repertory grids conducted during the training course and subsequently after qualification.

I analysed the data by searching for themes. These themes informed the construction of a narrative of transition for each participant. I analysed the themes from a psychodynamic perspective, searching for evidence of both conscious and unconscious processes. I was searching for evidence of conscious influences and unconscious elements from early childhood and previous transitions. A further stage of analysis was then undertaken, which drew on psychodynamic models of interaction and self-perception. I drew on all the research findings to develop a theory of transition.

Transition leads to the emergence of a teacher-self. The transitional process is revealed as complex, idiosyncratic and greatly influenced by childhood and adolescent experience. I argue that the findings of the study need to be interpreted within a holistic framework that acknowledges the cognitive, affective and psychic development of a teacher-self in terms of agency, interaction and complexity.

1. A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF TRANSITION

1.1 Becoming more aware of the dynamics of transition

What was I able to articulate at the early point when I was becoming curious but before I had established what I might study? I was able to see that the period of beginning teaching is a transition characterised by personal change. The training process appears to form a particularly distinctive period of initiation, which begins for many students when they start their course of training (or when they consider applying for a training place). The transition continues for an indefinite period through the training and beyond into the post-training period. These were my initial thoughts as I began to synthesise the discussions I had been having with students in training.

The desire to pursue this research developed as a result of two separate awarenesses. The first was that my teaching had changed substantially over the years since I began work in 1968. In the nineteen eighties, I had a growing interest in emotional education, partly through training as a counsellor. I was beginning to incorporate aspects of emotional learning more explicitly into my teaching. This shift of interest sensitised me to the process of emotional growth and learning in myself and others, particularly in the students with whom I work. I became increasingly interested in the affective domain and its influence on cognitive abilities.

The second awareness grew out of many discussions with individual students. I began to notice when students talked about emotional disturbance. I became interested in the nature and origins of what they reported. They frequently reported disturbances which appeared to emanate from some of the following:

- responses to the training process in college;
- interactions during school placements;
- a process of adjustment during their first years of teaching.

I began to pay closer attention. There were several sources of disturbance that were included in students' accounts.

1. Excitement, confusion and disappointment in the early period in college, involving the establishment of new relationships and the challenge of maintaining existing ones.
2. Anxiety and disappointment from those who wanted more detailed assessment and feedback than is generally available about their early college performance.
3. Surprise at the unexpected intensity of feelings and interactions experienced whilst on school placements.
4. Surprise at the sudden emergence of previously unconscious or vaguely remembered material from childhood and early adolescence, suddenly brought to mind and persisting in the conscious present.

Why were these themes emerging for a small but noticeable number of students at the outset of their course? I sensed a connection between my vicarious interest in students' early adjustment to their courses, my own development as a teacher and my work on in-service courses. Why was I becoming hooked by these stories? It is hardly surprising that some students face a period of adjustment when their imagined world as a student teacher gives way to the actual experience of studying and managing classes of children. But I sensed there was more. I perceived that some of the students' concerns were echoed by the teachers with whom I worked on in-service courses.

I began to form the idea that there were some personal, developmental processes at work which transcended the training period. More pertinently, some of the issues that were important to students and teachers appeared to have remained relatively unexplored throughout a fairly lengthy period of initial training.

I wanted to study these transitions more closely in order to understand them better. Why was it that students and teachers reported similar concerns about adjusting to teaching? Why was it that addressing these major concerns appeared to be beyond the scope of initial training programmes? Could I begin to understand the training process more clearly, and sensitise myself to the individual challenges facing students in training? What did I need to do to gain more insight?

At this point, I chose to review my own training and early experiences in school. But how could I approach this topic from the point of view of my own development? A book by Tripp (1993) entitled *Critical Incidents in Teaching* appeared to offer a way forward. This report of his work with teachers provides both a conceptual framework and also a practical guide for developing professional awareness and managing change.

It is also clear that one does not come to research with an uncluttered mind. Research starts with the researcher holding to certain values and beliefs, and immersed in a range of practices. What takes place is an act of selection from all that it is possible to say and write, a process of stressing and ignoring, a refining of previous ideas and, hopefully, the development of new insights and new ways of thinking.

My interest began to coalesce around certain themes and later these led to specific research questions. The principal themes became:

- the constructing of accounts of self and other during professional development;

- viewing the transition as a dynamic shaping force, directed from within (intrapersonal), and influenced from outside (both through interpersonal relationships and in response to prevailing circumstances);
- interpreting the processes by which we draw on previous experience when negotiating current transitions;
- finding ways to describe transition in more general terms;
- the emergence of a teacher-self;
- communicating with a professional readership;
- developing a theory of transition to a teacher-self as a dynamic life-course process.

At this point I discuss my initial ideas and the sensitising process that I used as I began to consider what this research study would look and feel like to me. How can the research be shaped and conducted in order to explore thoroughly the research themes and the more focused questions they generate?

1.1.1 Exploring emotional learning

In 1993 I became an OFSTED registered inspector, enabling me to lead primary school inspections. At this time, I was heavily involved with in-service work for primary teachers who were facing the first round of school inspections. In a short space of time, many found themselves appointed as co-ordinators of several curriculum subjects. Unfortunately, for some there was no negotiation in the devolving of these responsibilities and the writing of job descriptions. Many reported feeling threatened and overwhelmed by the looming inspections and by the response of their senior managers to the inspection threat.

Most teachers acquiesced in these structural changes to the middle tier of school management. They felt they had no right and no power to resist. For some, the lack of autonomy carried with it echoes of earlier situations and demands they had experienced both

in their work and at other times in their lives. For some, the changes that were brought about by the way senior managers were responding to school inspections evoked in the teachers feelings of being overwhelmed. They reported feelings that were unpleasantly reminiscent of threats of physical violence or abuse. Some teachers found that what they experienced was unbearable.

My response was to devote time, during some of the courses, to creating opportunities for explicit exploration of the problems being encountered. Colleagues provided support and the courses tried to provide help, in some small measure, by studying the effect of the inspection process on the boundaries that define teachers' working lives and professional relationships. Many boundaries had shifted as a result of the introduction of inspection. Some teachers found it difficult to accept, or even identify, new boundary positions and needed professional support if they were to be able to deal more effectively with feelings of intrusion and abuse. They needed to mediate the new requirements placed on them creatively and to develop new ways of asserting themselves in response to sometimes intrusive and invasive demands -- whoever was making them.

I was responding to a need that emerged quite quickly among primary teachers and this led to some *ad hoc* course planning and teaching. We opened up discussions about how we felt about our work, and how to communicate feelings in an assertive way. I became more aware of the effectiveness of explicit approaches to emotional learning in my teaching. This helped me to avoid simplistic reactive responses to needs. One starting point for increased understanding was to work with college students in ways that allowed for emotional learning as well as cognitive learning to be part of courses.

I thought it likely that the intense period of personal development experienced by some initial teacher training students would be a highly appropriate place to begin my research. I wanted to incorporate a psychological perspective in the study in order to examine the forces

affecting students. The perspective I developed drew on a number of writers and theorists but the construct of transition, transitional objects and transitional experience developed by the psychologist Donald Winnicott (1966) has been particularly important. There is a discussion of transitional space in sub-section 3.2.2 on page 52 and a discussion of classroom teaching space viewed as a transitional space in the footnote at the bottom of page 54.

1.1.2 Unpredictability and increased dependency

Is it possible that training courses encourage dependency? Do they promote the kind of professional knowledge, praxis and know-how that characterises an effective classroom teacher? Training institutions and schools may be unpredictable places to students. Tasks planned in college for students to carry out in school are dependent on the college's and school's mutual understanding of a highly complex situation. If each partner sets up expectations in the student that the other partner cannot deliver, then one consequence is likely to be students who cannot easily make and take decisions about their own practice. Does the training process then become an infantilising process where students are denied the opportunity to make even simple decisions?

It seemed to me that students' lack of knowledge about the structure and content of courses could, at least in the initial stages, produce confusion about the sort of behaviour that is expected, and lead to learned helplessness.

The structures that are evolved to deal with this [uncertainty] may involve the form of coping or defence mechanisms that can provide short-term alleviation of the immediate stress, but lead to longer-term harm. This has similarities to the infant having to create some form of order and security out of a situation which is both chaotic and confusing. (Coren, 1997: 128-129)

The untrained student is quickly expected to function as a responsible teacher within formal education settings whilst retaining the position and role of student in many aspects of the setting. These same settings may well hinder the development of an autonomous individual, since the apparent chaos and confusion can create strong tensions. It can be difficult to take

on the role of the adult teacher fully if one experiences the training process as confused and chaotic.

These ideas added to the complexity that I saw as part of an already complex issue. The transitional experience is not simply a moving on, or a moving through. It may well promote a regression to an earlier stage in one's life. The acquisition of adult roles of responsibility is part of a process of individuation that requires 'the severance of childhood emotional attachments, but to successfully complete that we may need to go back and relive them' (Coren, 1997: 10).

1.1.3 The nature of transition

Teachers develop a discernible teacher-self. In order to explore this conjecture, I would need to develop a research framework that allowed me to look at the 'teacher-self' and to search for congruity with students' behaviour. Changes in students' abilities to perform roles and to respond as teachers during the transition might help in describing the nature of transition itself.

I was already aware that where students experience disturbance this can be the consequence of experiencing echoes of the past. I was beginning to think of transition in terms of boundaries. I saw transition as lying between two psychologically distinct states, either side of a period of disturbance. The part-remembered past and the unknowable future are negotiated through the present period of disturbance.

Can the transition to a teaching-self be characterised for some students by psychological changes in the way the individual is both merged with and stands separate from significant others? This would need to be explored through students' relationships with significant others both past and present.

To do this, I would need to look for evidence of the transitional experience standing *for* the changing relationships with significant others and also standing *between* the trainee and others, separating them and helping them to form a distinctive teacher-self. The list of significant others was likely to include; parents, siblings, partners, children, friends, tutors, as well as teachers and others in the teaching practice schools.

I was aware that I was thinking of transition in dynamic terms, not as something that 'happens to' people in training. For the purposes of the research, I would need view the students' transition as a dynamic interplay between present live course events and reservoirs of previous experience. Transition is shaped by cognitive and affective elements and draws on conscious and unconscious material. I would need to be sensitive to evidence about the ways student teachers can *use* the transition, particularly when working on unresolved material from earlier episodes in their lives.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many students are successful in their college careers. From conversations and observations, it would appear that many go on to enjoy their teaching. For many of them, their transition seems to be a 'good-enough' experience. If students are relatively well integrated with a coherent self, and can project onto the transition the good relationships experienced with significant others, they may well feel protected by the transitional experience if it becomes imbued with the characteristics of the good relationships that have gone before. It could be seen by some as primarily an opportunity to get to know children or to teach interesting subject material.

The transitional experience takes place as a series of events in the current life course but it also has the capacity to act upon the contents of conscious memory and the reservoir of unconscious experience. For students who experience transition as successful, the transitional experience can allow the student to bring to mind relevant affirming images and feelings

including positive associations with significant others. This process can foster coherence and robustness at a time when the student is exploring the emergence of their self-as-teacher.

Of course, the converse is also possible. The transitional experience to a teaching-self might result in the projection of negative feelings, where disturbing events from earlier experiences are evoked by the transition and are relived within it, imbuing it with the qualities of earlier experiences such as a fear of failure, a loss of confidence or a lack of autonomy. Some experiences encountered during the transition (for example, adopting an authoritarian role with children, being separated from family and friends or experiencing emotional attachments in new relationships) can carry a strong emotional charge, one that for some is as unbearable as it is unanticipated.

Students experiencing difficulties have reported:

- being surprised that the transitional experience is in fact disturbing;
- being emotionally unready for the level of intensity of the disturbance;
- being surprised by what has been remembered from the past;
- being surprised that disturbance is not related to any particular recollection.

The length of the transitional period appears neither fixed nor easily determined. I noticed that the nature, intensity and content appeared to vary from individual to individual. I began to see that a Winnicottian perspective (see page 52) might be helpful in constructing a discussion of transition. Individuals appear to invest the transitional space with what Gattegno (see page 24) calls 'objectivations of experience' and to engage in a search for meaning.

The unconscious products of experience can be projected onto the new situation in ways that confound the conscious mind. By projecting unbearable and problematic feelings onto others, one can create an objectification that allows one to work on the disturbance constructively. This can mean that:

- the disturbance can become bearable within oneself;
- it can be introjected and reabsorbed later when one is ready to recognise the internal components of the projected material.

The period of transition can be marked by the creation of distinct boundaries or by abrupt change. For some, the beginning and end of the period appear to merge with other aspects of the individual's life course to make the change a smooth developmental process.

I hypothesised that I could make more sense of students' transitions by exploring their transition thematically. I could conduct interviews and look for relevant themes in the interview material. I could then explore the extent to which these themes represented forces that were shaping the students' development of a teacher-self. To work thematically, I needed a starting point. What themes were likely, plausible, productive? I needed to sensitise myself to possibilities.

It was at this point that I noticed I was already reviewing a number of my own experiences, including transitions. It seemed potentially profitable to look at my own teaching, partly because I had plenty of material on which to draw, and partly because of the particular opportunities that self-study provides in terms of access and analysis.

I hypothesised that important themes which thread their way through teaching might be common to different people. The themes emerging from self-study might not be confined to my experience, nor indeed to transitional periods. Thus, I did not limit the exploration of my

own teaching to any particular period but drew on significant episodes throughout my work. My purpose here was to establish a sensitising process both prior to and alongside a study of students' experiences. I needed a starting point that would help me tune in to other people's experience and allow the development of a theoretical perspective.

1.1.4 Awareness

I had already drawn on the ideas of Caleb Gattegno in my teaching, particularly his work in relation to the education of awareness. Gattegno sees experience as a generative process. One consequence of converting time into experience is the production of what Gattegno calls *objectivations*.

While time is given, experience is *created*. Hence the most primitive generation of wealth is the transformation of time into experience. Time is a universal raw material out of which humans make all the things that are "objectivations of energy" - a pot, a novel, a hypothesis, a theorem. Time that is spent - actively exchanged for experience - leads to objectivations. (1986: 214)

I had conjectured that the content of transitions is created and defined by students through their objectivations of experience. This process is shaped by their awarenesses. My research was intended to help me gain access to the students' objectivations via a self-sensitising process and through exploratory discussion.

1.1.5 Producing accounts

I wanted to establish a collaborative research process. I did not want 'to do research on someone', nor did I feel that such research in education was ethical. But how could I ensure equity when my interests might not coincide with those of the students? Trust alone is not sufficient, though it is an essential ingredient of a participatory working arrangement. To begin with I used a process of identifying significant events to elicit and to record aspects of my own work. I needed to generate data and to develop a method of imbuing it with meaning. John Mason (1996) describes a process for collecting and analysing experiential accounts in this way. I decided to use Mason's approach and this led me:

1. To render *an account* of each significant event.
2. To engage in a process of hypothesising, analysing and interpreting that provided opportunities to *account for* the event and its significance.

When this process was established and a number of significant events had been recorded, I was able to work with students undergoing transition to teaching. In the early stages, I was not sure how long this process would continue. I have been gathering data both formally and informally since 1993.

During a three--year period, I collected data from a wide range of students. I then began work with a small group of PGCE secondary mathematics graduates who became part of a longitudinal study. Both formal and informal discussions and interviews took place. I made use of repertory grids (see discussion on page 86) which were developed from personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955), although the analysis of this data does not appear in the thesis because of a lack of space.

Inevitably a translation has taken place in what I have written. As author of this thesis, I have been engaged in an interpretation of objectivations emerging from experience. I have used the research process to explore ways in which I can present *my* thesis and *my* perceptions, (this is, after all, a presentation of my perspective). At the same time I have continued to search for and report resonance with the accounts given by others. This has been made possible following discussion with those who have reported their experiences directly to me and as a result of working with critical friends who have reviewed my writing.

I have not sought to present a unified view, a single account or a generalisation of transitional experience. That has never been my intent. My purpose in starting the study was to enhance

my own insight into the processes under investigation and to research a method by which I can render coherent stories that illuminate people's transitional experience.

1.1.6 Looking forward

This marks the end of the initial orienting stage. My next step was to consider what an interpretative paradigm might mean in practice. The anticipated degree of personal involvement suggested that there was unlikely to be a place for a positivistic stance where an invisible researcher remains outside the sphere of influence, although I still have to determine what I mean and what is implied by following a research paradigm that involves personal involvement.

1.2 Summary

I have reported the starting points of the research: the tickling of the nose that started the whole thing. My initial curiosity about certain students' difficulties in adjusting to training and working in schools has to be seen against a backdrop that shows the majority as appearing to develop as teachers without major difficulty.

I have hypothesised a distinctive period which I called *transition to teaching* (action emphasised) and *transition to a teaching-self* (intrapersonal change and interpersonal relationships emphasised). I thought that some of the changes in my own development might be mirrored in some of those experienced by students who had recently trained.

I have identified the source of some of the disturbances experienced by students and recognised resonance with the in-service work I was doing at the time. I wanted to improve the quality of my teaching and the students' experience in training by utilising the research process.

I began to use the term *significant event* seeing this as a helpful focus for self-study, and identified emotional growth and learning as important in personal development. I have hypothesised that certain features, such as the unpredictability of outcomes to transition, would emerge in the data. Students' college life and their work in school could create personal disturbance and this is part of what I meant by the transitional experience.

I have begun to explore transition and identified some characteristic features. I have discussed the conditions for exploring research questions 2 and 3. Winnicott's and Gattegno's work have shaped my thinking and helped me to plan a research approach to transition and the development of a teacher-self.

I have recognised the value of looking for themes in interview material and then using the themes to explore the nature of transition. I have recognised that the study will result in an account of transition and I wanted that to be one in which the voices of the students were respected. I was not setting out to do research on them but with them.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE *PERSONAL* IN PERSONAL RESEARCH

In accepting the challenge I had set myself, I noticed a shift in both what I was attending to and in the quality of my attention. I began to see my work experiences as offering opportunities for furthering research as well as for carrying out my role as a teacher. These roles overlapped, creating a dynamic balance, but I experienced a shift: I felt different. I was sensitive to opportunities in a different way. I saw that my teaching could be researched, and that reflecting on the process could lead to new insights.

In considering personal research I wondered whether it was useful or even realistic to think about a 'real portrayal' of even a single student. Surely all I could see and think would be processed through my research lens with its unique filters? What then could be meant by validity, accuracy and researcher objectivity in this context?

One's values, beliefs, personal knowledge and understanding inevitably colour one's thinking. How else could I *think* about the problem under consideration except from my perspective? How then would these same influences shape my interpretations and my understanding during and after the research when I am faced with writing up my work as I am now? If it is problematic to eliminate or avoid personal idiosyncrasy in interpretation, then at least I need to acknowledge the problems inherent in personal accounts. Following Bruner's (1996: 90) observations that the 'object of interpretation is understanding, not explanation', I do not have to account for the way in which my personal involvement was *causally* implicated in the production of an interpretation. What I understand from Bruner is that there should be sufficient meat on the bone for the participants, and later the reader, to know something of my values, beliefs, and idiosyncrasies, sufficient that they can sense how I come to view things. The reader is actively involved in judging whether the interpretation is relevant and

useful, whether it contributes to a discussion on the nature of students' transition and the development of a teacher-self.

I am male, white, British, according to the coded way in which we can designate aspects of our selves, fifty-four years old at the time of writing. I trained from 1965-1968 in Derbyshire and gained a Teachers' Certificate which enabled me to teach in secondary schools as a physics and mathematics teacher for five years before moving to the primary sector. I studied part-time for an Open University honours degree. I taught for eight years in junior and infant schools, as they were then known, working as a mathematics co-ordinator, and later as a deputy head. I left to do primary advisory work for an LEA for four years before working in the university sector as a teacher trainer.

I began writing and was joint editor of *Mathematics Teaching* for a five-year period. More recently, I trained as a school inspector and led several inspections, drawing on my LEA in-service work with primary co-ordinators and senior managers.

I gained experience of research, undertaking my own small-scale studies, and publishing the findings (Brown, 1987). At the same time, other people's research also influenced my teaching. Dissertations were a feature of both undergraduate and masters level courses and the work of supervising students has continued alongside my own research.

In this study, I have analysed students' experiences in a professional training context and each student's life-course was seen as unique. The generalisations that I have made are interpretations offered to the informed reader who in turn can search for relevance, resonance and usefulness within the context of their own professional lives.

I claim membership of a teaching and research community and I base my claim on the training and experience described above. Membership of an expert professional community

allows one to 'see with an enlightened eye', rather than merely to look (Eisner, 1991:1).

Membership of a community can have a profound effect on the quality of understanding. For someone who is not a member of the teaching community, their understanding of teaching is limited because their experience does not include personal knowledge of teachers' praxis: the deeply-held professional 'know-how' that allows teachers to make sense of what they and others do in professional contexts.

I argue that I am qualified to research my chosen area through my membership of the community of teachers. However, despite sharing a professional outlook with other teachers this position also includes a unique perspective because of my birth, culture, beliefs and values. My personal research stance excluded looking for causal relationships between training and subsequent intrapersonal development, since it appeared that simple cause and effect relationships were unlikely to exist in such a rich and complex context. I did not include any formal assessment of student competence.

This personal research does not make statements about how things should be. It is a research story about my attempt to understand the process of transition and the emergence of a teacher-self existing within a multiplicity of selves within each individual. It required a research vocabulary appropriate to the task. I utilised terms which involve interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives and which offer opportunities for a reflective stance (Schön, 1988, 1991) which require an interpretative tradition. I explore the issue of appropriate vocabulary in more detail in the Chapter 4.

Before embarking on a consideration of the data sources and data collection, what was required was a careful examination of the context in which this research was to be established. What other studies were there on teacher thinking that would inform the construction of a research style? How has research into teachers and teaching been conducted? What changes have taken place in research methodology and tradition? What

could I learn from the current debate about appropriate ways of sharpening my research ideas into a research paradigm that is rigorous, appropriate and ethical?

In the next chapter, I take a critical look at a selection of the research that has been published on the subject of teachers and teaching and show how I used it to inform the decisions that I made about the structure of the research.

2.1 Summary

The research included personal exploration and a search for knowledge. I have recognised that the decision to conduct research affected my perspective on much of what I did both at work and elsewhere.

I have considered what might be meant by “real” in the context of the research, its findings and my interpretations. Earlier I had made the claim that I was rendering an informed account as an informed member of a community, with access to particular pedagogic knowledge and practical know-how that informed my interpretations.

I have identified some biographical details that would influence my viewpoint and my interpretative stance. They were identified to gain some insight into my personal position and in order to consider the research findings in relation to the researcher’s interests and dispositions. To make my research stance as clear as possible at this early stage, I have identified some boundaries to the research. I have reiterated that it would be a story about personal knowledge acquisition, and that the choice of vocabulary was an important one, since the enterprise is one of interpretation.

3. RESEARCH INTO TEACHERS AND TEACHING

This is an appropriate point for carrying out a review of literature. I need to discuss my developing research focus in relation to a published body of knowledge, to extend my own thinking about teachers and teaching and to indicate the scope of the study.

This chapter begins with a review of the changing nature of research into teaching, from studies of teacher behaviour to more recent studies of teachers as knowledge creators. The shift in focus has been accompanied by a shift in paradigm. It has resulted in an increase in the quantity and quality of studies into teacher thinking and identity. I review the work of several authors who have contributed to research into beginning teaching, and follow this with a discussion of the nature of self. A study of the teacher-self is considered from a psychodynamic perspective, and the nature of transition as disturbance is explored. Finally there is a discussion of the use of narrative as a vehicle for developing the teacher's voice.

3.1 The changing focus of teacher research

The focus of research into teaching has changed considerably in the last thirty years. From a position where most research followed a positivistic paradigm, researchers have widened their interests to include a broad range of sociological and anthropological perspectives. The changing focus has meant that studies have, broadly speaking, shifted their attention from measuring teacher behaviour to include studies of the inner world of teachers, their ideas, motives, values and beliefs. This has led to a considerable volume of research studies that explore reasons for teacher behaviour. There has been a shift in vocabulary that includes the following *components* of teachers' knowledge; personal, professional, tacit, pedagogical, know-how. Most researchers and writers on teacher development now see these components as

overlapping, interactive aspects of teachers' knowledge, which are active components in teachers' professional decision-making.

I need to explore the congruence between these ideas and my knowledge of the development of beginning teachers. If I can claim a measure of congruence, then I can draw on the results of other studies in developing my research focus. I shall also seek evidence from the literature that the process of knowledge acquisition by teachers provides evidence of the development of a teacher-self. I begin though, by considering teacher research from a historical perspective.

3.1.1 Studies of teacher behaviour

Through the nineteen sixties and seventies, studies of teaching were primarily studies of behaviour - the outer world of teachers and teaching. Much of the research at this time was seen as a study of 'relationships between what teachers do in the classroom (the process of teaching) and what happens to their students (the products of learning).' (Anderson, Evertson and Brophy, 1979: 193). Research during the period tended to make use of positivistic and behaviourist paradigms (McDonald and Elias, 1976). There are very few studies, for instance, that engaged with the ideas of Polanyi (1958: p viii) 'within every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known ... as a vital component of [the] knowledge.' Two notable exceptions are Jackson (1968) and Armstrong (1980) who describe the thinking and the mental constructs of teachers. Jackson conducted lengthy interviews with teachers of long standing, acknowledged to be experts in their field. He established his own classification of behaviour and explored teacher constructs under four themes: *immediacy*, *informality*, *autonomy* and *individuality*, arguing that all four of these themes resonated with the perspectives of student teachers as they set out to acquire practical know-how during their school placements.

Many teachers express strong views about how students should relate to pupils in classroom and other settings. Students need to interpret teachers' expectations, learn how to engage with pupils, and how to avoid being too distant or too familiar. There is a general expectation that teaching involves the immediacy of discourse: that questions and answers will feature as part of most lessons. Managing the great variety of pupil responses can be a particular source of difficulty when establishing rapport and *immediacy*.

Informality is problematic for certain students. Students are expected to acquire a range of behaviours for use in school, and to demonstrate that they know how to perform in these different settings. They also need to determine what passes for acceptable within the different educational settings in which they are being trained. Rapport cannot necessarily be achieved by modelling the level of formality displayed by teachers' behaviour.

Autonomy can be highly problematic for many students. They can find themselves sharing responsibility for classes and for teaching with a range of different professionals whose expectations vary. Acting autonomously is difficult when responsibility is diffuse and unclear. Pupils too, can become disturbed when the role of the teacher shifts to accommodate a student. In the sense that autonomy requires the ability to make and carry out decisions, it is not easy for students to take initiatives, particularly at the outset of their training.

What is significant about this early work is that Jackson sought explanations that went beyond the recording and coding of overt behaviour. Jackson identifies key areas of teachers' performance that are applicable to the development of students who need to engage with these 'teacher constructs' in developing teacher skills and know-how. Jackson was sensitive to issues that were unlikely to be explored at the time, such as teachers' personal strengths and the power relationships within school settings, '...even a first-grader knows that an absent teacher requires a substitute, whereas an absent student does not.' (p: 32)

His study offers a model for showing how teachers manage the subtleties and complexities of their teaching experience.

The personal qualities enabling teachers to withstand the demands of classroom life have never been adequately described. But, among those qualities is surely the ability to tolerate the enormous amount of ambiguity, unpredictability, and occasional chaos ... (Jackson, 1968: 148)

Jackson takes us towards the inner worlds of teachers. Many contemporary studies concerned themselves primarily with teachers' classroom behaviour and its supposed influence on pupil behaviour. His paradigm shift away from detached observation is substantial and significant. The predominant research paradigm was unidirectional in its assumptions about cause and effect: teachers' behaviour being seen as causing effects in pupils' behaviour and thereby influencing learning. Adherence to this paradigm often resulted in coded responses to behaviours (Flanders, 1970) in categorical observation schedules, with a de-contextualised data analysis seeking generalisability according to positivistic rules. Thus, although there was a growing interest in teachers' behaviour, the predominant research culture influenced the enquiry in a way that is more obvious from a historical perspective than perhaps it was at the time.

It may be that our understanding of teaching is inadequate because there is too much emphasis on conditional admonitions and too little attention to an analysis of the behaviour associated with these intentions. For all except the most gifted teachers, there is a gap between fairly good intentions and the teaching behaviour which occurs in the classroom. Perhaps teachers know what they ought to do, but they don't reach their aspirations as consistently as they would prefer. It is this observation which suggests that the study of classroom interaction may improve the quality of teaching simply because it would reduce the gap between intent and action – with a built-in safeguard that causes the shift to be in the direction of more effective teaching. (Flanders, 1970: 5)

This is a curiously contemporary view in that it foreshadows the current desires of the English and Welsh school inspectorate. Teachers are positioned as inadequate – professionally lacking the knowledge and ability to close 'the gap between intent and action' without the guidance of those who know better. Nowhere in this framing is there a suggestion of invitation by professional teachers to recruit researchers to help solve an internally perceived problem.

The shift in paradigms required a move away from the data that is typically produced by the FIAC (Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories) where, as Flanders writes:

'an observer sits in the classroom ... to hear and see the participants. ... decides which category best represents the communication events just completed, ... writes down this category number while he [sic] simultaneously assesses the continuing communication, ... at a rate of 20 to 25 tallies per minute. (*ibid.* p.37)

Current interest for many teachers and researchers starts from the premise that staying with complexity and ambiguity is neither bad nor avoidable in classroom settings where human behaviour and intent are the focus of study. The study of classroom settings as containing complex and ambiguous experiences does however require a paradigm shift from the one outlined above. If the classroom life of the teacher is complex, then that of the student teacher is arguably at least as ambiguous and unpredictable and possibly even more so.

3.1.2 Teachers as thinkers

Later studies (Nias, 1989; Diamond, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Huberman, 1993) show more interest in teachers' thinking and teachers' lives. Nias notes that very little had been published about who and what teachers perceive themselves to be. Seeking to find out what teachers think and believe is part of the shift from behaviourist models of teaching and learning to studies of cognitive and affective processes. This shift also reveals a change in researchers' attitudes to the question of who teachers are. From being the *objects* of study, teachers became people to collaborate with. Perhaps this is due in part to researchers like Nias who began their professional careers as teachers.

I have attempted to present an account of primary teaching as work, from the perspective of its practitioners. My justification ... is that neither pupils' nor adult observers' accounts can fully capture the lived realities of teaching as an occupation, that can only be done by allowing teachers to voice their own thoughts and feelings. (Nias, 1989: 2)

Nias' work has significance for this study which also seeks to establish a way of presenting accounts of the participants and the 'lived realities of teaching'. Nias' thinking is that teachers

operate in complex ways that are determined by professional judgements, many of which are made 'in-the-moment'. Here, teachers are viewed as professionals who work 'within a complex and uncertain community, ... and ... teachers' thoughts, judgements and decisions guide their classroom behaviour'. (Fang, 1996: 49)

This study will need to consider how the 'lived realities' of student teachers can be accessed, and how to detect connections between teachers' thoughts, judgements and classroom decision-making.

3.1.3 Knowledge and knowledge production

Through the eighties and nineties researchers placed increasing emphasis on teachers as knowledgeable, informed practitioners who make skilful judgements. Shulman (1986) identifies three sources, or *dimensions* of teachers' broad professional knowledge that inform their teaching: *subject matter*, *content knowledge*, and *pedagogical knowledge*. To these can be added 'know-how', a fourth dimension which relates to 'personal practical knowledge' (Beattie, 1995). Beattie argues that knowledge can be 'viewed as experiential, as a fusion of the objective and the subjective ...' (p: 63).

Shulman's classification informs the search for themes intended in this study. I anticipated that interview data could contain references to any of Shulman's knowledge dimensions. It is probable that students will see the acquisition of *personal practical knowledge* as the main purpose of training courses, and the focus of their work in schools. Shulman's and Beattie's classifications are a useful sensitising device to help the interpretation of data.

The literature shows two interesting epistemological shifts away from knowledge *seen as external to teachers* - a body of facts to be acquired through appropriate training - towards a quite different view in which knowledge is perceived as *constructed*. A second shift is from the views of researchers like Flanders whose inherent assumption was that researchers were

experts able to judge whether teachers' behaviour was effective and appropriate. Increasingly, teachers are the researchers, researching their own practice and that of their colleagues.

A constructivist view of teachers as knowledge-creators has been developed rather late in the day. Although interpretative studies of teachers have increased in number, and their complexity has steadily developed (with teachers' knowledge categorised in various ways by researchers like Shulman), the prevailing view in some quarters (e.g. TTA and their lists of competencies to be acquired by trainees) continues to be that teachers' knowledge is an external commodity, not an internal construct. Teachers' knowledge was the subject of a paper given by Hargreaves in which he presents teachers as knowledge creators in the context of the 'knowledge-creating school'.

[One can] treat practitioners themselves as the main (but not only) source of the creation of professional knowledge. From this perspective, the **knowledge-creation process and its management** can be analysed from two perspectives - the *characteristics of knowledge-creating schools* and the *dynamics of knowledge-creating activities*. (Hargreaves, 1998¹: 4. Author's original emphasis.)

Hargreaves develops the notion of teachers' *tacit* knowledge as 'closely related to procedural knowledge and practical know-how' (*ibid.* p.5). He draws on a model of knowledge-creation developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). In their model:

Socialisation concerns the *shared experience* through apprenticeship and on-the-job training, which generates tacit knowledge. *Dialogue* and collective reflection among members of the community trigger *externalisation* by which tacit knowledge is articulated into explicit knowledge. *Learning by doing* stimulates **internalisation**, by which explicit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge; as in skill acquisition, what is initially explicit becomes tacit through experience. (Hargreaves, 1998: 5)

This poses interesting issues for this study. As students complete their course of training and take up posts in school as qualified teachers, their construct of teacher's knowledge is likely to reveal something of the nature of their self-perception as teachers. How they see themselves as conforming to a teacher ideal or a 'good-enough' teacher could be revealed by exploring

¹ Paper presented to the BERA conference 1998.

their understanding of tacit knowledge. If tacit knowledge is indeed *unspoken* (cf. Chambers dictionary), does this mean it is *that which cannot be spoken* or *that which need not be spoken*?

Hargreaves argues that tacit knowledge is convertible into explicit knowledge through a process of reflection between members of the community, but one needs to ponder the extent to which students in training see themselves and are seen by others, as full members. There could be problems in gaining access to students' tacit knowledge through an interview procedure and this needs to be considered carefully. I believe that some tacit knowledge could be articulated by participants during interview, but that some will need to be inferred from the data.

3.1.4 Inner worlds

As the research focus shifted towards studies of knowledge-creation and internalisation of explicit knowledge, so the inner world of teachers' thinking became more significant to researchers and their studies. The construct of a teacher's inner world requires examination and theorising. Clandinin (1983) develops the notion of *image* as a component of the teacher's knowledge. Image is construed as dynamic, coalesced experience, including teachers' private experiences. Teachers can use their images as 'the perspective from which new experience is undertaken, ... through reflection ... an individual can make conscious her (*sic*) images and can set them up for inspection' (Beattie, 1995: 58). Images are internal products of interactions between experiences and other internal activity. They are likely to be shaped by values and beliefs about what students hold to be worthwhile, achievable, appropriate. Repertory grids may be useful in eliciting constructs which give information about the images that students construct.

This study draws on accounts of the lives of students and I intend to include exploration of the influence of their previous experiences on students' current decisions. It is therefore

appropriate to review research into the lives of teachers by drawing on the work of writers who have explored this area. Diamond for example makes use of repertory grids in order to identify shifts in values and beliefs held by the students during the period of his study. He draws on theories of social psychology, particularly those of Vygotsky (1979) and Kelly (1955). The use of repertory grids follows Kelly's personal construct theory.²

The way teachers are constructed in political terms can be seen as attempts by other groups to exercise control. Constructions that identify teachers as passive recipients of external knowledge are likely to emphasise the need for external control of teachers and the teaching profession.

Diamond identifies four major conceptualisations of the process of teacher education:

competency-based, personalistic, language and learning and perspective transformation. He then discusses criticism of the competency-based model. He describes it as casting teachers in the role of passive recipients of knowledge:

the delineation of specific behavioural objectives, prior to or early in a teacher-learning sequence, assumes that the teacher as learner is inert and passive, that there is a stable body of knowledge and skills and that there are fixed approaches to learning. (Diamond, 1991: 10)

Diamond argues for a conceptualisation of teacher education using transformative approaches, describing them as emancipatory processes where teachers become:

critically aware of how these structures [of psycho-cultural assumptions] or schemata both enable and constrain the way teachers see themselves and their relationships and then reconstituting this structure to permit a more discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings'. (Diamond 1991: 17)

² Personal constructs are seen as fundamental, core principles which shape our decisions. They are elicited from elements which 'represent part of the active, creative process at the heart of the experience of being a teacher self. They help us distinguish between positive will (bringing about what one has accepted from others as appropriate for a teacher), counter-will (opposing the demands inappropriately made on one as a teacher) and creative will (bringing about what one wants as an autonomous teacher)' (Diamond, 1991: 23)

He is concerned that, 'Although the most distinctively adult domain of learning, the epistemological empowerment of teachers to engage in knowledge production is the least known paradigm in adult education'. (*ibid.* p.17)

This study is firmly in the transformative camp and I concur with Diamond's sentiments about the different models and the different views of teachers that they perpetuate. Is it possible to distinguish between emancipatory processes that are self-initiated and those which are conferred by external agents as part of the training process?

The inner world of teachers has become central to many contemporary studies into teaching. The contents of this inner world: value systems, beliefs, imagery, personal constructs, and so on, represent the internal forces that shape the development of an integrated teacher-self.

There is growing acknowledgement that many aspects of being a teacher are rooted in childhood experiences and culture, ... All teachers were once children engaged consciously or unconsciously in observing and constructing knowledge of teaching both at home and at school. (Weber and Mitchell, 1996: 109)

I argue that exploration of the former will help shed light on the latter, and that as part of the discourse with participants, it is appropriate to explore their value systems, and beliefs, etc. not only as these feature in the participants' current settings, but also how they featured at earlier points in their lives. In this, I follow Kelchtermans who writes that:

symbolic interactionist studies ... and recent psychological research give support for a dynamic, interactionist and constructivist notion of self ... [which develops] as the result of a social construction process, that goes on during the life cycle. (Kelchtermans, 1993: 200)

3.1.5 Beginning teaching

There are several studies of beginning teachers which have contributed new knowledge (Calderhead, 1988; Bullough *et al.*, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Biott and Nias, 1992; Jaworski and Watson, 1994; Borich, 1995).

Bullough *et al.* (1991) chart the professional lives of a group of newly qualified teachers during their first year in the classroom. Goodson (1992) offers a range of methodologies for studying the lives of teachers and considers their relative strengths. Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984) discuss the actions of novice teachers. Borko *et al.* (1988) study the development of pedagogical expertise and describe certain types of student-teacher behaviour (teaching planning and preparation) and then identify influential factors. Russell, (1988) is interested in how students in training and novice teachers learn the 'practical, professional knowledge of teaching' (p: 14).

Calderhead's (1988) study of ten student teachers was conducted to explore their understanding of the training process. This reported experience of teachers and supervisors resonates with my own findings. Calderhead's students report anxious feelings resulting from being constantly watched and assessed. They experience dislocation as they begin work in school and attempt to model their teaching on that of the teachers with whom they have the most contact, particularly those who are supervising them. They try to fit in with existing school practices.

Diamond (1991) also reports dislocation in the students he observed. Two students, Grant and Mitzi were tempted to deny their own selves:

[Grant] I swung like a pendulum. My thoughts, attitudes and feelings reacted violently to reality. I changed quickly to my supervising teacher's form. I did not like it but it was successful in dealing with the volatile situation of school. Anyway he would be assessing me. I still don't like the shift away from myself though. (Diamond, 1991: 38)

[Mitzi] First high school lesson: Me playing a double role. One is the make believe teacher at the front and me going beyond myself to where I was the other watching the person out front, giggling and gazing in disbelief: 'That surely can't be you out there!' How do you become a 'real' teacher and not just an authority figure? (Diamond, 1991: 21)

This research is pertinent because it signals two things relevant to this study. First, Diamond finds evidence of student disturbance during their adjustment to teaching while on a placement. Second, the students can talk about themselves in terms of *playing double roles* and seeing themselves as multiple beings, i.e. they demonstrate ownership of a language which can include discussion about a *teacher-self*. The availability of a language of transformation suggests that these constructs will be accessible to me during this study.

Some studies have looked closely at the effects of training courses. Knowles (1992) finds little evidence that university-based courses influence the roles that trainees adopt in school settings.

In no case was the university preparation experience strongly evident in the individuals' teacher role identities or in their classroom behaviours. While the university teacher education experience appeared to help make cognitive changes in the pre-service teachers' thinking, there appears to be no significant evidence of the university's influence on practice - at least during the early months of practice. (Knowles, 1992: 134)

Thus, several of the above studies support the view that the period of studentship can be a disturbing one. The effect of university-based programmes is unclear and may be masked by strong effects brought about by periods in school, where students model teacher behaviour whether they value them intrinsically or not. Students tend to adopt behaviour that is approved of by those who are assessing them rather than follow their own beliefs. These findings are useful and informing as I move towards considering a suitable methodology for this study.

3.1.6 Studying the self

Exploration of the self is central to this study. It is essential to establish what is meant by self in the context of this research. Two different views are discernible in the literature. One tends to draw on intrapersonal and intrapsychic features and emphasises self-referential processes. The second requires the presence of an *other*, and argues that interpersonal processes involving the social construction of self are fundamental to identity. The two views are not

mutually exclusive and in this section I shall explore the usefulness of drawing on both viewpoints.

It seems undeniable that self-referential processes exist and that we are capable of recognising shifts in what and who we perceive ourselves to be. Since self change is a key aspect of the study, the work of Bannister (1981) is highly relevant. Bannister discusses the importance of self-referential skills in the context of managing one's own development:

To try and understand oneself is not simply an interesting pastime, it is a necessity of life. In order to plan our future and to make choices we have to be able to anticipate our behaviour in future situations. This makes self-knowledge a practical guide, not a self-indulgence. ... The stranger the country we are entering the more threatening the prospect becomes: the more we realize that some degree of self-change may be involved, the more we must rely upon our understanding of our own character and potential. (Bannister, 1981: 261)

In *Psychoanalysis and the classroom* (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992), the authors argue for a self-referential construct that draws partly on the work of Freud and partly on Klein and Winnicott. The difficulty of establishing a definition is argued to be the result of a more global problem. The authors argue that a paradox which emanated from the work of Freud continues to play a part in shaping psychodynamic definitions of self. Freud's interest in both the development of a general psychology with a biological basis and a theory of meaning encouraged exploration of the psychoanalytic world in two different directions, which included psychoanalytic researchers attempting to adopt positivistic paradigms in a search for general laws of psychology – the search for a metapsychology. Klein identifies the problem in this way:

Freud's metapsychology is not distinctively psychoanalytic. Moreover, it reduces human behaviour to a conceptual domain which requires a kind of observational datum different from that available in the analytic situation ... metapsychology throws overboard the fundamental intent of the psychoanalytic enterprise – that of unlocking meanings. (Klein, 1976: 49)

Bettelheim (1983) records the shift from the study of experience towards a study of functions and processes, and suggests that part of the problem lay in the translation of Freud's work,

typified by 'Strachey and Jones's preference for the experience-distant Latinate term "ego" rather than the more introspective and experience-near term "I" as the best translation of the German term "Ich",' (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992: 52). It has been argued that the term 'self' is a better translation than ego. Cohler and Galatzer-Levy continue:

Problems apparent in the translation of such terms as "ego" and "id" reflect lack of clarity regarding the contribution of experientially relevant concepts within psychoanalysis. The term "self" is perhaps the most readily confused of these concepts and may be too easily viewed as psychosocial or interpersonal constructs ...

Understood more generally within psychoanalysis as experienced coherence, continuity, or personal integrity ... the psychoanalytic construct of self refers to an intrapersonal or subjective state or agency leading to enhanced sense of personal spontaneity and wholeness. (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992: 52-53)

Cohler and Galatzer'-Levy's self is an intrapersonal construct. The view of self that one adopts depends on one's orientation within the different psychodynamic frames of reference. For those with an interest in clinical theory and the world of experience, the concept of 'self' relates to personal integrity. This research inevitably draws on this sense of identity and coherence. Different interviewees have described their transition in ways that show variations in their levels of internal, psychic coherence.

I became very aware of an intrapsychic dimension and self-referential processes adopted by interviewees. It was helpful to draw on a psychodynamic perspective that viewed 'the self as including the ego, the sense of being the subject [versus the object] of experience, the bodily self, and the sense of being a whole individual person' (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992: 53).

I also argue that Winnicott's construct of *transitional space*, created by mothers and infants, can be usefully adapted to a study of (student) teachers and children, and tutors/mentors and their students. This use of the construct of transitional space requires both a *self* and *not-self*, or *self* and *other*.

The need to consider both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of self means that I needed to look beyond a purely psychodynamic model. This study is also informed by the

work of Mead (1934) whose theory of the self posited a 'mind' or 'consciousness' as containing three elements, an "I", the actor, and a "me", who is the object of self-scrutiny (an 'objectification of the self' in Bollas' (1987) terminology). The *I* and the *me* are dynamically integrated with a third element, a 'generalised other' representing those individuals and cultures with which we interact. For Mead, the dynamic interplay of these three elements is the basis upon which the 'complete self' is constructed. The ability to conceptualise oneself as a developing teacher is regarded as integral to all discussions on self-reflexivity within this thesis. I saw a need to invite participants in this study to share their self-perceptions. Mead's distinction between actor and object helped to structure the discourse.

This study also draws on Freud's ideas about the power of childhood experiences to become integrated into the unconscious and to shape later behaviour. I do not draw on Freud's archaeological metaphor and its associated model of 'reconstruction', requiring a rebuilding of the past through the analyst's interpretations of the patients' free associations. Instead, I saw the work of Spence (1982) as more helpful because it gives greater heed to the construction of a 'narrative truth', constructed in the present, and taking precedence over a historical truth from which it may originate.

The 'self' that emerges from Spence's work is not a singular self, but rather a continually constructed and reconstituted self, formed from overlapping identities. As Somekh and Thaler remark, '... the identities of individuals are not only multiple and overlapping, they are also continuously reconstructed' (Somekh and Thaler, 1997: 144).

The processes of self-construction and self-management require a dynamic psychology where self-awareness and reflexivity are combined with an ability to 'see oneself' as an object and to act wilfully to manage the integration of Mead's 'generalised other'. Here, the *generalised other* includes all the external elements, (pupils, teachers, parents, ...) who become involved directly

in the student's world and who, in consequence are potentially implicated in the development of the student's teacher-self.

3.2 Objectification, integration, disintegration and becoming disturbed

The study presupposes transition as disturbance and within the work of Diamond and others (above) there is evidence that disturbance plays a role in shaping the self. I have already discussed the influence of Mead. The consequence of adopting Mead's argument for a discernible *I* and *me* is that it requires an objectification of *I as me*. This allows for scrutiny of a changing me, and suggests that observation of a changing me is not only possible but probable, particularly if an interviewer prompts the interviewee to talk about how they see themselves changing. Saltzberger-Wittenburg *et al.*, (1983) reports that the personal experience of learning has the potential to be deeply emotional for the learner.

What I believe is critical here is the extent to which learners are disposed to or able to sustain an integrated identity during periods when they are integrating new experiences with previous psychic accommodations. To maintain coherence as one develops requires that one is able to engage with current experiences in training and connect them to established values, beliefs and patterns of response. The ability to mediate problematic experiences may require the skilful management of both conscious and unconscious material that becomes associated with the training experience. Salmon (1983: 92) argues that self-awareness is a critical component for development when she says that training should enable teachers to 'become present to themselves, so that they are able to engage with the material from their own personal standpoint' and to be able to adapt their engagements.

Wilson and Cameron (1996) also report on student teachers' experiences of disturbance during initial teacher training. They focus on students' perceptions of effective teaching and

draw their evidence from unstructured student teacher journals. Their belief is that disturbance arises out of students' confrontation with conflicting views of what constitutes good teaching. They add that this creates, 'dissonance for many as they try to make sense of the teacher's role' (p: 194). Although this is a likely source it is unlikely to account for all sources of disturbance. Dissonance is possible even when a student experiences little conflict with views of what constitutes good teaching. I suspected that disturbance may be experienced even when a student begins enthusiastically to adopt a teaching style over which there is little or no disagreement. This current study goes further in the search for sources of dissonance by seeking to analyse transition in terms of its potential for creating intrapersonal dissonance.

In order to be present, in the sense that Salmon uses, one needs to be in touch with one's past, through being:

- consciously aware of significant prior events, which demands having a sense of the quality of one's engagement with them, and the subsequent adaptations;
- open to communication with the unconscious.

There is benefit in knowing the past as a story of previous experiences, hopes and imaginings. According to Bollas (1987: 6) 'the historical and the fantastical, the actual and the imaginary, are engaged in an endless and inevitable dialectic'. Some aspects of this dialectic are available to conscious processes, providing us with opportunities for conscious reflection and deepening self-knowledge. The dialogue can be entirely an intrapersonal one, conducted with oneself. It is common for us to see ourselves as the other, as an object to our own inner gaze, and as someone who performs as if 'at a distance'.

'Constant objectification of the self for purposes of thinking is commonplace' (Bollas, 1987: 42) and allows for observation of current performance and reflection. 'This intrasubjective

relationship will change according to the person's state of mind ...'. Making sense of the experience of transition to a teacher-self involves an appreciation of:

... the nature of intrasubjective relations to the self as object - those relations that are biased by instinctual forces and superego activities, and those relations reflective of integrative ego activities (*ibid.* p.42).

The ability to make sense of, and integrate the transitional experience is achieved most effectively by an already well-integrated self that can mediate the disturbance of transition creatively, constructing a teacher-identity that is in relative harmony with the existing self, ensuring coherence and integration within the developing self.

The process of psychic re-adjustment during transition is shaped by our ability to see ourselves as '*other*'. In the context of a developing teacher-self, this objectification can contain both *me* and *not me* elements - not dissimilar from Kelly's (1955) personal construct elements.³

One has to recognise the possibility that, at one and the same time, a student might have an objectification comprising both an *internal* and an *external* element; perhaps as a consequence of having successfully developed some classroom know-how, whilst at the same time experiencing dissociation in respect of a highly skilful teacher mentor, perhaps perceiving themselves as *not-teacher* because they are unable to perform as well as their mentor.

³ Kelly's original repertory grid and the various adaptations all follow broadly similar lines. Often the interviewer asks for a repertory grid of constructs to be constructed from triads of elements. Each element is a card on which is written a key word or phrase that is seen as fundamental to our sense of self. These elements can include words and phrases like: *me*, *not me*, *the person I would like to be*, *the person I fear to be*, ... The interviewer then asks the interviewee to draw three cards unseen from the set. The interviewee has to arrange two of them together to form a pair that the interviewee believes are associated in some way and the third is set apart as being qualitatively different in meaning to the interviewee. Thus, for example, an interviewee might draw; *me at five*, *the person I would like to be*, and *the present me*. Suppose they arranged the cards by placing *me at five* and *the person I would like to be* together (implying similarity) and *the present me* separately (implying difference from the pair). Through discussion, the interviewer then proceeds to elicit the interviewee's constructs about the similarity of the pair (e.g. I could always be myself when I was five – I was happy and free from feelings of social responsibility. Nowadays I'm playing a game. To be successful at work I have to put up a front to hide the frivolous side, the side that really would like to play). The interviewer then encourages the interviewee to interpret their key construct for the pair. One does not always get a predictable response. What is important for the interviewee might be: (being free from the pressure to conform socially) or (preserving childhood as a time for play) and the opposite construct might be (having to conform), or (being an adult), or (being a child in an adult's world).

The *me as not-teacher* could be identified negatively, by being associated with an absence of a quality that is perceived as integral to the development of a teacher-self; a lack of skills perhaps, or an inability to manage specific types of professional relationships with colleagues or pupils. Objectifications of *me as not-teacher* can also be regarded positively. For example they may coalesce around a resistance to the adoption of certain teacher behaviours, practices or values of which one disapproves (the bullying of pupils, for example) and which one does not wish to adopt.

However, if one perceives one's existing *self* as vulnerable, or one's experience of transitions is of loss, abandonment or an inevitable succumbing to overwhelming forces, then one may be threatened both by a sense of impending loss of personal qualities, as well as by the fear that there will be no-one to whom one can turn when help is needed.

So there are risks associated with studying our developing selves.

We may ... be at our most vulnerable when studying closely our own persona as teacher - the images others hold of us and those we hold ourselves. ... we may be entering into processes by which we deconstruct some basic, historically rooted views of ourselves. In such processes our existing images of the professional self will be challenged, questioned, re-thought and re-shaped in some degree. (Dadds, 1993: 288)

Evidence from Sally T. in the pilot study showed that transition can be accompanied by an unconscious sense of loss. The disturbance can be sufficient to threaten one's sense of self. The *I*, the *me* and the *not-me*, are all involved in Bollas' 'unending dialectic' through a process of objectification. And in Sally's case the objectification led to a split object where Sally failed to locate herself in her family (see the diagram on page 187). It would seem then that depending on the nature of the dialectic, and the regard in which the *I* and the *me* are held, the transition can tend towards either preservation or disintegration of the self.

An intrapsychic objectification, then, allows the beginning teacher to observe and comment on their performance during teacher-related activities. At one and the same time one may

recognise oneself as both *teacher-in-the-making* and *not-teacher*. One may catch oneself feeling surprised at 'seeing oneself' taking control of a whole class for the first time, or giving advice about child-care to a parent who is younger than oneself. Thus, part of the value of disturbance in transition and its potential for personal enhancement comes from the way it can sharpen one's consciousness of self and the changes that are underway. Through Bollas' 'unending dialectic' one can become much more aware of the constellated aspects of self and the shifts that are taking place during transition. These may include new awarenesses of what constitutes the changing self. For example:

- not-teacher;
- nearly teacher;
- not just a lay person;
- not just a parent;
- still adolescent;
- not always wanting to be adult;
- lacking immediacy with one's 'child';
- regaining one's "child";
- an authority;
- a tyrant;
- a bore;
- a storyteller;
- an actor.

These different and sometimes competing constructs generate resonance and dissonance within the changing self. Their co-existence in the psyche is the source of the creative energy necessary for psychic change. The process of intrapsychic objectification is not:

... just a cognitive division enabling us to widen the parameters of thought and action, nor is it simply an intrapsychic objectification of the play of instincts, desires, reproaches, inhibitions, and mediative activities. It is a complex object relation and we can analyse how a person holds and relates to himself as his internal and external object. (Bollas, 1987: 42)

3.2.1 Growth of the teacher-self

Salmon (*op. cit.*) argues that for the transition to a teaching-self to be accomplished successfully, trainees need to function reflexively. They need to recognise the process of change that is taking place within, and have some ability to manage it *for themselves*. Bannister argues:

... if we have only a vague picture or no picture at all then we cannot change; we need to be able to 'see' the changed us in the distance. ... when we have the picture then we can enact the role of a person like that. [and] if we enact in a committed and vigorous way for long enough then, at some mysterious point, we become what we are enacting and it is much more true to say that we are that person than that we are our former selves. ... (Bannister, 1981: 259)

The period of transition is necessarily ill-defined because, 'the [newly qualified teacher] may still psychologically be 'a student' who is enacting the role of teacher, who is putting on a teaching style and carrying out the duties of a teacher but who still, ... sees himself [sic] as a student' (*ibid.* p51). We use our ability to become objects to ourselves to develop a self-reflective stance. Exploration of our objectifications provides us with a sharper perception of what we want to become and what we are currently experiencing.

Working on the substance and nature of the transition in this way not only influences the process by which the teacher-self becomes integrated into the self, it also entails working on self-esteem, self-management and monitoring of processes of integration and disintegration.

3.2.2 Adapting Winnicott's notion of potential space

Winnicott developed the construct of potential space following his therapeutic work with children and families, and describes it as a space that exists between mother and infant, created out of a sense of confidence. He argues it is the location of cultural experience

'between a child and the mother when experience has produced in the child a high degree of confidence in the mother.' (Winnicott, 1986: 36).

Winnicott extends his ideas to adults, 'for every individual the use of this space is determined by *life experiences* that take place at the early stages of the individual's existence.' (Winnicott, 1971: 100).

What we have is a description of a learning space that we can employ in relation to two important contexts. I argue that there is a space analogous to Winnicott's potential or transitional space where a confident child and (student) teacher can work creatively together. There is also a space where a student can work psychically on self-development with others. These others could be: a college tutor, a school-based mentor or a pupil.

For this thesis, there is value in:

- locating the cultural experience of students who are learning to teach;
- theorising the development of a teacher-self;
- acknowledging the importance of earlier life experiences in the shaping of responses to current experiences.

We can benefit from using Winnicott's own words to describe the potential space because, 'For Winnicott, as perhaps for no other analytic writer, ... meaning lies in the form of the writing as much as in the content.' (Ogden, 1993: 223). Winnicott admits to the existence of paradoxes in his descriptions and considers it essential that they are allowed to be, 'accepted and tolerated and respected ... and not to be resolved.' (Winnicott, 1971: xii)

1. Potential space ... is the hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist) between the baby and the object (mother or part of mother) (Winnicott, 1971: 107)
2. Playing, creativity, transitional phenomena, psychotherapy, and "cultural"

experience ... all have a place in which they occur. That place, potential space, "is not *inside* by any use of the word ... nor is it *outside*" ... Potential space is an intermediate area of experiencing that lies between (a) the inner world, "inner psychic reality" ... and (b) "actual or external reality. It lies between the subjective object and the object objectively perceived, between me-extensions and not-me." ...

4. This "area is a product of the *experiences of the individual person* ... in the environment that obtains..." (Ogden, 1993: 223-224)

In the current thesis, the construct of a transitional space encompasses the great variety of physical locations in which teaching takes place, as well as non-physical space that can be experienced by individuals as delineating personal separateness and mutuality. A teacher who engages with a child can both enter and construct a transitional space within which the two recognise their separateness but also their mutuality. They are joined – often by a tacit agreement that what is underway is mutually beneficial, cognitively, emotionally and psychically. There are always temporal, cognitive, emotional and psychic determinants of the transitional space.

The student, and those with whom the student closely associates in training, can create and occupy a transitional space, in the same way as the child exploring mathematics. (See the footnote below ⁴ taken from an earlier discussion (Brown, 1996b: 113-136) in which I first made use of Winnicott's theory).

⁴ The learning of mathematics in school is often, at one and the same time, intensely private and personal, and very public. The creative teacher can educate learners to stay with their ideas, to tolerate the extent of each others' knowledge and to work through those stages of puzzlement, confusion and anxiety which are always with the mathematician. By learning how to dwell and through realising the importance of lingering, learners can gain some self control which aids both their personal understanding of mathematics and their ability to co-exist with others in a community of mathematicians. Teaching takes place in the space between teacher and learner. It is a boundary phenomenon. If the space is well constructed and boundaries are appropriate, giving security and stability to both the teacher and the children, they can explore the mathematics together playfully. Dwelling can then be practised within the space the teacher has created. It is a working space that contains echoes of Winnicott's "two areas of playing" (Winnicott 1971: 38). As Winnicott hints, the teacher sometimes has to work to bring the learner from a state of not being able to play at mathematics into a state where it is possible to play. Friedman, drawing on Winnicott points out:

The ... real question is how one participates in this. We can see this most clearly when someone who only knows the rules joins a game which we enjoy. They may move correctly, but are not "in" their moves. They have not been taken up by the game's proper spirit. Their absence from play may be because they are too libidinally involved in winning, or in being seen to move correctly. (Friedman, 1989: 68)

The exploitation of Winnicott's ideas allow us to consider a range of dynamic interactions between the student, significant *others*, and a transitional object. This transitional object has the potential to support and nurture the trainee so that survival of the transition is more likely. For some, the transitional object could be the school in which they train if this place can be embodied with the qualities that the trainee needs for survival and nurture. For others, it could be objectified in a parent figure (a teacher, mentor, their biological parent). For others again, it will be objectified as the *me-as-teacher* described earlier, and by the very distinctive professional relationships that can emerge between teacher and pupil as the trainee engages in school-based practice. For some, however, there may be no focused or objectified transitional object, only an unfocused sense of becoming a teacher, with no detectable object having become imbued with the qualities that make it a transitional object in the Winnicottian sense.

The notion of transitional space helps pose questions about what it feels like to occupy (or feel lost in, excluded from, in control of ...) the process of transition. The researcher's questions make it possible to explore the transitional space vicariously with the student during interview.

The purpose of dwelling in play and in mathematics, then, is to learn to be with and in the learning, to be complete, to be whole: both within the mathematics and also crucially within ourselves. I need to emphasise that this view of playing is not anti-intellectual nor should it be thought to imply a classroom that is *laissez faire*. Play can be a most arduous pursuit of understanding and wisdom. It is essentially a democratic activity that the teacher and the learner can engage in together. It leads away from fragmentation and disintegration, towards wholeness. For many children, the mathematics curriculum represents anything but wholeness. One important part of the role of the teacher is to work tirelessly at helping children to forge links. Where a child's world is full of fragments - of relationships and other broken patterns, a fragmented curriculum is doubly problematic.

What I think you must not expect is that a child who has not reached unit status can enjoy bits and pieces. These are frightening to such a child and represent chaos. (Winnicott, 1986: 61)

Drawing on Winnicott's theories of 'good-enough' mothering it is possible to explore the incomplete development of the teacher-self in terms of what is 'good enough' to pass the course, and what is good enough to teach. The parallel becomes an even closer one in those cases where the students' objectification of 'me' is accompanied by a self-nurturing disposition emanating from the 'I'. The recognition that an incomplete teacher-self is nevertheless 'good-enough' in the Winnicottian sense can support and preserve integration whilst allowing the gradual incorporation of more effective ways of functioning and a steady advancement of skills and behaviours.

Echoing Winnicott's idea that earlier life experiences shape our responses to our current life course, Bollas writes, the 'way in which we position ourselves in space and in time may partly reflect how we were originally situated spatially and temporally in relation to our parents.' (Bollas, 1987: 45). Where beginning teachers appear to be having difficulty in establishing a 'good enough' teacher-self, they may be experiencing the emergence of material from their past. Because the quality of self-management during transition may be highly dependent on previous experiences of earlier transitions, the interview process has to be carefully managed and sensitivity to students and their situation is important. The educator's role can resemble that of the parent and the transitional experience may be redolent with a student's previous experiences of parent - child relationships.

It is my view that each person transfers elements of the parents' child care to his own handling of himself as an object. In that transference to the self as an object, the person represents the interplay of the inherited (true self) and the environmental that featured in the structuring of the ego. In the relation to the self as an object the person re-creates elements of the mothers' facilitation of his existence. The structure of the ego is a form of deep constitutive memory, a recollection of the person's ontogenesis. (Bollas, 1987: 59)

For some beginning teachers, engaging in performance *as student* and performance *as novice teacher* may prompt an unexpectedly powerful interplay of the 'inherited and the environmental' (*ibid.* p.60) that can be surprisingly forceful.

Many beginning teachers manage their transition effectively and with creative flair. For many, it heralds a period of significant personal development, a successful integration of a teacher-self, and a precipitation into aspects of adulthood associated with teacher as authority, with consequential closure of many features of the adolescent period.

Although Bollas (*op. cit.*) is describing a therapeutic relationship between therapist and patient, a similar dialogue may occur as an intrapersonal process managed by the individual novice teacher as part of a natural inner dialogue that results in greater inner awareness and integration. It is appropriate to recognise in Bollas' words the potential for both the beginning teacher's internal dialogue, and valuable group discussions in teacher education settings. Thus, the beginning teacher who is managing the transition to teaching effectively:

... knows ... who his primary object is, what the assumptions of this object are in terms of being related to, and what this implies about the object's assumption about the self and its other. (Bollas, 1987: 61)

For this research study to be effective, the interview data needs to render insights into the interviewees' sense of 'me' – the primary object - and gain access to the assumptions about *self* and *other* during the training period. Because of the complexity of the material, narrative was seen as the most likely vehicle for providing rich, multi-layered analysis of the data.

3.2.3 Using narrative in a study of transition

The desire to study *people's* lives presents the researcher with considerable challenges in relation to truth, validity and representation. Researchers using the narrative tradition have sought to address these issues directly. The publication of *Local Knowledge* (Geertz, 1983) marked the beginning of what Denzin & Lincoln (1994: 12) call the 'fourth moment of qualitative research - the crisis of representation.'

Geertz wrote about changes to qualitative research processes as 'the blurring of genres', describing them as a 'sea change in our notion not so much of what knowledge is but of what

it is we want to know' (1983: 34). A good example of this was the growing sense of wanting to know about teachers' experience and the consequent focus on overt behaviour discussed earlier. The influence of the predominant paradigms of the time meant that research in education tended to follow positivistic and behaviourist approaches in answer to research questions about classrooms and teachers, as the work of Flanders (1970) testifies. In consequence, answers to the question "What do teachers' do?" focused mainly on the observation and recording of teachers' physical activity. As interest shifted to a broader view of teachers' experience, the information generated about teachers' overt behaviour seemed to be less helpful in answering new questions. Increasingly, it was motive and intrapersonal issues that captured *people's* curiosity and what researchers sought from their studies gradually shifted in the way Geertz describes.

Narrative is a vehicle for 'seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 12). In discussing the development of narrative as a vehicle for qualitative research I draw on my earlier writing (Brown, 1996a, 1996b), as well as the work of Spence (1982) in the psychoanalytic tradition.

Noddings (1995: 129) takes a critical look at the way 'qualitative research has been extended into "narrative research" '. She argues that in some cases, the historical veracity of narratives is not important if the 'confessed purpose of a narrative is to encourage readers to "try looking at it this way"' (p.130). The important point, Noddings argues, is that:

... we have a moral interest in truth-telling, and every researcher should be honest about the status of his or her work as report, philosophical fiction, or speculation. ... what seems unarguable is that researchers should be forthcoming about the purposes and limitations of their work. ... Readers should be invited ... to interpret the story in light of their own experience and, where ethically and practically feasible, to test its recommendations in their own experience. ... Narrative research, as part of the hermeneutic tradition, invites interpretation and reinterpretation. It puts far more responsibility on the readers or users of research who must play an active role in constructing meaning for themselves. (*ibid.* p.130)

Employing narrative was intended to aid interpretation and reinterpretation through the provision of a detailed and rich text. I intended to use the interviews as vehicles for collaboration and joint exploration. I organised them to ensure that roles were not blurred and I did not assume that agendas and responsibilities were identical.

Objectifications may become more accessible through the production of a narrative, allowing participants to articulate the transitional process in a more coherent and connected way. 'The stories we weave into our lives play a hugely important task in re-organizing our pasts, permitting the present and anticipating the future.' (Plummer, 1988). As Goodson comments:

If we are discussing the role that past experience comes to play in the construction of 'a life' then it is difficult to work without making reference to work done in the field of psychoanalysis ... Spence's recent work develops the argument; he asserts that there is a truth lodged in the narrative that people tell. That truth can be quite different from the 'historical truth' of what happened in their lives(Goodson, 1992: 224)

Some writers argue that the process of creating a narrative not only helps the articulation but also acts as a vehicle for claiming ownership of some of the changes that are captured in the telling.

As a child my life was controlled by my parents and teachers. Then it was controlled by my husband, children, money, lawyers and doctors. ... I believed all important decisions of life were taken away from me. Things were decided for me. I could not speak out, I had no voice, I had no power. Among many worthy reasons for wanting to become a teacher was a vague desire to realize a measure of power over my own life. Going to university gave me a steadily growing awareness of personal control. (Poirier, 1992: 85)

We re-work the past when we reflect on it, and our perception of past events shifts as we follow our life course. Working in the way that Noddings argues, with her invitation to the participants to interpret and re-interpret, may (according to Spence) result in reports that do not accurately reflect the original historical truth. Instead, the narrative becomes true through its articulation and its persistence in the present. Its survival ensues as a result of a process of scrutiny and potential rejection. What is left is a narrative truth, but not necessarily a historical truth.

Spence distances himself from Freud's archaeological model of psychoanalysis. Freud argues for the analyst's 'hovering attention' as a mechanism for interpreting the patient's free associations. Freud's description of the analyst as an archaeologist of the patient's past is dismissed by Spence who argues that:

The analyst cannot fail to form his own reactions to each of the patient's utterances. ... Sensitive empathic listening can probably take place *only* if the words spoken by one speaker are invested with private meanings by the other. Unless some kind of internal elaboration takes place, the listener hears only words. ... To listen with understanding and involvement requires the listener to be constantly forming hypotheses about the next word, the next sentence, the reference for a recent pronoun ... because it is in the midst of this kind of activity that words take on some kind of meaning. (Spence, 1982: 116-117)

Spence thus argues for an interactionist perspective whereby meaning is constructed in the here-and-now from dialogue. The meaning derives from the present and the patient's free associations (with their potential for providing echoes of the past), but according to Spence what the analyst does is construct a narrative that is a linguistic interpretation made in the present. In Freud's view, the analyst re-awakens the past for the patient, whereas in Spence's account, it is the narrative constructed in the present that is powerful. The narrative has the potential to become true and this gives it precedence over historical truth.

The linguistic and narrative aspects of an interpretation may well have priority over its historical truth, and we are making the somewhat heretical claim that an interpretation is effective because it gives the awkward happening a kind of linguistic and narrative closure, not because it can account for it in a purely causal sense. An interpretation satisfies because we are able to contain an unfinished piece of reality in a meaningful sentence: that is part of what we mean by finding its narrative home. The sentence acquires additional meaning when it meshes with other parts of the patient's life; it acquires narrative force by virtue of these connections, and adds narrative understanding to what is already known and understood. (Spence, 1982: 137-138)

The narrative forms which we acquire and develop 'provide us with genres for thinking with' (Beattie, 1995: 60) and offer ways to engage in the 'eternal rummaging in the past' and in the 'daring, scandalous rehearsal of scripts for the future.' (Rosen, 1986: 226, 237).

Spence's argument is critical to the notion of truth - and hence validity. I argue that the 'truth which lies within narrative' has current validity, however brief: when something is said, 'something is said'.

In this study, the narrative process commenced with the discursive interview and continued through the transcription process where reading and re-reading led to a cycle of interpretation and reinterpretation. It continued with the drafting of the accounts of the transition based on the data and what was read into the data (for example, through an interpretation of the influence of past events on the interviewee's current life course). From here, it entered a final stage where critical reading by informed professionals can add to the 'certain kind of authenticity' (Spence, 1982: 138) that survival of a challenged narrative ensures. If a professional readership finds that the accounts resonate with their experience, then this informed criticism provides 'a narrative home ... [and] amplifies and expands this truth.' (*ibid.* p.138).

The variety of contexts in which the current narrative has been re-viewed and re-worked has strengthened their robustness. I used sections of the data and the narrative with teachers and other professionals studying on different Masters research methods courses. The critical debates that took place contributed to the re-working of the narratives.

3.2.3.1 The reader's use of narrative

Beattie (1995: 59) reminds us that 'research conducted within the field of narrative studies could provide opportunities within which individuals can find voices to tell their own stories'. As MacIntyre (1981) argues, human social practices have histories and the meanings of these practices can only be understood within the narrative unity of the individual's life. Reading the narratives may be of practical benefit to the reader if they are used to stimulate reflection on the reader's own life course and professional development. If reading the accounts

nurtures narrative unity for the reader when reflecting on their life course, then so much the better.

Narrative then is implicated in the telling of a present truth that acknowledges the past as potentially active and influential in shaping current lives. MacIntyre links narrative *as method* with a concept of selfhood, 'a concept of self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative unites beginning to middle to end' (MacIntyre, 1981: 205).

Following Goodson's (*op. cit.*) argument that there is a truth located within narrative and that narrative truth can be quite different from historical truth, it follows that narrative can be a vehicle for the continual re-construction of present lives. Narrative is also implicated in the development of those interpretative research paradigms which are politically motivated by a desire to strengthen the actor's voice.

The significant aspect of classrooms are the contextual and social features, the very aspects that interpretative and narrative research methods capture so well. These are always interpreted in different ways by the participants, creating not one "truth", but many "truths" (Gudmundsdottir, 1997: 1)

The narrative tradition has been developed over several years. It invites contributors, writers and readers of narratives to reflect and review their motives and their life course. In so doing, their story may emerge more coherent. The emergent story may well be more robust and more organised than earlier accounts of professional life. Narrative can aid articulation of previously less coherent thoughts and it may also encourage ownership of the changes that it helps to reveal.

The writing of narrative accounts based on interview data necessarily draws on personal history and the narrative has the power to take precedence over the historical and become true because it represents and becomes part of a *present discourse*. Present discourses aid the

continual re-construction of present lives. The past is inexorably drafted in to furnish accounts of the present and speculations about the future.

In this study, narratives were intended to work at the level of interpretation. They were not an attempt to present a historically accurate report of the interviewee's past. Instead, through the narratives I sought to furnish an 'unfinished piece of reality in a meaningful sentence' and to locate it in its 'narrative home'. (Gudmundsdottir, 1997: 1).

There was no analyst-patient context here. Instead, I sought an active, joint construction through discussion in extended interview settings. It was more akin to a search for an emergent truth, a 'construction of something that makes sense', [and borrows from] Goethe's statement that only what is fruitful is true - *Was fruchbar ist, allein ist wahr*.

3.2.4 From questions and conjectures to theses

This chapter has dealt with the development of my research intentions. I started with the research questions in mind and tackled them as conjectures with the intention of working towards a thesis through argument supported by research evidence.

Question 1

I have supported the claim that interviewees' past experiences are potent sources of influence on their current life course, and that to incorporate evidence of the influence of the past into interview data requires a psychological perspective and a language that allows for the interpretation of psychic material.

Question 2

I conjectured that reflecting on experience through interviews can help identify and interpret the process of transition. I conjecture that my own experience is a suitable data source, together with material gathered from various sources as a teacher and a researcher in higher education.

Question 3

I have argued that teachers develop a discernible teacher-self and that this development may be influenced by the quality of the transitional space in which the student trains.

Question 4

I have argued that interview data is a potentially valuable source of material for the production of narrative accounts that explore transitional experience, and that offering narratives to a professional readership is an effective way of validating narratives.

Question 5

I have begun the process of theorising the transition to a teacher-self and incorporated a discussion of self-reflection through objectification. I theorise that a more integrated and coherent objectification of 'me' is achieved by a humane, caring and integrated 'I'.

What still remains is to provide further evidence to support the conjectures and the development of the associated theses in terms of an appropriate methodology that guides the gathering of data, its analysis, and interpretation.

3.3 Summary

Research into teaching and teachers has changed significantly in recent years. It has ceased to draw predominantly on behaviourist and positivistic paradigms and has broadened to include cognitive and affective studies. Education did this rather late in the day (Bruner, 1996: 90), but

researchers now view teachers as potential partners and collaborators. Many teachers are also researchers, and many researchers are teachers. Teachers' thinking is central to many research studies and teachers are perceived, at least by some, as producers of knowledge rather than being positioned as the recipients of training requiring induction into external forms of knowledge. Teaching as 'lived reality' has been accompanied by a respect for teachers' voices as legitimate sources of interpretations of teaching.

The categorisation of teachers' knowledge can sensitise the interview process and aid the interpretation of data in this study. Access to students' tacit knowledge may not be entirely possible through direct discussion and may require the researcher to interpret the data.

The ability to see oneself is central to discussions of transformation during transition. The notion of 'images' (Clandinin, 1983) is helpful, as indeed is Diamond's (1991) discussion of the conceptualisation of teaching as transformative. Resonance is detected between this writer's experiences and the findings of other writers (Saltzberger-Wittenburg, 1983; Calderhead, 1988; Diamond, 1991; Wilson and Cameron, 1996) that learning is potentially disturbing and that students do experience disturbance during the transition to teaching.

The source of some disturbance comes from students being confronted with conflicting views of what constitutes good teaching, and dissonance can be created for many as they try to make sense of the teacher's role. Some may also resist the acquisition of certain teacher traits and responsibilities, not wishing to be seen as 'that type of teacher'.

Objectification of the emerging teacher-self as the new "me" can help in the transformative process, particularly when it is conducted by a healthy nurturing "I".

Arguments for the construction of a teacher-self drew on the work of Mead (1934); Bannister (1981); Bollas (1987) and concurs with the view expressed by Somekh & Thaler (1997) that the identities of individuals are multiple, overlapping and continuously being reconstructed.

Objectification (Bollas, 1987) is central to the individual's ability to be reflexive and to manage change for themselves. In order to manage change effectively one needs to be 'present to oneself' (Salmon, 1983). The past is an integral part of the present transformative process (Winnicott, 1971) and the teacher-self can persist as partial and fragmentary (Bannister, 1991) for some time after qualification as a teacher.

Narrative is a powerful and appropriate way to explore the developing teacher-self and the each participant's story of transition. Teaching is a human practice. Human practices have histories (MacIntyre, 1981) and these can be understood effectively through narrative.

Narrative truth can take precedence over historical truth (Spence, 1982). Narratives can support and encourage ownership of change (Poirier, 1992) whilst also providing us with 'genres for thinking with' (Rosen, 1986).

4. A DISCUSSION OF METHOD

4.1 The story so far

In Chapter 1, I began by discussing my interests. I identified the areas that I will need to explore and I finished with a series of research puzzles (questions 1-5) that need to be addressed if the study is to provide an informed discussion of the training process of student teachers and their transition to a teacher-self.

In Chapter 2, I identified myself unequivocally with an interpretative paradigm. I discussed how the *personal* needs to be acknowledged and written into the research account. I stated that I was a member of the community under study, with specialist knowledge of the research area, and this had a bearing on the research style, the approach that I took. I claimed the skills needed to generate and interpret the data. The interpretative process and the production of a narrative assumed an informed readership, i.e. one which can also claim membership of the same community.

In Chapter 3, I discussed changes in the focus of researchers' attention on teaching and teachers. An examination of the literature also served to sharpen the discussion on the nature, focus and direction that the study took.

In writing this chapter, my main concern was to ensure that the research process supported the search for validity of the conjectures derived from the research questions. There are several points throughout the study where it has been appropriate to discuss the methods employed and I have explored them in these various locations rather than risk de-contextualising them by bringing them all together into one chapter. Developing the

interview process is discussed in sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 beginning on page 170. The suitability of the methods was reviewed following what had been learned from conducting the pilot study (see pages 176 and 202). A discussion on methods appears in section 7.1 on page 210 whilst developing the narrative is reviewed on page 212 in section 7.1.2.

In Chapter 9, there is a discussion of the limitations and weaknesses of the research study written just prior to submission of the thesis when I carried out a thorough review of the study and the methods used to collect and analyse data.

4.2 Fitting a method to research objectives

Over the last twenty years I have made and retained notes on a wide number of professional issues. I have recorded short extracts that explore my own development and during the six years spanning this research project, I have looked for themes that have emerged in my own transition to a teaching-self. A reflective, analytical exploration of my own experience was then combined with contemporary data and formed a theoretical study of transition into teaching.

The notes relating to my own teaching included data that covered development in both interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions. I continued to have an interest in both, and this interest played a part in shaping the structure of the research. I was curious about how teachers construct a teaching-self and the part that affective learning plays both within teaching contexts generally, and within the transitional process in particular.

I formed the view (expressed in previous chapters) that many students undergo a complex transitional experience as their training progresses. I based this on observations, discussions and notes made over an extended period. I had produced had a wide range of field notes on:

- discussions and interviews with individual students in a variety of settings;
- reflection on my own development as a teacher;
- discussions with groups of students at various points in their training;
- a range of teaching episodes;
- notes and comments proffered by students interested in my research.

The value of a reflexive study of my teaching was that it sensitised me to others and the pattern of their professional development. This is discussed further in section 4.6 (The research methods). Field notes and discussions with a range of students strongly suggested that the college-based and school-based elements of their training affected their learning in ways which are not always included in categorical research like that of (Shulman, 1986) who uses *subject knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge* to focus on discrete areas of academic, syllabus and praxis knowledge. These are perhaps the most familiar areas of knowledge to students and others associated with training courses.

The resulting method grew out of the need to extend the research to include data on psychological and psychical changes in individuals and guided the exploration of the conjectures and the generation of an account of transition that encompassed both interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives on transition to teaching and the emergence of a teacher-self.

4.2.1 What counts for students' experience?

Most students do well enough and complete their training with little personal difficulty. A few appear to experience major emotional and psychological disturbance. Several students have reported being surprised that the training provoked emotional disturbances that were quite unexpected in their range, content and intensity. A few of these students have explored these

effects in more detail as part of their own studies. To obtain entry into the world of students,

I chose to:

- use a process of self-sensitising by reviewing my own early experiences and subjecting them to an analysis of themes;
- interview a range of students using a case study approach;
- analyse student interview data by searching for themes;
- seek resonance between the data derived from these different sources and based on the perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 28).

I sought evidence of various hypotheses within the data and developed a theoretical discussion of the nature of transition that could account for the evidence that I accumulated. The purpose of developing a sensitising mechanism was to help me train my awareness so that I could more readily notice aspects of students' transition to a teaching-self. This was achieved through reflection on my own experience as a beginning teacher. Identifying the data that related to the emergence of my teacher-self sensitised me to the transitional experiences of others. This sensitising process enabled me to interpret the transitional experience of the students with greater awareness through a range of data collection methods. By listening to students and probing their initial responses, I gained valuable insights into their experience and I used this data to search for evidence of congruence with my own early teaching. The sources of data that I included were:

- college teaching sessions;
- other college-based work and experiences;
- school-based training;
- students' reflections on their current life experiences;
- students' reflection on their life-stories;

- students' emotional and psychological disposition.

There is a substantial body of writing on which I drew, and which pointed to powerful emotional effects associated with both the learning and the teaching mathematics (Blanchard-Laville, 1991b; Buxton, 1981; Burton, 1990; Pimm, 1994; Walkerdine, 1988; Weyl-Kailey, 1985).

Blanchard-Laville offered a model of working with teachers. She conducted psychodynamic group work with teachers in school, researching their experiences of mathematics teaching in their secondary school classroom work. Buxton's book deals with anxiety and panic associated with tackling mathematics. It includes a highly relevant discussion of the ways successful and accomplished people hide a fear of mathematics from their colleagues. Burton's work in gender specific issues helped me because the majority of students that I interviewed were women and it offered insights into issues of gender in the learning of mathematics. Pimm's work, like that of Blanchard-Laville, addresses the development of a psychology of mathematics education that includes the areas under investigation in this study and foreshadows this research. Walkerdine's research played a large part in challenging current pedagogy of mathematics. Weyl-Kailey's book consists of a series of interesting accounts of a child therapist who applies children's knowledge and beliefs about mathematics in a therapeutic context. Weyl-Kailey's work provided me with insights into the cycle of therapeutic interview, reflective analysis of interview data and the production of narrative construal.

Davis (1992: 173) suggested that 'by laying the strands of recent experience alongside the strands of past experience, you gain access to some possible ways of behaving in similar situations'. It is also possible to detect professional development in the shifts between choices that take place over time.

Some data from my current setting was gathered without any formal planning other than the practice of recording the results of noticing. I also carried out data collection using a more formal and systematic approach.

4.2.2 Moving from the particular to the general

I started by organising data from the early period of my teaching. I also kept notebooks of my current interests in which I recorded significant events. Some of these I wrote up in extended form. I worked with significant events as *particular* examples of what I had noticed. I analysed the *particular* examples, allowing generalisations to emerge as over-arching themes of association. From here I moved towards the development of a theory of transitional experience that incorporated both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. I set up a dynamic between *attending to practice* and *attending to theory*, so that my research proceeded in ways which allowed me to use each to inform the other.

4.2.3 The enlightened eye of the professional reader

My research has led to a particular thesis and a particular story which includes making the thesis available to others. There is a tension here, though. As Eisner (1991) argues, to look with an 'enlightened eye', rather than just committing the act of seeing, requires one to be a member of the community under study. This study is offered to professionals because it may inform them in their professional contexts. Informed readers are invited to engage with the study and to compare it with their own experience. There is an expectation that they will recognise some of the findings as relevant to their own professional lives. Validation of the study and its findings therefore depends in part on readers finding that the study resonates with their experience and informs their future practice.

In the following paragraphs, I discuss how I developed my initial ideas so that the research stance was underpinned by the methods used. It is followed by an account of the actual methods employed.

4.3 Determining appropriate methods

This research is a study of the processes by which humans make sense of their lives. It was achieved by researching how a small number of people shaped their life course and made sense of their lives. I conducted a search for meaning in their lives in order to answer research questions posed at the outset of the study. The conjectures I made were explored through the analysis and interpretation of the data I collected and used to theorise the process of transition to teaching and the emergence of a teacher-self.

4.3.1 Searching for meaning

In *Acts of Meaning*, Bruner (1990) identifies a growing interest during the nineteen eighties towards a culturally oriented psychology. Bruner describes a shift in the interests of psychologists to a broader, more inclusive view of people; less interested in the study of individuals, more interested in the constitutive role of culture. He acknowledges the centrality of language and particularly the work of Vygotsky in drawing attention to 'the impact of language use on the nature of man as a species'.

Drawing on the seminal work of Geertz (1973) on the nature of culture, Bruner argues that the shift of focus caused the work of psychologists to undergo a significant change in what constitutes psychological enquiry: Language could no longer be seen as being 'added to' a natural pre-existing mind. Neither could psychological enquiry regard culture tuning or adjusting biological needs:

A culturally oriented psychology neither dismisses what people say about their mental states, nor treats their statements only as if they were predictive indices

of overt behaviour. What it takes as central ... is that the relationship between action and saying (or experiencing) is, ... interpretable. (Bruner, 1990: 19)

Bruner argues that psychologists adopted practices which allowed them greater opportunities to interpret the relationship between actors and experience. In order to develop this research I need to develop methods that will allow this process of interpretation. One starting point is to study myself. I am encouraged in this by a lecture given by Caleb Gattegno in Winchester in 1988 shortly before his death. Gattegno argued passionately that we are all capable of studying the learning process because we all have an ideal case easily available to us: ourselves. Gattegno (1987) offers a paradigm for studying the self as learner in *The Science of Education*. (cf. Gattegno, C. (1971) *What we owe children : the subordination of teaching to learning*).

The 'cultural context' which particularly interested me was that of professional teachers. I could look with 'an enlightened eye', in order to recognise and interpret the actions, words and experiences of students who were training as teachers. I could analyse significant events and identify key themes in the research data. The themes were used to explore and theorise development as a teacher.

The second part of the thesis consists of an account of a pilot study and a longitudinal project with analysis of interviews with student teachers. The pilot involved a single student who was studying for the Bachelor of Education degree in primary education.

The longitudinal study consisted of eight secondary mathematics students who followed a Post Graduate Certificate of Education course. During this longitudinal study, I followed the students for two further years after they completed their training. Data from three of these respondents has been included in this study. A longitudinal study allowed for a more effective search for meaning within each student's transition to teaching and greater access to the changes in the student's teacher-self.

4.3.2 Justifying my research approach

4.3.2.1 Accounts and accounting

Much of the data that I obtained emerged from reflections and anecdotes embedded in personal accounts. I needed to look to qualitative methods and the systematic research of personal accounts if I were to develop a rigorous and defensible argument for my work.

The data needed to be gathered so that it included, ‘... well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts’. (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). The data that formed the first part of the study spans a period of thirty years. I wanted to preserve its chronological flow, partly because of the time span and partly because I saw the preservation of a chronological flow as allowing me a greater opportunity to tackle *hermeneutic composition* (what Bruner refers to as one of the nine universals of narrative realities).

No story has a single, unique construal. Its putative meanings are in principle multiple. ... The objective of hermeneutic analysis is to provide a convincing and non-contradictory account of what a story means. ... the meanings of the parts ... are “functions” of the story as a whole, and, at the same time, the story as a whole depends for its formation upon constituent parts ... A story’s parts and its whole must ... be made to live together. (Bruner, 1996: 137)

The second part of the study drew on the life-stories of students who trained to become teachers. I sought to work on the interview material in ways which allowed me to interpret aspects of their individual life course through a search for themes which had emerged as part of my analysis of the interview data. The themes were used when revisiting and reinterpreting the data in the production of a narrative of transition and the development of a theoretical framework that sought to *account for* the data.

As Bruner argues, it is inevitable that data can be interpreted in many different ways. I set out to provide the reader with a narrative construal of the students’ transitional experience that was a convincing account. I do not claim to have produced a unique construal, although I do

claim that the parts of the narrative and the whole do indeed live together, and can be laid alongside the experience of others. I also argue that my construal:

- enables me and others to make sense of my development as a teacher;
- makes a useful contribution to the interpretation of the professional development of other teachers.

Readers can explore the narrative to check for resonance with their own lived experience, and differences in interpretation can be used to prompt a closer study of both the accounts and the derived meanings.

Listening to two contrastive but equally reasonable accounts of the “same” event ... leads us to examine how two observers could “see” the same things happening and come away with such different stories of what went on. It wakes us up. (Bruner, 1996: 147)

4.3.3 What decisions had to be made?

I took a *social interactionist* perspective that drew on accounts of: culture and discourse, (Vygotsky, 1979), familial and cultural influences (Geertz, 1968), culturally-based ‘appropriation’ (Leont’ev, 1981), reflective practice (Schön, 1983), and what it is to feel like a teacher (Nias, 1989, 1993).

Initially, I considered the methods of action research. Within the action research paradigm, the improvement of practice and understanding of practice are paramount (Elliott, 1991; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). I expected the study to be informing and I anticipated developing my own practice as a teacher and also theorising aspects of it. Carr and Kemmis argue that practitioners can not only improve their practice by acquiring know-how but can also theorise their practice as a result of an action research approach. As I was concerned to improve my interactions with students, there was undoubtedly a flavour of action research to the study.

However, a good deal of action research sets out with the intention of establishing close links between current practice and improvement. The contexts for action research are predominantly those where the practitioner is *in the act of practising*, and this is not the context in which much of this study was set.

My intention was to generate theory about transition to a teaching-self and about the interplay between each actor and the contexts in which they functioned. In doing this, I used a psychodynamic approach to the interpretation of accounts. Few action research studies include psychodynamic interpretations and I concluded that although action research informed part of my study, its methods were not sufficiently relevant to its central themes.

The language of the study and some of its technical terms can be traced back to both education research and psychodynamics. 'Analysis' is a good example, so is 'interpretation'. Each has specialised meaning in both domains. I was conscious of the fact that as I *interpreted* the accounts and stories of the participants, I was drawing on both domains. The potential for ambiguity is an invitation to the reader to explore both fields, or at least to consider the language and meaning generated within the study from both perspectives.

One major criticism of both scientific and large-scale sociological research is that they have failed to address subjectivity. In this study, I emphasised subjectivity and I needed to draw on an interpretative style which has its roots in 'anthropological interpretivism', although this too presented potential difficulties since the anthropological approach assumes that researchers will be 'no more detached from their objects of study than are their informants.' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 8).

Pollard (1997) summarises the work of interpretative researchers as follows:

Typically, they study a limited number of cases in depth and try to achieve a view of the whole situation in a way which is seen to be valid by the participants. (p.47)

Anthropologists like Steedly (1993) often work hard to become integrated into the cultural milieu of their subjects' lives.

I danced and ate with the spirits, provided the umangs with their preferred cigars, served tea to the musicians and guests, took photographs and notes, helped out in the kitchen, and did duty from time to time as the butt of spirit jokes. ... became a favorite partner of the European spirits, who enjoyed the chance to "disco" and make lewd remarks in fractured foreigner's Malay ... (p.38)

Condensation of data is often resisted by anthropologists, many of whom prefer a process of multiple readings that will lead to a practical understanding of meaning and action. I have drawn to some extent on an anthropological research approach, although I am distant from the students. I was more detached than the students from many of the objects of study, since they, and not I, were the ones embarked on a rite-of-passage as beginning teachers. I was also absent from the settings in which they found themselves: I no longer worked in schools. My visits to schools were as an outsider - a teacher trainer or a consultant and I occupied a position of authority as a representative of the institution that trained and assessed students.

However, anthropological studies provide excellent examples of the struggle of reportage. They are useful sources of guidance in determining appropriate ways of communicating findings. On the subject of reporting her stories, Steedly writes that her efforts:

... raise with particular urgency questions of belief, agency, and authenticity - questions that lie at the heart of ethnographic experience and its representation. What to believe? Do others believe? Do I? Is this experience (of mine, of others) "real"? How to evaluate the evidence of unseen experience, or of experience shared yet incomprehensible? ...It may - indeed should - be present in any narrative encounter: yours, reader, with the book before you; mine with the stories I heard in Karoland. ... the historical space ... opens up many narrative possibilities, only a few of which I have traced ... my intention is not to get to the bottom of it, but rather to provoke [a] mode of critical thinking. (*ibid*: 38)

I agree with Steedly that readers should question for themselves how to evaluate the evidence as they encounter the text and I share with her a common concern about how one approaches representation, interpretation and authenticity. I am not convinced that there is a

bottom that one can get to! - in the sense Steedly implies above, but I was concerned to provoke modes of critical thinking and I take up this discussion in greater depth in the section on validation below.

4.3.4 The discipline of noticing

It is clear that many researchers and writers in the fields of anthropology, psychology and sociology welcome the involvement of the observer in the environment of the observed. The *discipline of noticing* offers a research paradigm that provides a structure and a method for involving the observer as an active participant in the environment under study. Its structure:

can be described in a number of overlapping phases. ... more than one phase can be operative at the same time, and there is a great deal of recycling and revisiting, rather than a simple linear development. (Davis, 1992: 171)

The methodological phases identified by Davis are:

- teaching moments.
- systematic reflection.
- recognising choices.
- preparing and noticing.
- validating with others.

The discipline of noticing is an appropriate methodology for my area of study. It identifies a research process based on the pursuit of queries, questions and puzzles that are not seen in causal relationship. It recognises a community of informed researchers and readers who seek to test their theorising on each other through a search for resonance between writers' interpretations of significant events and readers' own experience. It therefore recognises the value of the narrative approach that I adopted and it reflects the view that social contexts are 'shot through with indeterminacy and openendedness' (Bohman, 1991: vii).

Although the discipline of noticing eschews a positivistic paradigm, where a detached researcher looks for quantifiable data, it does so without recourse to an anarchic position like Feyerabend's (1975: 23) where 'anything goes'. It provides a valuable example of the structured approach that Bruner (1996) argues for, and which can lead to understanding through a process of 'organizing and contextualizing essentially contestable, incompletely verifiable propositions in a disciplined way'. (p.90).

Thus, my concern to organise data that was undeniably contestable and to offer it to an informed readership, fitted the paradigm. It mirrors my concern that representation, validation and authenticity of research into the human condition should be through resonance and the identification of congruity of different lived experiences.

4.3.4.1 Focusing noticing through critical incidents

Tripp (1993) invokes the term *critical incident* which is closely related to the phrase *significant event* which I use. He suggests that:

the development of professional judgement through the diagnosis and interpretation of critical incidents ... will lead to what might be called 'diagnostic teaching'. A diagnostic teacher is one who can analyse their practice in a scholarly and academic fashion to produce expert interpretations upon which to base and justify their professional judgements. (pp.7-8)

My interest is aroused by significant events that occur in my life. My actions as a participant researcher are informed by focusing on what I find interesting within the environment being researched. I can work on my awarenesses by sensitising myself, for example, by naming significant events as particular examples and then looking out for further examples. Noticing is the conscious act of being with our awareness, being aware that we are distinguishing between different aspects of our experience. Noticing is a process of stressing and emphasising.

What I notice in myself and in the experience of teaching, results directly in a process of selectivity. If I am sensitive to my awareness, then I can research the consequences of acting

on what I notice. The shift of focus of my attention, from certain noticings to new ones, can itself become a study of professional change and development. It is possible to study the dynamics between the object of awareness - *what* I notice, and what questions arise for me. Thus noticing can become a process of enquiry.

Some events are highly significant because, for the person who is engaged in noticing, they resonate with past experience to produce meaning. Through introspection I can use awareness to connect with and explore aspects of significant events. This can lead to the production of research questions, hypotheses and decisions about future actions and future focusing of awareness. I can then choose to look for further occurrences of what I noticed.

4.3.5 Reflecting on my teaching

When I worked as a beginning teacher, I often observed myself become interested by specific events. I labelled events as particular examples of general categories and I actively sought further examples. At various times I was taken up with what it was like for me to be a 'teacher'. I noticed many examples where my behaviour in school was different from my behaviour elsewhere. I was also very interested by student behaviour and how I came to influence it. I worked on these issues at the time by recalling memorable moments and reflecting on them. More recently, as I assembled and selected data from this period for the purposes of my research, I employed the discipline of noticing as I recalled events and scrutinised the data from my early work as a teacher.

4.3.6 Using and analysing in-depth interviews

The second part of the study explored students' experience while training as teachers. This could have been achieved by the kind of deep involvement described by Steedly, above. However, one of the constraints facing me as a part-time research student was the lack of opportunity to become immersed to the extent that Steedly achieved. I had to find an

approach that, while not offering the involvement available to Steedly, nevertheless allowed me a period of contact and a degree of intimacy sufficient to construct a narrative of student transition.

Interviews provided impetus for subjects to construct coherent accounts of their experience. Some topics were less likely to emerge in the course of ordinary conversations and this meant that unstructured interviews might not generate material in which I was interested. I chose to use semi-structured interviews to provide a cultural product in which students had opportunities to provide data that covered my area of interest. In consequence I was more confident that I would obtain the data that I wanted to analyse in order to produce *an account* of transitional experience.

The study of cultural products can be seen as one way of applying the basic idea of a qualitative approach to modern, individualised society ... the object of study may consist of one single story, a genre of stories, or a certain theme appearing in different stories. This kind of material is readily available. It is also better suited to a 'thicker' description and interpretation than a superficial survey analysis of data collected in structured interviews. (Alasuutari, 1998: 115)

In order for an account to be generated, I encouraged the interviewees to tell stories. During the interview I wanted both of us to play a part in shaping its direction and content.

Beforehand I identified prompts that I would use to ensure coverage of the areas in which I was interested. I also chose questions that were likely to initiate story-telling and elicit historical accounts. I asked follow-up questions in order to probe for meaning, and I encouraged students to reflect and explain the meaning behind their words, in order to help them to generate coherent accounts that were self-referential attempts to attribute meaning to action and thought.

Interviews are social settings and they offer opportunities to construct social explanations. I worked within the discipline of noticing during the interviews and this influenced the formation of my personal view of the individual and the interview experience. I sought to

establish rapport with the interviewee partly for selfish reasons. It is rapport, with its underlying assumption of trust between the parties, that I regard as contributing significantly to the interviewee's desire and opportunity to produce accounts that possess authenticity, coherence and integrity. The development of rapport is often accompanied by an increased sense of collaboration and joint ownership of the material, which makes shared interpretation easier to achieve.

...the purpose of [interpretative] research ... is to describe and interpret the phenomena of the world in attempts to get shared meaning with others. Interpretation is a search for deep perspectives on particular events and for theoretical insights'. (Bassey, 1990: 40)

The interview process provided me and the student with opportunities to explore agreement, to search for resonance and to establish an account of the student's transitional experience to a teaching-self that has meaning for each of us. Alasuutari writes about in-depth interviews:

... the idea is to negotiate an explanation that is internally consistent and in accordance with other facts, (Alasuutari, 1998: 143-144)

I tried to negotiate shared meaning by remaining sensitive to the words that were spoken during the interview and I re-used them to probe for further detail. My use of the noticing paradigm included for example, working on becoming more alert to slips of the tongue and word substitutions that interviewees sometimes make. My assumption was that such word combinations may provide evidence of unconscious thought processes and connections.

Among the slips of tongue that I have collected myself, I can find hardly one in which I should be obliged to trace the disturbance of speech simply and solely to what Wundt [1900], 392] calls the 'contact effect of sounds'. I almost invariably discover a disturbing influence in addition which comes from something *outside* the intended utterance; and the disturbing element is either a single thought that has remained unconscious, which manifests itself in the slip of the tongue ... or it is a more general psychical motive force which is directed against the entire utterance. Freud, S. (1901: 61)

I tried to remain sensitive to the occurrence of and to pick up on them in some way in the interview. At one point in the discussion with Nicola I had a sense of her struggling towards an important statement or perhaps a clarification of her own thoughts. She seemed to be exploring the feeling of being changed by her course literally as she spoke. I was aware that

previously she has used conversation to work on her views and ideas. I was aware that it might also occur during this interview. In discussion she said her feelings had altered as the course had progressed. I heard in the emotion of her words a concern about being able to preserve that part of herself that had existed prior to the training. She used the two words *affected* and *infected*. On this occasion Nicola acknowledged the two words were interchangeable. I didn't actually hear her comment that either word could be used. My response was triggered from regularly trying to notice word slips and unexpected juxtapositions.

... but um, the third year I've got doubts that are more personal to me. Um, because I think that Mrs. W, the two lectures that we've had with you and the maths have been particularly interesting to me because I do think that now I'm starting to question whether or not I can actually go out of here, still with a bit of me left, that's not going to be infected, or affected. I mean, you know, you could use either of those words really, (TB: - Yeah)

TB: - Both of those words describe you (Nicola: - Yeah.) in, cause one of them is quite invasive isn't it? (Nicola: - Yeah) to be infected (Nicola: - Yeah)

My intention was to draw Nicola's attention to what I had noticed and I tried to do it by saying what I had noticed. By juxtaposing the words myself and offering what I noticed, my intention was that any conscious or unconscious associations that Nicola had made could become more easily available for her, should she want to use them or explore the association further. By working with the discipline of noticing in this way I was assuming that:

- the speaker's use of words results from a conscious or unconscious association;
- by drawing attention in this manner, I make the association more easily available for further use;
- as a result of my intervention, the interviewee can more easily decide if it is fruitful to explore things further.

By holding back from asserting 'this is the case', and by staying with *accounts-of*, rather than trying to move too quickly to *accounting-for*, one can stay with a range of possible

interpretations and explore possible meanings. With the rich data that was produced, complete agreement over interpretations was unlikely and may not in fact be productive. Differences over interpretation may be more fruitful to explore than agreed accounts.

A look at another section of transcript from a little later in the interview with Nicola may be useful. Following her utterance presented above, I was wondering if she meant she couldn't survive the course without being 'infected'. Had she recognised 'a pre-course self' and thought it would be lost to another self, developed (partly against her will, perhaps or against her better judgement) during the four years of study? What did this mean to her? I tried to probe but the answer I received seemed to increase the complexity even further.

TB: - But that leads me on to my next question, which is, does it make, does it make you feel any different as a person? This process of thinking about becoming a teacher, feeling about becoming a teacher.

Nicola: - No, I don't think that um, College has particularly made me, friends of the family have said, friends and family have said to me that I've changed since I've been doing this, which I think is absolute rubbish really. Because people like to say things like that. They've got expectations that when someone goes on to a degree course or goes into, I mean the, when we went into the Access course, somebody, one of the lecturers down there said that we give a health warning with this. Now if that's not freely determining some outcome. They're telling you, you're going to change. You know, why say that, people are stuck in this "oh you're going to change" thing? I don't know, I'd like to think I could maintain the things that I felt dear and strongly about that the actual um, considerations.

What happens if we disagree? Does that invalidate an interpretation? I think not, but it does shape the interpretation. I heard Nicola in defensive vein here, strong and forthright, challenging others' assertions. People had said she'd changed. She rejected their argument. However, she had previously stated that she experienced an 'infection' of her previous self, which did imply change to me.

My interest was in the complexity and the apparent confusion about whether change had taken place; in consequence, I was more likely to shuffle away from disagreement with Nicola. The complexity of the interview data at this point showed that the nature and degree of change was an important subject for exploration. Agreement about interpretations will not always be achieved, in which case neither party can make a claim to truth. Instead,

disagreement can be explored and alternative interpretations offered. Disagreements can be rich sources for exploration.

4.3.7 Personal Construct theory and repertory grids

When I planned how to carry out the research with the students, I thought it would be an advantage to obtain data from more than one source. I was not sure how effective I could be at managing in-depth interviews, nor how effective these interviews would be in identifying students' values and beliefs. I wanted to be able to draw on their beliefs and value systems when I analysed the interview data because I was seeking to account for their actions and thoughts.

Repertory grids are a possible source of data because they provide information about beliefs and values. They are an experimental tool derived from the work of Kelly (1955) who argues for the existence of personal constructs within the structure of a personal construct psychology, Kelly (1963). Kelly's work as a therapist led him to an exploration of the motivating factors lying behind personal judgements and decisions. Behind the judgements people make, lie implicit theories about events: how things work, how people behave, how we are constituted. Our implicit theories are implicated in guiding our decisions in the here-and-now. We have our own hierarchy of theories - a network of meanings through which we function in all our social settings.

Any such hierarchy of constructs is highly personal: a unique structural system which in one sense can be said to be a description of the individual.

A construct is like ... a basic dimension of appraisal, often un verbalised and frequently unsymbolised ... and the system of *constructs* provides each man with his own personal network of action pathways, serving both to limit his movements and to open up to him passages of freedom which otherwise would be psychologically non-existent. (Kelly, 1969 in Fransella & Bannister, 1977: p3)

Fransella and Bannister argue that groups of constructs can be elicited which are implicated in particular areas of a person's life. I made use of a cluster of ten constructs elicited independently from each student.

4.3.8 The Triangle of Conflict and the Triangle of Person

The view that our past can catch up with us is a commonplace one. Common-sense is problematic however within the context of a thesis. Within a study of the self, inseparability of past, present and future could be seen as the province of psychotherapist. This could raise assumptions about the focus of such a study with attendant expectations of a focus on mental well-being.

This study does not focus on issues of health. Its preoccupation is the description and analysis of the development of a teacher-self taken from within a broad range of typical behaviours of generally healthy individuals. In studying the ways in which past experience shapes our current responses to our lived experience, it is necessary to consider the role of unconscious processes. Such a discussion can gain valuable insights from using psychodynamic (though not necessarily psychotherapeutic) perspectives.

Malan (1995) provides a useful way of working and thinking about psychodynamic interventions and analysis. Although a practitioner of psychotherapy, his theorising provides the reader with a broader view: a psychodynamic window into the unconscious. In his writing he offers short but powerful narratives that invite the reader to make sense of the complexity of his practice and what his clients present. His writing offers examples of how psychodynamic theorising can emerge from practice.

I made use of Malan's work by drawing on *The Triangle of Conflict*, with its three vertices representing Defence, Anxiety and Hidden Feelings; and the *Triangle of Person*, in which the

three vertices represent; *other* 'O' (usually recent past), Transference, 'T' (usually here-and-now), and Parent 'P' (usually distant past). (See the modified diagram of Malan's triangles and the discussion on page 278.)

Malan offers us a framework for posing questions about unconscious processes, but significantly, his work offers insights into how past experiences become interwoven in our present lives, often in unexpected ways. The first and second triangles are related:

...by the fact that the hidden feeling is directed towards one or more categories of the *triangle of person* namely Other, Transference, and Parent, represented by O, T, and P, respectively. ... [E]ach triangle stands on an apex, which represents the fact that the aim of most dynamic psychotherapy is to reach, beneath the *defence*, and the *anxiety*, to the hidden feeling, and then to trace this feeling back from the present to its origins *in the past*, usually in the relation with parents. ... The importance of these two triangles is that between them they can be used to represent almost every intervention that a therapist makes. (Malan, 1995: 80)

In the section 'Adapting Malan's model' (page 276), I have discussed my modification of Malan's ideas to fit the study of transition to teaching and the non-therapeutic interview context in which I was working. I have drawn on a theory of unconscious functioning in order to relate current disturbance or perturbation (emanating from a student's reaction here-and-now to the experience of transition) to earlier transitions (from home to school, from parent to step-parent, from school to school, ...). Thus, when analysing the data that was presented in the pilot study, which involved Sally in a discussion of the disturbance she experienced as she embarked on her course, I recognised that Sally's response to the college setting was not only related to anxieties about recent changes in her life-style but had its origins in her more distant past, in childhood settings.

This analysis suggests that it would be productive to be alert to similar themes in the longitudinal study. In consequence, I asked interviewees in the later interviews about early experiences and parent figures.

4.4 The nature and process of validation

Within the discipline of noticing validation is related to resonance. Joy Davis (1992: 174) writes that there is a process of personal validation which involves the comparison of experience and a process of validating with critical readers, 'validating with colleagues, by juxtaposing your own and their experience'.

In the study, I began by laying out the strands of my own teaching experience and I worked with the strands in order to make sense of my development as a teacher and to generate theory. In the second part of the study I examined and interpreted the students' transition to teaching. I looked for resonance with my own experience. I explored the strands of each student's experience and looked for coherence and meaning while continuing to build theory.

Accounts are offered to readers in the expectation that they will involve themselves in a search for meaning through resonance with their own experience. Valid accounts are plausible ones and can be understood through:

...identification, empathy, or a sense of entry into the lived reality of the case.
...The kind of truth involved can be regarded as akin to that of the novelist: the truth derived from identification with and living through a story with the richness and complex inter-relationships of social, human life. (Ernest, 1994: 25)

The study should be plausible and appear authentic both to the students who took part and to others who can respond as members of an informed, critical readership. However, different readers may make different kinds of sense of the material as it resonates with their particular experience.

The theory was developed in relation to my practice, with theory and practice each informing the other. I present evidence of practice as examples of theory-in-action. I also present theory derived from analysis of practice. If validation is to be addressed effectively, the theory generated should be seen as relevant to, and offer explanations of, apparently disparate

events. The reader should also be able to make use of the theory to account for a range of events from within their own professional sphere.

4.4.1 The use of narrative in the search for meaning

What the reader of a narrative account can do is examine the plausibility of the contents. In discussing the narrative mode of knowing, Bruner (1986) writes:

The imaginative application of the narrative mode leads ... to good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily 'true' historical accounts. It deals in human ... intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. (p.13)

The narrative mode is an appropriate way of preparing fragments of a life-story for further analysis. A search for meaning depends on personal location and the schema one brings to the act of reading. 'In interpreting a narrative we apply a schema that best seems to make the story plausible' (Rumelhart, 1977: 303). Schema theory anticipates an active interpreter: there is an interpreting subject and the act of reading. Readers are invited to search for alternative readings where the story fails initially to fit their schema.

Authenticity and cohesion within a narrative account can be made problematic when subjects talk in contradictory ways, as Nicola appeared to do, but the value of the contradiction within the narrative can be stimulating. Contradiction is a powerful way in which to engage the reader in sense-making:

... by analysing and identifying the different repertoires people employ in different contexts. ...
Such repertoires or discourses are also thought to be linked with identity construction, ... as representations with certain *subject positions* inscribed within them. (Alasuutari, 1998: 127)

4.4.2 Validation and the general reader

Validation is neither seen as a distinct object nor as a quality that exists as a separate entity within the text. Within the discipline of noticing validation with colleagues (and by ‘colleagues’ I mean professionals with an interest and professional experience within the scope of this research), is achieved through juxtaposing my own experience and theirs. The reader engages with the thesis and validation is explored through the process of construal. It is a process dependent initially on the construction of the narrative and subsequently upon the reader, the reader’s actions, and the judgements that the reader brings to the reading. In this spirit, the reader is invited to consider the following questions.

1. Do the incidents reported in the thesis, and the themes that have been drawn out from them, speak to informed readers and resonate with their experience?
2. Can an informed readership use the data provided here to gain new insights in relation their own experience?
3. Does the theory of transition I have generated resonate with the experience of informed readers?

4.5 Ethical considerations

The Johari Window (Luft, 1970) is a useful reminder of different aspects of the self.

According to Luft’s model, used by Pfeiffer, there are aspects of ourselves which we offer openly to others, and aspects that we desire to keep private. There are aspects that are open to our conscious awareness and others which may exist only in our unconscious.

	Not known to others	Known to others
Known to Self	Private Self	Public Self
Not known to Self	Inaccessible Self	Self-blind Area

Figure 1 The Johari Window into public and private selves

4.5.1 Interviews as catalysts for change

The Johari window helps to make sense of the flow of conversation and reminds us of what might happen as a result of interviews where the interviewer is probing for understanding and where conversations may take an unexpected turn. Interviews can perform an integrating function, providing coherence as well as being revelatory. They can alter both the content and location of material in the four areas of the Johari window and I maintain that we are often brought to awareness through a realisation that a shift has occurred in the contents of one or more windows.

I argue that the in-depth interview has some parallels with the 'therapeutic interview' and that this gives rise to a number of possible consequences for the researcher, the interviewee and the data. The in-depth interview is partly an enquiry into the interviewee's current feelings and their possible origins. The act of relating the origins of one's current disposition can be revelatory to the interviewee as well as to the interviewer. The disclosure of personal material can create an intimacy that shapes the relationship which is developing. Interviews can cause shifts of awareness and new insights in interviewees. It can be cathartic to an interviewee who wants to 'get things off their chest' or needs a 'shoulder to cry on'.

This therapeutic quality needs to be considered by the interviewer. The therapeutic nature of the interview will influence the shape and direction of further interviews and can lead to interviewees:

- regretting the disclosure of certain material;
- refusing to take part in further work;
- attending future interviews in the hope of obtaining something more profound than an opportunity to provide further data.

The researcher will not be able to control for all possible events, but needs to be aware that interviews, like all human contacts, can be unpredictable, generate ambiguity and release.

4.5.2 Using ambiguity

I discovered that ambiguity was an inevitable part of the interview process. For example, when I was interviewing, the respondents sometimes showed signs of having gained new insights. Sometimes interviewees made disclosures that did not require any comment from me. They simply found it beneficial to talk to someone who would listen to everything they said. An invitation to be heard, and the opportunity to talk to an active listener might be sufficient to significantly change an interviewee's perception and attitude to both interviewer and interview. However, I would not necessarily know that anything of the sort has happened. Interviewees may try not to communicate their feelings: and of course they may lie about how they feel when asked. They will inevitably keep some thoughts private, and so the interviewer is never fully aware of the interview material.

Ambiguity can also exist as a result of differences in the meaning each person ascribes to the language of the interview. I was aware that certain words used in the interview context have both general and specific meanings. The word 'analysis' for example, has meaning for both researchers and therapists. The use of certain words and linguistic turns can invoke quite different expectations in participants to a conversation, and not only because of the ambiguity that exists at a lexical level. The fact that words invoke different associations for different speakers and listeners led to the free-association technique adopted by Freud.

In the course of an interview subjects may change their descriptions of, and meanings about, a theme. ...The 'therapeutic aspect' of the in-depth interview is evident in the fact that the interview itself is seen as the first step of *analysis* [my italics] ... the interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes. (Alasuutari, 1998: 145)

In the act of interviewing, I sometimes sought validation by questioning the interviewee and asking for clarification. This caused respondents to reflect and sometimes to gain new insights for themselves. Interviewees can discover:

... new aspects of the themes they are describing, and suddenly see relations that they had not been conscious of earlier. (Kvale, 1996: 34)

I had an agenda and my agenda was not always clear although clarity often emerges as the interview gets underway. Interviewees react to the personality of the interviewer. Different respondents at different times could interpret my behaviour as: detached, remote, interested, sympathetic, curious, expert, controlling, lacking in direction, etc. The interviewee's perceptions undoubtedly shape their behaviour during the interview and this influences my behaviour as well as the scope, content and interpretation of the interview as an experience. Each participant will have a perception of the boundaries that exist during the interview. An interviewee's self-declared boundaries may limit the scope and value of the research in a way that the researcher finds unsatisfactory. The boundaries that the interviewer communicates will influence the nature, range and scope of the disclosures made by the respondents.

4.5.3 Preparing for the interview

At preliminary meetings I sought to clarify the scope of the research and to agree some boundaries with the interviewees. I wanted to establish a rapport that allowed interviewees to question me and gain sufficient understanding of the project to be able to make an informed decision about whether to take part. I wanted the preparatory process to allow the interviewee to see that I was going to encourage an active discussion rather than pose a series of formal questions during the interview proper. I believed that I would benefit from a committed, interested and informed interviewees since they are more likely to respond in ways that generate rich narratives that have meaning and coherence to both participants, without either party feeling used, betrayed, manipulated or embarrassed.

4.5.4 Using a pilot study

I needed to rehearse certain protocols and gain some experience of the preparatory processes prior to a main study. Conducting pilot interviews is a valuable preparation. Pilots can be analysed in relation to ethical issues and assessed in terms of the extent to which agreed procedures have been followed. I wanted the pilot to provide an initial experience that would allow me to further develop the quality of subsequent interviews.

A pilot is a useful preparatory device partly because it offers opportunities to practice interview management so that the interview remains broadly in line with the researcher's and the interviewees' needs and expectations. I needed to reflect on the results of the pilot to see if I had broadly achieved my research aims. In particular I wanted the pilot to provide evidence about whether I had:

- Confirmed my earlier hypotheses;
- generated relevant material in a coherent form that makes sense;
- managed the pilot in ways that mean the longitudinal study will be effective;
- developed the appropriate skills and tested procedures;
- discovered new possibilities that could be incorporated in a longitudinal study.

4.5.5 Managing boundaries

I needed to consider the way boundaries are established in the context of interviews. I believed that to be effective as an interviewer I needed to allow some flexibility in the interview process so that potentially valid and rich material would not be excluded by over-formalised protocols. Of course an interviewee may not wish me to enter certain areas. If these include areas of interest to me then the interviewee may not be a suitable subject. The identification and management of boundaries needed to be explored prior to the interview and of course boundaries would also need to be managed during the interview process itself.

This research study is not merely a conversation about the here-and-now. I sought to generate a narrative that necessarily drew broadly on interviewees' past experience. I asked interviewees to reflect on the current transition to a teacher-self and I encouraged them to talk about earlier transitions and previous experiences from childhood and adolescence. In the preliminary meetings I indicated the broad range of topics but not the specific questions. The preparatory discussion helped interviewees get a clearer picture of the scope of questions that I would be asking.

4.5.6 Involvement over time

I wanted to ensure as far as possible that the research presented the students' transition to a teaching-self in ways that they could recognise. This meant maintaining contact with them for up to three years after they left the training course albeit for brief periods. Ethical considerations are kept alive and under review by offering interviewees opportunities to revisit earlier ideas in later interviews. Extended discussion during the interview process allows them to examine, challenge and inform the researcher's interpretations. My original plan, following from the pilot, was to submit draft versions of the narratives to the interviewees and receive their responses. This proved impossible to organise and this weakened but did not invalidate the evidence base of the study.

4.5.7 Personal confidentiality

Since the thesis is in the public domain it is important to follow the usual rules of confidentiality and to respect the subjects' right of privacy. The names of all subjects have been changed, the dates of interviews have been altered and references to locations are fictitious.

4.6 The research methods

Three main influences shaped the way I developed the research. They are:

1. Interests, opportunities and constraints.
2. Research hypotheses.
3. Possible methods.

The genesis of the research was an examination of personal notes, writing and reflection on my own development as a teacher. I identified significant events, generated accounts of some events and then produced analytical writing that provided accounts for the events and their significance for me as a teacher.

4.6.1 Preliminaries leading up to the pilot

I reviewed and reflected on significant events that occurred in my own early teaching. I recorded events in my current teaching and kept field notes, which included data from extended discussions (some audio-taped) with several students studying on BEd and PGCE primary and secondary courses. A further six extended conversations have not been included in the study.

I also decided to support interview data by collecting information on personal constructs. Two students agreed to help me generate repertory grids prior to their use in the longitudinal study.

One of the interviews was suitable as a pilot project. The informant came to see me on a number of occasions after beginning a BEd four year training course for intending primary teachers. She wanted to discuss her progress on the course. She expressed concerns about her own progress and her feelings about starting a lengthy, full-time course as a mature student with a family. I told her about my research and my interest in the transitional experience of students beginning training. She offered to return so that we could have an

extended discussion. With her permission I audio-taped this meeting, and introduced her to the process of building a repertory grid. We reviewed some issues she had raised at an earlier meeting before moving on to new areas.

I transcribed the tape of our discussion ensuring references were anonymous and untraceable to her as an individual. I sent her a copy of the transcript together with some notes I had written as a commentary of the conversation. There was an invitation for her to comment on the material that I sent to her. She accepted and wrote a brief but carefully worded reply, identifying points of agreement and offering further commentary.

We met subsequently to discuss her continuing concerns about settling in to the course and she subsequently left the course at the end of the following term, without directly indicating whether our collaboration had influenced her decision. There was no evidence that emerged from our conversations that would suggest to me that she was academically unsuited to the work or failing to achieve satisfactory grades. I was careful not to advise her nor to appear anything other than interested in her concerns and positive about her status as a student. This collaboration raised a number of important ethical questions about procedure. For example, she was not made sufficiently aware of the range and depth of the discussions and the nature of the material likely to arise. In retrospect I believe that she was not in a position to give informed consent to the exploration. This situation arose partly because I was not fully conscious of the extent of the study either. I selected the work with this student as the pilot partly because of the difficulties that it illustrated for both of the parties involved.

I continued to make field-notes of lectures, workshops and individual discussions with students. Significant events arose during my teaching, both in formal and informal sessions. I wrote up some of these significant events in more extended form. Some significant events occurred as part of sessions and on these occasions it was appropriate to discuss what had occurred with individual students and groups who had been involved. It was also possible to

offer some pieces of my extended writing directly to individual students where we had conversed privately.

One student, Nicola, was happy to meet on several occasions for discussion and to help with the development of repertory grids. I was able to trial the process of searching for themes and began to use themes as sources for interpretation and analysis.

By this time I had gained considerable experience of conducting in-depth interviews, transcribing data and identifying themes. The pilot provided me with an opportunity to analyse themes, seek confirmation with the informant and review the impact of in-depth interviews on informants. At this point, I made the first attempt at constructing a narrative account based on the themes.

4.6.2 The longitudinal study

The research protocol for the main study developed out of the pilot. I was able to use the experience gained from the pilot to refine the interview procedure and the semi-structured interview probes. I queried the need for transcription of audio-taped data but finally decided to adhere to the existing procedure of searching for themes from transcriptions of the interviews.

I tabulated the themes against the section of transcript where they initially occurred. Then I identified subsequent appearances of the theme and matched them to their appropriate line numbers within the transcript. I used each thematically organised transcript to write an account of the interview. I then combined the accounts for the three interviews to form a single narrative. I experimented with different genres. My intention was to produce a style that re-presented the interview, seen through a thematic window and incorporating a

psychodynamic perspective that would allow analysis of the emergence of a teaching-self. The completed narratives were used in the development of a theory of transition to teaching.

The protocol adopted for the longitudinal study was prepared following the review of the pilot. What follows in Chapter 5 are examples of episodes which are significant events that are illustrative of different aspects of my professional development. Each episode is examined and the emergent themes identified. At a later stage, the themes derived from analysis of these earlier episodes are compared with those which emerged during the interviews with the students who took part in the longitudinal study.

4.7 Summary

The research process needs to support the search for validity of the research conjectures. Notes and reflections on episodes from earlier stages in my professional development have been used for analysis. The process of exploration and analysis has allowed a reflexive study of my professional work to take shape.

The familiar categorisation of training with its emphasis on cognitive learning, (e.g. subject knowledge) has been argued to be insufficiently broad. There is more to the training experience than this. The resulting method has grown out of a need to explore more widely and to include psychological and psychical data.

The nature and range of students' experience has been hypothesised and I have discussed methods that would give me access to students' experience as a researcher. I have identified several writers whose work includes psychological and psychical studies of students and teachers. I have discussed the use of particular episodes as a source of evidence that can inform more general viewpoints and I discussed the process of validation that takes place

when informed readers critically engage with the thesis by setting it against their own experience.

I have considered the appropriateness of a number of research methods including action research and I have identified the importance of using a method that satisfactorily addresses subjectivity. The process of *giving accounts* and *accounting for* episodes has been identified as an important part of the chosen method and the process can be incorporated into a noticing paradigm. Accounts can be developed into narratives which are also amenable to analysis. Readers search for meaning when they engage with narratives. Meaning is constructed by the reader, partly as a result of the reader being influenced by the internal coherence of the text, but it is also consequent upon a sense of resonance derived from the laying together of strands of the readers' experience with those reported in the narratives.

The benefit of in-depth interviews has been discussed. Personal construct theory and repertory grids have been identified as an effective means of interpreting and analysing interview data. Malan's work has been shown to provide a powerful insight into psychic processes.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical considerations, what has been learned from a review of the pilot study and how this has informed the development of the longitudinal study which followed.

5. ILLUSTRATIONS

This chapter provides data that has been derived from an exploration of significant events that have occurred in my professional work. I have presented each event as a brief account, before introducing a discussion that attempts to *account for* the event and its significance. The methods adopted were chosen because I argue that the reflective process enhances sensitivity to the events. This part of the thesis was written prior to a major study into transition and the development of a teacher-self, in order to sensitise me to the data that could emerge from a detailed study of students in transition. What follows includes:

- the production of data from my early development as a teacher;
- more recent work with teachers during in-service work;
- selected field notes and accounts of work with trainees.

5.1 Significant events from 1969 - 1990

5.1.1 David 11/69

In my second year of teaching I was working in a secondary school in the science department as the head of physics. I was in my first term at the school and teaching a physics lesson to a group of 16 year olds. The lesson proceeded as I had expected. There was a period of formal teaching, followed by practical work and then a formal question and answer summary.

Towards the end of the lesson, when students were writing up notes, I was standing near David who said to me that he couldn't understand what was happening in the classroom. He reported that throughout the previous year the class had been troublesome, awkward and very disruptive. Members of the class had climbed out of the laboratory window during lessons and then re-entered by the door, disrupting the teacher as much as they could. They

had connected the low pressure gas to the high pressure water supply with disastrous results. David said he thought they had contributed to the previous teacher's departure after only one year at the school. David knew I was the replacement. He reported his surprise that during my lessons everyone had behaved themselves and had worked.

I concurred. I had not experienced disruption. I had not been aware of any lack of effort or any problem over discipline. The view I had formed of the students was that they were well behaved, polite. For the most part they worked, were responsive and contributed appropriately to classroom discussion. Their behaviour had not been part of any conscious concern on my part. The content of what David said surprised me and in the following weeks left me feeling disturbed. I experienced what I now call a sense of disidentification.

5.1.1.1 Discussion

The anecdote is important because it has passed the test of time. Twenty seven years later I can recall the classroom, the student, our relative physical positions and some fragments of the conversation. What was the significance of this event for me at the time? In the moment, I was aware of feeling amused, surprised and proud that my teaching was so effective. This was followed later by a realisation that pride was perhaps misplaced arrogance. Whatever I had done in my teaching role, I had not done anything different from usual, so something else was happening.

Without David's comment there seemed to be nothing to separate this lesson from many others in terms of either my performance or the students' – at least on the surface. I had a dawning realisation that it was not I, but they (as individuals and as a group) who seemed to have determined that these lessons would proceed without disruption. I was shocked by the thought that *they* rather than my teaching might be the determining factor.

I began to realise the vulnerability of the teacher. I sensed for the first time as a teacher, the power of the classroom group and the process of 'working by consent' that I had certainly had to manage on previous occasions but had never really attended to. As a result of the episode I was much more aware of the complex nature of the classroom teaching process and the power relations that exist within teaching.

My teacher-self was challenged. This was the first time that many of the contents and constructs were brought into the open so starkly. Some of my naïve assumptions were clustered round a notion that teachers held power (and of course they can do), but I had more or less neglected to consider the power of the student.

My teacher-self had developed without attending to the notion of what are called 'power relationships'. I had spent little time consciously reflecting on what it meant to be 'a teacher'. The problem I faced after the encounter with David was that I had been brought 'face-to-face' with a teacher-self that I realised was not much help to me.

One of the consequences of David's interjection was identificatory compromise. I could no longer continue behaving as though I were not a teacher, but neither was I a sufficiently knowledgeable teacher. I saw myself in a transitional state, where I saw my under-developed teacher-self as representing a more limited professional self than I had realised. I recognised that part of my lack of attention to my development as a teacher came from a resistance to accept what being a teacher meant to me. It seems I had retained an identification of myself as 'not-teacher' in order to avoid acknowledging the emergence of some aspects of being a teacher that I disliked.

There are similarities between the identificatory compromise I faced during this episode and Diamond's reports of students' feelings of dislocation (see page 42). My 'personal practical knowledge' (Beattie, 1995: 35) of classroom dynamics was inadequate. I wanted to know

more. Emily (in interview 2) recognises a transitional stage in her development as a student-teacher when she says:

I'm not very nice because I'm in a small community. We start hearing comments from people. I know *people's* mothers, and, the word witch has cropped up a lot. I mean, I'm not that nice, and I'd like to be a lot friendlier than I am. And sometimes they say things and I generally think they're funny and all, and I think, in the future, I'll be able to be, have a better relationship that way, but at the moment I don't think I have the discipline to be able to get away with it. Generally, I'm not very friendly, I don't think. I'm not really bad, but I just, I'm not like I eventually would like to be,...[EM T2: 194]

5.1.1.2 Summary of emergent themes

- Gaining a broader view of power and influence in the classroom.
- Recognition of an emergent *teacher-self* and some of its components.
- Identificatory compromise: not wanting to be seen as taking on certain 'teacher' behaviour and attitudes, and not wanting to lose some of the current aspects of self.

5.1.2 The school disco

In October 1970, I was working at a secondary school where year 11 pupils could organise a disco if they recruited sufficient numbers of teachers to supervise. On one occasion, there were just two of us to supervise a disco. The other supervisor was a teacher who had difficulty making relationships with teachers and pupils. I was unaware until the disco commenced that Cyril and I were the only two teachers supervising. At about 10pm a pupil came to me saying a difficult situation had arisen in the entrance hall. Cyril had found some of the Year 11 boys smoking in the school hall and had told them to leave immediately. They had refused. He had then threatened them with me!

I went and spoke to them for several minutes about what had happened and then reminded them of what would happen to them the following week if they didn't do as they had been told. I agreed with them that Cyril's decision had been unnecessarily harsh. I suggested they wait outside for the disco to finish at which time they could meet the rest of their friends and go home. After about ten minutes they left quietly and without any trouble, continuing to

smoke despite having been asked by Cyril to put out their cigarettes. I did not ask them to stop smoking.

There was a large crowd watching and several people were making comments. I spoke quietly to one or two in the group so that the crowd could not hear what was being said. The group was all male and several of them were with girls who had been let into the hall. I was conscious that they would probably not want to be embarrassed in front of the girls.

5.1.2.1 Discussion

I felt nervous when I had to go to deal with them, but this soon dissipated. I was aware of the considerable complexity associated with this situation and what I saw in their behaviour I interpreted as adolescent strategies for managing anger. I decided to interact with them by producing plenty of talk about different aspects of the situation. I involved them in trivia. I asked questions out of curiosity rather than in an inquisitorial manner. Where had they been prior to coming in? Where had they been standing when they were told to go? I asked them what exactly had been said and by whom. I realised that talking in this way was having a calming effect so I continued by:

- telling them what I thought had happened;
- explaining why I dissociated myself from the other teacher's decision;
- explaining why I had to go along with his decision even though he had put me in a difficult decision by not consulting me before banning them;
- telling them that I could not revoke his decision;
- explaining the consequences of causing trouble;
- suggesting several alternatives like waiting outside for the last half-hour.

After five minutes of angry comment about the way they had been treated, they left quietly, the disco continued without incident and everyone who remained enjoyed themselves.

I interpreted their verbal threats of violence as face-saving in front of their friends. I assumed the comments were not being directed at me but as a means by which annoyance and frustration could be voiced. I also saw their anger as having some legitimacy.

There are some parallels with Barbara Dockar-Drysdale's advice about *holding* as a technique for managing anger and violence, albeit in the much more difficult circumstances of a therapeutic environment for violent adolescents.

The real risk in the question of holding is that the holder may become angry, or at least impatient. It is important to understand that the boy will recognize the anger or impatience. ... It is essential that the holder has the right feelings - compassion, empathy ... (Dockar-Drysdale, 1990: 124)

5.1.2.2 Emergent Themes

- Developing the ability to be in authority and learning to exercise authority when one has little actual power.
- Learning to distinguish in-the-moment between potentially violent actions, and displays of anger that serve to bolster the ego.
- Holding, learning to act as a container for other *people's* feelings. Responding with empathy.

5.1.3 The introduction of a commercial maths scheme

I recall the adoption in 1974 of *Mathematics for Schools*, often known as *Fletcher Maths* after the main author. Its introduction and use in my classroom provoked many difficulties. It took me a considerable time to understand what had happened.

I was teaching a class of children aged 6 - 7 at the time. Prior to the introduction of this scheme there had been no commercially published material in the school for the infant

children and teachers, although textbooks were used by the older junior children. I have identified some of the things that changed when the scheme was introduced.

- The proportion of whole class-teaching decreased.
- Talking to the class about specific mathematical ideas more or less disappeared.
- The children's mathematical diet had been mainly arithmetic. This now became more diverse with the specific teaching of sets, logic, algebra and data handling.
- Workbooks were introduced. These contained unfamiliar horizontal layout for arithmetic calculations. Considerable use was made of empty square boxes in which children were to write the solutions to number sentences, e.g. $6 + \square = 9$ $\square + 5 = 12$
- The introduction of the workbooks created a more sequential curriculum governed by the order of the topics in the workbook pages.
- The order of work was determined by the contents of the pages.
- The range of attainment increased as some children literally raced through the pages whilst others struggled with the reading and the mathematics of each successive page.
- I found teaching maths increasingly difficult.

I was able to identify and explore some of these changes at the time. I have only been able to explore others more recently.

5.1.3.1 Discussion

I couldn't manage the workbook regime and the requirements of the teachers' handbooks. The workbooks separated the children. They were all doing different pages. The handbooks were full of pictures of groups of children being taught by their teacher. In my classroom the work books were the more powerful determinant of practice. Group teaching disappeared and I continued to struggle to manage the new situation. I felt I wasn't a very good teacher because I couldn't make the system work in my room. I couldn't do what the scheme required.

The rate of children's progress through the workbooks almost immediately became a common way of defining 'mathematical ability', yet this clearly didn't equate with the children's knowledge when one looked at what individual children understood. Teachers in successive classes began to demand that all children were on the same book when they came up at the end of the year. This was impossible to ensure if one wanted children to understand what they were doing. Helping individual children in class became impossible because many couldn't read the instructions and so didn't know what to do. The external cultural forces of education increased the problem because the general consensus was that individuals develop at different rates, and that any attempt to force groups together simply prevented the children developing properly.⁵

This experience directly opened up my thoughts about children's mathematical abilities. Prior to this experience, I thought that if people have an aptitude for mathematics it was likely to have been revealed in childhood, predominantly through work they were able to do in school. I did not see myself as having an aptitude for mathematics, *because* I had regularly faced problems with mathematics in primary and secondary school.

I began to see that there was ambivalence within the school and the education world about what constituted mathematical ability. Strong associations were made in school between ability and individual children's progress through the workbooks. Fast progress meant good mathematical ability. I gradually gained the confidence to reject this as a measure. Too many individual children seemed to be providing me with contradictory evidence. I was beginning to emerge as a teacher with my own convictions. I began an Open University degree course and chose courses that focused on some of the issues I was beginning to raise. Professionally I was beginning to develop my thinking in a number of areas. For example:

⁵ A more extended discussion of this issue can be found in Brown (1996).

- mathematics was becoming a specialism. (I was drafted onto an LEA curriculum working party), I learned a lot about children's development;
- my success criteria for children studying in school were not accepted by many of my colleagues;
- I began to realise that teachers' thinking and action can be oppressed by external imposition of pedagogical imperatives;
- I realised that in mathematics, many teachers were working in a state of pedagogical confusion;
- I found that many of my views on education didn't fit my colleagues' views.

My development was shaped by childhood memories of the danger of being different. My perception was that being different could be equated closely with being naughty and being punished. I briefly discuss (page 46) Freud's unique contribution to an understanding of how adult behaviour can be shaped by childhood experiences, and Spence's notion of the 'truth' of childhood being constructed in the present narrative of one's childhood rather than in a formal history of occurrences. For me, there is an association between being different and being punished, such that being different can be hard work. This episode also illustrates what Somekh and Thaler (1997) call a 'multiple and overlapping' professional identity (see page 46).

5.1.3.2 Emergent Themes

- Recognition of distinct teacher attributes and beliefs.
- Learning to speak with a professional voice.
- Managing the feelings associated with being different from other professionals: recognition of an individual teacher with distinct opinions.
- Beginning to see more diversity, less homogeneity in teaching and teachers.
- Developing more focused views about what the mathematics curriculum in schools should be like.

- Establishing strong convictions about children as mathematicians and their rights to experience schooling as successful.
- Rejection of what I saw as spurious measures of educational success.

5.1.4 Paul - April 1975

From 1972 until 1976 I held the post of mathematics coordinator in a first school. In 1975, I taught a Y2 class of children aged 6 - 7. Paul was very noticeable in a small school. He was in this class, had a sunny disposition, was almost always happy and smiling. His physical development was well below that of other children his age. He had limited vision, malfunctioning kidneys, poor speech and a stammer. He had poor gross motor control and walked in a stumbling manner and often tripped over. He had difficulty in lifting his legs sufficiently to step over the threshold to go in and out of the classroom.

One afternoon after school had ended, I heard frantic screaming coming from the playground. I was alarmed by the intensity of the noise. When I went out I saw Paul screaming at his mother who was pulling him gently across the playground. He was stamping his feet and was in the middle of a very impressive tantrum. His mother gently challenged his behaviour. She repeated what she wanted and asked him to behave. There was no-one else nearby and the three of us were in different parts of the playground. Paul then saw me and blushed violently. He covered his eyes with his hands, immediately stopped crying and went quietly along with his mother. I heard him say rather pleadingly that he wanted to go straight home and asked if they could not go shopping.

5.1.4.1 Discussion

What struck me during this incident was:

- the contrast between this behaviour and what I was familiar with;
- the intensity of his screaming;

- the mildness of his mother's reaction;
- the rapid change in behaviour that took place on seeing me watching him.

The event was significant for me because I was intrigued by Paul's behaviour. I had no children, and realised I hadn't given much thought to how children might behave when they were with their parents or other carers. I'd 'sort of assumed' they were much the same as they were in school. I was so taken up with learning how to make my classroom performance appropriate for six-year-olds that I hadn't given much of my attention to them as people in their own right. (I had only recently transferred from secondary school teaching to teaching 5-11 year-olds.)

I had assumed my knowledge provided a fairly full description of Paul as a person. This relatively flat two-dimensional picture with little inherent complexity allowed me to interpret his behaviour in a shallow way. Thus, for a while, I could only see his behaviour with his mother as 'playing her up'. I had to accommodate his different behaviours in a more rounded view of him as a person.

Professionally, I possessed some (intellectual) knowledge about children and I probably could have given a psychological presentation on why different contexts might provoke a range of behaviours in school pupils. However, this explicit knowledge of child development had never been transferred know-how that I could use when working with children.

This episode was important because it enabled me to see how I might improve my professional knowledge of children by paying more direct attention to them and their lives. I was able to convert the experience gained through this episode into tacit professional knowledge, (see the reference to work by Hargreaves (1998) on page 38).

5.1.4.2 Emergent Themes

- Teachers' internalised knowledge emerging from their work with pupils and their wider professional life.
- Seeing the teacher-self as influencing only one part of the child's world.
- Respecting the child as a person.

5.1.5 Julienne and John: two pupils in the same class

A Year 3 class in a junior school. John worked slowly and frequently failed to get work finished in the allocated time. He was big for his age and relatively clumsy. He took a long time to assimilate new ideas and had difficulty in presenting work neatly. Julienne explained to the class what we already knew but didn't usually say publicly: that John found much of the school work difficult.

Julienne went on to say that she thought John was being unfair to himself. In her opinion, one piece of work that John had completed this week deserved a House point but he didn't think so. She added that she had looked back through his work book and it was clear to see that he had improved. His work was neater, and the ideas were well written. To paraphrase Julienne, 'Some of us have given ourselves House points for work that isn't as good as this. John should give himself a point for this work but he won't, because he doesn't think he's good enough to deserve one.'

After some debate, to which John, Julienne and others contributed, John agreed that his work stood comparison with the work of others and that it warranted a House point. It is of course possible that we persuaded him against his better judgement.

5.1.5.1 Background to the episode

I was appointed as deputy head in a junior school and I found many of my ideas challenged. In my view, it was an unnecessarily rule-bound school. It seemed to me that everyone was

expected to follow pre-determined rules and discussion of the rules was not welcomed. Rules were long-standing, created and enforced by those in authority. Older staff enforced rules on younger ones, prefects in the older classes enforced rules on younger children.

Three elderly teachers dominated the ineffective head teacher and imposed their own social etiquette throughout the school through brow-beating him. Several young teachers were systematically criticised and sometimes isolated by being ignored. Today, this whole process would be seen as bullying. I was adamant that the situation should not go unchallenged. My own view about rules ran quite counter to those that dominated the school. I believed that children and adults are more likely to adhere to rules if they are part of the decision-making process that produces them.

I wanted to work towards the establishment of a social system in my classroom that produced only the minimum number of rules necessary to maintain a fair and harmonious social order. I wanted a classroom in which everyone has the right to their own opinion and to question the views of others. I felt that the climate of the school demanded silent adherence rather than scepticism and debate. I wanted to develop opportunities for children in my classroom to:

- practise decision-making;
- develop self-reliance;
- express their own opinions as a way to improve their powers of reasoning and their motivation.

I immediately found myself in difficulty over the school's House system. The school routine was to award cups and medals to 'Houses' on a weekly basis. The House system played no other part in school life except for providing teams for the school Sports Day once a year.

I was personally antagonistic to a system of rewards that I believed deprived children from gaining personal satisfaction directly from their work. I have an intense dislike of the notion that children should focus on extrinsic factors like gaining points for work done. I strongly believed that successful involvement in the work *per se* could and should lead to a greater sense of achievement and satisfaction.

I tried to get children to make decisions for themselves about how and when to tackle the work that I set. I expected them to be self-critical and to have opinions about the quality of what they achieved. Public celebration of high quality work within the classroom was a part of my method of encouraging and sustaining intrinsic motivation. I wanted children to gain satisfaction by recognising when they achieved; understanding, knowledge, skills and new insights.

I did not deny that children can be motivated by gaining points for work done in class, but at the time it only emphasised the point that children can be motivated - something which I already knew. I preferred to find ways to motivate the children with whom I worked by:

- devising activities that were interesting and pleasurable in their own right;
- using puzzlement as a starting point for exploration;
- discussing ideas with the whole class;
- providing direct and informed comment about the quality of their work;
- identifying and celebrating effort and struggle as well as high achievement;
- suggesting ways in which work could be improved;
- letting children decide for themselves as far as possible, how and when they were going to tackle their work.

I regularly invited comment about the quality of the classroom activities I provided. I encouraged suggestions for improvements. I have always been comfortable with children voicing their own opinions about my performance and what I provide in the class. If children were bored, tired or struggling, I would often switch to another activity, giving me time to revise inappropriate activities and redevelop them for a future occasion.

This was a class of Y3 children aged 7-8. They were new to the school, having previously attended the infant school elsewhere in the village. I was immediately faced with the problem of 'House points'. Every Friday these were collected from each class teacher by a prefect from the Y6 class. I explained my problem to my class. I said something like:

- I'm new here too. I've never given children House points for work and I don't want to start now.
- Something has to be written in the House point book each week otherwise it will look like this class hasn't done anything.
- We need to come up with a way of putting something in the House points book.

It was Julianne who suggested what was to become a regular feature of our year together. She was a very creative individual in many ways. She often found solutions to problems and invented ways of organising us to good effect. Julianne suggested that children should give themselves house points, but before they did, they should spend part of the first hour on Friday mornings looking at each other's work. We all commented on the idea and criticised it. Several children voiced the opinion that some people might be too generous, giving themselves lots of points. Julianne said that if they looked at each other's work then they could tell if people were being fair.

Julienne's scheme was adopted and proved very successful from my perspective. Each Friday the children spent about an hour finishing off bits of work, giving themselves points, looking at each other's work, and talking about their work to each other. I avoided organising individuals if I could. They knew the task had to be finished by a certain time and there were other activities available if they had completed what they needed to do.

The children were very blunt at times. They had been together for two years previously, knew each other well and were often very perceptive about each other's qualities and strengths.

What also excited me about this review process was the close scrutiny that the work received and the constructive comments I heard. We tended to spend the last few minutes talking as a whole class about good work that people had noticed and children often stated how they were trying to improve. What developed over the year was a relatively unsophisticated form of target-setting.

5.1.5.2 Discussion

I was aware at the time that people learn in different ways, what is now commonly referred to as different learning styles. I didn't have the vocabulary to express this awareness in any detail. I was not able to explicitly describe or identify appropriate teaching procedures for responding to different learning styles, though I was making decisions intuitively. Gardner's (1993) work on multiple-intelligences has taken my thinking further and providing a language and structure that has supported the development of my pedagogy.

Julienne's statement and the underlying implications caused me concern. My classroom was not a place where John could feel successful. This suggested that I had failed to achieve the very objective on which I was trying to base my pedagogy.

I strongly hold the belief that a fundamental purpose of education is to allow learners to demonstrate success. But here was John, judging himself (or his work) to be 'not good

enough'. The problem for me was that I saw John's low self-esteem as emerging at least in part from my practice. It followed that I needed to improve the classroom, not just for John but for others who might feel the same way.

Should John receive lots of House points, and more easily? Should I acquiesce and give House points and take this heavy responsibility off his shoulders? Was there insufficient opportunity for John to derive motivation and self esteem from the tasks that I set for him? This latter view was the line I took. I was too resistant to the House point system to really consider adopting it, even if it would have helped in John's case. I concluded that:

- much of the work I set him was probably too demanding intellectually and in terms of writing skills required;
- too much work at too hard a level was undermining his confidence and self-esteem;
- more needed to be done to provide all the children with a greater range of strategies for tackling work and a broader range of ways of working;
- they needed a greater choice of ways of tackling classroom learning;
- more needed to be done to encourage children to express their own views about the activities and their responses to them.

In retrospect I recognise that I was preoccupied with the *quantity* of work that children produced. I was wedded to the notion that there is 'an appropriate quantity' of work that needs to be done each day or week, for progress to be made. Quality was a subsidiary issue that was only considered after quantity had been addressed. Realising this was a shock.

The classroom contained rhetoric that I had heard but had not noticed. 'You haven't done enough.' 'I want to see at least one page of work from you this lesson.' 'I've done four pages you've only done three - I'm beating you.' I had become more concerned with coverage of

the curriculum and keeping people busy. I was less concerned with quality. It exposed a dissonance between what I wanted to do and what I was doing. I wanted to work for quality but in practice I was less concerned about this than I had realised.

I began to shift from a position where I just ignored certain rules. Instead, I began to look for ways of working on them, modifying how they could be interpreted. For me, this resonates with what Marilyn Osborn calls *constructive mediation*, the ability to take, ‘active control ... responding ... in a creative, but possibly selective way.’ Osborn (1996: 36). She contrasts this approach with others that she calls: compliance, incorporation, retreatism and resistance.

There is an objectification involved in this self-review. “I” am a teacher, but there is also a professional “me” whose practice can be examined. I can watch me teach and examine the various products of my teaching. I can make comparisons between what I believe in, and what the “me” actually does. In this example, the “I” and the “me” were not too dissimilar. Reparation was possible since what I claimed to value and what my teaching demonstrated was actually valued in my classroom were not too distant or distinct to prevent me from working on the mismatch.

In contrast, if we look at Sally’s experience described in the pilot study (see page 50), the gap for her seemed to be enormous and she failed to bridge it. Bollas also comments on intrasubjective relations and the use of objectification of the self (see page 48).

5.1.5.3 Emergent Themes

- Changing my response to rules in professional settings.
- Beginning to find ways of using constructive mediation.
- Finding ways to incorporate children’s opinions into classroom work.
- Recognising the pedagogical gap between what I assumed I was doing and what I noticed when children drew my attention to the results of my practice.

- Using objectification to integrate different aspects of the teaching-self.

5.1.6 Ella, May 1990

I was working as a supply teacher for the summer term in a primary school, teaching a class of 10 - 11 year olds in their final term before they transferred to secondary school. With the exception of one girl, the children had established a good relationship with their previous teacher. He had been the deputy head and had worked in the school for several years, but had left in the spring after teaching them for two terms.

Ella had been diagnosed as diabetic at the beginning of the year (some months prior to my arrival) and according to the adults in the school who knew her, her behaviour had dramatically changed since the diagnosis. The family GP was monitoring her medical situation but there was no contact between the school and other agencies or support services, either medical or psychological. I sensed that the general feeling in the school was that the situation should be manageable without receiving external guidance or support from already busy services. Ella was learning how to manage her condition by monitoring her blood sugar and regulating her sugar intake.

Her mood swings were sudden, sometimes inclining to brief spells of aggression that almost always ending in desperate crying. After an episode, she often sought a cuddle or wanted to hold hands, either with me or with Joan, a non-teaching classroom assistant who had a good relationship with her, but who was based in another classroom. Ella was a bright girl, lively and chatty, often able to concentrate for long periods particularly on mathematics work which she enjoyed and in which she could become engrossed. Her outbursts were frequent – several per week. They were often followed by:

- shrieked accusations against other children, 'they've stolen my pencil', 'they're ganging-up on me';
- a period of shouting and sobbing;
- a period of subdued distress when she would put her head on the table and rest with her eyes closed;
- a period where she wanted physical contact, a cuddle with me or Joan.

Ella was wonderfully extravert but erratic in her temperament. She frequently brought collections of toys or equipment from home to show to everybody. She particularly enjoyed swimming (which was timetabled in the school pool each week) and would bring large quantities of equipment on swimming day; various costumes, a wet-suit, snorkel and flippers – but perhaps no towel.

Although she was supposed to bring them only on days when the class had a swimming lesson, she would sometimes bring them on other days claiming that she had muddled the days up, dressing up in them before school. She was great fun, generally biddable and amusing.

Ella's emotional state continued to fluctuate enormously. She was genuinely friendly and affectionate to all of us for some period during most days, but almost every day she was in tears for some of the time. Ella sometimes caused a disturbance during lessons. More often she caused problems at break times by arguing with other children and occasionally fighting with them. She would fall out with her friends, usually while out on the playground and occasionally she was physically violent. When adults intervened she would argue with them, saying that 'the others' had said or done something against her. She would argue vociferously for a short time and then burst into uncontrollable tears, run back to the classroom and bury her head in her hands. A message would then be sent to me or to Joan.

During lessons she would provoke an incident. She might amass a large collection of classroom equipment (pens, pencils, scissors, erasers) around her and make busy use of them all. She would refuse to share them and other children would take an item that she had beside her. She would respond by snatching things back, pinching or hitting other children, snatching their belongings, tearing up her work or theirs, refusing to do what I asked. Ella was occasionally verbally abusive towards me. The frequency of these disturbances was distressing to other children in the classroom who displayed great tolerance but seemed to be gradually distancing themselves from her.

Ella's mother collected her from school each day but showed little interest in her. I had observed Ella punch and kick her mother, who was generally indifferent to her and took little interest in her school work, but who bribed Ella with toys and money.

I tried to respond to Ella by:

- ensuring I gave her time when she was happy and when she was distressed;
- letting her know my feelings as well as my thoughts. 'You look happy today' 'You must be very angry to want to say that' 'You seem very sad at the moment' 'I get upset when you shout at me';
- talking to her about her diabetes, but only on those occasions when she initiated the subject;
- mirroring the anger in her voice by responding with what I judged was a similar level of intensity in my own voice when she was shouting at me.

I tried to match the intensity of her voice when she shouted at me, loud when she was loud, soft when she subsided. I made sure I was available when she wanted a cuddle, and I tried to be sympathetic when she was miserable.

Ella's increasing isolation from the other children was a factor in trying to find a way of managing her behaviour. When she was in a state of distress, Ella seemed lost to us and to her normal self.

5.1.6.1 Discussion

This work opened up several areas for exploration and personal development for me that drew on the training I had received a few years earlier as a Relate counsellor. My view of Ella was of a well-behaved, pleasant girl often overwhelmed by feelings. I did not think of her as fundamentally naughty, vindictive or deserving to be punished. Working with Ella challenged my assumptions about classroom boundaries and rules. She seemed unable to cope with the loose boundaries that I generally maintained. I began to think that the freedom of choice and the weak boundaries I normally provided were unhelpful to her and perhaps even disturbing, leaving her with the feeling that she was not secure. I wondered if they provided a metaphor for her own condition. Until recently she had been an ordinary person in good health. Now, the boundaries of her health were difficult to determine. The prognosis of diabetes can be difficult in the early stages, but it nevertheless remains a serious condition. Perhaps the vague classroom rules and boundaries too closely mirrored her ill-defined health?

I am inclined to use intrinsic motivation (see the account of Julianne and John above page 113) to encourage children to work. I try to avoid making use of extrinsic rewards or punishments, in the form of 'stars' or points. I have always been fundamentally resistant to using systematic methods of behaviour modification. I don't believe in compliance for its own sake – either for me or for children.

Thinking about how to meet Ella's needs challenged my position as an easy-going teacher.

Managing the classroom became problematic. I was trying to strike a balance between:

1. making changes to the classroom environment that I thought might allow Ella to feel more secure;
2. avoiding over-protecting her by pathologising;
3. ignoring her when she needed support.

I recognised that I was making some assumptions. For example that:

- There was a psychodynamic perspective to the situation that could inform me.
- That she was expressing (and unconsciously projecting) fear and confusion as a result of becoming diabetic.
- I would be able to provide something useful for her.
- I did not fully understand the situation but that I would have to try to find new ways of working.
- I had to work intuitively most of the time and review what was happening analytically from time to time.
- It could be productive if I showed Ella that I could contain her anger.

Containment implied a role for me as the responsible adult in the classroom. I was trying to 'temporarily hold a part of another before returning it in a transformed and benign form.'

(Coren, 1997: 61).

I assumed that Ella needed to be able to make sense of her feelings of despair, fear and panic. Because they didn't make sense to her but overwhelmed her, she needed me and other adults like Joan, to help her make sense of what was happening to her.

To offer her a more secure metaphor for classroom life, I wanted to ensure that classroom life could become more predictable and make more sense. I decided to establish more restrictive boundaries and apply the classroom rules more consistently and systematically. Ella would have to meet the rules of the classroom as closely as she could. As much as anyone else, she had the right to a classroom that was useful to her. To achieve this, I had to give up some classroom practices that I had developed over the years and which I believed offered children more 'on-the-spot' decision-making.

I wasn't sure whether I could or should apply this more rigid regime to everyone. In the event I didn't. I wondered if these strong boundary conditions might become unrealistically demanding of Ella, since I would probably overlook other children's occasional transgressions whereas most of Ella's misbehaviour would lead to a consistent response from me.

I didn't impose any punishments like extra work. If Ella broke rules, by fighting with other children or taking other children's possessions, or refusing to do her work, I:

- admonished her;
- explained which rules she had broken;
- expected her to apologise to others when she had regained her composure;
- limited her access to the playground during the play periods.

It helped me to understand some of the feelings of confusion and anger that I was experiencing, by supposing that Ella was unconsciously projecting her confusion and anger onto me, the other children, and other members of staff.

Emotions do not need words to be communicated; they too can be transferred. The mechanisms most commonly used for the transfer are projection and projective identification. ... what has been projected, which can be an unacceptable wish, emotion or quality, is something unacceptable to the subject

and consequently safely placed in the object who is then unconsciously invited to act out the projection. (Coren, 1997: 49-50)

Both Joan and I spoke on many occasions about how inadequate and bad we felt, suggesting that the process of projective identification was well established. There were occasions when I could not determine why the feelings I was experiencing had appeared. When there was nothing in my own immediate life that could account for the feelings of confusion, frustration or anger that I was experiencing, and I was at a loss to know their origin, I found it helpful to ask myself, 'Whose emotional stuff is this?' This allowed two developments in my practice:

1. I could free myself from the urgency of the emotions and look at them in a more detached and objective way as unexpected arrivals from elsewhere.
2. I could give some attention to Ella if I thought she might be the source.

Bion writes about projective identification as a necessary process in the healthy development of curiosity in the infant.

Projective identification makes it possible (for the infant) to investigate his own feelings in a person powerful enough to contain them. Denial of the use of this mechanism, ... leads to the destruction of the link between infant and ... [mother] and consequently to a severe disorder of the impulse to be curious on which all thinking depends. (Bion, 1990: 117)

I wanted to show Ella that the classroom was strong enough to contain the very worst fears that she could project onto us. I tried this by making the classroom a more formal and consistent place, demonstrating that it survived every challenge. I thought it was vital, for example, never to exclude her from the classroom, as a punishment, because I felt this implied that we and the classroom were insufficiently strong to contain her feelings.

If she was to transfer responsibility for managing her emotions to Joan and me, I wanted to try to understand the transference if I could. Education offers many examples of the

transference process. Some are given by Saltzberger-Wittenberg (1983) who writes that transference can affect:

... (a) the way we perceive, (b) the way we interpret, (c) the way we behave. An example of (a) is of a boy who adores his mother and has been the apple of her eye. He may expect to seduce his teacher (as he did his mother) by his charm rather than feel a need to earn praise by hard work and achievement. An example of (b) is of a girl who has an ailing father and who interprets her teacher's absence invariably as a sign that she has been too much of a burden on him. An example of (c) is a young man who, expecting punishment, behaves so outrageously that he eventually drives his teacher to act in a punitive manner. (p.263)

There were some improvements over time. What appeared to happen was that when I confronted her with her rages, Ella began to notice me and respond. Before, her feelings appeared so overwhelming that she didn't seem to know what she was doing or to notice anything I did or said.

A crucial factor in helping me determine whether we were being helpful was her attitude and response to both Joan and me, and the other children during her calm periods. She continued to be friendly, courteous, lively and enthusiastic in the periods between her outbursts. At a parents' meeting her mother reported that Ella liked me and was happy in my class.

I have no firm evidence on which to claim success for my decision to confront Ella with her anger in the way I chose. I do think the classroom, Joan and myself proved to be good-enough containers for her. There was some anecdotal evidence from other teachers, playground supervisors and Ella's mother, that suggested she was more settled during the latter part of the term. And at a time when some children were becoming anxious about the impending transfer to secondary school.

This experience brought the issue of emotional learning in classroom contexts to the fore and dramatically changed my view about education. Until this period, I had not considered emotional learning in the classroom in any depth. On reflection, I believe that my training was at least ambiguous about affective learning. It is possible that I would have been unable

to function effectively on this broad front during my early training, though if I had received some training, then who knows what might have been possible?

It does appear that there are some ambiguities that still exist in teacher training, in relation to the affective domain and what some call ‘emotional literacy’⁶, or ‘emotional education’. I suggest that the following questions would raise some debate and probably some disagreement about how teachers should act.

1. Should teachers display anger while teaching?
2. Should teachers discourage children’s anger?
3. Should children’s behaviour be channelled carefully into more positive emotions?
4. Should children see teachers as people who experience a full range of emotions?

It seems reasonable that teacher behaviour needs to be a selective subset of human behaviours. There is an increasing expectation that children should learn about relationships as part of their schooling. This must include an exploration of emotions. Is this to be done mostly ‘academically’ through discussion?

It seems unlikely that an effective curriculum can be established if teachers’ emotional behaviour has to be circumscribed. However, teachers’ behaviour is now more closely monitored than ever before. This is more likely to lead to a narrower rather than broader range of behaviours evidenced from teachers.

Teachers’ relationships with children are more carefully scrutinised than ever before and as a society we seem to be more ambiguous in signalling what we want the teacher’s role to be. All

⁶ Antidote is engaged in a ‘Campaign for Emotional Literacy’, from The Hub, 3-4 Albion Place, Galena Road, London W6 0QT.

this seems likely to make the transition to a teacher-self increasingly complex and challenging for individuals.

5.1.6.2 Emergent Themes

- Accepting that the exploration of emotions is part of the classroom curriculum.
- Learning to make use of the psychodynamic concepts of transference and projection to interpret classroom behaviour.
- Recognising that previous training had focused on cognitive and skills learning, with limited opportunities to learn how to make provision for education of the emotions in classrooms.

5.2 Important findings - what has become available for future use?

Reviewing the emergent themes from the critical incidents above shows that I was:

- making use of objectification (David, 5.1.1.2);
- identifying aspects of *myself-as-teacher* and as *not-teacher* and managing the identificatory compromise that accompanied this;
- holding others' anger (School Disco, 5.1.2.2 and Ella, 5.1.6.2);
- developing a professional voice – beginning to speak as teacher, (Maths Scheme, 5.1.3.2);
- acquiring know-how directly from work with pupils, (Paul, 5.1.4.2);
- using discrepancies between different objectifications of the self to indicate where reparation and integration of different aspects of 'me' could be attempted (Julienne and John, 5.1.5.3);
- learning to use psychodynamic concepts to interpret behaviour (Ella, 5.1.6.2)

Identifying the emergent themes allowed me to look for evidence of the development of my praxis in later work with students. The use of critical incidents and the application of a reflective process has identified themes from my own transition to teacher which I was able to apply directly to subsequent work with Nicola, Sally and others in HE contexts, and which were further developed for use in the longitudinal study with Emily, Pauline and Brigitte.

5.3 Significant events 1990 - 1997

5.3.1 Working with Nicola, March 1992

Nicola was a primary BEd student who consistently presented herself as a socially confident person, holding strong opinions, generally lively and animated, and assertive in groups. She readily engaged in pedagogical discussion with me before, during and after teaching sessions, and she would initiate conversations on other occasions if we met in the college. We established a close professional relationship very soon after her arrival.

At an early point during her first year of training Nicola had openly shared her fear of mathematics in the professional studies group to whom I taught mathematics. She had described her secondary school experiences briefly, and had identified points of crisis. Most of these anecdotes contained reports of her as a school student experiencing high anxiety and distress during mathematics lessons. Nicola had described several incidents that had reduced her feelings of confidence, and she elaborated some of the ways in which teachers had been implicated in these particular incidents.

Nicola's manner of introducing her anecdotes was in keeping with her enthusiastic response to pedagogical discussion and college work. I thought at the time that the anecdotes might have had two quite different purposes. They were wholly appropriate and legitimate themes for the group - this part of the course focused on children's mathematical errors and

common misconceptions. I did wonder about a second (perhaps unconscious) need for Nicola to present such forceful descriptions. I wondered if perhaps she was signalling that her school experiences had led to such discomfort that she wouldn't welcome any further involvement in public mathematical activity: in short, that she was trying to 'warn me off'.

Following her disclosures, I asked her permission to work directly with her on maths problems when they arose in the course of a mathematics session. She agreed that she would respond to my questions if I tried to engage her in working one-to-one with the rest of the students observing. She added that she probably would find the situation difficult. I had already worked directly with one or two other students in previous sessions, so this strategy was not unknown to the group.

I did engage her in the next couple of sessions and she found these situations immediately disturbing. I looked for opportunities where the group was unsure about adopting a procedure or unclear about the correctness of an answer. I would then pose Nicola a question and work for several minutes in a one-to-one conversation exploring her thinking and her reasoning. At the outset of each interchange she would quickly become uncomfortable and displayed quite untypical behaviour. On several occasions, she showed agitation, panic and her face became very flushed. We continued with our discussions and Nicola sometimes added a commentary on how she was feeling during the interchange.

Other members of the group were often strongly affected by her panic. Several attempted to side-track or stop the interchange. They were successful on one or two occasions. One student described the dialogue as an 'attack' and several challenged me directly during these question and answer exchanges. Some complained that Nicola was being 'picked on', emphasising that it was *because* she found the work difficult. I checked with Nicola both within and between sessions. She was willing to continue. These exchanges between Nicola and me occurred during approximately five sessions. Her contributions became longer and

more confident but so did the introduction of new anecdotes about her secondary school experiences.

5.3.1.1 Discussion

It was clear that Nicola did not like the experience of being overwhelmed by these emotions. The other students did not enjoy my interchanges with Nicola. The emotional disturbance created by engaging with a student will inevitably contain socially and culturally related elements. There was a clear sense of the other students wanting to look after or even protect her. Their discomfort seemed to me:

- to be in part directly related to Nicola's discomfort and their concern for her as a friend and a fellow student;
- generated partly by what they saw as 'exposure' of Nicola's inability to engage with the mathematics allied with a sense that such 'exposure' is unacceptable;
- partly due to their relatively passive roles during these periods. Some of them appeared to have difficulty with 'sitting on the answer' to a mathematical problem when someone else hadn't got an answer;
- partly due to unconscious elements within the group.

There is a need to work discursively with people who are having difficulties with mathematical knowledge, conceptual strategies, techniques and procedures. For many people, the difficulty may not arise out of conceptual difficulties with the mathematics as much from the incompleteness of their mathematical education. For many people, their classroom experiences over the last twenty years are characterised by the absence of discourse.

One outcome of mathematical discourse is that it offers an opportunity for confirmation of big ideas and the making of connections between ideas that are conceptually linked (but which may not be obviously linked). Many of the students in training today have not had

their ideas and misconceptions exposed to any form of rigorous examination through discourse. The result is they are secure in very few areas, not necessarily because they do not know or understand the mathematics, but because they have never had their ideas confirmed in any external discussion with another adult. And, they have never had to articulate their knowledge and commit their ideas to public discussion. Their experience of mathematics has been a solitary one. Communication has seldom been about mathematical ideas. What communication with teachers has been available has been solely through the submission of workbook pages returned by teachers with marks and written comments.

Evidence from TIMSS and from OFSTED inspections shows that English children still spend a considerable amount of lesson time working individually from published materials. OFSTED's *Key Stage 1 and 2 Subject and Standards Review 1994/95* identified that teachers usually deploy a very narrow range of teaching styles with a class, a major reason for this being that they rely too heavily on published schemes, which pupils work through individually. Pupils have some assistance from the teacher ... but are fundamentally left to "teach" themselves. An effective teacher of mathematics conveys information ... personally, rather than relying too much on curriculum material or textbooks. (DfEE, 1998: 19)

As a result, large numbers of people are unfamiliar with the experience of being involved in direct, classroom-based discussion in mathematics.

This work pre-dates the introduction of the National Numeracy Project and the subsequent Strategy by some six years. It points to some of the possible difficulties faced by teachers who are required by the NNS to develop mathematical discussion in classrooms. Not only were these students lacking in experience of learning mathematics through discourse that involved the exploration of common errors and misconceptions, but also the cultural milieu of their formative years used the publicising of pupils' errors punitively, and to underline failure rather than success in mathematics. Such personal histories may be expected to contribute to teachers' difficulties in implementing the strategy.

The cultural experience of seldom having errors discussed openly in classroom settings may be a significant factor in the emergence of the emotional disturbance that seemed closely allied to the cognitive disturbance that I attempted to create.

The exploration of mathematical errors in English classrooms may be perceived more in terms of the failure of individuals to learn mathematics successfully, than as a common and universal experience of learning mathematics. If the evidence from TIMSS and other sources is reliable, then engagement with errors and misconceptions in other European countries and elsewhere, does not produce high levels of emotional disturbance in learners. It may be that the English school experience may have contributed to the establishment of a logical link that could be presented in the following manner, with apologies to Laing (1970).

I make mistakes in mathematics
Therefore I am stupid
My teacher draws attention to my mistakes
in order to punish me for being careless and stupid
I must be doubly stupid
Stupid because I make mistakes
And stupid because my teacher tells everyone I make mistakes
And I must be trebly stupid because my friends all know I make mistakes.

R D Laing recognised the knots that we sometimes create in our lives. It is useful to look at a couple of knots that Laing wrote about. It is interesting to read them after positioning oneself as learner - and then to read them again after re-positioning oneself as teacher.

JILL You think I'm stupid
JACK I don't think you're stupid
JILL I must be stupid to think you think I'm
 stupid if you don't: or you must be lying.
 I am stupid every way:
 to think I'm stupid, if I am stupid
 to think I'm stupid, if I'm not stupid
 to think you think I'm stupid, if you don't
(Laing, 1970: 22)

There is something I don't know
that I am supposed to know.
I don't know *what* it is I don't know,
and yet I am supposed to know,

and I feel I look stupid
if I seem both not to know it
and not know *what* it is I don't know.
Therefore I pretend I know it.
This is nerve-racking
since I don't know what I must pretend to know.
Therefore I pretend to know everything.

I feel you know what I am supposed to know
but you can't tell me what it is
because you don't know that I don't know what it is.

You may know what I don't know, but not
that I don't know it,
and I can't tell you. So you will have to tell me everything.
(Laing, 1970: 56)

These knots are phenomena that are built up through our responses to relationships with others in a range of social and cultural settings. The exploration of mathematical mistakes and misconceptions in classrooms seems a good example of a knot that is likely to be difficult to undo in the short term. It requires teachers to recognise the complexity of the situations in which they engage learners on the subject of mistakes, and to review the choices they make when they work with learners on mistakes in classroom settings. Certainly it could be argued that avoiding public exploration of errors and misconceptions and continuing to engage privately with individuals may well only exacerbate feelings of failure and inadequacy.

The response that I encountered included some collusion between the students. Some began to display anxiety and agitation. It seemed to me that some of the students behaved *as if* they were being challenged directly. Not everyone appeared to be interceding *on Nicola's behalf*. Some appeared to be behaving *as if* they were experiencing what Nicola was experiencing. They may have experienced projection of Nicola's need to be protected from anxiety or hidden feelings.

I am now more acutely aware of the emotional disturbance that emerges from cognitive disturbance. I seek students' permission to work with them in difficult areas. I try to maintain an open dialogue with students about staying with the present. There is a need for them as student teachers, to work as *teachers* and not just as students in emotionally challenging

situations, and to bring to the group their experiences as teachers in classrooms. As a result of working with Caleb Gattegno in workshop situations over a period of eight years, I now try to pay attention to educating awareness, training behaviour and harnessing emotion. Only by combining work in all three areas does it seem possible to develop as teachers.

Only awareness is educable
Only emotion is harnessable
Only behaviour is trainable

... correspond to modern psychological distinctions between cognition, affect, and enaction ... The force of the word *only*, which Gattegno used in his formulation of the first assertion, acts to generate disturbance followed by questioning and even investigation of sense and validity for these assertions. ... The *three only's* memorably summarise the main components ... and provide a framework for structuring professional development and practitioner research through distinguishing different energies in training, harnessing and educating. (Mason, 1994: 7)

It is valuable if there are possibilities to continually communicate with the people with whom you work. Nicola and I met on several occasions and explored the very personal issues associated with the process of her becoming a teacher.

5.3.1.2 Emergent themes

- Learning to identify themes in students' development – (for example, resistance to the articulation of mathematical ideas and thinking processes as part of learning mathematics).
- Learning to create exploration through provocation. (Introducing a method of teaching that challenges students' previous classroom experience.)
- Using modelling to show alternative ways of working with individuals in group contexts.

5.3.2 Nicola in conversation - searching for a professional life

The following is an extract from a taped conversation with Nicola 4th May 1994.

Nicola: - The more that that that first year I think I was quite keen. Although I didn't originally set out with the idea of being a teacher, I didn't particularly want, I've never wanted to teach. I wanted to do some kind of education, Further Education and I can't remember if I told you this, I was going to do radiography (TB - Hmm) yeah well um I was offered a place at the School of Radiography and when I went along they offered me a week's work experience. So, I thought that was great, and I felt sure that I was going to really, really

enjoy it.... Um, so off I went for this weeks work experience and I was so disappointed because at the end of it you didn't say to somebody at the end of it I'm ever so sorry but you've got a broken arm and I'm going to fix it, you know. The doctors did that! ... at the end of it you just, you know, you just pass this piece of film to somebody, and he's the one, or she's the one, that says right to the person you know we're going to do this. So I was really disillusioned and I had to say no. So then it was, right, what can I do? That's going to give me a profession to um, that I feel I can grow and move on in, and develop even, you know, something that I was really going to enjoy, and really there weren't many choices. ... Then in the first year I though well yeah I , because on the interview, I probably told loads of lies, do you really want to teach, oh yeah I'd love to teach, I've always wanted to teach . You know. And um, I think G. smelt a bit of a rat on the interview, you know ... and she said I really think you ought to go out into schools and you know, perhaps, you know, get a bit more of an idea what its all about, but anyway I got in and the first year I did think, yeah I think this is what I want to do. The second year, um, perhaps a few doubts started to creep in. Mostly about the theory and the practice of it. I felt there were differences there about what [the college was] saying and what it was actually like. There were obvious problems there but not just for me I think even for people that had come in desperately wanting to teach, you know, ... I was listening to the other end of it, this is what it's going to be like for you, and this is what you will do, and then when I went out there I saw it was different. So we're all seeing these differences but from different perspectives. Having gone in at different points, with different wants and needs. But um, the third year, I've got doubts that are more personal to me. Um, because I think that Mrs. W. the lectures that we've had with you and the maths have been particularly interesting to me because I do think that now I'm starting to question whether or not I can actually go out of here, still with a bit of me left, that's not going to be infected, or affected. I mean, you know, you could use either of those words really.

TB - Both of those words describe you (Nicola: - Yeah.), one of them is quite invasive isn't it? (Nicola: - Yeah) to be infected (Nicola: - Yeah).

From 1990, when I returned to higher education teaching, I began working in this detailed way with students. I noticed similarities in the story-strands provided by different students, and began to wonder if there was *an account* that could be given, which in some way represented the essential features of these different stories but without losing their uniqueness. I began to use and muse on these accounts and occupied myself in:

...some sort of mental laying of the strands alongside each other, weaving them into a tapestry-like story ...[and] using them to sensitise myself for noticing in the future. (Mason, 1996: 31)

In this extract Nicola was searching for a profession – first radiography and then teaching.

Her account shows the emotional and the cognitive clearly intertwined. In both radiography

and teaching she saw opportunities for caring, for cognitive learning, and for emotional engagement. For Nicola, professional training was strongly associated with personal growth.

The concern about differences between college-based and school-based experiences appeared not only with Nicola but again later in the longitudinal study, in conversation with Emily. In the extract below, Emily discusses a one-day meeting with other students at College to plan a pre-professional week towards the end of the final school placement. She already knew she had successfully completed the course and her teaching placement school had already recruited her as an NQT for the following year.

EM: And I also said I've struggled marking course work for GCSE especially attainment target one. I can't do that very well. And everyone sort of said no. It meant directing the days for pre-professional week. No one else came up with any idea. I wish I hadn't come up with an idea. W. can't be there for the whole week so I think, well what's the point? I'd rather have another week in school. Getting resources together or something like that. I thought well if we've been in school this long and we're coming back for a week surely college can organise a way of seeing a lecturer so we can talk about problems.]
[EM, T2: line 542]

For Emily a significant aspect of her transition was underway. A stronger identification with school and a weak, compliant response to the remainder of the college course.

5.3.2.1 Emergent Themes

- Using student accounts to sensitise me to students' views of professional orientation, growth and development.

5.3.3 Number 17 - working with Karen and Nicola, June 1993

This session of about seventy minutes was part of the professional maths programme for a group of primary BEd students in their second year of training. They were not yet half way through their training course. The group had been formed at the beginning of their course in their first year of training. Some were confident about their own mathematical knowledge and about teaching maths. Most lacked experience both of teaching mathematics in schools and of discussing pedagogy.

My chosen purpose for the session was to support students' mathematical thinking, and to offer a classroom model. The group had a history, having studied together for two years already. Several in the group appeared to have made strong friendships. I felt comfortable in this group. I sensed that most of them regarded it as a useful place to learn. I had worked with them in both their first and second year professional mathematics programmes.

I introduced the 'Function' game to the group of about 20 students. I invited them to play the game and set the rules as follows:

- The game was to be played verbally, but people were free to write anything they wanted to (most did).
- Only one calculator available - used solely by me.
- They are to offer me a number and I will enter it into a calculator.
- I will tell them the calculator output number.
- They must use trial and improvement in an attempt to give me an input number that will output 1
- I perform the same operation on each number given to me.
- The group discusses what number should be give to me next.
- I will only accept a number after it has been agreed by the group.

I requested a number, saying that I was going to begin with a very obvious calculation. This was to ensure that we were all clear about playing the game.

I was offered 6 and returned an output of 9; then 4 and returned a 7; then 12 and returned 15. There were several comments like:

'three';

'adding three';

'it's three more each time'.

I called for a formal statement which was volunteered by one person. I asked if we were all in agreement. No one volunteered anything more complex, such as:

'input our number add something and then subtract that number and another three'.

I announced that I would begin again with a different function.

I was offered 5 and returned 0.29411765

I was offered 13 and returned 0.76470588

It was at this point that Karen offered 17.

I was dividing by seventeen. I was surprised that it was offered so soon. I had no idea whether Karen had calculated, intuited or guessed her offer of 17. I could see that most people were still tuning-in to the activity and were beginning to get involved in one of several activities. I observed some people:

- checking they were interpreting the activity in the same way as their peers;
- exploring the possible relationships between the pairs of numbers, 5, 0.29411765 and 13, 0.76470588;
- discussing how to record the information in a convenient way;
- discussing how they could predict a 1 as an output number.

I felt that the acceptance of 17 as a correct answer would have:

- Disrupted most *people's* thinking.
- Emphasised the production of answers over the process of finding a suitable way of attacking the problem.
- Rewarded speed rather than mulling things over.

- Positioned me as the arbiter of correct answers rather than them through their collaborative deliberation.

I had deliberately looked hard at the calculator and pretended to have to concentrate on pressing the right buttons so that I could keep eye contact to a minimum. I was therefore in a position to chose to ignore Karen's offering, by pretending that I had not heard it. There was an added advantage because several other people offered different numbers at the same time.

One or two people were writing numbers in lists and organising the numbers in various ways, presumably trying to identify patterns. One person near me had written 17 in her list and had left a space beside it. All the other input numbers on her list had a corresponding output number in the form of a decimal. I can recall seeing the space beside 17 and thinking how empty and large it felt. There were now two people pursuing 17. Karen offered 17 again.

Karen: Seventeen. I gave you seventeen and you didn't answer me.

Why did you say seventeen?

I think it's about three less each time.

(Hearing this answer made me want to continue to avoid closure of the activity. It seemed that at least one person was using an additive rather than a multiplicative process to calculate the answer. I wanted different thinking processes exposed and examined for their appropriateness.)

What answer do you expect it will give?

Thirteen point something.

That's not the answer I have here, (I paused but she seemed unready to pursue it any further for the time being).

Let's go on.

I heard fragments of Karen's continuing discussion with a partner that the answer might not be three less each time. I also saw the person who had written 17 and left a space tapping and saying to a friend that I hadn't given them the answer to 17 so her list was incomplete. I ignored her comments.

Right. Can anyone offer a comment about what might be happening?

We continued for several minutes, building patterns and predicting answers. Those who were not clear were offered ideas and suggestions by others. Then someone offered 10.

What sort of answer would you expect?

Suzanne: Point five something.

I noticed several puzzled faces and looks of admiration. Suzanne is thought to be fairly smart at this kind of work. I asked her to explain her prediction. It involved looking back at 5 and arguing that multiplying by 2 would give her 10. So multiplying 0.29411765 by 2 would be appropriate and this would give 0.58 something. I drew people's attention to Suzanne's use of ratio and multiplication and asked for some people who had been puzzled to test multiplication out on some other pairs of whole numbers in order to find out whether there was a multiplicative relationship. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the space beside 17 being tapped with a pencil.

You haven't given us the answer to this one.

No, I didn't.

Several comments came at once. What are we supposed to be doing? What was the activity? Trying to get 1 on the calculator? Oh. It's got to be about sixteen because 8 gives 0.4705882 It's going to be point 8 point 9 something. It's seventeen.

Are you asking me to try seventeen?

Yes. Someone asked for seventeen before.

Karen: I did!

Yes I know. I tried very hard to avoid giving you an answer too!

5.3.3.1 Discussion - avoiding closure

I wanted to hold on to the situation where students were engaged in mathematical thinking, conjecturing and testing hypotheses. *Avoiding closure* is a useful place holder for the strategy described above. I was aware of the expectation of responding to Karen's 17 under normal social circumstances. Teaching includes discourses and practises that may need to cut across or go beyond social practices in other contexts. I wanted to employ a teaching strategy that was sufficiently acceptable socially, but which postponed the closure that can be a routine part of discourse in many social settings.

By accepting 'eight' from someone, I was able to continue the process of collecting suggestions and providing answers that provoked further study. Several other numbers were offered and I replied. After a few more minutes the activity came to a close. We began to discuss what had just taken place. The discussion was animated and most people in the room spoke. I reported that the process of avoiding closure is a pedagogical strategy I sometimes choose to employ. Some members of the group reported being surprised that they were reluctant to challenge me and ask directly for an answer. Several said that they did not receive the information they wanted but hadn't the confidence to challenge me and demand that I respond to them and to Karen. On reflection, they thought they had been more inhibited than they would have anticipated. Some said they hadn't noticed any of this. Others reported that they had noticed the focus of the lesson change: their focus of attention remained elsewhere. Peripherally, they had been aware of my behaviour but had carried on working. Karen reported feeling puzzled by my behaviour but not discouraged from continuing work.

Karen: I thought it had to do with subtraction. I thought of it as a take away.

Nicola (excited); I want to know how you deflected us and Karen. I realise now but I wouldn't have done if we hadn't discussed it. These are the sorts of things we need to find out about. It's this sort of thing we need to learn about.

TB: Here we are finding out about them. How did I avoid giving Karen an answer?

Several students reported a realisation that their pedagogy didn't embrace avoidance of closure. Several reported that closure was an assumed objective in their lessons. An underlying assumption seemed to be that speed is of the essence: rapid acquisition of new ideas and skills is part of what teachers routinely strive for. The main purpose of working with learners according to their pedagogy is to reach a conclusion, demonstrate a point then move on. Coming to a swift conclusion is seen as a main part of the general *purpose* of classroom activities. My purpose was assumed by several in the group, to be that they should quickly find that 17 gives an answer of 1 in the above activity.

They did not seem to have considered that I might hope:

- for an exploration of ways of testing whether multiplication or division, rather than addition and subtraction are implicated in the process;
- that they would explore why some input numbers (e.g. zero, one or ten) make the function more transparent and discernible.

The discussion seemed to offer at least some of the students the possibility of greater choice in their teaching. They were able to contemplate teaching lessons where they could choose to go for closure or choose to postpone it. For others, modifying the process of choosing whether to close an episode seemed to be closely related to anxiety. For some people in the group, rapid closure seemed to be a much more comfortable option. For these people, going for closure during teaching episodes seemed to be equated with:

- lessons that are 'going somewhere useful';
- the teacher being in charge of, and directing, the learning;

- the teacher fulfilling a role judged to be important, of being the source of knowledge and the provider of answers;
- being able to avoid difficult or unanticipated questions from learners;
- avoidance of long silences (which many said they found uncomfortable).

Teachers learn to interact with groups in ways that follow different rules from those operating in many other group interactions in other contexts. The pedagogical imperative anticipates that teachers modify the rules that apply in the social interactions associated with teaching episodes. Signalling a request for closure (e.g. seeking an immediate answer to a question) forms part of the discourse in social settings. In many cases, the expectation is of compliance: the request will be granted and the desired response given. In the context of teaching, this may sometimes thwart other teacherly ambitions. Avoiding closure (by maintaining silence or ignoring aspects of behaviour, ...) may help sustain thinking, action and learning.

For me, several issues remained after the session finished.

- What is it that allows me, as a teacher, to prepare myself to work in this way?
- How can I explore whether I am justified in my assumptions about the strategies I use?
- What other issues are associated with avoiding closure?
- What further issues need to be considered when 'working with an individual' in a group situation as I have reported doing with Nicola above and with Elspeth in what follows?

Reviewing this episode again, this time in 2000, I find myself wishing I'd asked Nicola if this was an example of being infected (see above, page 137).

5.3.3.2 Emergent Themes

- Wanting to create conditions for critical reflection on my pedagogy as a means of exploring pedagogical issues with students.
- Learning to create contexts where students have to meet models of thinking and practice that challenge their current ways of thinking and behaving.
- Provoking dissonance between students' current self and an emerging teacher-self.

5.3.4 Working with Elspeth on becoming more articulate

In December 1993, the PGCE programme of mathematics sessions was nearly complete. I had negotiated with the group the topics for the last two sessions. One was 'Conflict in Teaching', the other was 'Preparing of Job Interviews'. The mood of the group was very mixed. There was considerable anger being expressed by a core of students about recent events which had dramatically affected the circumstances of one member of the group. Others had taken up a range of stances and there was considerable hostility being directed towards 'the college'. Some of this hostility was projected onto tutors, including me, involved in running this final week of the programme.

We began the session 'Preparing for Job Interviews' sitting together in a group of approximately twenty, around a large rectangular block of tables. I started the session by inviting the one or two students who had already been interviewed for jobs to recount their experiences. The mood was sombre with few signs of usual bubbling conversations that characterised beginnings of sessions. Tina agreed to talk and spent several minutes recounting the questions she had been posed during her interview. I became aware that the mood had changed. Most students became attentive. They commented and their body language showed them to be alert and responsive, nodding, smiling and reacting to Tina's account. The group had become energised. Several people questioned Tina and a discussion began to emerge.

Tina recalled that one interview question in particular had been difficult for her. She wondered if she had really answered it satisfactorily. I interrupted Tina and asked the rest of the group to consider their answer to it. Some began working on this, calling out thoughts and ideas. I asked if anyone could formulate an answer. There appeared to be a range of reactions. Some people appeared comfortable with the prospect of having to formulate an answer to it. Others said they felt unsure of where to begin. However, one or two were expressing a very different view. They were reluctant to make any attempt at an answer. For them, the situation appeared to have produced considerable anxiety. I speculated to myself whether what had emerged was something that I could now call 'a fear of publicised inarticulacy'.

Many small conversations erupted in the group. These partly overheard fragments gave me some clue to the feelings of the speakers. I waited for a minute or two then whispered to Marietta who was sitting beside me, asking her if she would frame the question in her mind and be ready to ask it in couple of minutes time. She agreed to this and she rehearsed with me how she should do this, deciding to act in the role of a school governor. By asking another person to put the question, I organised myself to be freer to pay attention to the group and the individual responses. I told the group what I had arranged with Marietta and asked her to start when she was ready. Marietta asked the question to one person and another as they signalled they would be willing to formulate a response. Several people contributed what came to mind. All the responses seemed to offer something of value: a confident tone, a partial response, an appropriate body posture. Fragments of a rounded answer began to emerge and we moved on to consider what a balanced answer might need to contain.

It was at this point that Elspeth's behaviour caught my attention. Her normally pale complexion was red. She was animated, anxious and shaking her head as she spoke quietly to the person next to her. I spoke directly to her saying that it appeared to me as though she was very anxious and disturbed. I asked her to report her concern. She replied that she didn't

want to get involved. I wasn't sure whether she was fearful of taking a direct part in this activity, whether she thought she could never find the appropriate words to answer this question, or whether interviews made her very anxious. By now she seemed to be in a panic.

I asked her if she would repeat to us what she had said to her friend. She did this immediately and graphically. She described various situations that had caused her to panic and the great mental confusion that accompanied such situations generally. She detailed the terror that even the thought of interviews evoke in her. Having spoken at some length, Elspeth finished with, 'It's probably one reason I won't get a job.'

It seemed from her account that one problem she had in preparing for interviews was that she had no effective strategy for organising a possible answer.

I invited others to describe how they had rehearsed their answers in the moment between hearing Marietta voice the question and beginning a response. Some reported they were unaware of any conscious preparation, but several had strategies which they shared. I asked Elspeth which strategies she felt were worth trying out, and which fragments of the answer had caught her interest during the rehearsal. She identified three issues which she felt had to be included in a balanced answer to the question. I then asked her to organise them in some way and told her to signal to Marietta when she was ready to hear the question again. After a minute or two of thought, she began by discussing the three elements of the answer with the rest of the group, several of whom responded. Elspeth began organising her thoughts until finally she said she was ready to begin to next stage.

There is no doubt she was anxious and her face was still highly coloured. However, there seemed to be an eagerness in her voice and her body movements. She appeared to want to explore the possibility of developing greater control in this situation. Marietta repeated the question and immediately some of Elspeth's panic returned, and we watched her struggle to

control it. An answer emerged. Several people congratulated her. I asked for a repeat.

Marietta asked the question again and Elspeth this time spoke more slowly and with increased confidence, adding a spontaneous gem of her own which revealed the depth of her insight into the issue under discussion.

5.3.4.1 Discussion

Only a few people spoke publicly for any length of time during the twenty minutes that it took to explore this. For me at least, there was a feeling that we were all engaged in working on something which I can now describe as 'becoming articulate'. Tina's account of her interview had seemed relatively remote to many people. It was *her* experience - not theirs. By centring the work of the group on Elspeth and by working with her, the interview process became much more immediate and personal for many more in the group. It was no longer hypothetical: it had become vivid and present.

Elspeth reported that during interviews her attention routinely became focused on her own inadequate voice and her halting, fragmentary reply to questions. It would seem that she routinely places her attention in her performance: in her anticipated inarticulacy. As a consequence there is embarrassment and fear of poor performance. There is insufficient attention left to organise a response to a question and ensure a coherent reply.

When we perform (at interview, in the classroom or elsewhere), we have the potential to draw upon our entire previous experience. The extent to which we can make use of our experience is influenced by the degree to which the experience is accessible to us in the present. One way of making it accessible is through visualisation: imagining or imaging situations in which we perform well. Alternatively it is possible to work on disturbance and the nature of disturbance, which is what I did here.

I sometimes use the strategy of asking a group to think about the worst question they could imagine being asked at an interview. My experience is that when one person offers a 'worst' question, there is often someone in the group who would welcome the opportunity to answer it because they perceive it in terms of opportunity. They can see a way to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or beliefs. By sharing what they see as the positive features of someone else's worst question, a model answer can often be developed.

The session was a variant of this approach and I was alert to the possible appearance of people's 'worst questions'. Although I spoke to the group before the session, I did not choose to reveal the methods I would use, limiting what I said to the briefly stated purpose of rehearsing interview questions by drawing on individual's experiences and expertise. It seemed sufficient to say that we would work on improving our chances of succeeding at interview and that we would consider some ways in which we could prepare ourselves for them.

When we perform in an interview we need to draw on our knowledge, skills, intuition and emotional wherewithal. When we rehearse for an interview, knowledge and skill can remain elusive unless we harness our emotions effectively. I thought it might be possible for the group to consider three things:

1. In what precise ways are interviews different from normal, everyday conversation?
2. What characteristics can I identify in my performance in normal conversations?
3. Can I become aware of myself and my performance moment by moment in an interview?

I wasn't very explicit about these. The first seemed palpably part of the beginning of the session when ordinary conversation changed dramatically as people explored interview questions and answers. The second was touched on when Elspeth began to organise her

answer and the third she demonstrated as she rehearsed and responded to Marietta's question.

Working on tasks that force me to notice my performance, here-and-now, can be challenging. It may feel intrusive and overly personal. There are contexts where it is recognised and accepted, but in teacher training it is perhaps less frequently experienced. Detailed analysis of individual performance is very common in sport training for example, in football, or activities like improving high jumping technique, or a sprint start. Performance is often subject to minute scrutiny - using a range of techniques like video cameras and visualisation, (...imagine you are getting ready to start, close your eyes, describe in detail what is happening to you, ...). Similar attention to the quality of individual performance is a routine part of dance training, voice coaching and learning to play a musical instrument. In teacher training there is a tradition of focusing on children's behaviour and learning theory. Focusing on the generality of teacher behaviour is not unusual, but looking closely at an individual teacher's (or trainee's) behaviour is a less common experience for many. This in itself creates the potential for disturbance.

The opportunity that such work gives is that awareness can be heightened. When one is more aware of one's performance, then one is more likely to be able to exercise control over it. I may notice that the reason I'm unable to modulate my voice normally is that my chest muscles are tight through nervousness. It is, perhaps, *only* as a result of increased awareness of the quality of the muscle tone that I can try to relax the muscles and thereby ease my breathing and regain my voice. When I notice I'm gabbling, I can pause in my talking. When I'm calm in an interview I may gain confidence, and I might be able to ask for a difficult question to be repeated, improving the chances of answering well. If I feel my face tense, I can smile and work at relaxing the facial and neck muscles. In their book *The Inner Game of Music* Green and Gallwey discuss the advantages of focusing on awareness instructions.

Awareness instructions put students into an entirely different frame of mind. They are based on the students' own experience - their ability to learn by noticing what's happening. They don't involve 'right' or 'wrong' ways to go about things. (...) [They can be introduced so as to] emphasize the students' own awareness and experience, ...

Be aware of ...

Listen for ...

How does it feel when you ... (Green and Gallwey, 1986: 149-151)

Increased awareness comes through increased sensitivity to the nerve impulses that are providing us with the information about our current functioning . I can gain some degree of control in the interview by paying attention to nerve signals and by consciously responding to the information they provide. I can then more successfully direct my performance - not mechanistically - but with greater awareness of my performance in-the-moment. When my noticing takes in my moment-by-moment performance, there is the potential for me to modify it. The increased confidence gained through recognising a good performance allows me to attend to the quality of the answer during the interview.

Change and disturbance are the essence of noticing, at every level from the functioning of the senses to the evocation of emotions, to the recognition of similarities ... To be able to act creatively and freshly requires two things to happen within a context of genuine enquiry and initiative. You have to be sensitised to notice freshly in the moment (to be awake to the situation), and you have to have access to possible alternative actions. Most of the time, students, teachers and administrators react to disturbance. Their actions are the working out or unfolding of habits formed and decisions made, hours, months or years earlier. Occasionally there is a moment of awakening, a moment of real freedom. A few such moments can invigorate you for weeks, so powerful is the effect. (Mason, 1994: 5-6)

I wanted to create a situation worth working on, a situation where there was an opportunity for some people to explore:

- how they behave in an interview;
- how this behaviour might be developed to maximum personal benefit;
- how their interview behaviour could be informed by noticing;
- how they might be enabled to draw on other more effective behaviours and so improve interview technique.

I knew from previous experience that I could choose from a range of strategies to create the necessary 'disturbance' in the sense that Mason uses. What I realise from reviewing this incident is that I do not have a pre-planned, conscious strategy for shaping and directing such a session, although I can recognise certain techniques that I employ.

I know I encourage certain contributions and ignore others. I often vacate the teacher's 'telling' role for certain periods, and assume it again at other times. I sometimes confront people with what I am noticing in-the-moment, whilst at other times I notice and withhold verbal comment. Inevitably, I fail to notice many things. I am however developing the ability to notice behaviour that suggests changes in other people's emotional states, and to make use of these altered states within teaching sessions.

I base this principle of action on the maxim that '*only emotions are harnessable*'. Emotions heralded by physiological changes are always here-and-now, and give an excellent guide to a person's disposition in-the-moment. I want to draw on people's emotional engagement because it is here-and-now and I view their engagement as a potentially powerful lever for change and development.

My performance when working with groups may be more variable in quality than it need be. To develop my practice further, I need to improve my methods of preparation so as to increase the opportunities for effective interaction in groups. 'To be prepared, is to be able to be ready to be spontaneously creative, not to be pre-determined'. (Mason, 1996: 37)

The process of becoming articulate that was identified in this session with students was expanded and incorporated into a discussion on the notion of the 'articulate self' presented at the Open University research seminar in May 1994.

5.3.4.2 Strategies used in the session with Elspeth

- Seeking evidence of changes of emotional state in others.
- Reflecting back to others observed changes in their behaviour.
- Encouraging collaboration.
- Searching for and drawing attention to resonance or dissonance between different people's views or feelings as observations rather than judgements.
- Encouraging resistance to uncritical acceptance of what is happening in the group.
- Encouraging reflection during the session.
- Negotiating possible next steps.
- Arranging the physical space to maximise opportunities to sit face-to-face.
- Purposely using eye contact to acknowledge others.
- Allowing silence to persist on occasions, so that there is time for quiet reflection.
- Using silence to create emotional disturbance. (See note ⁷ below).
- Setting up sub-tasks whilst trying to ensure continuation of the main task.
- Giving up and regaining overt control of the group process.
- Invoking procedures that free my attention.
- Searching for signs of where others place their attention during the session.
- Harnessing emotion in others, monitoring changing of emotional states in myself.
- Intuiting whether my felt emotions originate in self or others.
- Working to develop articulacy through repeated rehearsal of answers.

⁷ I was offered a useful commentary on disturbance by Dick Tahta:

Group dynamics remind us that the more leaderless a group the more (emotional) disturbance will be aroused. Someone might do this deliberately in order perhaps to encourage the group to deal with the underlying emotional issues that have been aroused. On the other hand the sort of disturbance that a student teacher might want to be setting up with children is quite different. Isn't it? To set up cognitive disturbance in a group would seem to require the traditional lead role of a teacher - and one might say that traditional "control" also "contains" any emotional disturbance. (Correspondence, May 1998)

5.3.4.3 Discussion - the nature and use of emotional disturbance

When I began teaching, I attempted to conduct my teaching in a manner which would not worry or annoy those whom I taught. The reasons for this were many and complex but my original focus was almost exclusively on mechanistic methods by which cognitive development could be achieved.

I had also drawn on some of the psychological theories of the day which I had interpreted in ways that suggested learning needs to be smooth, comfortable, harmonious and that these conditions can be orchestrated by the teacher through well-regulated lessons.

The teaching style I had adopted after training, stemmed partly from my own desire to avoid the discomfort that I associated with some emotions. Anger, frustration, disappointment were feelings I wanted to avoid. One strategy to avoid them was to attempt to suppress them - though this necessarily requires some level of denial of their existence. I also became more sharply aware at that time of the beliefs I held about what schools 'ought' to be like.

The teaching that followed from this way of viewing the world (of schools and schooling) inclined towards a view of the learner as a passive recipient rather than an active subject. Active participation was confined in the students to responses to carefully formulated questions and to carefully structured 'scientific' practical work. It was characteristic of my early teaching, and may be characteristic of the beginning teacher, that interest lies more in achieving cognitive disturbance in students whilst using control techniques to manage and contain emotional disturbance during lessons. Although I have reported above that I realised that other teachers tackled issues that allowed students' emotional states to be very present in the classroom, I didn't realise at the time that my methods of control functioned in two ways.

1. They were effective in keeping students -'on-task' in science lessons. They focused on cognitive disturbance (e.g. exploring differences between common sense and scientific interpretations of physical events).
2. They contained and suppressed emotional disturbance and in consequence, limited the opportunities through which students could express their views about the teaching and learning process.

Experienced teachers and tutors may be more inclined than beginning teachers to encourage and explore emotional disturbance with pupils. If this is so, then one could speculate that one source of anxiety in trainee teachers that could emerge from interactions with tutors might derive from the dissonance between the teacher/tutor's tolerance of emotional disturbance in classrooms and the students' own lack of confidence in managing this during their own teaching practice.

Perhaps some beginning teachers need to develop abilities to manage cognitive disturbance prior to managing complex emotional disturbance? Might there be an unconscious desire to suppress emotional disturbance emanating from pupils during the early stages when students are beginning to develop and manage their teaching?

During the first few years of my teaching, I observed other teachers at work. I became very aware that some teachers expected and even demanded active participation of a type which I avoided and discouraged. It began to appear to me that other teachers held very different views about how schools could and should be.

I observed that some colleagues used questioning in order to invite opinion and encourage debate. My questioning style at the time was more limited in its range of purposes. I frequently used it as a form of control. One main purpose was to allow me to check whether the students being questioned could paraphrase and report on the content or knowledge that

I was intent on transmitting. An answer judged by me to be good was a single word or sentence that conveyed to me that the informant had been 'paying attention' - in the sense of memorising the content of the lesson. Answers which demonstrated that the informant didn't understand, then provoked me (allowed me?) to move the lesson in a particular direction. Answers which indicated that a informant had not been 'paying attention' allowed me to invoke sanctions of one kind or another.

I did not value questioning as a mechanism for promoting open discussion - because I had not grasped a broad view the of value of discussion within classroom settings. The idea that contribution to a discussion may help us to develop a sense of self worth was not within my immediate grasp. I did see that I could use guided debate as a mechanism for helping students in re-structuring knowledge and understanding. At that time, my focus was firmly on the transmission of knowledge and skills related to a science syllabus. I used questioning primarily as a teacher-initiated activity for the purposes of:

- maintaining control and discipline;
- creating and maintaining cognitive dissonance by drawing attention to inconsistencies (based on my judgements and drawing on my authority as teacher) between my view of scientific knowledge and the students' interpretations of facts and events within the lesson framework.

I was fortunate to work in a school where the practice of teaching was a continual subject for discussion. I was inevitably exposed to the work and views of other teachers and I found this fascinating. I became increasingly curious of the motivation of teachers who seemed to have very different agendas from my own. Particularly, I was eager to examine the motives and techniques of those teachers who welcomed, explored and, it seemed to me at the time, 'indulged' the emotions of their students - on occasions even publicly commenting on their

own emotions. This recognition of a sense of 'indulgence' helps to convey my sense of the place of emotions in learning at that time.

I recognise now that my own behaviour was partly driven by a belief that my emotions (e.g. anger) might hurt, damage or offend others. My experience was that others were unreliable containers of my emotions. The situation is more complex than I realised at the time. An unconscious fear of anger may develop as a response to the fear of loss of self-cohesion and the inability of others to survive the force of one's emotions.

Schools may in fact be useful places to work for people who want to work on self-development and the integration of violent and opposing forces within the psyche. The school climate is a strongly social one, often with explicit rules and sanctions that apply to everyone. The behaviour of teachers and students is closely monitored by other students, colleagues, parents, governors and others. Institutional rules often seek to govern behaviour which is associated with strong emotions.

I began to detect some inconsistency in my own wishes and responses to the process of becoming a teacher. This led me to puzzle over what I saw as the broad range (or inconsistency) of approaches to teaching that I was observing. A gradual self-acknowledgement that my emotions were normal, healthy, acceptable and not dangerous to others was coupled with a growing realisation that others have the strength to withstand them. The human situation was not as fragile as I had learned from earlier experiences. I could subsequently allow myself to express emotion - if only tentatively at first. To some extent it remains a risky business for me.

Teaching without acknowledging the existence of emotions is teaching in a desert. To focus explicitly on the emotions that are present when one is teaching a group can, however, be an imposition and a misuse of the leadership role ascribed to the teacher. Seeking to harness

emotions, acknowledging the existence of feelings, inviting emotional responses, reflecting on changes in one's own emotional state, are all legitimate activities. They are an appropriate part of working with a group if that work is to be rich: provided the individuals in the group are able to reach some sort of consensus about the manner of working. The teacher or group leader has some responsibility for ensuring that individuals in the group are at least reminded of their status as consenting subjects.

One mechanism for monitoring that the group work is acceptable and tolerable is to encourage individual resistance to high levels of tolerance and uncritical acceptance of what is happening in the group. Inviting resistance also seems to promote individual engagement in what is taking place in the session, although achieving this in group work is complex and difficult. And, of course, it is perfectly possible to believe one has the agreement of individuals in a group when one has not.

Many of the fluctuations in people's emotions are signalled by changes in behaviour, particularly posture, body movements and facial appearance. These changes in behaviour and appearance are often signals of internalised shifts of attention or strongly felt reactions to thoughts and ideas. They are the outward signs of an inner engagement - not to be feared or ridiculed but to be thought of as powerful and direct means of communication.

They can be read as communication although they are often unconsciously produced and are externalised signs of internal work involving the accommodation, assimilation and resolution of challenging thoughts and provocative ideas. They are the signs of an active mind, and sometimes the student is busily and creatively at work on the very same stuff that the teacher wants to work on. For this reason alone, it is worth looking for signs of changes in the emotional state of those with whom one is working and developing ways to make these changes a part of one's direct work.

5.3.4.4 Emergent Themes

- Noticing physiological changes in people when working in group settings – seeing beyond the spoken word.
- Developing my strategies and confidence to work directly with a single individual while in a group context.
- Improving my awareness of disturbance and the sources of disturbance - using disturbance as a source of material for group work.
- Developing my strategies for engaging other group members in noticing aspects of their performance with the intention of working on the improvement of personal performance.
- Becoming more sensitised to changes in people's emotional states in order to harness their emotions for personal change and development.

5.3.5 Waking up beside you in the morning

During the final session of an in-service course (1996) for sixteen primary teachers, we met together in a large room devoid of furniture but with a thick, comfortable carpet. The course had run for fifteen days, which spanned several months. I was the full-time tutor. A colleague had contributed to the course on several days and had observed me on some occasions. We all sat on the floor in a large circle. I asked the group to think back over the times when we had met, and to recall incidents that were memorable. There were several contributions about the first day and the sense of discomfort that they had felt as individuals.

People referred to the pace of the day, the sense of contrast with the structure and content of their days in school as class teachers. My colleague offered 'disturbance' as a theme and shared the results of her observations based on previous sessions. What was reported could be described partly as cognitive disturbance. The opening days of the course had been so noticeably different from their daily experience in school that for several it remained a

memorable experience. At this final meeting, they reported how valuable it had been for them to step outside the school perspective for a while. Later elements of the course had been very closely linked to their daily needs in school and they described how they were able to 'take a step back' and be able to tackle important and urgent school tasks with a broader perspective.

The discussion moved on to look more closely at reasons for creating disturbance. This part of the discussion exposed the deliberate nature of teaching-with-intent: the process of teaching in order to create change in others. This was an explicit analysis of teaching purpose and I sensed that for some of those present, this was an unfamiliar discussion - though not unfamiliar in terms of the subject matter. One female teacher abruptly commented, 'I would hate to wake up in bed beside you in the morning.' She spoke directly, through her emotions not through her intellect. She was obviously surprised and somewhat embarrassed by what she had said. She blushed and covered her face with her hands while almost everyone else laughed as each of us conjured up a picture for ourselves of what this all might mean.

What is memorable for me is not just the utterance, or my sharing of her embarrassment as I thought about how I felt about this imagined situation. In addition, what struck me was how forcefully she had made the association between cognitive disturbance and emotional disturbance. I was left with the realisation that I cannot consider one without the other, in the disturbances I experience, whether I am teaching or not and when teaching, whether I am the leader or not.

A few weeks later my colleague produced a short series of notes based on several observations of my teaching but focusing on the above incident. It is as well to add that we have observed each other teaching over several years and do occasionally provide each other with written commentary as well as verbal reports of classroom observations. Some extracts from her notes are reproduced below:

Teaching as Disturbance

Disturbance as in discomfort, unease: as in unbalanced, off course; as in confused and muddled; as in stirred up, provoked and rearranged. Different types of disturbance may suggest a variety of emotional responses: anxiety, distress, excitement, passion, anger, demoralisation, insecurity, denial, laughter, determination, liberation. Some react by digging in, others by turning their backs. It can produce sudden insight and clarity or gentle, self-driven realisation.

The teacher who is able to live with disturbance in the classroom is both curious and resilient. A touch of arrogance can be helpful as disturbance involves risks. (Joanna Haynes – Private correspondence, April 1998).

5.3.5.1 Emergent Themes

- Practising the presentation of teaching-intent to a group.
- Realising that cognitive and affective disturbance may be closely linked.
- Realising that searching for the links between cognitive and emotional disturbance might be difficult but valuable. What would it be like to invite the group to search?

5.3.6 Socks on a washing line - 1997

Karla brought an example of mathematics work to an in-service meeting. She is a primary teacher, particularly gifted in teaching the visual arts. Evidence from her photographs and from several conversations during the meeting demonstrated Karla's outstanding ability to provide a rich visual environment for her class. She teaches children how to respond and contribute to their own environment by teaching them to understand the use of a wide range of media. Her pupils regularly work both in 2D and 3D. They make artefacts and learn a wide range of drawing, painting and printing techniques.

Her four and five-year-old reception children had been working on the representation of pairs of objects. Over a period of days they regularly returned to this theme. Karla had given them several different ways in which to look at and talk about pairs of objects. One activity had been to look at clothing. She provided a wide range of different objects for the children to look at, hold and discuss.

One group of children were given brightly coloured pairs of socks as an examples of objects that can make a pair. The children either copied the sock patterns or made their own designs. The resulting pairs of socks were stuck to a paper washing line by the children. Most had glued their socks facing the same way but one pair had been glued quite differently with striking results. These two socks were turned inwards with toes touching each other giving the impression of someone with turned-in feet, knock-knees and if one could imagine the whole person, someone slumped crouched or cowed. We talked with Karla about the children's work and several people immediately commented on this particular piece. What was striking was that the image spoke to so many of us with immediacy, and communicated the same sense of anxiety for the child (let's call him K.) who had arranged the socks in what I immediately saw as a highly symbolic way.

5.3.6.1 Discussion

Karla offered the following commentary. K. was a chaotic boy, aged five, who was difficult to contain in the classroom setting. In school, he often showed great anxiety and frequently appeared distracted and troubled. The day prior to producing this piece of art work had been a Sunday. He had taken some matches and set alight the flat in which he lived. He came to school the following day and although he displayed considerable anxiety he wanted to take part in the art activity. His finished piece of work had struck Karla too as containing a symbolic (self)-representation of K. and his troubled psychic state.

I found Karla's carefully weighed and highly informed commentary very helpful. For me, and apparently for Karla too, the episode was a good example of experiences that teachers can use to increase their sensitivity to a child's communication about their affective and psychic state. The sensitising is brought about by a conjunction of opportunities and decisions:

- being sensitive to the possibility that a piece of work might be imbued with symbolic content – in this case a very *odd* pair of socks, and;

- being able to draw on a symbolic interactionist perspective argued by writers like Blumer (1986)⁸

... the first premise is that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. (p.11).

In his book, *The Hidden Order of Art*, Anton Ehrenzweig argues:

The complexity of any 'work of art' however simple far outstrips the powers of conscious attention, which, with its pinpoint focus, can attend to only one thing at a time. Only the extreme undifferentiation of unconscious vision can scan these complexities. (Ehrenzweig, 1971: 21)

There is a rich body of evidence on the use children can make of artefacts as symbols.

Consider this discussion between Jill (aged 7) and Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, also about socks.

Jill was a withdrawn child of average intelligence, ... institutionalised and conforming, adapting in the situation with me to what she supposed I would demand of her. ... She [drew] a squiggle for me ... and drew a second identical object beside the first one. ...

Jill: A pair of socks they are ... baby's socks ... one was lost.

Myself: I am so very sorry – how cold the baby's foot must have been.

Jill: Yes, they took her into a room with an electric fire and a television, but it wasn't any good.

Myself: She needed the lost sock?

Jill: It has never been found ... will she ever find it?

Myself: I am afraid not. I wish it could be so.

Jill: Is there anything that could be done?

Myself: Well, there is one thing which occurs to me. Could you perhaps learn to knit, and then you could knit another sock for the baby – but this would be very difficult, you would have to find a pattern and the right wool, and someone to help you to do it. There would be dropped stitches, and you might even lose the knitting and have to start once more.

Jill: I would like to come to you, and learn to knit.

Here was a child who had achieved some degree of integration, and the lost sock represented her earliest emotional experience, before she lost her mother.

(Dockar-Drysdale, 1990: 76)

It seems likely that the above reference to squiggle is to 'The Squiggle Game' devised by

Donald Winnicott (reported in Goldman) as part of a procedure for initial clinical interviews

with children.

⁸ 'A tree will be a different object to a botanist, a lumberman, a poet, and a home gardener.' (Blumer, 1986:11) Here was an invitation to consider the child's work as being in some way symbolic of the child's inner world. I want to be explicit here. I am not arguing or even inferring any causal link between events in the boy's life and the production of the socks. There may be no connection between the child's outer and inner worlds other than in my conjecturing.

I use the term “psychotherapeutic consultation.” It is a diagnostic interview ... [where] the specialist does not need to be clever so much as to be able to provide a natural setting while the patient gradually *surprises* himself by the production of ideas and feelings that have not been previously integrated into the total personality. ... At a suitable moment after the arrival ... I say ... “Let’s play something. ... First I take some of the paper and tear the sheets in half, giving the impression that what we doing is not frantically important ... I say: “This game that I like playing has no rules. I just take my pencil and go like that ...,” and I probably screw up my eyes and do a squiggle blind. I go on with my explanation and say: “You show me if that looks like anything to you or if you can make it into anything, and afterwards you do the same for me and I will see if I can make something of yours.” (Goldman, 1993: 101-103)

In her discussion of the use of artefacts and activities like Lowenfeld’s ‘Make a World’, (Newson, 1992: 91-107) argues that activity may allow expression that would otherwise be hampered by poor linguistic or social development. Karla’s sensitivity together with her lengthy and regular contact with the child makes coherent observation and interpretation a real possibility. Observation makes it possible to build up an understanding of the child through his actions and responses to situations. This is not to suggest that the teacher should *act* as a therapist, but rather that she can draw on some of the insights and techniques in order to become more roundly informed.

Newson goes on to give some advice that can be used immediately by teachers. Indeed the suggestions echo ways in which Karla already operates in the classroom whilst teaching.

It is important not to comment on the World [that a child has constructed using sand and other objects] in an evaluative way, including approval. Beginning therapists have a tendency to try to show positive acceptance with ‘That’s a very good World’ or ‘That’s nice’, conveying the implication that there are some Worlds that might be made that would *not* be ‘good’ or ‘nice’, often a full and busy World is equated by adults with ‘good’ which would make it difficult for the child at some later stage to express, emptiness, desolation or chaos, as he may well want to do. So the therapist must express acceptance and interest without false enthusiasm and she may now ask the child, ‘Can you tell me something about what’s going on in your World?’ (Newson, 1992: 94)

Karla’s presentation to the group showed that she often responds to children and their work by signalling acceptance without evaluation. She also invites children to comment on what they have done so that they can put their own values and interpretations on their work.

Karla’s account resonated with me in the sense that through ‘connecting’ the positioning of

the socks on the washing line and the way a distraught person might stand, we both recognise it is possible to interpret an (unconscious) mirroring of the child's inner and outer worlds. Through this juxtaposing of the socks and the child, Karla attempted to increase her sensitivity to the boy and her understanding of appropriate classroom provision. It is worth applying caution here.

I assumed until recently that interpretation belonged strictly to the fields of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. ... I have broadened my views, and feel that interpretation can be used naturally and individually in other fields. This does not mean that interpretation can ever be employed without care or thought, but I am certain that it is actually used in other ways, and can be as valuable or, alas, as dangerous as when it is an analytic technique. (Dockar-Drysdale, 1990: 118)

Considering how powerful I recognised them to be, I was struck during this episode and reflecting on it later, just how little I had developed opportunities to use visual symbolism in my work. It was three years earlier that Sally T. had drawn a representation of her family, omitting herself from the diagram. Despite my knowing the power of symbolic representations, I still find their introduction into my work problematic.

5.3.6.2 Emergent Themes

- Extending (self-imposed?) limits and boundaries of interpretation.
- Attending to the development of both unfocused and focused attention.
- Becoming sensitive to the person through 'reading' the products of education.
- Becoming aware of my continued lack of use of symbolic representation in my work.

5.4 Significant events and self-sensitising

The process of exploring significant events from my own work follows Tripp (1993) and the work of Davis (1992) and Mason (1996) on the discipline of noticing. I have developed a sensitising process in which significant events taken from my own case study have led to a range of themes that may be evident in the transitional experience of other teachers as they develop a teacher-self.

A significant event is one which leaves a trace in memory - it consists of a memorable disturbance which is then available for us to work on, if we so choose, through reflection, analysis and re-interpretation. I am more likely to recognise themes in other people's life experiences, when gathering data from interviews and other sources, if I have previously worked on my own.

An interesting line of enquiry is to seek a possible explanation for the retention of an event as a trace in memory. It would appear that the deposit of a memory results from disturbance - an unexpected dislocation - associated with an event that becomes significant for us. I am aware of the problems of distinguishing between the recollection of historic events and imagined histories. I am interested in the influences on students' present transitions. Both historically true events and imagined ones may influence present behaviour, so I am not inclined to attempt to make distinctions between them. In the main body of the study, I have considered significant events derived from interview data and sought evidence of shifts in the interviewees' awarenesses both during the interview process and afterwards, by analysing the data thematically and interpreting it in a search for the existence of unconscious links that may not be directly observable.

[The unconscious process of identification] becomes conscious only in a movement of disidentification. ... At the moment of disidentification, the subject remains, in a certain way of speaking, marked - for life - by certain personality characteristics. (Blanchard-Laville, 1991a: 7)

By examining a significant event in terms of what it allows us to become sensitised to, we can describe and name features of our work and new insights in our professional lives. A significant event, then, may become memorable through our ability to detect a situation in which there is a disidentification with our current perceptions of ourselves, our roles and our work.

In order to work on significant events, we need to hold them in our awareness. The sensitising that is initiated by the significant event can be retained by several means. Our new

sensitivity makes us more alert to further occurrences and we may claim to see things 'in a different light'. We are able to see occurrences of the newly noticed phenomenon in the work of colleagues, or in the behaviour of other students. We can recognise repetitious features of our own behaviour. By using strategies like note-taking and discussing with others, we can remain in touch with our new awarenesses, maintain our new found sensitivity and consider what it might bring us in terms of deeper or sharper insights. Tripp (1993) advocates a process of note-taking and review with colleagues or a critical friend.

By storing notes and revisiting them at a later date, we can sometimes detect a later disturbance which reveals a further 'disidentification'. There is sometimes a difference between what struck us as revelatory when the significant event first occurred and what strikes us at a later date as significant when we review it. The difference can give us a measure of the shift in our professional development over time. Thus, the method is expected to provide an appropriate structure for describing professional development.

The procedures adopted in the pilot and in the longitudinal case studies were significantly informed by a process of reflection on the critical incidents reported above. The incidents were critical in themselves because they contained evidence of important developments in my know-how and my response to the learning of others. They have continued to be critical because I have used them in a second cycle of development by reflecting on them and considering their potential for supporting future work.

6. THE PRELIMINARY CASE STUDIES

6.1 Moving from autobiography to biography

Several strands needed bringing together if a coherent study were to be constructed. The preliminary work began with an exploration of significant events taken from my own teaching experience, latterly from my work with teacher trainees. This work was closely related to their development as teachers. Some of these significant events provided a guide to the development of a protocol for exploring the transitional experience of students and the emergence of a teacher-self.

I had amassed a considerable amount of informal and formal data and reviewed this to see how my research protocol matched my focus on transition and the development of a teacher-self. (A large amount of interview material had been transcribed from interviews and discussions with three particular students. Though much of this material is not used directly within to this study, a review of the material helped shape future protocol.)

I reviewed my existing discussion procedures and questions, and devised a semi-structured interview booklet following Radnor (1994), containing key areas of interest to me and interview prompts which were to be used if interviewees failed to respond to more open invitations to talk.

I used the transcript of a discussion with Nicola to develop the process of searching for themes. I wanted to test this process further in order to ensure that it could be used effectively with a group of informants who would be involved in the longitudinal study. The opportunity arose to pilot the discussion procedure and the exploration of themes.

6.1.1 Reviewing the discussions with Nicola

Some main and supplementary questions and prompts were effective in promoting discussion in areas in which I was interested. Others were less effective. I explored the relative effectiveness of these questions and prompts.

I also needed to bear in mind several features of the particular setting in which these discussions with Nicola had taken place since some would not apply to subsequent interviews.

1. Nicola and I had formed a working relationship over two years in which she had been at the college, and I am indebted to her for the encouragement she provided. She was naturally talkative, interested in pedagogical discussion and wanted to talk about her own development as a teacher for her own ends as well as being willing to help me. These factors were unlikely to be present in my relationships with the students whose development would form the longitudinal study.
2. Most discussions with Nicola took place in my study. This was a familiar place to her (though of course 'my space'). It was not unusual for Nicola to call in for impromptu chats, *en passant*. We did occasionally make use of teaching rooms, as well as the college bar and restaurant.
3. The setting for interviews with the longitudinal study group would probably include my study and their experience of this space would be different. Interviews also be conducted in placement schools. I resolved to negotiate discussion settings with each student in the longitudinal study in the hope of finding mutually acceptable locations, so I could avoid situating all the interviews in 'my space' and in a college setting. (This was achieved. Two interviews were carried out in pubs, three in respondents' homes, several in school

classrooms or mathematics departmental office space and no interviewee was interviewed entirely in the college.)

I reviewed the discussion questions and prompts together with the responses in preparation for the longitudinal study.

6.1.2 Effectiveness of discussion questions

Main discussion questions - Nicola	Usefulness, effect, possible modifications
<i>How long have you been at College for now?</i>	Not particularly useful as a warm-up question.
<i>What age group have you specialised in?</i>	
<i>How do feel about becoming a teacher?</i>	Drew rich historical material that revealed important desires and decisions, and unfolding of complex history. A useful question that is likely to provoke evidence of value judgements. Informal approach that hints at affective domain but leaves space for a range of styles and content.
<i>... you the person, and you said infected, ... having to live with or as part of a system</i>	Not a question but reflecting back material that emerged as a result of previous question. Need to remember to reflect and respond to interesting material as it emerges.
<i>Does it make you feel any different as a person?</i>	Potentially powerful, but I failed to deal with it in this discussion. The respondent clearly identified a contradiction here. " friends and family have said that I've changed, ... which I think is absolute rubbish." I failed to pick up on this contradiction, my attention being taken up with the response to the next question which reveals some possible points of difference between Nicola and her family but not why she should argue that she hasn't changed.
<i>Do you think training to be a teacher has affected your relationship with other people?</i>	The respondent focused on friendship. This would not necessarily be the response that others would make. There is value in adding a prompt "Has becoming a teacher affected your friendships?" or retaining a subsequent question about relationships, as I did here.
<i>What's happened within your family in terms of relationships?</i>	Interviewer's lack of control clearly evident here. Adding a personal viewpoint to a question! Question stirs a hesitant answer - "problematic" followed by some clear examples of friction within family relationships. I'm interested because I hypothesise that dialogues within relationships shape the student's self-image, influence what they believe are wise and appropriate choices and behaviours for their "college lives". It is possible that college-related decisions are made in terms of their impact on personal relationships at home.
<i>What does the term "personal identity" mean to you?</i>	This question did not generate much material. Perhaps better to leave this question until a second discussion? The first REPGRID should provide some constructs, which could then be brought into this question. The phrase personal identity didn't seem to encourage an answer.
<i>Do you think that you're the same person that you were in the past?</i>	Although potentially a difficult question to answer, this produced a large amount of material highly personal material. To help focus on teaching, it could be followed by a supplementary question. "How do you think these changes have affected the way you see yourself as a teacher?" Another supplementary question, could be "Do you think your experiences help you understand children better as a teacher?"

<p><i>Are you aware of ways you've changed during the course?</i></p>	<p>This didn't seem to be a very productive question. However, it could have seemed an abrupt change of focus for Nicola because the previous part of the discussion had been very personal, about change and had centred on life outside college. I think she might have found this difficult to answer because of the timing of the question. There is no mention of teaching practice, for example, though she was fascinated by her own teaching performance and pedagogical issues. She also reported above that she didn't start out wanting to teach. The college course has been interpreted as quite distinct from work with children (an interesting issue <i>per se</i>). I want to interview students at the beginning of their course, again after a major teaching practice and finally at the end. This question needs modifying. In discussion 1, it should perhaps be about impressions of the course over the first month. Discussion 2 could explore whether the student can identify different components of the course as well as changes in relationships within the student's college and home environment. The third discussion could then explore perceptions of how the course prepared students for college work teaching in schools.</p>
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Figure 2 Effectiveness of discussion questions

The above are excerpts from the discussion with Nicola A. The discussion produced rich and personal material about Nicola's perception of herself and many of the influences that had played a part in shaping her current self-image and behaviour. Some of these were taken up more fully in the discussion on ethical issues (pages 91 - 96).

6.1.3 Recognising the value of emergent themes

It was through these regular discussions with Nicola that I realised that the themes which tended to emerge were important issues for me. I saw the identification of themes in discussions as a way of managing the huge amount of data I had collected. I realised I could analyse the themes and move between themes and data as I carried out my analysis.

The themes identified from discussion data were regarded as condensations of the speaker's experience and which give coherence to their value systems and beliefs. Conversational themes were seen as helping speakers to validate the context of their lives and shape the emergent self.

The subjective perception of oneself including one's working situation is of central importance in our research. ... One doesn't perceive of a career as a chronological chain of facts, positions and social roles. ... A teacher's professional biography results from a narrative retrospective reconstruction of his or her career. (Kelchtermans, 1993: 201)

I saw the possibility of referring to the themes as a way of reporting both the content of the discussions and where the importance lay for the speaker. I also realised this could be the basis of a narrative of connected themes. Biographical narratives are seen by Schulze to be amongst the most important sources from which to understand the self (Schulze, 1979: 59-60).

It was from working with Nicola that I first saw the possibility of exploring the use of emergent themes to facilitate production of biographical narrative in ways that illuminate the development of the self. To be effective, these narratives should, 'reflect events, experiences that are important for the person one is' (Kelchtermans, 1993: 201). In discussion, Nicola:

- spoke of never wanting to teach;
- wanting to be a radiographer;
- showed disappointment at the actual role of radiographer;
- was disillusioned with menial work and lack of decision making;
- clearly wanted a professional role;
- talked about growth and moving on;
- described the restrictions, boundaries and limitations placed on her by her family situation;
- told lies to maximise her chances of being selected as a student;
- experienced an emergent sense of commitment to teaching;
- had doubts and anxieties about college and school perceptions of teaching;
- experienced personal doubts about her role and life style;
- used the metaphor of infection and wondered whether there were any 'original bits of her left';
- felt she was banging her head against the wall, struggling against the system;
- fears creeping in;

- feared she was slipping into bad teaching habits and fears about strength of her own determination;
- recognised others' expectations of and attitudes to her as a professional with a degree;
- wanted to hold onto her deepest beliefs;
- recognised personal change by giving examples of changes in political and social views;
- felt that friendship had been put to the test;
- saw some friendships out of college as being firm and continuous.

All these featured in the discussion. By identifying them as themes I had some short labels or triggers to use in future conversations. Making connections with the same theme over time provided a longitudinal picture of Nicola's development. The use of semi-structured interviews in the longitudinal study allowed me to re-introduce themes into later interviews.

It was evident from the range of themes that I needed to ensure a focus to the longitudinal study interviews to increase the possibility of obtaining the data that I needed.

With the longitudinal study, there was greater opportunity for exploring authenticity because the study extended over a three-year period and three interviews, allowing a comparison of data from three very different point in the transition.

I also discussed authenticity with the interviewees who took part in the last phase of the research. Initially, all of them agreed to respond to any written material I sent them to read. However, this proved not to be possible to arrange.

The meetings with Nicola provided opportunities to develop my role as a teacher and researcher. Although working with Nicola was not the only opportunity I had to discuss my ideas with students, it serves as a useful example of the way I worked at that time. I was able to refine my interview protocol and reviewed the ethical position of working with students in

this way. The other student who made a major contribution to the research at this stage was Sally. She agreed to discuss her experience of starting training. The data from these meetings was substantial enough to provide a useful pilot study.

6.2 Working with Sally

Sally was a student in her thirties who had just begun a four-year vocational course of teacher training. She was in a long-term relationship with the father of her two children. The relationship has been a significant and positive aspect of the subject's social and relational life for a number of years. At the time of the discussion, Sally had been an active college student for approximately eight weeks.

At the outset of the course, students have to pass successfully a two-part interview which covers selection to both their preferred area of academic study and to the professional part of the course. In the first and second years, students follow two academic specialisms (a main and a supportive area of study) together with professional studies, which includes a series of placements in schools.

Sally initially came to see me about her progress. She expressed mild anxiety about not knowing how well she was doing on the course. She described feeling unsure about her abilities. Nothing in her manner distinguished her from many other students anxious to do well and to make a good start in their studies. Sally talked freely about her hopes and aspirations. She called in to my study briefly to see me on a few more occasions and talked about the settling in process and what she was finding enjoyable. She was willing to talk about the process of becoming a student and I asked her if she would be willing to contribute to my research and she agreed. Sally was helpful to me for the following reasons:

- she was a recent arrival to the college and I assumed that the decision-making process that led to her becoming a student would be fresh in her mind;
- from our brief conversations she appeared to me to be stable, happy, reflective and thoughtful about her intentions. I felt she was likely to be able to speak with confidence to a relative stranger;
- she had a partner and two children, and I was interested in the demands that full-time courses place on mature students. I was particularly interested in researching the transitional experiences of mature students and the effects on students with family responsibilities.

We talked about my research and my interest in the pressures on students as they enter college, pursue the course and emerge at the end of the training as teachers. From our conversation I identified a number of influences that Sally was experiencing. My next step was to form them into more focused questions that illuminated the research.

The issue for me during the time that the pilot study was carried out was; *'Can I gain access to students' transitional experience to a teaching-self in ways that I can analyse as a researcher?'*

6.2.1 Reviewing the suitability of the methodology

The time taken with this single student gave a useful guide to the time that would be needed when working more extensively with a cohort. I had used the same conversational style of interview with Sally that I had developed with Nicola. I made connections with Sally's previous experience through reflection on the data generated about her present situation.

It was clear to me from the analysis of working with Nicola that this type of interview gave rise to rich and multi-layered data that related to the focus of my study. I used the pilot to test my ability to focus the interview more effectively than I had previously done with Nicola and

this review and comparison helped me to be more systematic when searching the data for themes.

I had dismissed questionnaires at an early stage as too inflexible and impersonal. They fail to generate data that is sufficiently rich and they cannot be modified in-the-moment in the way that is possible with semi-structured interviews. An ethnographic style based on participant or non-participant observation was beyond the scope of this pilot and would probably also be beyond the scope of the longitudinal study. Shadowing Sally for some period of time within the institution and visiting her at home and on placement in school to collect field notes was not realistic because of constraints of time and other resources.

Preparatory meetings took place because I believed it was necessary to allow Sally to see the scope and intentions of the research. At these meetings, I provided examples of typical discussion questions and Sally offered the beginnings of answers. Thus, I believe she was able to establish boundaries within which she was prepared to operate during the research process and I was able to prepare some of the questions in advance of the interview.

Sally reported that she was happy with the scope and range of the questions. She agreed to respond to written material produced by me as a result of the discussion.

6.2.2 The research process

With Sally's permission, the discussion was audio recorded and material from the discussion used as the basis of an analysis of the transition to studentship. Sally is a pseudonym: the identity of the informant remains undisclosed. We agreed that no confidential material would be divulged other than anonymously. Sally was free to read and comment on the written material produced as a result of the discussion and its subsequent analysis. She was invited to contribute by commenting and offering opinions that challenged my interpretations and

analysis. The discussion was conducted in two parts with a break of approximately two hours part way through. This was to allow both Sally and me to meet lecture responsibilities.

At a later date, I played the tape through several times. I then decided to transcribe the entire discussion. As a relatively inexperienced analyst of taped interviews, I wanted a useful way of re-entering the discussion material through immersion. I assumed that inexperience could lead me to miss some important aspects of meaning. By transcribing the tape, I was able to listen repeatedly to fragments of conversation. This gave me opportunities to heighten my sensitivity to conversational patterns and structures. The interview proved to be rich. It contained cognitive, affective and psychic material. There were examples of:

- single-mindedness;
- belief;
- anticipation;
- anxiety;
- confidence;
- nuance;
- suggestion;
- intimation;
- implication;
- connection;
- ambiguity;
- ambivalence.

During the analysis of the pilot data I reviewed the usefulness of transcription. I thought that it might not be appropriate to analyse the longitudinal study data in this way. However, on reflection, the task of transcribing provided a valuable way of maintaining a focus of attention

on the data. The experience of transcribing demanded different qualities of attention than those required during the discussion itself or during a subsequent listening to the tape.

All processing is a form of interpretation. I construed meaning at different times through the use of different procedures, and transcription was a useful activity. I decided to retain it for the longitudinal study.

The transcribed material was word-processed and printed. The printed version was analysed in the following manner. First, broad categories were identified that were considered to relate to significant themes, which were interpreted as containing meaning for the subject. Further research was conducted using these themes for the construction of repertory grids (Kelly, 1955). I listed the themes before searching the transcribed discussion material for further references to each theme. An analytic, interpretative account was then produced using the themes and linked references.

A printed version of the discussion and the account was sent to Sally who read it, and wrote a brief commentary. A date for a second meeting was made. This meeting was also tape-recorded. I used it together with Sally's written comments when reflecting on her response to the initial analysis and interpretation. The resulting material was then combined to form a final analysis.

6.2.3 Summary of preparations

In preparing the pilot, my tasks included:

- seeking informed consent from the informant;
- discussing the broad structure of the research with colleagues;
- identifying areas likely to generate useful material;

- preparing a semi-structured interview;
- drawing on previous interview experience to ensure, as far as possible, that the discussion would be authentic and responded to empathetically;
- making available a range of materials during the discussion so that the subject was not limited to explaining verbally;
- exploring possible methods by which the data could be processed;
- considering the written form of the report of the pilot study;
- identifying reading and literature likely to offer a theoretical under-pinning to the work;
- using lessons learned from the pilot in the longitudinal study.

6.2.4 Interpreting the transcript

This discussion was based on the original notes submitted to Sally, and reproduced in Appendix Sally T 1. Page 315.

During our meetings, I formed an impression of Sally as a friendly, outgoing and sociable person with a bubbling personality. She was frank and thoughtful. She was at her happiest when she had a self-directed sense of purpose. For Sally, this was an important part of being fulfilled in life. She appeared to have a clear sense of who she was - or at least who she had been, up to now. At the time of our meeting she was experiencing anxiety which she said came partly from the lack of feedback from college tutors about her academic progress and achievement. She expressed some ambivalence about her present situation and reported feeling uncomfortable and not in control of her changing moods and views.

	<i>TB: So what do you think, now that you've started? Have you made the right decision?</i>
Line no 133 page 318	Sally: I'm still not sure to be perfectly frank with you. ⁹ A couple of weeks ago I did think why am I putting us all through this? To be honest. Because, I thought at my age and at my, with my experience, it would be like coming and doing a job of work. And I knew there would be work to do at home, but I didn't think it would be as emotionally draining as my A levels were. But it is.

Figure 3 Conversation with Sally, making the right decision

Sally's use of 'emotionally draining' made me curious. This is an early part of the course and few students report feeling drained at this point. For many it is still a time of exhilaration. I am also responding to the word *emotionally*. During the discussion, I only hear her refer to the course. On reading the transcript, Sally puts her emotional disturbance down to the first lot of assignments, but in a way that invites other readings and interpretations. Perhaps what are being reported are the reactions of Sally, her partner (and others in the family?) to Sally beginning life as a student?

My curiosity was revealed in the question that followed and her answer suggests a displacement of anxiety from 'becoming a student' to 'knowing how well I'm doing in my assignments'.

	<i>TB: So what is the nature of the drain?</i>
Line no 140 page 318	Sally: I think it's um, I've sort of comforted myself with the thought that it's because it's the first lot of assignments, and until you've done them and you've been assessed, I'm still not absolutely sure that I should be here, that I'm going to be able to continue to be here, you know? So I've decided that's the big stumbling block.

Figure 4 Conversation with Sally, becoming emotionally drained

So, she is not sure she should be here. The opportunity to study is one that is described in terms of tolerance and support within boundaries, rather than something which Sally sees as hers of right. She is here very much by family consent.

⁹ A potentially risky disclosure to an authority figure who is part of the institution.

Line no. 161 page 318	<p>Sally: Well no, actually. I want to be ... a useful working member of society I suppose.¹⁰ I want a really useful role. It's not having a degree. If ... if it wasn't vocational I don't think I'd do it because ... I think it would be too selfish, you know, on the family.¹¹ I did say to my husband, actually, "Oh! Apparently if you don't get on very well with the teaching side of it, which actually isn't a problem, for me at the moment, I feel very comfortable with that side, (<i>Right</i>), but if you don't you can change to a BA. Well, he said, what would be the point of that at your age? OK his support will go so far ...</p>
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Figure 5 Conversation with Sally, selfish and unselfish choices

There is support at home for training *if it leads to a job* but not for education for non-vocational ends. Sally reveals three themes in her thinking. *Selfishness*, if she pursues full time study for its own sake. Her own desire to be a *useful member of society*, which seems to be underpinned by a notion of contributing by working for a living. Thirdly, the idea of what constitutes *reasonable support* within her family setting. What is reasonable has already been negotiated or at least positions have been established within the family - and the processes of joint agreement, permission and acceptance is encapsulated in the anecdote above about transferring to a BA degree.

The collaboration and search for a working agreement about changing roles during the transition is evident in the way Sally describes changes to family routines that appear to have been initiated to support her. Role confusion and guilt about relinquishing responsibilities are implied if not directly stated.

¹⁰ A further strong association with the world of work, suggesting that college and university life is perceived as "outside" society in some ways?

¹¹ What appears to be emerging here is a construct of *selfish* - *not selfish* with the preferred pole being not selfish. To be the person Sally wants to be (and to function appropriately within the family) Sally needs to see herself (and be seen by others as "not selfish". Doing a vocational degree is more likely to be seen by others (and by herself) as less selfish than a non-vocational degree.

	<i>TB: And he's been supportive in a practical sense?</i>
Line no 180 page 319	Sally: Yes. Absolutely. Which again in a way I feel slightly that I'm only just making it. I'm not doing anything at home. He's done all the shopping for weeks and cleaning and washing, you know? All the domestic things he's taken from me. Which I don't feel is very real. ¹² in a way. But I'm hoping that next term, I will be a bit more adept at everything. But then, on the other hand, he is there during the day and whereas I have a sort of a daytime social life, he doesn't really bother with that. So, he, you know, he's quite happy to, so long as he's got a video of rugby or cricket he'll stand and iron quite happily. But I'm very grateful to him. ¹³ But I feel it; I do feel it's unbalanced ...

Figure 6 Conversation with Sally, being supported but feeling unbalanced

Sally knows that in the past she has been able to remain positive and purposeful when events have threatened to overwhelm her. She knows she can cope and gives several examples. The difficult birth of her second child is a story of success: although a stressful and worrying time, the family survived and was strengthened by the experience. The balance has shifted and she has unresolved feelings about the shift and the lack of balance.

Line no. 56 page 317	Sally: Well actually she was premature. <i>(Oh.)</i> She was very poorly. And the birth, the birth was all right. My husband and I went to NCT classes both times. We knew what we wanted. And the midwife allowed it, as far as she could. But it was a very strange onset of labour and when she was actually born it was very quick in the end. So, and then she was in an incubator for six days. We were in SCBU ¹⁴ for a fortnight. But actually, when things are that worrying I've realised that shutters come down and you just, I mean there were lots of questions I could have asked but I didn't even ask them, because I just took every hour as it came.
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Figure 7 Conversation with Sally, managing difficult times

Knowing she has been successful in the past is something Sally is able to use to confirm in herself and her family that she is able to come through difficult times.

¹² This is unclear. What is real / unreal here?

¹³ Sally seems to be re-exploring issues in the same form as they came up within the family context. I get the feeling this is quite close to discussions Sally had with her husband.

¹⁴ Special Care Baby Unit.

Sally appears a tolerant person. She accepts the views of others and is happy to 'live and let live'. She accepts that other people are different from her and she is happy to let them express beliefs which are very different from her own. She does not usually feel threatened by what other people say and she does not try to foist her own views onto them. When Sally describes herself, she presents a clear view of herself through her own life-story as a stable and continually developing person. She sees adult life in terms of action and activity in the world. Being successful is 'making your way' in business, commerce or industry.

The main purpose of education is to study to improve your chances in life. Education is not a way of life in itself - except for a minority: a different kind of person.

She wants to be a valuable and valued member of society. This view may involve deep spiritual or religious roots, though there was no direct evidence for this coming from the discussion.

Sally sometimes lacks confidence in new situations and one strategy she employs is to defer to authority figures: and she sees males (and her mother) as occupying authority roles. Sally did not mention her father in the discussion, so it is impossible to discuss his influence on her directly. It is, however, possible to infer from the absence of direct reference that Sally's father was a significant figure in her life though perhaps not a dominant one. There is evidence to suggest that her mother did defer to her father and insisted Sally do the same. Might this have set a pattern that is present in her current family relationships?

Line no. 298 page 322	Sally: She's very outgoing and sort of, happy at nursery, and with the child-minder. But, {Pause} I don't know what her behaviour would have been like with me anyway, because, my eldest one I found very difficult at this age, because {Pause} I encourage them to talk and make small decisions like what would you like to have for your lunch. But it sort of backfires on me because I find I haven't got the control, (laughs) that, perhaps {Pause} well I suppose that my mother had, that's the role that I've got. But then I've got, I set about it in a different way, consciously, so, but we won't go into all that.
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Figure 8 Conversation with Sally, the role of the Mother *and the mother* and the Child *and the child*

There are parallels in Sally's role as mother and the mothering she received. There appears to be an ambivalence to her mother who still tries to dominate Sally, while Sally resists this at the same time trying to remain friendly and respectful. She wants her mother's approval and works to achieve it at one level of the relationship. On another level, there is tension because Sally seeks to give her own children a different childhood experience from the one she received.

The dilemma may be that she wishes to continue to have her mother's approval but she does not want to be the mother to her children that her mother was to her. Parental approval is not easy for Sally to achieve and there is perhaps some disappointment for Sally here, if not friction in the relationship.

Her new role as student has brought Sally some difficulties, though most were anticipated. It is characteristic of her relationship with her partner that both of them planned the process of Sally becoming a student. There appears to be ready support for each other. Sally finds her partner's encouragement supportive and reassuring; both because she trusts his judgement but also because her partner sees many things the way Sally does, and so his view is comfortably confirming.

Sally wants to preserve the stability of the family. She emphasises those aspects of the maternal role that relate to caring and nurturing others - at one's own expense if necessary.

She appears comfortable in a maternal role. Some of her anxiety may well have developed as a consequence of the ambiguity that studentship has brought upon the maternal role that previously seemed much more distinct. Sally does see the family unit as resilient.

Sally's view of her responsibilities is not unlike that expressed by many carers who which to beginning full-time study. The other members of the family group and their well-being take precedence over her personal needs. She sees the need to further her own individual career as both temporary and beneficial to the family in the long term.

She has spent a lot of time considering her changing role. At a practical level, she has weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of returning to her old job. She has assessed her qualities and present qualifications including, characteristically, what she has gained from life so far.

A desire for change emerged as the result of Sally considering her future at a time when both her children were in school. She understood herself well enough to realise she would not be fulfilled unless she had another role to play. Any new role would need to meet her deep seated desire to be both valued by, and valuable to society. Sally explored a number of options, but academic study (for a vocational course) was always in the background. The possibility of teaching has been a long-held idea, but not a sharply focused one with a clear role identified.

Sally did not discuss her ideal teacher in the discussion but it is possible to speculate that a 'good teacher' would for Sally be one who achieves that remarkable double of being a fulfilled person themselves, while also being able to help others to gain fulfilment in their own lives. Thus although Sally is a pragmatist, she is also an idealist with strong beliefs about what is good and worth striving for.

Sally recognises the potential we all have for playing the role of martyr. She is determined not to play this role herself. It may be that Sally's specific reference to the martyr role is triggered by her perception of the role her mother played during Sally's childhood. It can be problematic to criticise the martyr when you may have been one of the (unknowing) participants in the martyrdom process.

The task for Sally now is to adjust to the effects of the transition to student life. It is important not to imply that other aspects of life have necessarily been given up. For a person with children involved in a long term relationship with a partner, this period can be a re-bonding process rather than a bond-breaking one. It is a complex process that may continue for a considerable time before new stable positions and roles finally emerge.

The following diagram is one of several that Sally drew to represent the family. In this crucial and revealing first attempt, she omitted to represent herself. She then seemed to be struck by the realisation that she had indeed given something up and was no longer sure who or what she had become.

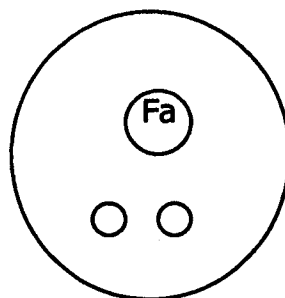


Figure 9 Conversation with Sally. Sally's absence from her representation of the family

Line no. 218 page 320	<p>Sally: It was the circle, just the circle really and um the three of them in it. (Pause.) Yes, that's what I saw. {Pause} But I suppose I feel I'm the circle in a way. Where am I? <i>TB: Where are you? Yes! (Pointing to circle), you're this? This thing that's around them? (Yes. I suppose.) In a way? What is the circle? Is it the family? Not the family?</i> Sally: I suppose it must be our family. I suppose it must be... {Pause} the lot of us. <i>TB: And yet, that same circle...{Pause} is you? Where are you?</i> Sally: Yes. I knew immediately where I would put them. I saw three of them in a circle. {Long pause} But I'm not, you see, because I'm not, I'm not performing this, this all-encompassing role now.¹⁵ You know. I'm sort of; I'm not out here. {Points outside the circle} But no, so I don't think I can honestly say I'm, that I'm the circle, {Long pause} in that sense. {Long pause}...</p>
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Figure 10 Conversation with Sally. Bringing unconscious absence to consciousness

Where identities develop from the playing out of important roles, within strong boundaries, there is a risk of a loss of identity when these boundaries are modified and roles are changed. The most telling evidence for her confusion was Sally's unconscious omission as she drew a diagram of the family unit but omitted or perhaps excluded herself. Did the action record an absence or a repressed presence?

The transition required a change of roles at home. Sally defined herself partly in terms of a wife and mother whose role was to meet others' needs before her own. Since her transition to student demanded a very different role for her, the transition presented some difficulties as her roles shifted. Were they being re-negotiated within the family or being re-shaped in unspoken ways by the changing dynamics?

Sally's partner had taken on a caring role, which is not uncommon today, but it was new and unusual in terms of their relationship. Her partner's role could be read as more 'maternal' and this in itself was a source of several difficulties for Sally perhaps because of her strong identification with this role prior to full-time study.

¹⁵ A poignant moment. S's face had a confused look which mirrored the ambiguity of how she could represent herself in the diagram she had drawn of "the family".

Of most concern then, was not the shifting of roles *per se*, but the way roles had been used by Sally to define herself and her partner. With her role as mother taken up at least partially and successfully by her partner and accepted by her children, Sally may even have felt herself excluded from a powerful triadic role that she once occupied with her two children. She was having to come to terms with the contrasting feelings arising from fear of exclusion on the one hand, which could be read as representing failure to fulfil her old role 'properly', mixed with pleasure on the other hand, arising from the liberation that becoming a student was offering. At the time of the discussion this conflict of roles appeared to come to a head.

As Sally herself perceptively acknowledged, there had not been many gains for her as yet, though there had been losses. Sally had given up her role as the focal maternal adult in the family and saw herself as having temporarily perhaps, moved to the edge of things. She had experienced a loss of control, though she expected to regain some control as she learnt to manage the student part of her life. Although not life-threatening, the transition had brought some unexpected discomfort for Sally and it had taken courage to persevere even though the first eight weeks.

Her overall demeanour during the discussion was one of a successful, thoughtful person who was managing change well and enjoying her life.

6.2.5 The cycle of discussion and response

My discussions with Nicola had continued over a long period and we had established an informal cycle of discussion, reflection and review of issues raised at earlier meetings. This process had led to a significant depth of mutual understanding. I wanted my further studies to reflect this quality. Sally responded to my original analysis of the transcript and her brief comments appear on page 329. I saw great potential in developing a method which

incorporated extended discussion. From the experience with Nicola and Sally, I hoped to establish ways of extending and broadening the responses of informants so that their comments could more fully engage the issues raised. In fact this proved difficult in the longitudinal study for reasons that I had not anticipated.

6.2.5.1 Sally's responses

Sally reported that my opening comments were accurate. She then went on to contribute more information about the period through to Christmas and on into the Easter term. She described continuing to experience a range of feelings from confidence through to anxiety and confusion. A few months after the discussion she reported:

I experienced a severe lack of confidence and felt that I had lost my sense of self. After a couple of sessions with the counsellor, and talking it through with my partner some of my self-confidence has returned. However, in the last few days, feelings of panic at not being strong enough, intellectually and emotionally, for this course and the profession of teaching, have threatened to overwhelm me again and I have requested another appointment with the counsellor. (Sally T., Correspondence, March 1995)

I had described Sally as tolerant. Sally rounded out this picture adding in her reply that there was some acquiescence mixed in with the tolerance. She reported having some difficulty in confronting others if she disagreed with their views. I can only speculate about the origins of such anxiety and would have welcomed the opportunity to ask Sally about what if anything she could recall from her childhood about arguments and disputes. Sally wrote: 'I am tolerant of others but often do feel threatened by what other people say and will sometimes make no comment rather than appear confrontational.'

Sally accepted my description of her about living life by being involved. She agreed she was looking for ways to be productive and useful in a practical way. She accepted the description of herself as wanting to be valued by society and able to contribute to it.

She wrote: 'Paragraph 5 is spot on!' Here I had attempted to deal with her responses to male figures as authority figures. I also speculated about influence that her father had played in her

childhood. She also accepted the description of her relationship with W as being one of shared planning and decision-making. I had written that they appeared to have planned Sally's college career together.

For the most part Sally wrote that she accepted the rest of what I had written. This was less of a discussion than I had hoped for. Partly, it lacked the quality of discourse and of course it could also be read as another example of either deferring to a male seen as being 'in authority' or to someone who was uttering ideas that she didn't agree with.

In this respect, the pilot proved to be a valuable piece of preliminary work. It exemplified that it is impossible to ensure a continuing dialogue of equals in the research process. Instead, it points to the necessity of openness so that interviewees can make informed judgements about their involvement.

In the final part of the transcript analysis, I wrote about Sally's need for feedback on her college work. Sally's response was to make a distinction between the main subject and the educational, or professional studies part of the course, where she felt she had received less information about her performance. She wrote in reply: 'Although positive assessments have come through in my major and supportive subjects, I feel nervous at not being formally assessed in my professional studies.'

6.2.5.2 Difficulties with the longitudinal study

I planned the longitudinal study based on the experiences described above and it is relevant to raise some issues relating to method here. There is a need to time meetings so that respondents feel a connectedness between one meeting and the next. It became impossible to ensure this with the students on the longitudinal study because the intervals between one meeting and the next were too long to maintain coherence between meetings. This meant that students were busy tackling new aspects of work and current issues in their life course

while I was interested in exploring shifts in personal development and in comparing data gathered from the previous round of interviews. It meant, that on occasions, part of the researcher's trail had gone cold.

The longitudinal interviews did not resonate with the memories of earlier discussions in the rich way that had occurred when talking with Nicola. Sally felt a sense of urgency about her situation and this made the pilot a different experience. It was Sally's anxiety that served to energise our meetings.

Following the analysis of the pilot I concluded that an explicit request to write a part of the narrative should be put to each of the informants in the longitudinal study. In practice this did not have the desired effect. Although all interviewees were welcoming and enthusiastic about each interview, they made fewer connections with previous interview data than I had hoped for. After the final interview, Emily did not respond to a request to write a narrative.

I judged that the long periods that passed between one interview and the next resulted in a quality of dialogue that was less rich and multi-layered than I had hoped for. I do not believe this invalidates the research. The data gathered in the longitudinal study was rich and complex and I was able to complete the analysis with the exception of a collaborative narrative.

6.2.6 Analysis

It would appear that in respect of her feelings of displacement Sally failed to be present to herself. As her feelings fluctuated the two roles of student and mother appeared to come into conflict without Sally's conscious awareness. These two roles appear to have been too distant from one another for integration to be successful, and in some ways each threatened the other. The new 'me' was perhaps too indistinct for Sally to objectify it successfully. The 'I' appeared somewhat self-critical and supervisory, guarding against pleasure and personal

success because this was seen as selfishness. In consequence, Sally seemed unable to engage with the material. Instead, she presented herself as someone who was dissatisfied with the course because it did not give her the information about her current performance that she so desperately wanted.

As she had projected her feelings into the course structure and into the people associated with it, she was looking to the course to provide what she needed and it failed her. She was unable to adapt her engagements to her family sufficiently and establish a 'good enough' engagement with her role as a new student to tide herself over the difficulty of this part of the transition.

Though there is no information available about her children and her husband except through her, Sally's response to her child's tantrums reminded her of her mother's way of dealing with children. So, even a predictable problem of the children finding the changes to their routine frustrating, and taking the opportunity to act out, actually provoked in Sally the added stress of unfavourably comparing her own child-rearing abilities with those of her mother with whom she still appeared to be in competition (for her father's attention?).

The choice and preparation of the college course had been a responsibility shared with her partner. I argue that for Sally, the accompanying loss of identity and fear of loss of approval became unbearable. The activities for which she had traditionally taken responsibility - shopping, cleaning, cooking, child-care - had become the responsibility of her partner and his adoption of these activities as much as her relinquishment of them, posed difficulties for her. Perhaps she even saw the relative ease with which she had been replaced by her husband taking up a more maternal role as another example of her failure - 'If it's that easy, surely I should be able to cope?' The ambivalent nature of her relationship with her mother, in which Sally both sought to resist and to seek approval was not a new burden but continued.

Sally and her partner appeared to have found the transition more problematic than they anticipated. They seem to have been overwhelmed by the emotions provoked by the transitional experience despite apparently both being committed to making Sally's change of life course a successful one. The shift to a more independent self may have been associated with Sally's construct of maleness and this might have been another force in the shift away from her previously more maternal role.

...men and women have each absorbed differences between male and female and the psyche contains images of self and other. In an intimate relationship ... the couple therefore has the possibility of empathizing across the boundaries of gender to the partner's needs. (Barnes, 1990: 261)

Taking Barnes' optimistic view that it is possible for a couple to empathise across gender boundaries, we could suggest that during the transition to studentship, this intimate couple were unable to adjust to the changing images of self and other. Perhaps the speed of transition, following its relatively abrupt start, posed problems that rendered them unable to make the necessary adjustment.

6.3 Analysing themes

I analysed the transcript and identified several themes that would bear closer examination.

The themes can be seen in Appendix Sally T. 1 on page 315. I identified the following:

- motivation for change;
- role as a parent;
- relationship with partner;
- perceptions of relationships in general;
- preparing for the transition;
- aspects of vulnerability.

I was still working on the idea of producing primary and secondary level themes, in an attempt to isolate what I saw as fundamental constructs or beliefs, perhaps leading to Jungian archetypes. This proved unsuccessful and I did not attempt this categorisation in the longitudinal study.

I thought that these themes could be referred to as primary level themes which could give rise to others. Examples of two potential second level themes relate to *paternal authority* and the *martyr* role. Carol Pearson (1989) describes an interesting set of six archetypes in her book *The Hero Within*. She discusses the martyr role in detail:

The Martyr embraces suffering, believing it will bring redemption ... gothic novels, saints' lives and other genres all dramatize and reinforce this belief. So do our major religions. (p.142)

Pearson argues that her six archetypes are transitional states whereby one can occupy a stage for a period in one's life and then move on to another state. This provides what Pearson calls self-exploration. The problem for women in particular, Pearson argues, is that for centuries, the martyr role has been used in a wide range of social contexts, to confine women and limit their self-development, preventing access to Pearson's other archetypes, *innocent, orphan, traveller, warrior, magician*.

The confusion that was revealed in Sally's failure to include herself in the diagram of the family involved her in a long scrutiny of what she had drawn. She searched the diagram for a place in which to locate herself.

At this point, I tried to organise the themes into different levels but this proved not to help in the analysis and so was dropped. When I reviewed the transcript, I chose not to include *confusion* in any of the first level themes. The difficulty for me was one of making decisions about categorisation. A further first-level category could have been produced. For example, I could have used *searching for a self*, or *changes in self-perception*. These seemed too broad. The

difficulty with broad categories is that they can become a catch-all, and fail to support further analysis. Alternatively, *loss of identity*, or *confusion over identity* could feature as second level categories emerging from *Vulnerability*. In some ways, this could be more helpful. It would allow a discussion of the nature of Sally's vulnerability, itself a noticeable feature of her demeanour.

Not all students feel vulnerable as they enter a period of transition. I am not suggesting that each category must be present in every transition. Changes of identity and self-perception may not be case-specific, although it did become a conjecture that transition often involves a modification to or reconstruction of self-perception.

6.3.1 Theorising personal development and transition

What had Sally experienced in previous transitions and in previous family settings? How were previous beginnings managed? Were they seen as threatening disturbances and met with anxiety? Were they supervised by males taking the role of father?¹⁶ Perhaps, survivors who judge previous beginnings to have been successful will be more likely to speak positively, whilst those survivors of painful, unsuccessful beginnings are more likely to recount 'a litany of woes: exhaustion, over-investment, tensions and uncertainties.' (Huberman, 1993: 35).

Having demonstrated that it is possible to generate themes and analyse them from a psychodynamic perspective, it was necessary to consider models to support this position. For Sally, an analysis of her present position from both intrapersonal and interpersonal viewpoints revealed influence of past roles and childhood experiences.

¹⁶ The use of repertory grids in the longitudinal study assumes that benefits could ensue from a study of responses to previous transitions. Included in the repertory grid elements are 'me at five' and 'me at twelve'. These were purposely included because of the transitions to primary and to secondary schools that occur around those ages.

Analysis of Sally's transition to studentship confirmed the conjecture that the past shapes the present. To explore this more fully demands a model of personal development that includes the consideration of; cognitive, affective, and psychic dimensions. Many models only address socio-cognitive dimensions where cognitive knowledge and skills are seen as being 'embedded in a social context that includes the individual and the individual's actions'. (Pintrich, 1990: 827).

Many of the models in current use rely heavily on rational-logical and analytical definitions of knowledge and thinking which are insufficient for building a model that includes the data presented in this study. The 'deeply ingrained and partly unconscious feelings and dispositions developed' in early life are recognised by researchers as continuing to influence the here-and-now. (Korthagen, 1993: 319) There are alternative ways of interpreting the data of experience, and authors such as Korthagen argue for a different approach.

Adopting Korthagen's viewpoint would involve making use of the idea of *gestalts*¹⁷ and this is something that I considered in the very early stages of the project (see note 12). A definition similar to that used in gestalt therapy is helpful, where the whole of a person's experiences are taken to be implicated in the production of *'personal knowledge'*. (see also Polanyi, 1958).

In my search for evidence of the influence of earlier transitions on the transition to a teacher-self I found Korthagen's position useful. At the outset of this study, I argued that cues from the environment could activate a gestalt - a non-logical, immediate interpretation of the new

¹⁷ My original consideration of the nature of the often spontaneous response to certain challenging situations faced by teachers and students, led me to think of a behavioural explanation. I believed it possible that something similar to a gestalt - a bundle of previously developed behaviours were triggered by certain situations. This proved inadequate. Responses from students and teachers often referred to emotions and to memories, not of previously similar situations but of people - mothers, fathers, siblings and significant others. It appeared that the student who began talking about her father, associated aspects of her new situation as student with both her actual father and fatherhood in a more general sense - an archetypal father. A behavioural model no longer seemed adequate to explore the sometimes strong responses that students encounter and which so often surprise them by their strength. The student was questing her father and what he (had) offered.

situation. Further, these interpretations could feed and shape the non-rational, affective domain and determine the person's general disposition by partly determining mood, and general feelings of optimism, disappointment, comfort or helplessness in the face of cues that trigger the existing gestalts. Thus, I argued events which occurred during the student's passage through the transition to teacher might trigger a learned but partly unconscious disposition to repeat particular responses. It was with this view in mind that I searched the data generated by the discussion with Sally.

For Sally, at the outset of transition to teacher, the disturbances at both intrapersonal and interpersonal levels seemed to trigger a sense of vulnerability. Despite her careful preparations, the discomfort of panic and loss of identity returned and feelings of vulnerability remained unresolved. There seemed no immediate chance of resolution of Sally's distress, though Sally herself reported that visits to the counsellor and talking things over with her partner helped. The transition appeared to have become a de-stabilising process and the disturbance was in full-swing, reported as a crisis of confidence in Sally's written response to my interpretative account of the discussion.

The limitation of this analysis is that it appeared not to offer a way of taking the theorising any further forward, or of offering a model where self-control and choice could function, since the gestalts were taken to be bundles of relatively automatic responses. Nor was it clear how to incorporate the development of new gestalts into the theorising. The evidence I had collected fully supported the notion that agency is a factor in determining life course outcomes – and Nicola was a good example of a decision-maker. A theory that incorporated repression or temporarily unavailable unconscious thoughts and actions was preferable since I already had some examples of mechanisms (Freudian slips) that could be used to stimulate access to temporarily unavailable or unarticulated thoughts and feelings.

Another way that disturbance at a personal level may be interpreted is through the use of life-cycle accounts. A life-cycle account of personal and professional development is depicted in Huberman (1993: 13). This shows career phases/themes of teachers and teaching in terms of years of experience. A more fundamental but similarly structured process is that proposed by Jung (1930) who suggests a concept of individuation whereby the healthy individual progresses towards an integration of the temporal *self* with the primitive *self*.

It could be argued that Sally's progress along the 'life-path' alluded to by Jung has been disrupted by her involvement in a strongly hierarchical, vocational education institution where personal behaviours and beliefs are expected to adjust to the demands for adherence to institutional practices and mores. The data obtained from the discussion suggested that Sally tended to acquiesce in hierarchical situations. The discussion revealed a tendency to defer to male decision-makers. Although college life can be viewed as rule-bound and hierarchical, it can be experienced as much more impersonal than some family settings, where taking decisions for others can be viewed as caring and nurturing, 'knowing what's best for someone'. Sally reported feeling uncomfortable with what she felt was a lack of personal information, feed-back or caring about her performance.

Following the discussion with Sally I wrote, 'It does not seem possible to predict medium-term or long-term outcomes for Sally at this moment.' The motivation for change which was evident in the discussion referred mainly to the period when she decided to apply for a college place. There was little sign of this motivation in the evidence that she provided about herself when she was interviewed. The motivation to succeed appeared to be in decline and had been supplanted by concerns about personal competence and an (unconscious) search for a lost identity and a more coherent self.

6.4 Narrative and the pilot study

The idea of developing a narrative emerged early on in the pilot study. It was not possible to fully implement the ideas at this stage, but it indicated how a narrative might be developed. It also allowed emergent themes from earlier interviews to be explored in subsequent ones, permitting greater opportunities for reflection and review, and a more sustained exploration of resonance between the views of the researcher and the interviewee. A valid narrative of the emergence of a teacher-self was much more likely to emerge if I followed students into school after they qualified for their PGCE. A one-year course was much more appropriate for working within the time constraints of the study than following students through the four year course on which Sally had embarked.

The pilot was valuable in providing me with opportunities to:

- explore the data on Sally's transition to student life;
- consider alternative theoretical models (gestalt and life-cycle accounts);
- write a coherent narrative of Sally's experience as a student;
- identify some of the possible features of transition as a student;
- assess the application of a psychodynamic perspective to the interpretation of interview data;
- interpret interview data in terms of emergent themes.

The pilot demonstrated the efficacy of my approach to the exploration of transition to teaching and of the protocol for exploring the emergence of a teacher-self. Interviewing students over a longer time span was probably going to be more effective in providing rich, multi-layered evidence of the process of transition to teacher, and the emergence of a teacher-self. I knew that I was going to be able to develop a narrative that analysed the transitional experience for each interviewee based on data from a series of interviews.

Focusing on experience is crucial to the success of the study and James (1890: 402) implies an

effective mechanism based on attention that has been taken up and developed more recently by Gattegno (1987) and Mason (1996). James writes, 'My experience is what I choose to attend to'.

In his autobiography, Paul Feyerabend (1995) argues that stories represent a truth, 'All you can do, if you really want to be truthful, is to tell a story'. He continues:

... why not avoid the fraud by using stories right away?
The problem of reality ... always had a special fascination for me. Why are so many people dissatisfied with what they can see and feel? Why do they look for surprises behind events? Why do they believe that, taken together, these surprises form an entire world, and why, most strangely, do they take it for granted that this hidden world is more solid, more trustworthy, more "real" than the world from which they started? (Feyerabend, 1995: 163-164)

Discussion can lead to a harmony where the interplay of questioning and response allows for the exploration of the life story with the informant reflectively exploring her experience. The interviewer and interviewee can share responsibility for the production and use of the data. It is possible to compare the responses of the interviewer and the informant in a search for resonance and authenticity. They have different roles but the search for authenticity should recognise the roles of each as contributing to the story that is written. In his discussion about ways of reflecting on narrative perspectives, Diamond (1991) comments:

teacher narratives ... are ... most properly treated by way of yet another story or through extended and appreciative response. This resolution arises out of sharing and out of a disciplined subjectivity or attuned intuition. (p.102)

6.5 Review of the pilot study

The pilot study illustrated some of the complexity of transition for someone who gave every appearance of being stable, competent, healthy and initially enthusiastic. It also highlighted a number of aspects of Sally's management of the transition process, some of which I have discussed in detail above.

Sharing my analysis of the data with her provided us with a measure of agreement over my interpretation. The brevity of her responses was disappointing to me and I realised that her agreement could also be interpreted as typical of Sally's responses to males in a hierarchical setting. I nevertheless found many features of the pilot effective in supporting an analysis of the changes to self during transition.

The pilot study confirmed that the research method fully supported the exploration of the research conjectures and the development of theory. The chosen method was adopted for use with the eight initial respondents in the longitudinal study. Their transition to teaching was explored through interview and transcript analysis which led to the identification of themes embedded in the informants' discourses.

The analysis of the pilot confirmed the conjecture that the complex process of transition is implicated in shifts in one's view of self and self-worth. It also demonstrated that difficulties can arise in maintaining family bonds and relationships. Although positive developments in the realisation of a teacher-self were not evident in Sally's case in the pilot study, evidence was available from earlier data. As I discussed above, I did not achieve all I set to do in the longitudinal study, most notable was the failure to produce collaborative narratives. However, the findings of the pilot study were informative and allowed for effective planning of subsequent stages of the research.

6.6 Preparing for the longitudinal study

In the second part of the study, I have discussed the exploration of the transitional experience of several students. My intention was to extend the method of the pilot to gain a greater depth of understanding of the nature of this transitional period and the changes that each interviewee underwent. It was a vicarious experience and I was not a detached observer. My intention in carrying out a longitudinal study was to further enhance my understanding of

the nature and complexity of transition through an interpretation of the data collected from a series of semi-structured interviews and from repertory grids (Kelly 1955). I made a decision part-way through the study not to include the repertory grid material in the analysis, as this would have resulted in an over-extended time period and an overlong thesis. I intend to explore the data elsewhere.

The pilot showed that transition to teaching can involve students in the re-emergence into consciousness of forgotten experiences and relationships. Discussions with students prior to the pilot study provided evidence of powerful forces for change running through their lives, particularly in regard to relationships. Many talked about power relationships, and about becoming increasingly aware of authority roles from the time they entered school settings. Some described themselves as having to struggle with the adoption of authority roles with children whilst at the same time also needing to accept very different roles with the head teacher, class teacher, ancillary and classroom assistants and parents.

It is worth reiterating that some of the students working in primary school settings are of a similar age to the parents of the youngest children in primary school. In secondary school placements, some trainees are only three or four years older than the sixth-form students they are teaching, whilst they can be thirty years younger than most of the other teachers in their department.

This multiplicity of relationships is brought into sharper focus by the expectation that a student will quickly have to adopt and play many of the teacher's roles – and these roles are themselves complex and subtle.

In the early development of my thesis I speculated that the role-playing aspect of teaching could prove problematic for those students whose personal relationship roles in earlier life contained unresolved elements. These unresolved elements may go unnoticed in the life-

course of many adults. However, those entering teaching are confronted by the demand to take up parental and authority roles in relation to pupils, whilst at the same time to enter into submissive and deferential roles with mentors, head teachers and others.

Re-entering a wide range of relationship roles as a trainee teacher can lead to the evocation of earlier feelings relating to childhood or adolescent relationships. Where these proved less than satisfactory trainees may re-experience feelings of ambiguity, confusion and loss. Where there were unresolved elements in the students' relationships with their own parents (absence or early death of the father, for example) then, I supposed, students reporting difficulties in managing the acquisition of certain teacher-roles may be disturbed by the re-emergence of previously unresolved material.

Many students take opportunities to work with children prior to formal training. During training there are formal and informal placements. Some students also make additional private arrangements in a range of settings including: schools, play groups, social services centres, hospitals. Many students working in these settings appear to enter roles which (at least temporarily) cast them as *neither-teacher-nor-child*, and many students find such roles beneficial – at least until they want to assume greater responsibility for directing children's schooling.

My discussions with trainees suggested to me that 'the classroom can be considered as an intermediate space' (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992: 42). I was reminded of the Winnicottian notion of potential or transitional space and saw the possibility for a useful adaptation of Winnicott's ideas to my interest in classrooms.

The use of Winnicott's ideas had the added advantage (over models like gestalt, which I had previously considered) that I could use it to explore some aspects classroom dynamics and to theorise students' actions in the here-and-now as they manage the transitional process. The use of the concept of transitional space offered agency: rather than mere description.

I saw parallels between the use of Winnicott's potential space to describe infant development (and the establishment of a symbiotic relationship with a good-enough mother) and a similar need of students to play with (rehearse) their development as a teacher in a transitional space that provides good-enough support, guidance and opportunity.

In discussing the transitional space that can be created for students in college and classroom settings, I sought to research how:

- some of the teacher's status can be acquired;
- the appropriateness of certain behaviours is determined;
- it may be possible to rehearse being a teacher without having to immediately shoulder the entire responsibility for children or teaching.

The use of Winnicott's ideas are discussed in general on page 52: in regard to mathematics in particular, there is a footnote on page 54. For an example of a student experiencing a difficult transition to teacher training, see section 6.2.4 in the pilot study beginning on page 180.

It had become clear from my earlier work that visiting classrooms as a trainee can produce dissonance between previous constructs of self and the self that is required during school placements. Several students involved in classroom visits for training purposes had reported to me a discontinuity between the self that emerged in direct response to teaching practice, and the sense of self that they associated with their pre-training experiences, as children and adolescents, on work experience prior to selection.

During informal pre-training placements, several students reported comfortable transitional experiences perhaps best described in the negative as 'not-pupil and not-teacher'. Discomfort

arose for some when they were required to give up the 'not-pupil and not-teacher' role in order to work on formal teaching practice placements as a teacher who was responsible for children. The British phenomenon whereby teachers act *in loco parentis*, may indeed compound the difficulties students face in managing this transition, since responsibility is often immediate, abrupt and extensive, even in the early relatively informal placements at the outset of the training course.

Some students reported reluctance or difficulty in creating a more formal relationship and a greater 'social distance' between themselves and the children. The struggle appeared to involve a sense of loss, perhaps of their own freedom from responsibility, but also a loss of intimacy with the children: marked by a move away from first names to last names. (Primary students who take up the opportunity to work in London schools towards the end of their four year training can experience yet another twist since many of the London placements expect teachers and head teachers to be on first name terms with parents and with pupils of all ages.)

When students adopted more formal roles with children this was often accompanied by the adoption of other roles including; being more of a disciplinarian, being a supervisor of play and work rather than a collaborator, being an observer rather than a participant. Students also mentioned less physical contact and fewer opportunities to spend time in the playground. My point here is not to judge the appropriateness of the students' behaviour as such. It is to report the very strongly felt difficulty that some students experienced in emotionally adjusting to these shifts: reporting either a regret at the loss of intimacy with children (and perhaps a recognition of the passing of their own childhood), or discomfort with the adoption of more formal roles, or both.

Invoking Winnicott's perspective one could conjecture that there exists a desire to be treated as a rather 'special' ancillary pupil (not-child-and-not-teacher), and thereby foster or preserve

a special relationship with the class teacher, and to maintain a comforting transitional space to which they may find themselves becoming attached.

During this period of adjustment some students reported feeling strong associations with other relationships and with authoritarian settings recalled from childhood or adolescence. For a few, this recollection was disturbing and the intensity of the recollection was beyond anything that the student had anticipated they would experience during training.

The pilot demonstrated that it is possible to provide a narrative of transition. For the main study the challenge was to tell a story of transition to teaching for PGCE secondary mathematics students.

My desire to broaden my understanding was certainly bound up in a general curiosity about the way people manage their lives. Over and above this, at a professional level, there was a desire to confirm the thesis that transition – in the sense discussed above – is a significant part of the process of becoming a teacher. This, combined with a view that teaching is above all else a human activity, means that the human process of adjusting to new circumstances needed to remain central to the study.

6.6.1 Adapting the construct of transitional space

It was possible to develop a diagrammatic representation of transitional space as it applies to students training to teach. The diagram below illustrates how I theorised the development of a transitional space by a (student) teacher and children.

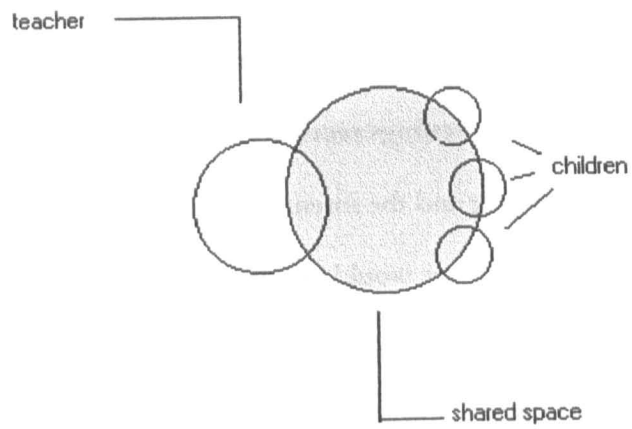


Figure 11 The transitional space created by teacher and children

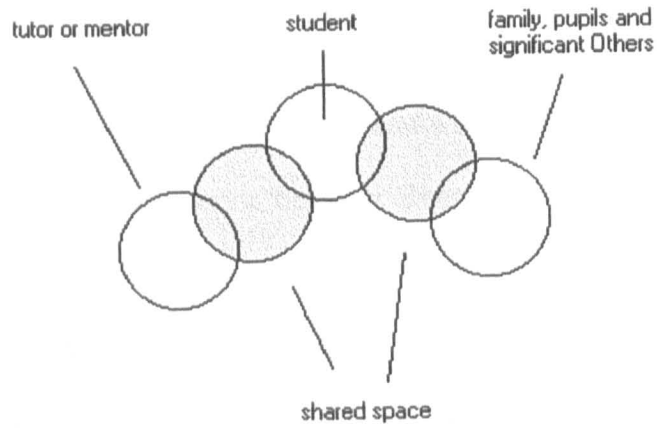


Figure 12 Transitional space experienced by trainee teachers.

The diagram borrows from Barrett and Trevitt (1991: 10 and 60) showing the creation of a transitional space shared between children and teacher in school.

In Figure 11, I have retained the representation used by Barrett which shows the child space as smaller than the teacher space, implying (to me) different physical size. In Figure 12, I have used circles of equal size to represent; the tutor/mentor space, the student space and the family/pupil/significant other space. I felt this was necessary as many comparisons could also be made here; of ego, influence, emotional capacity, etc. and my main interest was to explore the ambiguous nature of the space.

Figure 12 also represents the relationships that impinge on the student during the transitional process, and illustrates the complexity of the inter-relationships that exist between the student and significant others - partner, family, pupils, tutor/mentor. I argue that Figure 12 illustrates a beneficial arrangement of shared space arising from the dynamic interplay of psychic forces within which the transition is played out, and which are implicated in the re-shaping of the student's existing multiple selves and the eventual emergence of a teacher-self.

6.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the move from autobiography to biography prior to reviewing the work with Nicola and what I had learned from it. The effectiveness of the discussion questions, interview technique, and the value of using emergent themes has been discussed. The work with Sally has been reviewed in depth and the suitability of the chosen method has been considered in the light of the evidence from the pilot study. The transcript has been interpreted and Sally's move to studentship analysed. Personal development and transition has been theorised in the light of the pilot data. Preparations for the longitudinal study have been considered in the light of what had been learned from the pilot. A modification of Winnicott's transitional space has been introduced for later use.

7. THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

7.1 The methods used

The methods used flow from the discussions to be found in the methodology chapter. There were six major elements that made up the longitudinal research.

7.1.1 Stages in the longitudinal research

1. Analysing interview data on each student's transition and identifying emergent themes.
2. Searching for evidence of coherence and discontinuity revealed by the data and resonance with reported earlier experiences. I tried to remain sensitive to important data during the interviews and I also carried out data analysis between interviews.
3. Searching for resonance between the themes generated from students' interviews and my own experiences reported in chapter 5 (beginning on page 102).
4. Using themes to interpret interview data from a psychodynamic perspective.
5. Constructing a narrative that explored coherence and discontinuity of self-perceptions during the student's transitional experience, in ways that allowed exploration of; the changing nature of the self, and the emergence of a teacher-self.
6. Constructing a narrative that supported the writing of a theoretical account of transition to teaching.

For the longitudinal study, I sought students from the secondary PGCE mathematics course. I thought that the short duration of this one-year training course would be likely to compress the transitional experience of students into a relatively short and manageable time span. I wrote to each person in the cohort during September at the beginning of the course, inviting them all to a brief meeting where I explained my research interests. Eight students out of the

cohort of fourteen responded positively to my request. I talked to them about the focus and scope of the research, my interest in the process of transition and the intended outcome of the research.

The first round of interviews took place in October and November towards the end of the college-based part of the year's training and during their first school placement. Interviews and repertory grid activities together took about ninety minutes. I carried out semi-structured, in-depth interviews over a two week period. I used and followed a schedule modified from Radnor (1994) containing a pre-prepared series of orienting questions. One question was written at the top of each page. These questions were designed to provoke lengthy answers. Students were encouraged to give a brief life history and to talk about their current concerns relating to the course and their training. At the foot of each page were a series of prompts that I could use to ensure coverage of the topics I was interested in. The students all gave permission for the discussions to be audio-taped. They also agreed to try to stay in contact with me for the three-year research period. Towards the end of the first discussion I elicited personal constructs from them using a standard method. The elicited constructs were used to devise a repertory grid (Fransella and Bannister, 1977).

I carried out a second interview in June and July at the end of the students' year of training when they were completing their second school placement. Most of these interviews were carried out in school. One student knew she had failed the course, the rest knew they had passed. The third round of interviews was conducted two years later when most students had completed two years of teaching. One student had ceased to teach and was interviewed at home. The student who failed the course, and two others, were not traceable.

Like the first interview, the second and third also included pre-prepared questions designed to encourage students to give lengthy descriptive accounts of their experience. I sought rich accounts that focused on the areas that interested me, but which also provided opportunities

for interviewees to introduce other material they felt was relevant. Part of the time taken up during interviews two and three was given over to recording changes to each informant's repertory grid. During this period, I transcribed the interview data and examined it carefully for evidence of themes running through the informant's account. Each student was treated separately. For each student the three interviews were analysed in turn. The emergent themes were then used to analyse the encounters with family and significant others, college tutors, teachers and pupils during the transitional experience. I searched for evidence of coherence and discontinuity revealed by the data and I looked for resonance with childhood and adolescent experiences that had been reported during the interviews.

A brief commentary was written for each of the three interviews for each person. My intention was to combine the three written descriptions into a narrative that described the transitional experience in terms of coherence, wholeness and self-identity. Where current themes resonated with earlier experiences these were identified and interpreted by drawing on a knowledge of psychodynamics. The narrative thus produced drew attention to issues of changing identity, self-development and changing life course.

Comparisons were also made with the emergent teacher-self of interviewees and earlier findings relating to my own reported development as a teacher.

7.1.2 Three attempts at narrative construction

The first attempt at a narrative resulted in shallow accounts. These could be characterised as flat, uni-dimensional chronologies that did little more than reproduce the events described in the interview settings. A second attempt at narrative writing introduced more speculative accounts that drew more extensively on psychodynamic perspectives. This attempt provided colourful but highly speculative accounts of transitions and future possibilities. Although

richer, their level of speculation rendered them inappropriate for further analysis and the development of a theory of transition.

The third attempt at construction of a narrative is the one that has been adopted in the thesis. Here, themes were explored with reference to fragments of transcript which are embedded within the discussion. Themes were analysed by drawing on a psychodynamic approach and the analysis is speculative with fragments of the original transcript used to justify the speculation with some alternative interpretations offered.

Each student was sent a copy of the narrative relating to their transition, together with a covering letter describing the process I had used, and requesting a response which, at the time of writing, have yet to be received. The narratives were used to:

- support discussion of the transitional experience;
- aid exploration of the changing nature of the self;
- discuss the emergence of a teacher-self.

The production of theory drew on all the material available. Theorising began with each student and was then extended to provide a more generalised account of the transitional process together with a coherent theory of transition.

7.1.3 Preparation of the narrative

Within the narratives I made a number of professional interpretations. I did not draw on the entirety of the themes, but I did use them to support the development of a narrative which charted the students' progress.

Phenomenology argues that every experience contains both a noematic and a noetic component. ... a 'story' (... *what* happened) and the affective components linked to the 'story' (that is, *how* what happened is interpreted and 'felt' by the experiencing being). (Spinelli, 1992: 150)

I searched for both the noematic component – by considering *what* happened to students as well as searching for, or rather interpreting a noetic component – by looking at their responses and searching for links that they appeared to make with the affective components of their recent experiences and with their earlier experiences during childhood and early adolescence. As a participant in the research process, I am part of the noematic component. What interviewees offered, what they communicated, provided the basis for the interpretation that I made. My interpretations were partly based on insights that I gained directly from my meetings with them.

There has been a continuing discussion in psychoanalytic circles about the need for authentic case studies. In this context the question to raise would be, “Does it matter if Emily for example, is fictitious or real?” One can work on the data and the interpretation from either starting point. Does it matter that Emily recognised what I ‘saw’ in her account of her disrupted nurturing as an adolescent?

It is *my* thesis that the confusion of roles that appeared during her adolescence vis-à-vis her mother, reappeared (but I do not mean ‘replicated’) in Emily’s relationships as she moved through the transition to become a beginner-teacher - Spinelli’s noetic component of the story. What Emily said and did, brought to my awareness the possibility of the narrative that I subsequently provided. And of course the same applies to the other respondents.

7.1.4 The focus for the longitudinal interviews

Interview	Focus
1	Reasons for choosing mathematics as a subject to teach. How and where mathematics has featured previously in their lives. E.g. as a subject in school; in relation to another person (parent, sibling or other family member, friend, teacher...). Hopes for the PGCE course year. Current impressions of the course. Influences and affects, how the decision to train has involved others. Eliciting descriptions and perceptions of self. Description of childhood. Material from the first REPGRID will also be used when planning subsequent discussion questions.

2	How they are getting on in school placement. Relationships - how they are getting on with students and with teaching colleagues. Awareness of performance in the classroom. Attempt to locate significant events during the placement or earlier (i.e. the college-based component of the course). Whether they think they are becoming the teacher they expected to be. Significant others - who has been influential recently. How they see themselves as a teacher of mathematics.
3	Whether the course has had any significant impact. How their self perception has changed. What significant events have emerged? Whether they seem to be thematic? How the student has managed to interpret (resolve?) issues emerging from teaching in schools.

Figure 13 The focus for the three interviews

7.2 The longitudinal study data

7.2.1 Emily

Emily began her course of training after completing an engineering degree and travelling for a while in America, the Far East and Australia where she stayed with her boyfriend's uncle and his family. She took the opportunity to teach mathematics to the children in the family. Teaching had been 'in the back of my mind' for a while and mathematics was a subject she enjoyed.

One reason for asking Emily to become involved in the study was that she did not have a mathematics degree. Mathematics had been an interest and a pleasure. Her engineering degree, although obviously drawing on mathematics, did not allow for an in-depth study of the subject. How would a PGCE secondary mathematics course prepare her to teach the subject?

The initial discussion revealed that Emily, an only child, maintained a very close relationship with her mother and was likely to return to teach in the town where she grew up and

attended school. How would she re-enter this familiar world: as an adult, as a professional?

How would the process of 'going back home' influence the transition to teacher?

7.2.1.1 Searching for themes

The discussions with Emily were reviewed in a search for themes. The approach taken was to listen to the audio tapes on several occasions, recording themes as I noticed them. My sensitivity was enhanced partly through the work I had completed on significant events in my own teaching, and partly by reviewing the contributions that Nicola, Sally and others had made and then writing about them.

After a collection of themes had been produced from one interview I searched for other places in the data where these same themes were repeated. I recorded the different occurrences of each theme with the appropriate line number references in the transcripts and placed them in the relevant appendices. I then transferred the list of emergent themes for each interview to the main body of the thesis. They appear below for each of the subjects, Emily, Pauline and Brigitte.

Having collated the themes for each discussion separately, I then used them to produce a narrative of Emily's transitional experience.

7.2.2 Themes identified in discussion with Emily

7.2.2.1 Discussion 1 (10-11-95)

The following themes were identified:

- The future and employment.
- Exploring ideas and making preparations.
- Challenging parental expectations.
- Recognising parental influence.

- The qualities of teachers and teaching.
- The need for resilience and personal challenge.
- Acknowledging feelings.
- Identifying values to live by.
- Internal tensions - ambiguity and contradiction.

7.2.2.2 Discussion 2 (20-6-96)

At this time, Emily was close to completing the final school placement. She knew she had passed the college assessment and was going to qualify as a teacher. She had had a successful interview at the school for a mathematics post and would be working there full-time from September.

The major themes emerging from the second discussion with Emily are listed below:

- professional development;
- relationships;
- preferences, values and beliefs;
- teaching mathematics and special educational needs;
- the nature of transition to teaching.

7.2.2.3 Discussion 3 (8-7-98)

On listening to the tape and reading the transcript, I identified the following themes in Emily's account:

- A view of professionalism that emphasises colleagues, the department and the whole school.
- A professional perspective that emphasises intimacy - vis-à-vis relationships with pupils.
- Maternal themes of nurturing and caring and a desire for intimacy within a professional context.

- Seeking and taking opportunities for extending the range of responsibilities by taking on administrative and other roles associated with the broader functioning of the school.
- Personal qualities are seen as contributing to the quality of teaching performance, personal development, greater effectiveness and harmony with pupils.
- Emergence of a personal pedagogy that can resist pedagogical assertions from others.
- Needing to work more holistically and moving towards a position where this is possible.
- Ability to review her own practice.
- Ambiguity surrounding attitudes to professional life and private life.
- Complex mechanisms that support social distancing from pupils in a context that nevertheless sustains intimacy. The convenience of becoming Witch.
- Processes of preparation and attunement to teaching.
- Transition to teaching, transition to adulthood.

Before looking back at the transcripts of the two previous conversations, I need to point out that I became very excited by the complexity of these themes. They seemed on first inspection to be richer and more elaborately interconnected than the themes which emerged from previous discussions. This may reflect the increasing complexity of the teaching situation. Alternatively, since we had by then met several times perhaps a heightened rapport between Emily and myself might have allowed her to feel more comfortable in making richer responses. Another possibility is that the integration of Emily's teacher-self was by then well advanced, and illustrates a self:

... embedded in a complex matrix of meanings, including the capacity for self-soothing and appropriate use of others as a source of comfort, formed by the experience of others as more or less able to provide solace during critical times of psychological distress. (Cohler and Galatzer-Levy, 1992: 54)

7.2.3 Emily - a narrative account of transition

7.2.3.1 Preparing for change 1994 - 1995

Transitions can include periods in the life course where contradiction and ambiguity emerge. The setting up of ambiguous or incongruous situations may even provide the energy that individuals need to initiate change in their lives. With the end of her degree approaching, the trajectory of Emily's life course appeared to be ambiguous. On the one hand, she continued with chemical engineering, going for job interviews whilst at the same ensuring that she made herself unattractive to potential employers, for example, by attending for interviews and behaving unenthusiastically. Her approach appeared to have initiated a transition and maximised the opportunities for propelling her out of her undergraduate mould and into a different life course. [T1 08: sort of half way through the degree I was realising that I was just doing it to get a degree and not because I wanted to do chemical engineering. (TB: *Right*) It was really weird, I did go for a few interviews and I think it was blatantly obvious to the interviewer that I really wasn't interested.]

Was it also an indirect way of making things blatantly clear to her mother, who may have received reports of yet another 'unsuccessful' interview? Many people become involved in the travel and leisure industries, and interest in travelling can of course be for its own sake. Here though, it may be more productive to interpret a desire to travel as providing a temporary postponement of decision-making. Mulling things over can often be highly productive when carried out at an unconscious level, or in the background when fore-grounded by routines like route planning, and catching trains. It allows time for a maturing of the thinking that surrounds a search for choices about potential new life courses. For Emily, it avoided or postponed a return to an earlier life-style - that of living with her mother. Travel is also a normative activity for students and ex-students so Emily could be seen to be living within a common life frame and behaving normally.

Emily appeared to have used the opportunities presented whilst travelling to revisit her earlier thoughts about teaching as a career. [T1 26: And then I really enjoyed it and thought, when I got back, that was the first thing I've really done that I've enjoyed and I sort of always wanted to be a teacher but

everyone wanted me to go into science and I never really thought about it. I just thought I took the time out and travelled and really got into it. }

It is interesting that Emily engaged not only with teaching but also with family relationships and explored both and the way in which they interacted within the family she visited. [T1 35: I was going out with someone then, and I went with him and his uncle is a Maths teacher, and he couldn't teach his kids, he was too close to them. And he was really shouting at them and then getting really upset.

[T1 40: their Maths teacher wasn't very good, their Maths teacher used to swear at them and stuff and they just weren't strong enough to cope with that so I just went through it [the mathematics] all really quietly.]

Here Emily seemed able turn a situation to everyone's advantage. She became a teacher, and explored some of the relationship roles that she might need to draw on as a teacher. She found herself able to do this, and also discovered that she enjoyed the role.

She was able to parent the family in an effective way, caring for them, providing what they needed and bringing together two of her strengths, an interest and ability in communicating mathematical ideas, and providing a calm, supportive environment for others to live in. [T1 47: I'd always had the idea in the back of my head but I think that bought the idea to the front. I was scared because I thought yes coaching is very easy, it's not like teaching. Then I thought there's only one way to find out and that's to actually try.]

By accepting the challenge of coaching, Emily initiated a 'rite of passage'. [T1 92: I've always been very family oriented, so when the threat then of losing my family came along it really made me insecure. So I might have been insecure before, being family oriented but that wasTB: *Um... but then going ... I know you went off with a boyfriend, but just heading off to Florida and Fiji and Australia and so on, that's....*Emily: That got my confidence back and when it all started for me.]

Events during Emily's adolescence had in some ways reversed elements of the roles that existed in her relationship with her mother. When her mother became seriously ill, Emily took on some of the parenting. She performed some of the caring functions that her mother temporarily needed. Emily was physically healthy, strong, qualities that one associates with the

Parent. Her mother was ill, vulnerable and dependent, qualities more often associated with the Child. This role change seems to have been acceptable to both of them and it undoubtedly extended Emily's qualities and abilities. They both appear to have adjusted well to the rapid and unexpected change of roles and to have grown as a result of the opportunities the role reversal gave. Emily developed qualities of courage and determination. She was focused, both in terms of pursuing her own needs, and in responding to her mother's needs.

Emily's maternal role in her own relationship with her mother was emphasised by her concern that her mother might fall ill while she was away. At the same time, Emily's response to her own feelings about her mother were complex. [T1 104: but I find the organisation of the trip and going away perhaps ... a year away from my Mum was quite hard but I thought I had to do that. TB: *Um.. why did you have to do that?* Emily: Because I'm too old to be well I was too old to be feeling that way I felt. TB: *What? A Mummy's girl I suppose?* Emily: Yes.] Emily is reluctant to name the desire. I recognised a hesitation and offered substitute for the suppressed word.

Emily had already described some of the reasons for her concern about her mother. [T1 71: my life has been really weird because first of all... it has, like lots of things have happened ... my Mum got cancer when I was fourteen and I looked after her and it was like touch and go for a long time if she lived. And I did my O Levels while that happened and then did my A Levels when my Dad had a heart attack and then um... my Father passed away a couple of years ago through heart failure.]

Emily's anxiety could be described through projection. Her concerns for her mother could be seen as being projected onto the voyage itself. The process of projection could equally well have functioned in the opposite direction. Maybe she was travelling too far away and she wouldn't be able to manage the journey? This feeling may have resurrected earlier feelings of lacking confidence. It does seem however that Emily associated the two episodes in her life and recognised that they were connected. [T1 114: It's hard because you don't know.... you've got to

get over the feeling that maybe she's going to get ill again and the you've wasted a year. *TB: You say wasted, what...? Emily: Well wasted a year with her, but then she might live 'till she's eighty so I could do that...]*

Emily made connections between earlier and current transitions. We use transitional experience for personal growth and development in two ways. First, we engage with current transitions in ways that create a vehicle for revisiting and reworking unresolved elements of earlier transitions. Second, we invoke resolved elements of previous transitions to assist in gaining direction and resolution within current transitions.

[T1 146: I don't particularly want to pass this course, I want to feel comfortable at the end of it that I've chosen the right thing and I don't think that comes with just passing the course. *TB: Something else? Emily: Yeah, just feeling that I've done the right thing, to come out of it and think yeah, ...TB: How do you think you will get hold of that? How will you know? Emily: Normally with me it's if I feel that I'm good at it. ... TB: And what's it? What will be it? Emily: The relationship with the teaching and kids.]*

The key elements of Emily's development towards a teacher-self at this time involved the ability to perform as a teacher and the quality of the relationships that she could establish with the pupils. These were the elements that had become constellated in the setting that developed in Australia.

At the outset of this transition, what occurred appears to have been a combination of chance events and personal choice. Our opportunist use of chance events and the way we exercise the choices we judge are available to use is often not entirely transparent and therefore not easy to deduce. Emily's decision making seemed to be guided as much by unconscious processes as they were by conscious ones.

It appeared that when working with the family, Emily took the opportunities that arose to explore a number of important (possibly unconscious) elements. For example, she seemed to have a previously unvoiced belief in the possibility of teaching as caring. More explicitly, there was a curiosity about the extent of her own ability to instil in others an enjoyment and

interest in mathematics that she had. She took an opportunity to rework her relationship with her mother, by interposing a distance that forced her into a situation where she could not perform the caring function that she would normally have provided. She needed to explore a caring role within a family setting, and in some ways this had been denied her through illness and death in her own family.

All these opportunities were available, although perhaps organised and explored at an unconscious level or through an intuitive sense of what she needed to engage with at that time, if she was to influence the next part of her life course.

Early on in the training, Emily began to explore her relationships with pupils, her responses to their needs and the boundaries of her capability as a teacher. [T1 186: The bottom group, there are these two kids that bother me ... she's just, all the kids call her thick and she says she's thick, it's just a way of getting attention for her because I played a game with her and I was patient and she was really good at it.]

Emily was highly sensitised to those children who are on the edge of things. She noticed what they ate, where they sat, how they moved. She appeared more concerned to explore the extent of her ability to care (rather than determine her responsibility for supporting pupils).

[T1 196: The other boy Martin, he just...he doesn't really want to communicate. He's got a really bad background and he's quite bright but has been put in the bottom group. He doesn't communicate, he's got no ... he asks me where he should put the answer for the next question. Things like that. He is always on his own, he comes in on his own at lunch time, sits at the table and things like he doesn't eat properly. The most he will eat is like a bar of chocolate. He bothers me but I think a social worker should deal with it and I will just concentrate on the maths side. TB: *Do you find that you do want to get involved in that?* Emily: I want to, but I think that will be a problem, I really do. TB: *Yeah, why, why is it a problem?* Emily: Because um ... if I went through school taking everybody's problems on board you can't cope. I don't think so.]

The limit of her nurturing role seemed to be defined by Emily's ability to make provision, and one suspects she was prepared to give as much as she could within the professional framework that she was establishing. [T1 208: TB: *Is that the kind of person you are, that you might take other*

people's problems? Emily: Yes. TB: *Do you think that's partly what you are trying to do with these year 7 at the moment, the lower group?* Emily: Yes, trying to find out how I can deal with people that I want to be a total social worker ... and that's ..(indistinct)... that's one of the main changes at the moment, while I've got time to.]

7.2.3.2 Final school placement - ascendance of a teacher-self

The second discussion took place in July, some eight months following the initial talk in college. We met in school towards the end of the final teaching practice.

A training process that includes both university and school-based elements appears to create a transitional space in which the training takes place. At different times and in different contexts the trainee can be located variously as:

- neither student nor teacher;
- neither adult (teacher) nor child (pupil);
- both teacher and pupil.

At the time of the second interview, Emily had already been offered a job at her final placement school. She continued to affirm her interest in pupils who find maths challenging. [T1 67: if I had a choice between the bottom set and the top set I'd take the bottom set. (TB: *Really.*) Yeah. Definitely. (TB: *Because?*) I just find it a lot more challenging. Pitching the work at the right level. Trying to be creative enough, I mean, colourful things, and worksheets that are attractive to the eye. The top sets don't need that really. Top set's just hard graft. Give them the maths and make sure they can do it.]

Emily appeared to have a view of intelligence as malleable and changeable. She saw herself as a teacher who should make provision for individual pupils. She did not appear to see pupils' intelligence as being fixed and immutable. [T1 172: normally, if they don't work very hard, I tend to think that I've pitched it at the wrong level or, it's a boring lesson or the weather's really bad, like it was the other day. TB: *So you kind of look at, look at you and what you're doing,* Emily: Normally look at myself, yes.]

[T1 178: it was probably easiest when I first came, actually, 'cause they sort of, they give you a real chance. (TB: *Really!*) Yeah. Yeah and then, I think as it got on that I'd been teaching them for longer and longer, I think the struggle's been that I'm not living off it, - someone else's discipline so much. I've started living off my own, and that's been daunting. So, it hasn't fallen apart or anything. I did notice a time when it was starting to get a bit dodgy.]

7.2.3.3 Familiarity and belonging

In the Winnicottian sense, a potential space is a space for play¹⁸ and exploration. In the training setting it is difficult to identify who can take the role of Winnicott's 'good-enough mother' who maintains the play space for her charge, and who ensures that it remains one where experimentation and growth can take place. There is evidence that such a space was available to Emily in her final placement school. It appears to have been provided by the head of department and staff.

What characterised this second discussion was Emily's general knowledge of what was happening in the school, to her pupils and to herself. She tended to report happenings as an insider, rather than as a college student who belonged outside the school. [T2 80: The second in the department, EH, at the beginning, when I was here, there was a Westchester student as well, and NC was in charge of me and EH was in charge of the Westchester student. I didn't, I didn't have a lot to do with her because of that. But just lately, she's got some fantastic ideas and she's very approachable.]

[T2 86: N who works at the end, she's an NQT no, she was an NQT last year, she's very new. She's good for that side of things. When you're feeling sort of new and you don't really know what's going on, she's excellent and her maths knowledge is brilliant, just brilliant.]

[T2 97: There's a scheme of work and it's very structured and it's constantly being reviewed and improved and if someone tries something and it works at a meeting they'll say, oh this worked really well. This resource is really good. (TB: *And are you involved in all of that?*) I go to all the meetings. At the moment I'm a bit introverted I think ... (indistinct)... I'm a bit scared to say I tried this or I don't think this works or something. They've got a lot of experience but that's something that is my fault not theirs, to be honest. I'm included, even in moderating and things like that.]

¹⁸ It is unfortunate that because play is dismissed so readily in educational (though not psychodynamic) circles as a potent context for learning, I must reiterate that play is seen in this context as a serious business

[T2 167: And we've definitely got the sort of, the big council estates and the housing estates. They all come here and that shows ... in their behaviour I guess. Generally, I think they're very well behaved.]

Belonging was illustrated by 'insider statements', and the intimate knowledge of pupils, parents, the acknowledgement of nicknames. [T2 194: *(TB: What are you like in the classroom?)* Emily: What am I like? I don't think that, well I know, I'm not very nice because I'm in a small community. We start hearing comments from people. I know people's mothers, and, the word witch has cropped up a lot. I mean, I'm not that nice, and I'd like to be a lot friendlier than I am. And sometimes they say things and I generally think they're funny and all, and I think, in the future, I'll be able to be, have a better relationship that way, but at the moment I don't think I have the discipline to be able to get away with it. Generally, I'm not very friendly, I don't think. I'm not really bad, but I just, I'm not like I eventually would like to be.]

The process of becoming a teacher included increased awareness of the pupils' performances, her responses to them and her relationship to different groups within a single class. [T2 219: I've realised that it's only in the past two or three weeks that I've realised that within the classroom there have been groups that I've abandoned slightly. Because they are either so good they don't need any ... any encouragement or any discipline and I thought, you're not actually rewarding them for that. They should sort of be rewarded. You know. They're still being ... and I'd lost that, just lately.]

The initial intensity of struggling to attend to the specific elements of teacher performance had been replaced with an ability to take a broader view, once certain behaviours had been 'automatised'. [T2 225: I've relaxed enough to be able to take a step back and have a look at the classroom as a whole instead of just ... (indistinct) ... I don't think about the content of the lessons so much now either. I used to be obsessed by having enough in the lesson and what I'm going to do next and timing, you know, or, "Do this in ten minutes." And now I can relax and take a step back and as long as I've got ... I know what I'm going to do ... I've normally got in my head what I'm going to do next lesson so if it falls short I can do what I want whereas normally I think oh I need this in case I'm ten minutes short.]

Emily realised the emergence of a teacher-self as distinct from the self that functions out of the school context. The teacher self had some clearly discernible characteristics which, although they did not seem to have been consciously or deliberately developed, were

nevertheless thought of as useful within the school context. [T2 258: *(TB: You said witch! How do you feel about that?)* Emily: I think it's funny. I think it's really funny that my own character analysis of myself out of school is not witch at all. And I think it's funny that I've come across that way. I don't know. *(TB: You don't mind it?)* No. I think it's better. I can work with that.]

[T2 497: Someone said, and I can see this, the acting bit. A lot of people say, and I'd be a hopeless actress, but some of them say I'm a witch. I'm obviously not myself in front of that class. I'm taking on another personality, which is a form of acting.]

Emily saw different roles emerging at different times, with different demands. [T2 505: I'll get to be this teacher I want to be in this role. Then I'm going to want promotion and then I'm going to have another step. When it gets to the point of taking of taking the next step I don't know if I want to go into the pastoral side or the department promotional side. I really don't know but once I make that decision and I go up that next step then I want to fill that role and have ambitions for that role.]

7.2.3.4 Managing the course

Emily appeared to have kept control of the direction of her life course through the training.

Her mother had returned to live nearby. [T2 386: I am comfortable with my life at the moment. It's going in the direction I want it to go and so that's got to be good. *(TB: Looking back, what little I know of you, there have been hard times.)* Yes. I'm really pleased actually because I haven't let anything affect this course. And when all the problems started, that's what I set out to do. Cause I didn't want anything affecting it and I haven't.]

Emily separated her life outside school from her life inside. [T2 393: if I was upset, it just had to not be in school time. As soon as I walked through the school door then I just totally put everything to the back of my mind, and then, it's fine to fall apart in the evening I don't mind that but I have to get myself together for the next day. I can't handle things like getting upset when I'm in school. You know? I'm just not that sort of person. So I just totally blanked it out of my mind. I didn't dwell on it. I did a lot at home but not in school.]

Emily had a clear sense of her life course at this point. She was able to reflect on herself as a teacher and looked objectively at the qualities and skills she recognised as developing within her. She recognised something of the teacher she wanted to be. [T2 446 Not getting close but knowing the direction. I'm on the right path. *(TB: You're on the right path).* Yeah. I set very high standards.]

She demonstrated determination, strength of character and clarity of purpose. [T2 453: To {pause} to always give the kids what they deserve. You can either think, oh today we'll just do a chapter from the text book, I can't be bothered. But I always make that extra effort that means I've put something in for the lesson, you know, and, that's my highest expectation. If I started letting the kids down in any way then I'd be very hard on myself. So long as I'm putting my effort into it and it's going the right way then I'll be all right. Then I'm hoping that the experience along with that effort I will make quite a good teacher. You know.]

Emily was aware of changes that were taking place outside the school environment.

Relationships with long standing friends gave some clues to changes in outlook and adjustment to the demands of teaching. [T2 516: Friends who don't have anything to do with teaching. There's been a strain there definitely. I think you do take on a different attitude. I think you do become different. I've changed my priorities.]

It seemed that although relationships with friends were important, maintaining good relationships with individual friends was not as important to Emily as succeeding in becoming a good teacher. She hinted at a cooling of friendships, and expressed disappointment that diverging interests had led to a drifting apart and loss of regular contact and intimacy.

[T2 523: One of my friends who is starting the PGCE I found myself getting on with her so much better than the other friend who works in a shop. That's terrible though. And I hate it but there's nothing I can do at the moment. But that's time again. It's all new at the moment.]

Emily used her mother to explore her thoughts and feelings about her growing involvement with the school and the job of teaching. This was seen as a special role, and at that time only her mother could fulfil the role appropriately [T2 513: My mum, she's always been. If I am proud of something she's the only one I can tell it to. She's the one. I will phone her up and totally speak my true feelings about things. She's the only one. So yes she's been a heavy influence.] What meanings can be associated with heavy here? Is heaviness essential in order to oppose the unbearable lightness of being (to borrow from Milan Kundera), or has it simply been a noticeable burden?

7.2.3.5 The infantilising effect of training

University based training courses appear to have an infantilising effect on student teachers. This may of course be a general feature of rites of passage. Emily described returning to college for a day towards the end of the final placement. The tutor was absent. The students were unable, in the unanticipated absence of the tutor, to organise a discussion about important issues. Emily suggested this was *because the tutor wasn't there*. Initiating discussion seemed like usurping his role. [T2 556: When we go back to college we're looking up to someone else to be the teacher.] Her interpretation was that the course tutors failed to organise the meeting appropriately. Another view, though of course it could also be read as a defensive one, is that this incident positioned Emily firmly as 'teacher' - but only in a school context. [T2 540: there's one thing about going back to college for the odd day. I was disappointed yesterday. I felt well, I've got some good lessons to teach and we were taken out of school for the day. We met W. at one o'clock and it was ideas for pre-professional week. And I said well I'd really like that we all share any resources and good lessons.] [T2 549: what's the point? I'd rather have another week in school. Getting resources together or something like that. I thought well if we've been in school this long and we're coming back for a week surely college can organise a way of seeing a lecturer so we can talk about problems.] This incident happened at the same time as she was able to perform effectively as a teacher in school on a daily basis and be 'looked up to' by the pupils.

Transitions can involve temporary loss of individual power and responsibility. As a student, one gives up one's autonomy to the power of the tutors and the course. In Emily's case, autonomy and control were re-gained to an extent during the final placement when she frequently planned and taught pupils without teacher supervision for lengthy periods of the school day. At this point she was effectively a teacher, and as a successful student she was viewed as such by the pupils.

If this is a reasonable argument, then those who plan courses which begin in university and which then 'push their offspring out into the world of school', are naïve if they don't anticipate some adolescent rejection.

For Emily, there were two teacher-selves emerging. One appeared as an authoritarian parent and seemed to be the dominant self, constructed as a public figure for use in most professional situations. The other teacher-self appeared to be available mainly in specific settings and in relation to particular pupils. Indirectly of course, this nurturing teacher-self had become more widely known because pupils and staff invariably talk about their interactions and their personal knowledge of the teacher's behaviour gradually becomes shared and therefore public knowledge.

Both these teacher-selves were developing at the same time. The nurturing self seemed to have grown in the shadow of, or under the protection afforded by the more authoritarian teacher-self.

At the time of this discussion both these teacher-selves appeared relatively strong, well defined, and adapted to the complex social settings of school and classroom. Emily appeared to be exploring their coexistence. She seemed to have found it easy to develop both these teacher-selves.

7.2.3.6 Integration

The third discussion took place almost exactly one year after the second discussion. By now, Emily had worked in the school for two years as a qualified teacher. She had constructed a complex view of teaching which had already gone a considerable way in incorporating her own unique teacher-self. Early in the discussion she made a distinction between working with colleagues, which she referred to as professional work, and developing relationships with pupils. She did not use a category label for this second aspect of her work, which took up a

large part of our conversation [T3 4: There's the professional how you feel you're getting on in your profession and then how you're getting on with the pupils. Pupils I feel like I've got a good relationship with them now. I've established myself as, they know the boundaries. They don't go too far and something that's stood out, I had one pupil a lot of behavioural difficulties. He couldn't cope in his tutor group and he was put into mine and we've built up a very good relationship.]

Relationships with pupils were highly important to her. She saw these relationships as influenced by the setting of rules and boundaries. She saw herself as responsible for controlling this aspect of her work. She did not suggest that school rules or the general school context was a major determining factor, although Emily was evidently conscious of working within a social context and within the school's scheme of things. She appeared relatively free from external pressure and saw herself as having considerable personal responsibility for determining this area of her work. She saw herself as the main determinant of the nature and purpose of her interactions with individual pupils. [T3 51: I think I'm very fair, within the classroom. If something happens with a pupil I've definitely got my guidelines. It takes a long time doesn't it. Sometimes you say you're going to do one thing but you don't really do it, and you do something else. I know I've definitely, I don't go too far with my punishments to be honest. If I put someone outside the door it's probably for a minute. If I have anyone in for detention it's probably for ten. Somehow, the discipline's all worked out since then. Since they kind of know what's going to happen. And I'm really pleased with that because I still feel my lessons are creative.]

As far as their relationships with Emily are concerned, the pupils were not seen by her as being in a position to negotiate the rules about responsibilities and boundaries, though they were seen as dynamic and influential contributors with their own views. What the pupils did, clearly affected Emily, her responses to them as people, and the boundaries she sought to establish. [T3 81: I've got a general awareness of whether everyone's contributing. I think it's important to build up their confidence and not pick on them, you know?]

The nurturing role that was evident in the previous discussion seemed to have become more firmly established. Emily had continued to develop warm and friendly relationships with individual pupils. There was evidence of high quality, intimate, professional relationships existing with several pupils who faced difficulties at school. [T3 225: I've got one boy in year 7 who's a concern. He's not really naughty but he's not working where he should be. I have one year 8. I was concerned about him and I phoned his parents. And I got him tested and he's dyspraxic. I was looking for reasons why he was being like he was. (TB: *You've always been interested in special needs.*) Yeah, I was quite pleased about that. There were just a few little signs. He's so intelligent but he wouldn't get it down on paper, so if I was to ask him questions - I can remember he came in at year 7 and knew cube numbers - but then he won't write anything down - and I'm finding out about dyspraxia now.]

Emily's wish to develop a nurturing role appeared to have flourished in the two years since she started teaching. It is useful to contrast her nurturing teacher-self with the lack of help and support that Emily experienced when she attended school as a pupil during her early teens. Unlike the teachers who ignored her needs, she was empathic and saw herself as a person who pupils could 'run to' when in difficulties.

Emily's attempt to deal with the 'pupil-under-the-table', not surprisingly seemed to contain some ambiguity in her behaviour. There were aspects of both the authoritarian and nurturing teacher-self in evidence. [T3 272: A lot of calm. A lot of pleasure. Occasional frustration. I've got one pupil in my tutor group he has really bad - I don't know what they are really - he's got problems. He has tantrums. He hides himself under the table and he won't come out. And he won't come out for me. And that really frustrates me. He will for Mr M. And I just can't get him out and that upsets me every single time because I feel like I've failed.]

In the discussion, Emily reported the episode from both perspectives. She appeared to see the pupil's behaviour as challenging her authority, although her main motive seemed to be to protect the pupil from the consequences of his own lack of self-control.

Emily described herself as possessing a range of qualities. Few of them draw on authoritarian behaviour or values and many were associated with nurturing. Her descriptors for her qualities included: fair, approachable, committed, and involved. Classrooms were seen as places where pupils had a right to know what was going to happen. They were places where everyone should have been able to contribute.

She had become someone who *belongs to teaching* and someone who was engaged in the construction of a complex teacher-self that appeared to be better integrated than a year earlier. The emergence of this teacher-self appeared to be partly achieved through transformation and partly through accretion - built up through interaction with the here-and-now as well as through reinterpretation in the present, of past transitions, critical events and significant others.

She described school as a separate bubble of existence. [T3 210: I've always looked on school as a separate little bubble. That whatever's going on outside you can just walk into school. It's a separate little space bubble.] Perhaps school had become, for her, a separate bubble of existence when she faced enormous emotional difficulties as an adolescent in her own secondary school career? A place where she could exclude or at least distance herself from the distress of illness and death?

For Emily, a significant feature of the process of becoming a teacher, was personal development, individuation, integration and the recognition of responsibility for oneself and one's own life course. There is clearly Emily *the private adult self*, and Emily *the public teacher-self* with both selves having become more robust, but contained within an integrated whole. [T3 305: I think I've grown up a lot. (indistinct) I've learned to prioritise more. I've bought a house, you know, dull boring adult things but you have to. You can fight it for so long but just can't win. More independence. I love my own space now. I don't know. I've been doing more of the adult bit. This is my job, then I go home and do this yeah and I can get everything more straight in my head. I feel like I'm more mature.]

The transition involved the realisation of a complex teacher-self and the re-definition of a private-self which was not greeted with quite as much enthusiasm. The teaching-self was seen as wholesome, whereas the maturing adult-self was viewed with a hint of criticism or disappointment and a sense of loss. Perhaps there was some projective identification of the less pleasant features of transition onto the private self? It was the private-self that was described as doing 'dull, boring, adult things' like buying houses and growing up. There was quite a strong distinction and separation of the private-self and the teacher-self. This is not intended to suggest a fragmentation of the multiple-selves but rather a symbiosis. Symbiosis and internal coherence may not be automatic outcomes of the transitional process. In Emily's case, however, the steady emergence of an teacher-self was associated with adjustment, growth, success, while development of her private-self was associated with a loss of freedom and the irresponsibility of adolescence. Both were tolerable aspects of her self, to herself, and didn't appear to threaten the core Emily or her belief systems. Emily appeared to see it as part of the process of growing up and accepted it (albeit with some reluctance) as tolerable and part of an apparently unavoidable process of maturation.

7.2.4 Pauline

Pauline applied for a place on the PGCE course whilst she was working as a civil engineer. She was married and her husband worked in the same profession but on other projects in other areas. Teaching had always interested Pauline and she had considered it as a job when she was in secondary school before taking an A - level course. Like Emily, Pauline's first degree was not in mathematics, although the civil engineering course required considerable study of mathematics. How would the course prepare her for teaching mathematics? Pauline showed herself to be a very reflective person. She continually looks back over her past and sees herself as a developing person. She looks particularly at her growing confidence. The transition to teaching was in many ways a reluctant one. She loved the life of a civil engineer and was sad to be giving it up. How was she preparing herself for the challenge of beginning training as a teacher?

7.2.4.1 The search for themes

I followed the same procedure as I had with the taped conversations with Emily. I still felt the need to transcribe the whole conversation. Not all has been included here. I have not included the transcription of the conversation that took place when the repertory grid was constructed. I monitored the effectiveness and appropriateness of full transcription.

7.2.4.2 Reflecting on methodology and methods

It is not clear yet whether full transcription is the only or the best mechanism for identifying themes. It emphasises the visual whereas drawing out themes from an audio tape emphasises oral communication. The visual form of the data emphasises structure and makes regular comparisons with different parts an easier task. Transcription degrades the emotional content, inflection, speech pattern including hesitation and emphasis. Information about the vocal register is eliminated.

I considered how to respond to these two different processes whereby data was collapsed in different ways. It was possible for me to search for themes directly from the audio taped conversations without interspersing a process of transcription. The data was collapsed in different ways and the channel of communication was different. The quality of the collapsed data may be just as rich. I used the emergent themes as the basis for the narrative that follows below.

7.2.5 Themes that appeared in discussion with Pauline

7.2.5.1 Discussion 1 (27-10-95)

The following themes were identified.

- *Playing at being a teacher.*
- *Work as a purposeful activity.*
- *Relationships.*
- *The development of confidence and self-esteem.*
- *Being a student, and becoming a teacher.*
- *Home life and influences.*
- *School life as a child.*

7.2.5.2 Discussion 2 (11-6-96)

- *Confirmation and belonging.*
- *Developing confidence.*
- *Shaping a teacher-self from a historical-self.*
- *Making sense of past and present.*
- *Developing a teacher-self.*

7.2.5.3 Discussion 3 (14-7-98)

- *Confidence.*

- Being appreciated and being helpful.
- Avoidance of ambiguity.
- Dislike of pastoral work.
- Relationships.
- Responding to pupils.
- Developing as a teacher.

Again, I chose to draw on the themes to construct a narrative that explored the development of Pauline's teacher-self and did not follow the themes slavishly. I wanted to write a narrative that explored the development of her adult-self as teacher.

7.2.6 Pauline - a narrative account of transition

It seemed that there were two selves to whom we could listen. There was a child-self who revered adults as older and wiser. This self responded shyly to adults: one might say withdrawn and even anxious to please. There was another self however who was strong, determined rather than wilful, who prepared carefully for the possibilities in life. [T1 25: they just kept saying "No, no you do what you want, don't be a teacher just do anything else but!" So I went to university and I decided to do a Civil and Structural Engineering degree and that took me four years and I got that in B. And when I graduated civil engineering was my world and I loved it and I went out on to site and I worked on site for two years. Then I went into a design office for a year, as part of my training to become a chartered engineer. Then I went back on site for a year and unfortunately I hurt my back going up and down ladders all the time and started going to the chiropractor and it was costing me a fortune in money and I'd be too scared to actually do things at work because I would hurt myself and then it would cost me lots of money. So I thought... I had to sit down and actually think about it and I decided to go back to my original choice, which was to become a teacher. So that was really it, but it wasn't that sort of straightforward, if you know what I mean.]

This self was not trapped by stereotypes. As a female, she was sometimes the subject of discrimination in her first profession of civil engineering, but her enthusiasm for the work

helped her overcome it. She drank in the pubs, spent all day and night on site when necessary, specialising in sewerage management. She became one of the team but not one of the 'boys'. She retained an essentially female personality.

The two selves evident in the discussion, appeared to have emerged during childhood. [T1 290: I mean I noticed a lot of changes in my confidence, from when I left school to when I left university and again to when I left my job. I think it's all to do with self confidence, that I know I can do something if I set my mind to it and I'm not... I don't particularly like standing up in front of people and talking.]

Opportunities for self expression came through great application to academic studies and through sports. Here Pauline demonstrated an ability to determine her own life. [T1 299:

When I was at school I wouldn't say boo to a goose. I used to sit there and get on with my work. I used to have a couple of close friends and I never used to do anything really, well never used to say a lot. I used to do an awful lot because I used to do all the sports under the sun at school and I was in all the top classes in lessons and used to do all the work for those. But to look at me then and say you're going to be a teacher, I'd have just laughed. You know what I mean, no confidence in myself whatsoever.]

She chose to specialise in science subjects. She chose her sports and became involved in gym clubs. She chose to belong and to compete. She demonstrated to her parents that she possessed the qualities needed to make choices.

All this happened in a context where choice of television programmes, clothes and behaviour were all carefully managed for her on a daily basis by her parents throughout her early childhood and her teenage years. [T1 359: just things like Blackadder on the television. We weren't allowed to watch that and it was all when I was about sixteen, but my Mum and Dad wouldn't let us watch it because they didn't think it was right.]

[T1 364: I mean I watch it now and I think it's really good but ... and like they used to just tell us what clothes we could wear and things like that. We didn't have any choice until I left home and went to university.]

Her parents appeared united. Many children and adolescents establish an intimate relationship with one parent which is based on collusion with the one against the other. There was no

suggestion of this here. Pauline didn't appear to have been playing them off against one another. There was nothing clearly stated but the impression was of parental and family unity.

It was useful to examine the possible relationship between the high level of parental direction and Pauline's lack of confidence and feeling the odd one out. It was too simplistic to suggest a causal link, by assuming either that Pauline's lack of confidence led to her parents having to provide a highly directive environment, or the converse. It was appropriate to assume the two functioned in relation to each other. That her lack of confidence and their taking the responsibility to choose television programmes and clothes, went hand in hand. We could deduce from the transcript that Pauline was not so much afraid to trust her own judgement but rather that she was inclined to defer to those in authority and to under-play the status of her own opinions. These responses to authority could be looked for in other encounters and may be particularly appropriate in an educational context where school life is strongly hierarchical.

Here was someone who appeared ambivalent about being alone, possibly she was someone who feared loneliness although this was not explored in detail during the discussion. At one point Pauline said she enjoyed her own company. There were other references to loneliness but the two were not examined together to see how they related.

Pauline perceived adults as having access to greater knowledge or wisdom. Her response to being told to, 'Do anything you like but don't be a teacher', was to accept the advice but then ponder the reason for the advice - not to question it. The advice influenced her decision to take up civil engineering. She readily recalled it our discussion.

Throughout her account she connected rational thought and feelings. She reported feeling happier once she had made the decision to change careers. One might have expected more

concern about being challenged by others, especially older people - but no. The more confident self was clearly playing a prominent part.

Pauline used a strongly rational approach to list the advantages and disadvantages of a lifestyle change. Once she had done this she felt prepared to explore the ideas further with her husband and her mother. There was no sense of Pauline making the decision for other people. Rather, it appeared that Pauline established a preparatory period where she began to think the unthinkable, then allow it to become a possibility. This appeared to be a preparatory stage from which to embark on genuine joint discussion.

Throughout the discussion Pauline made interesting use of rational, emotional and intuitive thinking in her day-to-day life. All three seemed to be integrated into Pauline's ways of knowing. *She demonstrated that she drew on all three to inform her.*

When she learned of Pauline's decision, her mother recalled stories of her childhood, teaching her cousins and her younger sisters. This was seen by both Pauline and her mother as powerful material, confirmatory evidence of the appropriateness of Pauline's decision. There was a sense in which Pauline re-used these and other memories to inform her current decisions and shape her present self. In this case, she identified key qualities that she believed she demonstrated as a child and which she continued to possess in adulthood. She saw these as examples of qualities of good teachers.

She regularly drew upon memories of childhood and other experience to help her to initiate the construction of a teacher self. Both sides of her personality were in evidence, in that she was:

- able to identify key qualities without embarrassment, and;
- remain self-effacing.

Her need was to have an inspiring job, one to which she was committed. This was an important feature of her choice of both careers. Pauline described the commitment to civil engineering and to teaching in similar ways.

She busied herself in exploring the wider issues of education as soon as the course began. She explored important issues, read more widely than the course required, started to take an interest in education as a news and current affairs topic. She began to acquire habits of thinking about teaching from the perspective of a teacher.

Apprehension was never far away. Her degree was full of maths but was it the right sort? At the start of the course everyone else seemed to know each other, but she knew no-one. Standing up in front of people and talking to them would be nerve-wracking, but the course should give her the techniques needed to do it. The school pupils might be difficult but she would know more than them because she was older and because she would have been trained - so things should be all right.

Pauline appeared a cautious optimist. I got a strong sense of someone living in the healthy cross currents between a fully functioning rational mind informed by continual emotional commentary. She was also highly reflective. She looked back over her life and saw herself changing. She could see changes to her self-confidence. Transitions were clearly marked out in her observations about increased self-confidence. She looked back and noticed, [T1 290: changes in my confidence, from when I left school to when I left university and again to when I left my job. I think it's all to do with self confidence].

Pauline had already begun the transition to teaching by the time she told her mother of her decision and her mother reminisced about Pauline playing teacher in the garage with her cousins. Transitions sometimes include a positioning of the trainee as not-adult. Studentship

can allow this and some trainees take this up strongly. Pauline didn't identify with studentship, although the existence of certain aspects of her own personality meant that she had a history of positioning herself as not-adult on occasions when she felt she was not well enough informed or experienced.

She did not seem to have positioned herself as student, although this conversation took place early in the course and there might have been changes that took place later that influenced her view of herself as student. During the conversation she reported at least two conversations with a friend about being a student again. She had already contrasted the feeling of being a PGCE trainee teacher with her status as a civil engineering student.

She argued that in part the difference was perhaps due to living away from the college environment in her own home as a trainee teacher.

What seemed to be having a greater impact on her emotionally were the responses she was already receiving and enjoying from working with pupils in school. Some brief mention was made of whether she would be able to manage. The emotional charge was one of excitement at being with the children and teachers in school.

Part of the construction of her teacher-self emerged at this point in the discussion. She was surprised by the reaction of children to her as a teacher. Typically, her comments were couched in language that echoed her own past, and her own childhood responses to teachers. Her observation of the pupils was, 'They can't be scared of me!'. Pauline was beginning to position herself as a teacher through an elaborate mechanism that allowed her to recognise herself as generating those feelings and responses in pupils that teachers produced in her as a pupil. The type of construction that Pauline might put on this reflection could be: They made me feel like that and they were teachers - I seem to be making these pupils feel the same so I must be a teacher too.

Here was another example of her ability to combine rational argument and feelings to shape her perception of herself and the transition she was entering.

At the end of this first conversation, Pauline seemed to have already been working on the acquisition of the mannerisms and perspectives of a teacher. She appeared sensitive to the idea of transitions though she didn't use the word. She saw certain periods in her life (school, university, first career) as influencing her, particularly in respect of her self-confidence. She saw the training year as equipping her with basic skills and knowledge that she could use. Knowing what to do and what to say would be a key element in the continued growth of her self-confidence. She clearly expected to be a confident teacher once the course had trained her. She also saw herself as being able to learn for herself by being in school and making sense of things there.

I cannot leave things here without commenting on the fact that her family life was strongly hierarchical. Her father was a member of the armed forces, an institution organised to exert force and power through strict observance of its hierarchical structure. Pauline was now training to work in schools. Schools are another type of institutional structure that rely on the use of hierarchy for organisation and control.

7.2.6.1 Early experiences

Teaching was a theme in Pauline's early life. She often imagined herself as a teacher. Her childhood was closely regulated by her parents and their views were held in high regard. Their discouragement of Pauline in following her career interest was genuinely puzzling to her at the time. Her respect for them and the high value she placed on their views rendered them omniscient from her childhood perspective. They must know why teaching was a bad idea, if only she could discover what they already knew, then she too would understand.

There seemed to be two equally powerful sources of influence in Pauline's construction of herself as a person. She could sometimes act as an omnipotent adult, though on some occasions she appeared almost powerless. On the latter occasions she appeared to define herself almost exclusively in terms of what she sensed others perceived her to be. Pauline's behaviour suggested a self that was continually being re-created, drawing on what had gone before and re-fashioning past selves to meet the prevailing situation.

On occasions, Pauline took the leading role, both in her family life and when working in school. She did this, for example, when taking the decision to leave civil engineering and start a teaching career. She found it natural to take most of the responsibility for this decision herself. Where did she get the assuredness to do this? [T1: 271: I'm quite good at making decisions, but I normally have to think them through so I can work out the consequence of it first. Because I like to know what is going to happen]. She worked through the problems in a logical and rational way. (Perhaps here she was mirroring the way her father tackled problems?)

She was careful to ensure the well-being of those around her. When functioning in this way she appeared to draw on the idealised behaviour of her own parents. Her accounts of her rather strict upbringing (characterised by a high degree of close supervision; of television viewing, behaviour, language, choice of clothing, ...), show her to be highly respectful of her parents *as parents*. She gave her parents a high approval rating for their performance as parents. From her account one could not get much of a sense of them as individuals in their own right. There was little offered other than her construction of them as parent figures. We could take from this that Pauline was very clear about what it was to be a good parent, because her own parents provided a model which she idealised as a child. They were seen as wise to have brought her up in the way that they did, they knew best, they had the best of intentions, and the restrictions they imposed were sensible and a sign of protective love. In fact it would be interesting to know how *protection* figures in Pauline's construction of love.

One consequence of the very particular construction of childhood and parenthood that Pauline has generated was that she also knew what it was to be a particular type of child. She was obedient, respectful, reliable and honest and this was reproduced in her generalised construction of appropriate childhood behaviour, particularly in situations where children interact with adult (and particularly parent) figures. One needs to add that the child thus constructed, was not one with an independent viewpoint who could present counter arguments. Deference was also a requirement from Pauline's perspective.

So my attempt at a narrative account was shaped by my belief that Pauline had quite strong perceptions of a particular kind of *parenthood* and *childhood* which I argued were not only influential in shaping her current attitudes and behaviours but also, on occasions she was constrained by one or other of these roles, and became locked into a pattern of behaviour that drew directly on one or the other. She could, I argued, be a strong parent figure (but most often of the type that her parents were). Equally, she could revert to the child that she was, a deferential child whose sense of self worth was defined by the opinions of those with whom she was immediately associated.

The decision not to discuss giving up civil engineering with anyone other than her husband could be interpreted as avoidance of playing the role of the child who disappoints, the child who has not taken the advice of parents. It could be argued that Pauline was able to minimise her own feelings of disappointment by avoiding a public announcement to the family that she was going into teaching. [T1: 129: I felt quite alone you know, 'What am I doing? I've done this and now I've stopped it.']

Decisions were often associated with feelings of anxiety about being good enough, successful, or being able to manage in new situations. [T1: 158: I was obviously a bit apprehensive about what was going on because I hadn't actually done a pure maths degree and I was a bit worried that I wouldn't be able to

cope with maths, and we did an awful lot of maths in my degree anyway but everyone else on the course, apart from a couple, have done pure maths degrees.]

Although she described herself as 'not particularly confident' she displayed considerable confidence in some settings. In attempting to identify which settings these might be, I was unable to be specific, except to suggest that the response to a situation was determined partly by the role that Pauline took when engaging with the context. One could usefully draw on the three main positions of transactional analysis (Harris, 1999)¹⁹; Parent, Adult and Child. The adult role is rational and functions from a secure knowledge of a robust self, (I'm OK). Pauline, I argued, often occupied either a child or a parent role. The way her behaviour was shaped by her perceptions of appropriate Parent and Child was significant for her development as a teacher since they shaped both her perception of how to be a teacher as well as how to be a (good) child.

In her early experiences at the outset of the course Pauline reported pleasure in no longer feeling like a student in the way she had when an undergraduate. She reasoned that this may have been because she was living in her own home. Pauline also found great pleasure and personal satisfaction in teaching small groups. This was a strong confirmatory experience. The college-based part of the course allowed her to review her own maths knowledge and to explore pedagogical issues. Initial training visits to school brought Pauline face to face with the emergence of a teacher-self and the accompanying shift from who one was, to who one might become. [T1: 310: some of the children there don't say a word and you look at them and they look scared and you think 'They can't be scared of me!' But when I think back I was like that]. The associations with her own childhood were many and varied. She argued that she should be able to become a teacher partly because [T1: 329: ... it's just a different situation and these (children) are mostly going to be smaller than me so... and I should know more than them if I'm teaching them anyway.] Here was

¹⁹ For a description of Transactional Analysis see Harris, T. A. (1999). For a discussion of the theory of human behaviour as being determined by earlier experiences and learned routines, see Steiner, C.M. (1990)

another reconstruction of childhood and parenthood (in the guise of *knowledgeable teacher*) that helped Pauline. Children are smaller than teachers, teachers are like parents in that they know more. Therefore, I should be OK as a teacher because I'm bigger and because *I am* the more knowledgeable person.

The second interview took place towards the end of the training year when Pauline had successfully passed the course and the teacher practice. She had built up good relationships with staff and students and was respected. The students were challenging and Pauline had developed a good level of classroom control. She had become an enthusiastic and effective mathematics teacher. The department was well-resourced. It consisted of a small cohesive group of staff with their own office where they socialised during coffee and lunch breaks.

Pauline had been encouraged to continue at the school by being invited to apply for a temporary vacancy. She had already been for two interviews. She expressed herself confidently and described the way her confidence had developed over the training year. [T2 29: My problem was, when I actually started the course I really did want to be a teacher, but I lack confidence until I've done something and I've done it well. So, until I can do something well, I won't tell anyone I can do it really. Because it's my confidence in myself. I mean, you read any reports they do, they say, has grown in confidence, has grown in confidence.]

The way in which her confidence influenced Pauline's development as a teacher can be seen in the way she describes her preparation for teaching during her first placement. [T2 65: in the first school I was terrified. And I got over it by making sure I had such a big lesson plan and it was written down word for word what I was going to say that I could never just sort of freeze. I could read it out and we could get on with it! Gradually the lesson plans were getting shorter and shorter, just sort of coming down to content of work rather than everything else.]

7.2.6.2 The difficulties of knowing too much

Pauline expressed ambivalence over relationships with school students. On the one hand, Pauline described helping them out and was concerned to make sure that students were

happy. On the other hand, she found personal contact problematic. [T2 152: It's an important part. It's one of the ways you get to know people isn't it? talking and making sure they're OK and they're happy. If they're not happy they're not going to come to school and do well]. [T2 155: Well, it's a bit of a pain sometimes. It's always when you're busy. You've always got something to do. It's just nice to feel wanted really. To feel useful. She's got a few problems with her family. I don't have any private conversations with her. I say you'd better go and see your tutor. (TB: *You limit the extent of it?*) Yeah. I keep being very aware of how much I'm supposed, it's not in confidence, I always tell her. If there's anything dangerous to you or something, I might have to tell someone.] In some ways, it seemed that Pauline was the one who feared the disclosures. It was not clear why, but the pastoral side of work had always presented difficulties for Pauline. Here she described the tutor group as creating the most difficult situations. In her final interview after teaching as a qualified teacher, the pastoral side of work was again seen as the source of many problems for herself and other teachers. It appeared to be the diversity (of abilities, interests, maturity) that Pauline identified as problematic, together with a lack of direction, [T2 166: we get these very brief notes about what we are supposed to do and we have to do this for about an hour. And I've got this Year 9 and there are some real pains in there. And they just do not do as they are told.] This was contrasted with the mathematics classes which were set by ability and which, in comparison were not difficult to control and teach. For her maths lessons, Pauline either knew the script or wrote one for herself. It would seem that in contrast, she didn't have a script for managing the students in a tutor group session and she didn't seem to be sufficiently confident to write her own. [T2 210: I know what I'm doing really in maths, whereas in tutorials it's all a bit vague really.]

It must be said that it is not unusual for teachers to find themselves in this type of situation. What was interesting was the relative difference in Pauline's ability to self-organise across the range of different settings that existed within the placement school.

Pauline found it easy to review her professional development as a teacher of mathematics. She had been able to organise and teach a wide range of topics. She met the expectations of the other teachers in the department and organised practical lessons. She spent a lot of time

finding practical activities that the students enjoyed and which exemplified the mathematics that had to be taught. She derived a lot of satisfaction from the enjoyment that the students got and to some extent her ability to see herself as successful was dependent on being able to recognise that they were enjoying their mathematics lessons. The views of others continued to remain important, not just because they could be encouraging or discouraging but because, for Pauline, they continued to play an important part in the construction of her teacher-self.

[T2 316: My friend's a teacher and she's really interested in how I'm doing here. Because she didn't think I'd be able to do it. She didn't have much faith in me! So I feel I've sort of proved myself.] [T2 332: Just my family. They say that I'm so much happier. (TB: *They've noticed?*) Yes. They've noticed that. I must be!]

7.2.6.3 Growing into the job

Two years later, Pauline had been working in the same school since she qualified. She was positive about the experience and obviously encouraged by many aspects of the work. Some themes seemed to have continued throughout the period. [T3 3: I've had loads and loads of positive things about my work which has really made me feel happy and know that what I'm doing is what I really wanted to do. I mean, the first term it wasn't like that at all. I basically just got on with it and I was really working hard every night, late at night. And I didn't know if I was doing it right or wrong. And at December time I sort of said to my head of maths, 'Am I doing OK?' And she was really surprised that I even thought that question. And she said, 'Yes you're really doing well. We're really pleased with you.'] Her confidence and enthusiasm was qualified by her need for external confirmation to be direct, verbal and from an authority (parental) figure. She had established herself as an effective mathematics teacher and had taken on considerable responsibility for organising the department's resources. She was well thought of by parents and students. She has expanded her teaching to include A-level work and had been considered for promotion within the school. She still disliked the pastoral work. [T3 74: I don't want to do the pastoral side though. No way! I hate that. I don't like the little petty problems. I'd much rather stick with the subject rather than go for jobs like assistant head of year.]

For Pauline, getting to know the children was important. She saw herself as doing this most effectively within the context of mathematics lessons. Managing the students' emotional

difficulties continued to frustrate her. It took her away from the work that she saw as constituting her most effective contribution to students' learning. [T3 94: when someone bursts into tears and we talk to them and they say they've just had an argument with a friend. You spend time talking to them and calming them down and the next step is they're back to normal again and you suddenly find out it happens every couple of weeks and you just think, Oh! You wish you could spend your time on someone who really needs it. Rather than being sort of distracted by the loudest ones.]

7.2.6.4 Constructing our selves and the selves of others

It is appropriate to write a short aside following this interpretation of Pauline's development. My argument is that we construct not only our own selves, but the selves of others too. I argue that there is little value in describing ourselves or others *as if* an externally verifiable truth exists about an single completely definable entity that we might call 'that person'.

My own perception of others is shaped by my personal constructs which emphasise power relationships between people. I am disposed to draw parallels between stories of childhood and adolescence, and adult behaviours. I explore individuals' prior experiences and retell them in order to make sense of an individual's current behaviour.

From this perspective, I am emphasising certain aspects of Pauline's development as a teacher, because:

- I am sensitised to these aspects of human behaviour;
- as I have articulated previously, my developmental theory of the construction of a teacher-self implicates earlier interpersonal dynamics as a powerful shaping and defining influence.

From the perspective this offers, I can construct a story of the development of Pauline's teacher-self in which her childhood and adolescent experiences have shaped the teacher she has become. One test of validity of this narrative account is for readers to explore the resonance they experience; either with my viewpoint, with Pauline's experiences, or with my

use of this interpretative account as a way of illuminating teacher development. Where resonance is experienced, a teacher who is reflecting on their own development can review their own predispositions. How do they 'see' others? How do they 'see' themselves? Can they interpret their own childhood and adolescent experiences in ways that illuminate the process of professional development and the emergence of an effective and harmonious teacher-self, and make the process of self-development more efficacious?

7.2.7 Brigitte

I followed the same procedure with the data from Brigitte as with the two previous interviewees. Interviews were recorded with permission. I transcribed the whole of the interview except for the work with repertory grids which will form part of a subsequent study. The transcriptions were used to explore themes and these appear below in list form. The process of searching for themes allowed me to tune in to the undercurrents that exist in all conversation. I then used the themes (but did not follow them slavishly) in my attempt to give a narrative account of the emergence of a teacher-self in Brigitte.

7.2.8 Themes that appeared in discussion with Brigitte

The following themes were identified in the three interviews.

7.2.8.1 Discussion 1 (21-11-95)

- Dislike of ambiguity.
- Stressful and secure situations.
- Apparent inconsistency between behaviour and speech.
- Defining family roles.
- Teaching as transmission.
- Adjusting to the reality of teaching.
- Statistics, influence and power.

- Enthusiasm and passions - self as unpredictable, unknowable.
- Judging self by observing others.
- Teaching through passion - the consequences of being inspired.
- The shaping of the emergent teacher-self.
- Satisfaction derived from challenge.
- Limitations of the training course.
- School as the defining element in early development of teacher-self.
- Qualities of the good teacher.
- Challenging oneself to change by putting oneself in disturbing situations.

7.2.8.2 Discussion 2 (12-6-96)

- Recognition of transition as a loss of power for the student-teacher.
- Pleasure in establishing relationships.
- Developing confidence.
- Differential response to pupils of different ages.
- The importance of Brigitte's own personal relationships.
- Awareness of the importance of endings.
- Ambivalence about the teaching placement.
- Confirmation about choice of teaching maths.
- Awareness of self-development.
- A desire to be organised and in control.
- High expectations of self and others.
- Managing different pedagogical expectations of college and school.
- Developing skills of classroom management.
- Robustness and personal confidence set against vulnerability.

- Gaining satisfaction from pupils' persistence, and motivation in lessons.
- Interest in pastoral work.
- Teaching as performance - a different way of thinking and behaving.

7.2.8.3 Discussion 3 (31-7-98)

- Relationships with pupils as a source of satisfaction.
- Interest in pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Raising pupils' self esteem.
- Determination, self confidence and commitment.
- The need for positive confirmation of ability and success.
- Interacting with pupils in lessons as a source of pleasure.
- Working autonomously and making decisions.
- Dislike of school politics.
- Increased confidence and flexibility in teaching styles.
- Using the training process for self-development.
- The need for feedback, encouragement, support and mentoring.

7.2.9 Brigitte - a narrative account of transition

Brigitte had wanted to teach for a long time although she had been busy pursuing other interests for a few years. Her family has a history of working in catering and for a while Brigitte tried this as a career. She ran a restaurant for a year but found the work very stressful. She thought of teaching statistics but does not seem to have considered that teaching too might be stressful. She did not identify the source of the stress that she experienced when catering, but did suggest that there was, for her, a sense of safety and security in working within mathematics. One source of stress for many people is the uncontrollability of life-events. Gaining and maintaining control of

herself, significant others and her life-course were features of Brigitte's conversations and mathematics was something she could control.

Brigitte spoke rapidly, with enthusiasm and a bubbly lightness. I identified what I thought was a contradiction between her manner and how she described herself. She appeared energetic and busy, and I thought, spoke almost with a sense of urgency. When I probed, Brigitte disagreed. [T1 34: The difference is that I am not in a hurry, I'm not in a hurry, (*oh your not?*) No. (*Why is that?*) Why should I be in a hurry? Nothing's got to be done tomorrow]

She described the previous year's work in her father's hotel with her sister. Later in the interview, she described her experience of sibling rivalry. She defined her relationships with her family in terms of work: almost as a business arrangement. In fact one could say she defined her family relationships in terms of the work the family members did and how they did it. [T1 52: working with your family can be difficult and I have a very working relationship with my family anyway, we are not a very close family.]

Brigitte enjoys maths and particularly statistics. She perceived mathematics in terms of clarity and enjoys this quality. At the beginning of the interview she made a distinction between maths (unambiguous, predictable) and other aspects of her life [T1 9: I like black and white. I can't write essays, numbers are good, but essays I have real problems with.]

Teaching was described in terms of her own learning as well as that of students. [T1 61: I love gaining knowledge and passing it on. And I get a lot of satisfaction out of that.]

At this early stage of the course Brigitte was already adjusting her aspirations in the light of the teaching experiences on the first placement. [T1 61: not as great as I hoped it would be but there again I

am not surprised (*what's not so great?*) Oh class sizes, the way kids are, that was one of the reasons why I wanted to teach at university cos the people are there because they want to learn the majority of the time.]

She saw statistics as a source of power, potentially available for controlling others and manipulating them. She wanted to make students aware of this danger through her teaching. [T1 79: you suddenly realise quite what a powerful tool it is, and in the wrong hands it can lead to very bad results.] She frequently expressed firm opinions and presented herself as a committed person, being led by her beliefs.

7.2.9.1 Interpreting Brigitte's passions

In reading Brigitte's transcript I was reminded of the passion that was present during the interview. [T1: 75: I think it is something you either love or hate, but the thing is that it is such a new subject on its own, ... it is only when you isolate it that you suddenly realise quite what a powerful tool it is, and in the wrong hands it can lead to very bad results.] I speculated about questions that could be put to Brigitte along the lines of, "What bad results do you fear when powerful tools are put into wrong hands?"

I was sensitised to the possibility of hearing some reference to her past experience which might account for, or at least resonate with, her current desire. I wondered whether Brigitte wished to protect young people, not specifically from bad statistics teaching, but from power exercised by the 'wrong hands'. And because of the passion that accompanied the discussion, I wondered whether this theme meant something special to Brigitte.

Thus, my use of Malan's ideas in this context led me to consider the possibility that the passion for teaching statistics well (so that young people can be protected from the 'wrong hands') may be a defence constructed in response to an anxiety produced by thinking about young people being vulnerable to the unscrupulous use of statistics. Such a defence could also serve to protect

Brigitte from the emergence of strong feelings unconsciously associated with earlier experiences of being manipulated in other ways by unscrupulous people.

7.2.9.2 Integrating aspects of the self

Brigitte often used dynamic and expressive language. She also perceived herself as passionate. [T1

111: I probably feel as passionate about my rugby as I do about my statistics.] However, there is another aspect to her character. This is presented in those parts of the interviews when she refers to being overwhelmed on occasions by lack of motivation, depression and despondency. More recently, Brigitte seemed to have been more accepting of these different aspects of her personality.²⁰ [T1 127: it's just a matter of taking each day as it is and see how it is, some mornings I wake up and it's bad and some mornings I wake and it's not.]

She introduced a complex idea about facing up to personal anxieties and problems. Brigitte recognised that one can trivialise personal problems, and also that other people, in attempts to be supportive, can dismiss one's concerns. She seemed to be arguing that if one attempts to dismiss one's problems as minimal, in some way one is trivialising oneself, which in turn can lead to a loss of self-respect.

She seemed to be saying that one should stay with the complexity and the intensity of the feelings associated with one's personal problems rather than dismissing them as trivial, especially when one knows that one is struggling with a deep or painful issue.

She also compared herself with others [T1 131: but em I see that a lot of people can cope so I don't see any reason why I couldn't cope.], but only in order to encourage herself.

²⁰ During this part of the interview I was reminded of Winston Churchill's description of the 'Black Dog' that often accompanied him. Self and other separate and distinct: at one and the same time, part and yet apart.

Some of the qualities that Brigitte saw as constituting an effective teacher-self emerged in the interview. First, there was the notion of passion as a driving force. This is a quality that she recognised in her own life experience. Brigitte recognised she is sometimes driven by her enthusiasm. She hinted that at other times, she can be immobilised by depression and an absence of enthusiasm or passion.

Identification and non-identification played important roles in the construct of Brigitte's teaching-self. In Brigitte's judgement, bad teaching leads to boredom. At this stage in the training she was beginning to articulate her notion of what constitutes bad and good teaching. She made an interesting comparison between her current experiences with teachers and her past experience as a pupil. She was reminded of teachers who engage learners in subtle ways. [T1 142: He never taught us maths, but we were learning maths the whole time, and it was very subtly and cleverly done. (*Really?*) He was brilliant and I decided then I wanted to teach maths.]

Brigitte regarded the excessive use of textbooks as detrimental to learning. Her view was that the majority of people can master the basic skills if mathematics is taught well. She suggested that textbook learning is divorced from real life in the minds of students in school.

She saw her own developmental needs in terms of acquiring classroom skills in organisation and management. [T1 167: just really about classroom management because that's where you are totally vague. I mean I've got the maths knowledge, I just don't know how to handle the children... That's what I'd like to learn.]

Bad teaching was associated with choking, with being sick, [T 189: they are actually sick to death of their booklets, they are absolutely choked with them, you can see it, everyone, take them away get rid of them for two weeks, get some inspiration back into them.] A second metaphor or double meaning can be attached to

inspiration (inspire – to breathe in air). So, within one relatively short utterance, the theme of breathing, choking, sickness and death are all related to mathematics.

As an effective teacher Brigitte could already motivate students [T1 223: I find them [students with SEN] very challenging and very rewarding, because they don't have to actually learn that much before they are pleased with themselves] and she recognised that she already had expertise, as a teacher of statistics, to offer colleagues [T1 240: they are not specialists and already I have had a few ask me questions which is quite nice cos' it means there could well be an opening for me in any sixth form if there is that lack of statistics teachers around.]

7.2.9.3 Transition and powerlessness

Brigitte was unable to influence the college course sufficiently to deal with her need to explore specific situations in a particular school. Instead, the course focused on generic teaching issues (exploring situations that she considered to be idealistic) and failed to deal with specific problems that she and other students faced [T1 263: their (college tutors') ideas on an ideal school. They do not exist. They don't even nearly exist. So by teaching us something like that really isn't getting us anywhere.]

Transition is often marked by the student's lack of power when negotiating their role in school (for example when being required to teach extra classes at short notice) which Brigitte saw as detracting from time that should have been spent by teachers giving students instruction and guidance [T1 275: what they are meant to be teaching us at school they're not having time enough to do.] but was unable to assert her needs. Brigitte recognised the powerful influence of the role model that her professional school-based tutor provided but was not able to establish the level of contact with him that she wanted. Here is an example of the relative 'powerlessness' of the junior, and it suggests that this powerlessness is an outcome of the process of traditional PGCE training with students 'belonging' to a university course being placed in school for periods of training.

The trainee undergoing transition is expected to give up power on entry. Transition includes acknowledging a lack of experience and expertise that will be ameliorated as a direct consequence of transition. The particular context of teaching can involve trainees deferring to two sources of expertise; first, the expertise possessed by the college tutor and second, the expertise possessed by the school-based professional.

Transition meant ambiguity. Brigitte was a student on a HE training course and at the same time she showed signs of seeing herself as already belonging to the school. She said [T1 307: *we (my emphasis)* haven't got the support staff ... *we* are meant to have classroom assistants.]

This was interestingly ambiguous, because Brigitte followed this utterance with [there is me and the other teacher.] So the *we* could have stood for 'we teachers working together in school' with self-identificatory implications. Alternatively, the 'we' could be a plural: two people working in the same classroom. Her decision to use *we* as a pronoun sensitised me to search for other signs of perceived belonging. Where else could one find thoughts of belonging, becoming attached, of self-identificatory processes in the transitional space?

Non-identificatory episodes also served to shape Brigitte's sense of teacher-self. The advice she got from one male teacher was firmly rejected. He directly encouraged her to be aggressive and threatening towards students in school. [T1 396: He said to me afterwards you should have bawled at him because he is serious. Go up to them that far away from their face and yell. But afterwards I said that's not me, that's not how I can handle the situation.]

The infantilising process may be a necessary part of transition. Brigitte recognised that much of the power for determining the direction of her study lay in the hands of others. [T1 424: You learn to adapt just because that comes with the job and I mean it's like this year I have almost got to sit down and shut up and get through the course and then as soon I get teaching then maybe I can start more to develop my own style.] [T1 430: it's a case of doing as they say at the moment and then perhaps start to develop your own ideas.]

I detected here that Brigitte was aware that she already had a style and 'knew' (not necessarily in a way that could be articulated at that moment) that she was developing a personal style. Brigitte could recognise an emergent teacher-self.

Brigitte revealed another part of her personality when she described her time in London. Here, we hear of a perturbed person, knocked off course by 'being away' from 'my base'. [T1 477: in London it was very stressful, by the end of it I was ready to just crawl into a corner and quite happily fade away into oblivion.]

The process of adjustment might not have been much different in some ways from learning the restaurant trade. In both situations one is [T1 482: involved with people all the time, you need to just break away from it all.]

There was a single reference to violence [T1 529: The violence and drinking really I just tend to associate the two very much and so I still can't handle pubs but every so often I'll think no I'm going to the pub for an hour and I'll think yeah I did that.] There was a description of being encouraged to use potentially violent and aggressive behaviour earlier when Brigitte was encouraged to stand close to students and scream at them, but otherwise violence does not feature.

Here we have a discussion of violence and drinking and a 'still can't handle pubs' which implied another story. How does a teacher in training adjust to the vulnerability of school teaching and the potential for aggression that accompanies working in school?

There were two themes of competition and attention-seeking that emerged around line 577. In what ways had Brigitte changed roles, leaving the role of younger sister in a competition she 'very

rarely won', to become more like 'the older sibling' or 'Parent' in her role as school teacher for whose attention the students vie? Had her earlier childhood experience sensitised Brigitte to the students' struggle for attention?

The theme of confidence that emerged in line 630 was fascinating. Here was quite a different aspect of personality. Unlike the dysfunctional state triggered by the London experience, here was a person who had substantial control over her responses to situations [T1 630: most of the time, if I'm in a situation like teaching I have to be (confident) so I switch into that frame of mind.] Brigitte saw the need to perform in order to teach as being a precipitating factor in changing or stimulating a change in her behaviour. [T1 638: I was finding it really difficult, and it was almost just like flood therapy [being immersed in a therapeutic context] for me. Just do it. You have just got to get out there and do it. So if I hadn't done it then I would probably still be sitting in a basement flat in Westlea somewhere, not doing anything.] Brigitte concludes this section with an enigmatic [T1 650: there is a lot more to me than I know at the moment.], which might refer to the transitional experience, but which could go much further beyond her immediate circumstances.

Relationships are likely to be a strong theme running through transition to teaching and Brigitte was not just interested in what people 'make of her'. She was also interested in establishing appropriate relationships with pupils in school. [T1 697: I think they deserve to be treated humanely. A lot of the time they are not, I feel quite disgusted really, the way some of the teachers speak to them, because they are still people.] She was also exploring roles within the family. [T1 729: We only hug because I go along and say hi mum. And it's like I say it every so often just to see her response really. Just to see what happens.] Brigitte linked the theme of intimacy with that of independence and self-expression. There was an implied fear that intimacy can threaten independence and individuality, and could limit her ability to assert her needs, particularly in relation to authority or Parent figures.

The tension between the two contrasting aspects of Brigitte's psyche are seldom far away. They are brought out here when Brigitte described two equally likely ways of behaving. [T1 789: that's what makes me up ... sometimes I will sit and just be a real miserable cow, but, I sometimes just think well sod it tonight I going to be, and other times I think well get off your arse and do something about it.]

What interested me here was the extent to which the transitional experience might be bringing these themes to the fore. There were several instances where, for Brigitte, the past was strongly present in the here-and-now and appeared to have a considerable influence in determining her current decisions, inclinations, motivations and responses to the transitional experience of becoming a teacher.

7.2.9.4 Shifting from 'they' to 'we'

The second interview took place towards the end of the training year. The final school placement was almost finished. Brigitte was revelling in the busy-ness and the challenge. She complained about some aspects of the work but this appeared to be a complaint about those parts of the job she found irksome. [T2 14 obviously you have to mark every week but you have to come back to the lessons so there is that. You have books in, and then we have to do an awful lot of assessments just for the sake of it (*right*). I'm not the only one who feels like that (*is that school driven or department driven?*) department driven. We have got a temporary head at the moment, she's taken over the head for the summer term, and it's just got a bit ridiculous really (*em*) she just gives assessments for the sake of assessing, filling in forms for the sake of filling in forms.]

The role of student was perceived as one requiring acquiescence [T2 29: I am just letting it ride. I've only got a couple more weeks, and I'm here to keep people happy really ... 32: I've got quite good references off them, so.] Brigitte was more relaxed having passed a job interview at another school.

There was evident pleasure in having been successful during this placement. [T2 51: I've clicked with them, they are great. They don't get on with their usual teacher and I think they have enjoyed the refreshing change as well.]

There had been a change in Brigitte's self-perception. The development of a teacher-self was evident in her language. The phrasing she used, the vocabulary, the descriptions of herself and the school context all suggest being a member of the group - belonging. [T2 57: *I just do it my own way now, and because I've got the job it's given me the confidence to just say yeah you can do it, so just get out there and do it.*] She was aware of differences between schools, and of reacting differently to different schools [T2 71: *I didn't find that at Riverside, I found them the same all the way through, and it was only here when I walked in, and I thought oh my god I don't like any of these. I hadn't come across that.*]

Brigitte recognised that she had developed during the course of the training. [T2 150: *I've grown a lot since I've been here as such, and I remember the first day I got here and felt about this big [gestures] and now I feel about... I think a lot of that is because I have a job (yes) because it is very comforting to feel someone else thinks you can do it.*]

She recognised what she needed if she was to be able to function effectively. [T2 160: *my great importance is making sure that I am at least a day ahead on my lesson plan, at least a day ahead on my marking and then I know where I am. If I'm not organised I just think badly.*] On those occasions when Brigitte was asked to do some unscheduled teaching at short notice, she found the lack of time for preparation was unsettling. [163 *and sometimes I feel I can't do that because I'm being put on.*]

In response to questions about her qualities as a teacher, she described herself as relaxed and easy going within the classroom. She saw herself as having high standards, which, for her, guarded against complacency. She was also beginning to recognise the range of abilities and interests within her classes. [T2 191: *But I'm like that with the students as well, I expect a lot of them. I think what I really try and do is push them to the best of their ability, rather than say you have all got to do this type thing. I'm trying, I'm learning to cater for different children.*]

There were signs of an independent thinker. Brigitte's reaction to the decisions made within the department demonstrate she could hold opposing views to those in authority. [T2 205: I had a very nice five page booklet, two question on each page for the kids to answer. It would have been great just to put in their folders as it was, em, then got told no you can't do that. So I feel the amount that we have just spent on photocopying exam papers for assessments I feel a bit cheated by it.]

Brigitte had learned to organise and manage classroom her teaching so that she could respond to the range of interests and abilities within the classes that she taught. [T2 230: Divide them up with extension work, make sure you always have something for someone to be getting on with.] [T2 235: there would be group discussion (*ah ah*) bringing it together at certain points, getting them to do a task and bringing them back, getting them to do a lot of that, and they'll be doing a task by themselves but within groups so they will all actually have something to show at the end.]

She derived much of her satisfaction from; teaching mathematics, teaching effectively, and seeing the pupils develop their understanding. [T2 277: two or three of the lads..... they worked really hard through the lesson trying to find.... and eventually they found it with about two minutes to go and they were really pleased and got quite a kick out of it, em, they were so pleased that they achieved it, because that was the whole aim, it was nice to see them motivated enough to do it, and they didn't write a thing down all lesson but they sat there discussing it and arguing it and eventually they got the rule which was the whole point, and it didn't matter that they didn't write anything down (*em*) they didn't have anything to show for it except for the fact that they knew the rules 8 , 9 minus 11, and that was good.]

She was able to acknowledge her own success [T2 294: I felt very pleased with myself really.....and it was really nice to see what I had done had actually sunk in.] and she recognised the successful relationships she had established with the classes that she had taught [T2 358: and they wanted to stay on after school to have this party, and they have been most helpful (*em*) some of them are great kids.] and with individual pupils [T2 363: one girl was having problems at home and we had a nice long chat over my lunch time and told her tutor and the tutor is taking it up.] She also recognised that her position was an interim one and

unlike that of a fully-fledged teacher [T2 365: but it's difficult for me in my position (*em*) I don't want to be seen as overriding anyone else there, and put anyone's nose out of joint.] [T2 371: I like the pastoral side, it's the side I want to get into.]

Brigitte was clear about some of the benefits she expected from a full-time appointment to a mathematics department. [T2 373: I've got a tutor group there so my plan is for the for the first year I will just try and get myself sorted there really. It will be nice just to have a classroom, instead of being portable in a portable classroom.] [T2 377: They have got three very big ICT suites each with about 30 computers in ... the TES have done quite a few articles saying what a great model school and all the rest of it but actually when you get in there it's not.] [T2 388: I can't wait to start earning some money, I can see the benefits from it, you work like a fanatic during term time and you can actually get your holidays off, which I've managed to do, which has been really nice.]

The emerging teacher-self was evident in a number of ways. Brigitte recognised this herself in the way she prepared herself for school. [T2 424: I am very different here to what I am at home. I can't always get up and immediately put my teacher's head on and so I think part of the dress is part of the teacher's head.]

Clothing featured several times in conversation. It was a symbol for Brigitte. It could be an important sign of her independence, or a mark of the degree to which she had conformed.

Despite having said she would not compromise, she did. [T2 437: I would very much like to wear my jeans in the winter especially. I don't like wearing skirts in the winter because they are not really very practical. It's the last thing you want to do, walk around with a skirt getting wrapped around your ankles. But, I mean it depends on what place you are at, at Riverside it was a lot different as regards to what the staff are wearing. Here they tend to be a little more relaxed so, and also at the end of the day if they think I am good enough to take a job at A. they will have to accept me as I am. I will not compromise.]

She was critical of the way the school failed to support her and the other student, but also acknowledged that she had learnt a great amount from the experience. [T2 448: I've been thrown in at the deep end (*right*) here, very much, We were told what our classes were and we were then told to get on with it

really. (Right) I don't think that would, I think if R. and I weren't the type of people which we are, I think a lot of people could have sunk, em, but we have learnt, it is great how much we have learnt.] She identified the supporting influence of the other student. They shared ideas, discussed their teaching and the pupils.

Although she criticised what she called 'being thrown in the deep end', Brigitte may have unconsciously encouraged school tutors to do just that. [T2 466: As I said before I am a great believer in self-finding, you have just to find, I think that comes from yourself rather than other people.] Did she in fact encourage others to let her try things out for herself?

For Brigitte, one of the features of starting work as a qualified teacher would be that lesson observations and assessment of her teaching will stop - or at least be reduced considerably. Brigitte had mentioned previously that she performed differently while being observed. There was an interesting contrast between showing people what she thought they wanted to see and being prepared to challenge current procedures. For Brigitte, part of the transition from student to teacher was the opportunity to 'be yourself' [T2 474: I am not going to be continually assessed, I am not going to have people saying I need to do an evaluation of you all the time, I am not going to have that type of pressure. I can develop my own style more in my own classroom.] She saw this change to her own style as part of her development [T2 480: a better bond with the students having my own base.]

She saw the professional work of teachers as falling into two categories. In keeping with many students it was her work in the classroom, with its emphasis on learning and teaching and building relationships with individual pupils, which was the main motivation for Brigitte. [T2 498: I don't think anyone would do it well and stay in the profession a long time unless they enjoyed it. I really don't. I would hate to come here and not enjoy it, I mean not enjoy the teaching side of it (*em, em*) the rest of it is just part and parcel of the job.]

Also, in keeping with many students and newly qualified teachers, the transition to teaching had been a time of personal development for her. [T2 504: Changed me (*yeah*) yes, it has built up my confidence, em, but no I don't think it has changed me too much I still manage to go out and have some fun, I go clubbing and see my sixth-form students which is quite embarrassing.]

7.2.9.5 Establishing relationships

The third interview took place towards the end of Brigitte's second full year of teaching. Relationships with pupils were identified by Brigitte as being a major feature of her development as an NQT. [T3 003: I get on brilliantly with the kids I really do.] She identified strongly with SEN pupils, with the most able, and with pupils who might not be treated well within the school. The theme of respect and caring for individual pupils was strongly in evidence. It was important to Brigitte to gain pupils' respect and she saw this as coming at least in part from being respectful to them.

Within the department and the school she had formally identified herself with special education needs (SEN) issues, representing the maths department as the SEN representative. She expressed strong views about respect at several points during the interview and said she believed in treating pupils... [T3 011: also I think, the special needs, treating them very much as equals not treating them as shit basically which a lot of teachers do, which I think is appalling, I really do.]

Much of her own professional satisfaction as a teacher was connected to her interest in pupils who find maths difficult, although she also referred briefly to her work with more able pupils. [T3 57: It's just something that I've latched on to, the kids themselves, the more able because they are like sponges and they just soak it up and they want to learn, and the special needs one because, I mean most of my lot do their work, I mean I don't get that much trouble out of them at all, but they don't, you give it to them in suitable spoon size.]

Themes of praise and encouragement appeared throughout the interview, as did determination.

[T3 105: so I suppose I'm quite determined. My year 11s I have just put through hell, cos I had the B-C group and I had a lot of students in there who were struggling Cs as well but I wouldn't let them move, they wanted to move and I wouldn't let them move because they could do they were just being bloody lazy.]

Brigitte seemed confident about taking decisions without reference to other more senior colleagues. She appeared willing to discuss ideas with others but didn't appear to lack confidence in deciding for herself how to manage and organise her teaching. [T3 143: My lower groups I tend to do a lot more em, a lot more verbal, a lot more talking about things, we don't tend to write that much down really, because a lot of their problems are with writing so what's the point of just getting them to do things they can't do?] She also tended to take decisions that allowed her to be interactive in the classroom. So the decision to encourage verbal discussion rather than written tasks could be seen as something of a personal preference for Brigitte as well as having the effect of easing the struggle of writing for the pupils. In contrast, working with the quiet year seven class was not reported by her with the same level of enthusiasm. [T3 126: I've got a top set year 7 group, who just sit in silence working, and I don't like silent working in a group like that because I think they will learn a lot of each other, but they are all polite, they are all budding mathematicians, they just want to sit there and work and do their work and run up and show me what they've done and all the rest of it and em in that case I always try and, I just wander around and say things really.]

Brigitte needed encouragement and support during this early part of her career. Teachers do not always support colleagues to the same extent as they are prepared to support pupils. Brigitte found various ways of obtaining feedback about her success. The reactions of pupils appeared to be one of the most important sources of encouragement to her but examination results also featured as a significant source. Brigitte displayed a distinctive personal style in that she introduced change in an assertive way. [T3 85: I had the top set year 9 last year and I had, I managed to get something like six of them to do the 6-8 SATs paper, and it wasn't something that was done at the school, I had a

bit of a run in as you can, I'm not one of those teachers who just sits quietly by the way.]

She needed to see herself as having a positive effect on pupils, particularly in influencing their attitudes to work. [T3 214: I think this expectation I have of them they eventually end up having of themselves I hope and that if they have high expectations, not an unrealistic one, but a high one, then they can also push themselves.]

Brigitte made reference to her own self-esteem in this interview as in the two previous ones. What is interesting is the appearance of self-esteem as a major theme in both her own life and the way she chose to engage with pupils. [T3 401: I used to be a real extrovert, and then just everything filtered away and became very much an introvert and lost an enormous amount of confidence and I think it has always been there it's just kind of like getting it back again, appreciating yourself, getting to like yourself again.]

Becoming a teacher could well have played a part in the regaining of Brigitte's self-confidence. She seems to have created a powerful dynamic tension between demands and expectations of the training, and her temporarily introverted psychological state. Prior to starting the course her extrovert nature had receded and was unavailable to her. She was finding life difficult. She had lost her enthusiasm, and engaging with groups of people was problematic. She appeared to use the course to put herself in a position where she had to carry out tasks that were personally challenging to her at that time. Her determination was also a factor in finding ways to push herself to change. [T3 423: making the change yourself, actually saying I've had enough of this I want more, I know I can do it, let me get off my arse and do it basically. I think, I am one of those, a bit sadistic really. I suppose making myself get into a situation where I think oh shit this is really awful, but once you have done it, you know you can do it next time.]

She forced herself to engage with a personal struggle as she took on tasks like organising and speaking to large groups of pupils and committing those public acts which are characteristic of teaching.

During the two years as a newly qualified teacher, Brigitte received insufficient praise from colleagues and line managers, although she did get valuable acknowledgement from pupils. [T3 408: having to stand up in front of a class em having to communicate with people who I would otherwise have absolutely no time for, em, having people appreciate you, appreciate what you are doing em praising you.]

Positive feedback from parents was also an important source of encouragement. [T3 100: I got some feedback from one the parents who was a governor about how pleased they were and how enthusiastic their son was with the work and all the rest, which is really nice.]

The school, or more particularly the department, was not a source of much support or encouragement. [T3 413: I think more time should be given, people actually saying yes that was really good, well done.] [T3 516: perhaps our department does not show any support, there is very little support there, and the first year I didn't have a bloody clue as to what I was teaching was right or not, and it is quite worrying.]

For Brigitte, working in a highly competitive environment with little encouragement and support led to a feeling of being isolated from those colleagues who were potential sources of encouragement and help. [T3 516: now B. the other girl who started with me, the two of us would occasionally get together because of the whole ethos is very competitive. You are in competition with the person next to you, it is as simple as that. And unfortunately you get swept along with it and it is only now that I am saying bugger it I am not going. But because it is your first job and it's your first teaching post and you want to get on and you want to show them that you are a good teacher, and that you are enthusiastic and all the rest, B. and I ended up quite a bit in competition with each other.]

Lack of clear feedback about one's successes and the absence of regular appraisal limited the pace of Brigitte's emotional growth and learning. [T3 602: I am not very good at looking at myself and saying

yes you are doing that right or yes you are a good teacher basically. I am not very good at that side of things.]

Regular feedback from an appropriate mentor could have accelerated her adjustment to teaching and her ability to assess her own effectiveness. [T3 602: It is something I am very worried that I won't be, ah I am not a good teacher and the kids don't like me normally or they think oh god I've got a maths lesson with this woman, I don't ever want that to happen.]

The evidence here points to a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher who learnt a lot about teaching in a very short space of time. Brigitte's particular needs were not often directly related to pedagogy, and improving her effectiveness as a teacher of mathematics. She already seems to have had a very clear pedagogical model of mathematics teaching that served to guide her. Her model of interactive, discursive, practical activity with elements of teacher-led exposition is not far from either that suggested by Cockcroft (1982) or what has been included in the National Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1999). The most significant need was for support in personal growth and learning in the affective domain. One of Brigitte's main professional needs was to be relieved of anxiety about whether she was an ineffective teacher. She needed to receive constructive feedback and encouragement about her performance and her effectiveness. She knew that her judgement of her own performance was usually sound but that there were times when she was unable to be objective and analytical. During these periods, more constructive feedback and a regular mentoring process would have proved invaluable to her professional development.

7.3 Summary

The longitudinal study followed the stages established in the previous chapters. Eight students have been identified and extensive interview data obtained over a three-year period. Three different attempts at narrative construction were made. A focus has been established for each of the three sets of interviews. The themes emerging from the interview data have been presented as data and explored in relation to illustrative fragments of the transcripts. A narrative style was

used to provide an interpretation of the transition to a teacher-self for each of the three interviewees. Key features of each respondent's transition have been identified and analysed in depth, drawing on a number of theoretical perspectives established in earlier chapters.

8. THEORISING TRANSITION TO TEACHING

8.1 Using important findings

Throughout this study, theorising has been a part of each stage of the research and the resulting theory has supported the subsequent stages. Important findings from the earliest part of the study were identified on page 129. These emerged from the use of significant events as part of a self-sensitising process carried out through a search for emergent themes. They were influential in shaping the work with Nicola, Sally and others in the next stages of the study.

The findings from the pilot study were brought together and discussed in section 6.5, page 201. They showed that transition is implicated in shifts in self-perception and self-worth. Winnicott's transitional space was useful in theorising the way interviewees engaged with significant others, to establish rapport with pupils, to receive mentoring, and to engage in changing relationships both in professional settings and elsewhere.

The theory of self-objectification was used to analyse the "me" of the interviewees in terms of integration of the self, cohesion and self-identity. The "I" was explored in relation to previous transitions and the theory used to argue that the degree to which the "I" can nurture the "me" depends on the extent of coherence and identity at the outset of the transition.

Narrative was shown to be effective in conveying vivid, coherent and rich accounts of changes to the self. These findings from the work with Nicola and Sally in the pilot were used to inform the longitudinal study.

Chapter 7 presented the findings of the longitudinal study for each respondent in turn, together with a narrative account of each transition through a process of transcript analysis, including interpretation of previous transitions from childhood and adolescence. Emergent themes from each of the three interviews were combined and these produced a narrative of the transition for each respondent that drew on theory and interpretations of the data.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the theory of transition further, and to theorise the emergence of the teacher-self from a more general viewpoint, drawing on all the data and the theoretical perspectives introduced at different point in the study. I have introduced a new, more general interpretative paradigm developed from the work of Malan (1995) discussed in section 4.3.8 on page 87. This has been adapted to serve as a theoretical framework for unifying the two sources of influence on the interviewees' transitions that so far have been theorised separately. The use of Malan's theory for a demonstration of the inter-dependence of the response to the current transition and the here-and-now objectifications of the self, with the influences of the past. This discussion provides a more integrated view of the influences on self-development during the transition to a teacher-self.

8.1.1 Getting to grips with transition

In this study, transition is seen as a rite-of-passage from any one of many previous contexts into studentship, through a training period, and out into a teaching world as a qualified professional. Ontologically, transition is seen as experience in which the potential for meaning abounds. It contains an essence of 'otherness': of 'not-me', or rather 'me-and-yet-not-me'. It can be seen as a separator between different parts of the student's life course. Transition is not characterised here, by sharp or abrupt change. For the case study respondents it is characterised by lack of distinct form, by fuzzy edges and murky contents, from which clarity can be sought through reflection, and analysis. The data I draw on is a source of narrative

possibilities, a 'space full of stories where you can move in all directions ... always finding stories that cannot be told until other stories are told first'. (Calvino, 1981: 109)

The interpretation then is a story about stories, some drawn from the past, others fashioned from the present, and some woven into a possible future. To draw on Calvino again, the transition is a bridge that one can describe stone by stone.

"But which is the stone that supports the bridge?" Kublai Khan asks.
"The bridge is not supported by one stone or another," Marco answers, "but by the line of the arch that they form."
Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: "Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me."
Polo answers: "Without stones there is no arch." (Calvino, 1972: 82)

8.1.2 Constructing narratives

A theory of transition to teaching that operates within a qualitative paradigm, and which seeks to offer insights to readers, should provide a language in which to explore the phenomenon under study. It should provide a conceptual framework for exploring the processes of personal change and development that accompany preparation for teaching and early teaching experience. It should offer a vehicle for interpretation of transitional experience that might not be possible in the absence of the theory. It should also provide some insights into those features of transition that have been identified as key influences of the transitional process. These include the following arguments, that:

1. The past can become very present. Past experiences, earlier relationships, and previous transitions can emerge as influencing factors that shape the changing life course during the current transition.

2. Transition is often characterised by disturbance and perturbation. It is common to experience; anxiety, confusion, excitement, agitation, a loss of self-determination, and a later re-gaining of independence and self-direction.²¹
3. Transition is a period of change and reconstruction of the self, leading to; new ways of perceiving the world, seeing oneself as different because of membership of a new group, gaining new perceptions of the self, forming new relationships, (with pupils, etc.), reconstructing relationships with significant others.
4. One perceives oneself as different, and one uses new modes of self-identification, (e.g. me as; teacher, a professional person, an adult, a Parent figure to pupils).

8.1.3 Adapting Malan's model

An adaptation of Malan's two triangles (Malan, 1995: 80) has proved useful in theorising the transitional process. The two triangles are shown below in modified form (page 278).

The Triangle of Conflict has been adapted to illustrate the connection between anxiety expressed in relation to some aspect of the current transition to teaching, the defence to the expressed anxiety and the relation of both to hidden feelings. Sources of anxiety during transition are related to:

- perceived threats to the current integrity of the self;
- the recognition of unresolved anxieties about power, relationships, responsibility;
- emergence of unresolved elements of earlier transitions and relationships with significant others;
- being a debutante, a novice, an incomplete teacher;

²¹ Disturbance can be experienced as a consequence, but can also be invoked by the person undergoing transition, as a mechanism for focusing attention, and creating a dynamic that precipitates change. Disturbance may originate in the recollection of earlier aspects of one's life, (e.g. memories of a deceased significant other, or of childhood relationships, patterns of upbringing.

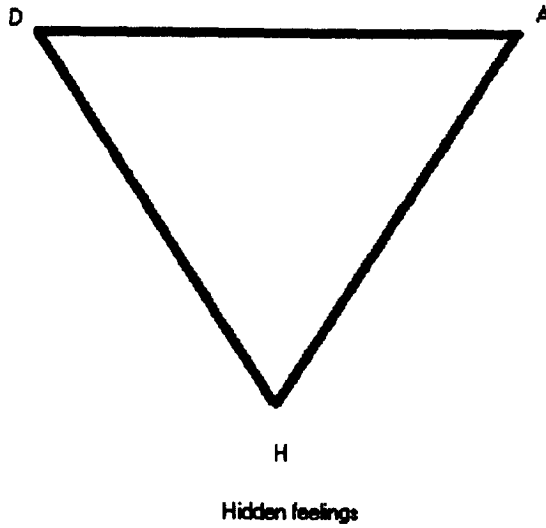
- feelings of vulnerability consequent upon a lack of knowledge, skills, or know-how. (See Hargreaves, 1998)

The modification to Malan's second triangle *The Triangle of Person* allows us to illustrate links between Context (the physical spaces and temporal situations in which the transition is played out), the current or recent significant others, (tutors, teachers, pupils, close family and partners playing an influential role in the current transition) and significant others from the past, often the distant past, who often played Parent roles. This second triangle can also be employed as a *triangle of time*, when appropriate.

Adapted Triangle of Conflict

Defence against hidden feelings

Anxiety about current transitional experiences



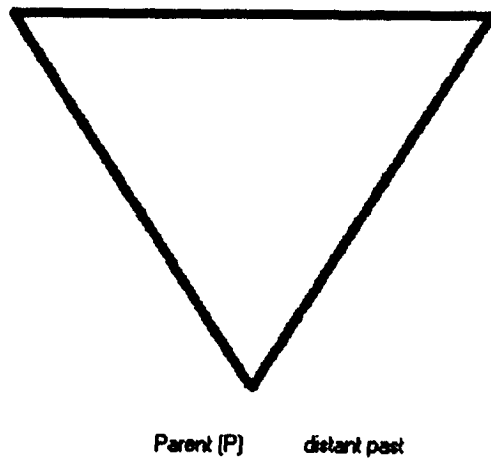
Adapted Triangle of Person

parent or recent past

Other (D)

Context (C)

here-and-now



Parent (P)

distant past

Figure 14 The triangles of conflict and person adapted from Malan (1995)

The two triangles can be employed to symbolise and theorise the processes involved in transition to teaching. In the case of Sally who experienced anxiety about 'how well she was doing' on the course, (see page 181) there were, she complained, too few marked assignments and a lack of information from tutors about the progress she was making and the progress she was expected to make. She defended herself against powerful hidden feelings by presenting her anxiety almost entirely in relation to a need for feedback from the assessment process.

The hidden feelings related to a crucial loss of identity and Sally was able to discuss the pressures she experienced at the outset of this transition to student-teacher. Her experience is not an uncommon one for women with family responsibilities. Duncan (1995) argues that experience of disturbance like Sally's can be partly accounted for by 'the dominance of a pattern which put the needs of husbands, children and the home first', and by 'the persistence of gender inequalities in the home' (*ibid.* p.299).

As Duncan reports, many women are pressured into only taking on studentship on the condition that change to family life should be minimised. Where women have routinely carried the main burden of domestic responsibilities prior to studentship, this state of affairs is often expected to continue, with the requirement that any intrusion of academic studies into home life is minimised. Unsurprisingly, this leads to intolerable burdens for some women who choose to become teachers.

For Emily, the notion of becoming a teacher was at odds with much of the family history of expectation. Emily had been expected to work as an engineer, a chemist, a scientist, but presented herself to prospective employers in such a way that she was unlikely to be employed. (see page 219). The hidden feelings were not clearly revealed but the theory allows for speculation about them. It is not inconceivable that the desire to become a teacher remained hidden to avoid stress in the family. Perhaps Emily anticipated that her mother

would be disappointed with her choice of career, and so kept it from her. Emily's initial defence was to avoid being given a job as an engineer, but her strategy at least invited the possibility that her mother would realise her reluctance to follow the family's earlier expectations.

The second triangle allows us to look at Emily's relationship to tutor's, teachers and the context of school. Her strong association with Parent - Child roles emerges in many sections of her account. She responded to the Australian family's need to escape from a cycle of frustrating and ineffective teaching and learning, by parenting the family. During her placement in school on the PGCE course, many of the individual pupils that Emily identified with were those who struggled with the school setting, or those whose home backgrounds were problematic in some way. (see pages 220 and 223).

The second triangle helps with an exploration of the curious feature of infantilisation that occurs (perhaps inevitably) in the training course. Emily, as a successful student, behaves and is recognised as a teacher in the school setting, Context (C). Here she is fully responsible for her pupils, and is offered a job. She returns to college for a meeting but the tutor is absent. Emily and the other students respond to the tutor, this missing other (O), by positioning him as Parent and themselves as Child. The group fails to organise itself and use the time effectively for its own ends. Capable as they are of organising groups of pupils in school, they fail to organise themselves in the university context. Although teachers in school may be positioned as 'in authority' over students, there is sufficient responsibility within classroom settings for students who are nearing the end of their training to develop their status, vis-à-vis their pupils, in ways that approach the status of qualified teachers. Emily certainly achieved this. In the college context, in contrast, there is little opportunity for students to alter their status in relation to tutors. The students' increased ability is symbolised in record sheets, reports and pass grades (themselves more symbolic of being a pupil than a teacher) and is always in another context. Students are not generally called upon to demonstrate their

teaching ability in the university setting, it is always distant, always other. The lack of opportunity to display new status means they remain students in the university setting: it is always distant, always other.

The context of training for teaching has had an effect on Emily's friends. This is accessible through analysis of the O/C link. Emily describes the changing nature of her own interests and the relatively static interests of one close friend in particular. Working in the school context requires new skills and perspectives. Working in these new contexts effectively changes Emily's interests and she finds there is less commonality between her interests and her friend's. (See page 230) She expresses disappointment but suggests the context is only temporarily affecting relationships with friends. We can reflect on both the P/C link and the P/O link and consider what Emily has gained from her earlier relationships that provide her with the confidence to continue with the potential loss of long-term friendships.

Interestingly, she never suggests that a loss can be substituted for, by the gaining of new friends. She makes little mention of personal friendships with either staff in school or with other students on the course. There appears to be a deep-seated belief in the uniqueness of friendships that may change over time.

The quality of the C/O link appears enhanced through the O/P link and the C/P link respectively. It seems likely that Emily can draw on distant past relationships with her parents in shaping her relationships with pupils. The current context (a caring school created through her own responses to pupils) contrasts with her unsatisfactory experience as a pupil when she needed support. Unsurprisingly, current C/P links can be shaped not only by pleasurable experiences of C/P links but also unpleasant ones (where her own teachers (P) ignored her needs as an adolescent in the similar context of a school.)

For Pauline, parental and authority figures loomed large. I was aware of considerable counter-transference during our discussions, where I felt angered by her apparent acquiescence in the

face of her parents' exercise of control. Pauline's submissiveness left me feeling frustrated and annoyed, and later whilst reviewing the transcripts, looking at her relationship with her parents through my own rebelliousness to Parent figures in my own relationships. The data obtained from interviewing Pauline can be interpreted using the first triangle. Here, I see Pauline functioning with a defence that provokes others to give her encouragement.

[T3 06: ...and I didn't know if I was doing it right or wrong. And at December time I sort of said to my head of maths, 'Am I doing OK?' And she was really surprised that I even thought that question. And she said, 'Yes you're really doing well. We're really pleased with you. And I said that's all right because nobody said anything at all to me.]

I interpret this as Pauline's defence against anxiety that emerges from insufficient direct positive encouragement on a regular basis. She suggests in the exchange that she herself has no criteria for making a judgement. I am dubious about accepting this at face value because she provides plenty of evidence of being able to make highly perceptive judgements of herself and others. So I am drawn to the conclusion that the defence operates in the context of status. Where Pauline perceives the other as an authority figure, she seeks to precipitate feedback about herself. The triangle of conflict suggests a link with early parental figures and we know from Pauline that her parents exercised their authority over her in a wide range of ways. We can speculate that within the family dynamic of Pauline's childhood there might have been insufficient praise to sustain the developing self.

When we look at the second triangle, and examine the O/C link, we do find evidence that Pauline may be reproducing earlier behaviours from her childhood. As a teacher in authority, she is ambivalent for example, about pupils' emotional needs, perhaps in ways that reflect her own parents' responses to her as a child. [T3 92: I think that what they moan about is petty. It irritates me. I don't know if that sounds awful for a teacher to say that. But when someone bursts into tears and we talk to them and they say they've just had an argument with a friend. You spend time talking to them and calming them down and the next step is they're back to normal again and you suddenly find out it happens every couple of weeks and you just think, Oh! You wish you could spend your time on someone who really needs it. Rather than being sort of distracted by the loudest ones.]

This is not to suggest that Pauline is uncaring. Far from it. The focus of this current discussion is the underlying source of the ambivalence - and the use of the P/O and the P/C links to explore what Pauline might mean by spending one's time on 'someone who really needs it', what being 'distracted by the loudest ones' actually means to Pauline (as a teacher) who as a child was brought up *not* to be one of the loudest ones.

Brigitte's preference for maths, because it is 'black and white' and her dislike of essays [T1 9: I like black and white. I can't write essays, numbers are good, but essays I have real problems with], suggests a desire to avoid ambiguity. This is a C/O link. She prefers contexts which she sees as unambiguous and she prefers 'other' (mathematics, statistics and possibly her current relationships with the members of her family) to be unambiguous too. She speaks of checking to see her mother's reaction to her [T1 728: I can't remember the last time any of our family hugged each other. We only hug because I go along and say hi mum. And it's like I say it every so often just to see her response really. Just to see what happens.] Her concern for the misuse of statistics and her desire to safeguard her students from harm can also be identified as a C/O link between the Context in which Brigitte is working and her relationships with immediate others in her life.

There were two instances of competition for attention that arose. In the first, Brigitte competed with her sister, a battle she 'rarely won'. For children, this is often an O/P link, a rivalry between siblings built on a desire to be noticed. In the second, pupils were competing for Brigitte's attention - a C/O link. Brigitte made several references to her work with disadvantaged (especially SEN) pupils and had found that giving them attention was an important factor in building good relationships and acknowledging her own values. [T3 011: also I think, the special needs, treating them very much as equals not treating them as shit basically which a lot of teachers do, which I think is appalling, I really do.]

Self-esteem figured in all three interviews. Brigitte's use of the training course is complex. It appears to have been a vehicle for redressing the current imbalance between the despondent and the optimistic sides of her character. The demands of training and the accompanying

expectations and requirement to perform in certain ways appears to have been used by Brigitte to change the current state. The decision seems to have paid off. Thus, there is an apparent C/P link. The current Context (the course) with its specific demands has taken the place of the demands of the Parent. [T3 423: making the change yourself, actually saying I've had enough of this I want more, I know I can do it, let me get off my arse and do it basically.]

Brigitte wants a mentor who can act in the nurturing Parent role on occasions. Another example of the C/P link where Brigitte's experience of being nurtured by Parent figure in her childhood is unconsciously recognised as appropriate in her current situation as a newly qualified teacher eager to develop and succeed. [T3 413: I think more time should be given, people actually saying yes that was really good, well done] [T3 602: I am not very good at looking at myself and saying yes you are doing that right or yes you are a good teacher basically. I am not very good at that side of things.] [T3 602: It is something I am very worried that I won't be, ah I am not a good teacher.]

Adapting the triangles has allowed me to test out ideas about how the training process was proceeding, and in particular, what internal resources the trainee was able to mobilise to support herself and ensure success through the transitional process.

Using the triangles in this way is not a trivial task. I would like to develop a more explicit use of this way of working within the training process. I anticipate that trainees who are exposed to these ideas, initially with tutors, would learn to internalise this way of working as a self-reflective process.

8.2 Objectification

Brigitte gives an excellent example of the process of self-objectification and its use for nurturing the 'me'. She says she is not very good at looking at herself and saying, 'Yes you are a good teacher.' Four possible reasons come to mind.

1. She knows it is possible to objectify the “me” but lacks the strategies to do it effectively.
2. She is able to do it but is discouraged – perhaps because there is insufficient reward in doing it.
3. She places comparably greater value on positive regard and nurturing obtained from significant others.
4. She is unable to discern what constitutes a good teacher.

From the evidence of the transcript data I argue that it is possible to exclude possibilities 1 and 4, suggesting that for Brigitte the “I” is insufficiently able to nurture the “me”, or there is a lack of perceived value in self-nurturing, and a subsequent dependence on significant others to carry out the nurturing role. Although this applies here-and-now, did it emerge primarily as a response to this transition or are there echoes from the past? As I wrote above, self-esteem featured in all three interviews with Brigitte. Her report of fighting with her sister and ‘rarely winning’, and hugging her mother to see what the response would be suggests that Brigitte was seeking attention of Parent figures as a child and adolescent.

Pauline used a mechanism to involve others in proffering nurturing comments, and at the risk of attracting criticism. For Pauline, it appeared that any comment was better than no comment and the risk of being criticised was less unpleasant than not being noticed.

Both Brigitte and Emily gave considerable attention to pupils with emotional needs and learning difficulties. In Emily’s case, it could be argued that she had received good nurturing from both parents. She also learned to play a nurturing role for her mother when she was an adolescent. Her ability to nurture pupils appeared to come partly from her own direct experience of being nurtured and from her learned role of caring for her mother. Brigitte’s awareness of the needs of others appears to come from a recognition of a lack of her own

self-esteem and a knowledge of what she needs if she is to develop a more positive, integrated sense of self.

All three respondents were able to create a transitional space in which their development as teachers was supported by professional colleagues. Emily did not make much use of old friendships, Brigitte made good use of the relationship with her partner, as did Pauline. Both Emily and Brigitte were very effective at creating a transitional space with pupils who needed pastoral support and help. All three were very effective at creating a transitional space where they and pupils played with mathematical ideas and where effective ways of teaching and learning were established.

8.3 Summary

This chapter opened with a description of the cyclic process of theorising followed by application and further theorising that typifies this study. A theoretical model has been introduced that allowed for an integrated discussion of the effects of current and past transitions on the life course. The adapted Malan model has been applied retrospectively to Sally and her transition. It was then used in detail to account for the data provided by Emily, Pauline and Brigitte in the longitudinal study. Brigitte's self-initiated use of self-objectification has been discussed and the chapter concluded with a discussion of Winnicottian transitional space applied to Emily and Brigitte.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

When I began this study I hoped I would be able to answer some personal questions that I had posed about the development of teachers during the initial training process and beyond, and what accounted for the differences in responses to the challenging situations that student teachers face when they first encounter the formal process of training to teach. I was keen to explore the interplay of cognitive and affective learning during the transitional period. To do this I took a particular path that began by reviewing critical points in my own development as a teacher in school and in my work in undergraduate and post graduate teaching. My reasoning was that any themes which were evident across such a space-time might be worthy of consideration in the broader context of the British teacher training process. I theorised that I could use a reflective approach to my own work as a self-sensitising process in preparation for a more focused case study of students in transition. And, as suggested in the literature, if the emergence of the teacher-self is a problematic process of growth and development, then an exploratory case study approach of students' transition would provide some answers to my questions. The study began with a set of conjectures. I then provided evidence that supported each conjecture and led to the production of theses.

Conjecture 1. It is possible to give an account of the process of transition.

Conjecture 2. Knowledge can be gained from reflecting on one's own experience as a teacher.

Conjecture 3. Teachers develop a discernible teacher-self.

Conjecture 4. It is possible to produce a valid narrative account of transition which presents the process of transition to a teacher-self in a way that can make sense to an informed readership.

Conjecture 5: It is possible to theorise the process of transition to a teacher-self as a dynamic life course event.

In this concluding chapter, I will review the insights I gained from the research process in general and the case studies in particular. I have discussed these insights in Chapters 6 and 7. Here they need to be discussed with reference to the theses and the claims that have been made for the research. I will then conclude with a review of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

9.1.1 Establishing a thesis from an exploration of the conjectures

There is a need for a thorough examination of the extent to which the thesis can be said to be justified by the evidence used to support the conjectures.

9.1.1.1 The thesis arising from Conjecture 1

It is possible to give an account of the process of transition

I sought data from two principle sources; my own experience, and the experience of several students used as case study data. I undertook a review of my own early development as a teacher and more recent teaching involving students. I drew on a critical incident paradigm to explore issues and themes. I augmented these sources with a detailed examination of three recent case studies where data were collected over a four-year period. I argued that an in-depth interview process involving trainees' early childhood experiences would allow a search for resonance between earlier and current transitional experiences.

I discerned a number of key elements that appear in the transitional process and may influence the life course of any individual trainee, but which are unpredictable in terms of occurrence or severity. They included:

- emotional disturbance;
- changes in self-objectification and what constitutes 'me';
- temporary loss of identity;

- infantilisation and the loss of opportunity for self-directed decision-making and control over current life events;
- re-appearance of themes and learned behaviours deriving from earlier transitions and formative experiences in childhood;
- the evoking of earlier transitions and related emotional charge;
- the unconscious displacement of emotional responses related to earlier transitional experiences onto the current transition (projection and projective identification);
- difficulty in taking on the various roles demanded of classroom teachers (for example, responsibility, authority, caring for others, intimacy, ...).

While it is possible to give an account of transition in terms of the possible changes to perceptions of identity and the gradual emergence of a teacher-self, it is not possible to give a predictive account of the nature, path, intensity, or outcome for any one individual.

I established these based on the conjectures in two ways: first through interpretative accounts of specific case studies illustrating the transition in terms of an individual's life course, and second through a general account of possible influences that explored the areas identified in the bullet point list above.

9.1.1.2 Review of the data and the data analysis

Notwithstanding the richness of the data, there were some problems emanating from the adopted interview procedure.

The interview questions did not directly ask for an account of transitional experience.

Formulating a question or a series of questions that explicitly ask for an account might have revealed connections that in practice had to be made through interpretation. However, they might also have provoked the students into obscuring or hiding some of what they in fact revealed.

Analysis of the data raises a number of research issues. The interpretative process relies on an understanding of psychodynamics. This may mean the research processes and procedures may not be applicable to outsider-researchers and it presupposes that insider-researchers have both an intimate knowledge of schools and teacher-training together with an understanding of psychodynamic processes.

The highly personal nature of the data that was elicited was a surprise to at least one case study informant. (Pauline [T1: 370- 400] introduced the subject of her father. She then went on to reflect on what he meant to her 'for the first time in years'.) See also the discussion on the therapeutic interview, page 92.

The highly personal nature of the information will inevitably create an imbalance between the interviewer and the interviewee, since there is a great difference in the degree of disclosure about life history and life course issues. A rich and complex account of transition (at least in the way transition is perceived within this study) could not be constructed without the degree of intimacy and disclosure that was achieved.

9.1.1.3 The thesis arising from Conjecture 2

Knowledge can be gained from reflecting on one's own experience as a teacher

In section 5.2 on page 129, I listed important know-how and praxis that the use of critical incidents and subsequent reflection had enabled me to identify as significant in my development as a teacher. The reflective process brought these features into focus and allowed me to exercise more fully their use in subsequent work with Nicola and others.

Reflection on my own development as a teacher formed a part of the early data. The reflexive process, brought about a heightened sensitivity to my transition and the transitional process in general. I have also been able to identify the development of praxis, and know-how in relation to pedagogy, classroom management and the nurturing of learners in teaching and learning contexts.

The procedures adopted in the pilot and in the longitudinal case studies were significantly informed by the process of reflection undertaken during the first period of the study. My work followed the spirit of enquiry suggested by Schön:

What features do I notice when I recognize this thing? What are the criteria by which I make this judgement? What procedures am I enacting when I perform this skill? How am I framing the problem that I am trying to solve? (Schön, 1983: 50-68)

A similar invitation to reflect on professional practice has been made to the reader. I have assumed that readers will engage with text in many different ways and that my attention to the structure and content of the written study must at least attempt to make it easier rather than harder for readers to engage with the ideas presented here, and reflect on their own practice should they choose to.

9.1.1.4 The thesis arising from Conjecture 3 Teachers develop a discernible teacher-self

One of the assumptions I made was that since training and studentship are the predominant ways of gaining paid work within the recognised profession of school teaching, then there is a purpose behind the training which, *inter alia*, anticipates that trainees will undergo a change (in terms of cognition, affection, psyche, skills, values and beliefs). I also assumed that one expected outcome of training would be that those who are successful (i.e. pass the required tests and assessments, meet the required judgements that are made) could be expected to behave more like the professionals whose body they have been trained to join.

The research has been carried out within a paradigm that acknowledges insider-researcher expertise. The exact nature of the actions and attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that teachers display has not been defined. Instead, there is a genuine expectation that the expert reader (i.e. one with intimate insider-knowledge of teaching and schools) can detect teacher-behaviour and teacher-routines in the context of teaching episodes within school.

The study sought to identify the emergence of similar features within the case studies. Typically, they include changes of dress and hair style, sleeping and dressing routines, organising personal possessions, modified ways of conversing, questioning and giving instructions, responding to authority, orders and advice, appropriate professional intimacy with pupils. To these one can add the technical language in which discussion about teaching is conducted, together with the routines of preparation, planning, implementing and evaluating lessons, and the assessment of pupils and their work.

Accordingly, the onset and adoption of these characteristics of teacherly attitudes and behaviours were looked for in the interviews and evidence was found of complex responses to the training demands experienced by the informants. In this respect the data confirms Nias' research:

What emerges is the contradictory nature of the feelings associated with teaching. Various reasons can be adduced for this. The outcome of all of them, for the successful teacher, is mastery over a complex and difficult skill: the theme of 'balance', it can be argued, accounts for the sense of fit between identity and work which, at its best, characterizes 'feeling like a teacher'. ... Some stressed a sense of fit between self and occupation ... [o]thers saw little distinction between their 'selves' at work and outside. ... Many teachers linked the notions of 'being yourself' and 'being whole'. Some achieved 'wholeness' by blurring the boundaries between their personal and professional lives. ... Yet this sense of wholeness and fit between self and occupation is dearly bought. (Nias, 1989: 181-197)

In all the cases presented in this study there was a discernible teacher-self coming into existence. Like Nias' case studies the interviewees often talked about themselves in terms of coherence, and wholeness, and referred to the degree of fit between who they judged themselves to be and who they saw themselves becoming.

It is the degree of coherence of the newly developing teacher-self with the current self that shapes the individual's identity and defines to some extent one's ability to function as a teacher. Where the initial self is neither coherent nor whole, then the accretion of elements of a teacher-self may be de-stabilising and jeopardise what coherence there is.

9.1.1.5 The thesis arising from Conjecture 4

It is possible to produce a valid narrative account of transition that makes sense to an informed reader

The narrative accounts were problematic. Three different attempts were needed before a narrative discussion was developed. By drawing on the themes, and moving between fragments of transcript and the narrative it has been possible to chart the significant features of each interviewee's development as a teacher. The narrative style has allowed connections to be made between the here-and-now and the interviewee's earlier experiences from childhood and adolescence.

The use of Malan's Triangle of Conflict contributed to the robustness of the narrative since it raised my awareness of the process by which hidden feelings and past events can interrupt the life-course in the present. I was able to use data from earlier interviews to shape subsequent interview questions in an attempt to generate data that would shed light on significant others in the lives of the interviewees.

There was some evidence that the experiences of authority and control in childhood certainly shaped the way Pauline responded to pupils as an authority figure and to others in authority over her. Brigitte's more challenging response too has its origins in the family relationships she experienced as a child. The narrative structure allowed these discussions to emerge and the juxtaposition of interview data and interpretation allows the reader to search for resonance with their own experience and also permits the production of alternative hypotheses.

The narrative style has offered rich, multi-layered, descriptions of the individuals involved and a way of connecting the numerous elements of their character that have been portrayed.

Comparing each characterisation with individual responses obtainable from the transcript material it is possible for the reader to verify whether the narrative has accurately represented

the degree of coherence between the interviewee's responses to their training and their articulation of who they are as people.

I have argued that the narrative is a vehicle for representing the person as a whole. It provided opportunities for the reader to search for; evidence of consistency in an individual's behaviour, attitudes and beliefs, coherence and integration as a professional.

It would be perfectly possible to write a completely different narrative having selected and emphasised different experiences and interpreted them in different ways. However, I believe the narrative structure used here demonstrates that we have created one of many believable versions of who these individuals were in the process of becoming, as they negotiated their transition to teaching and acquired a teacher-self.

9.1.1.6 The thesis arising from Conjecture 5

It is possible to theorise the process of transition to a teacher-self as a dynamic life course event

I have analysed the interview data from a perspective which is inclined to the view that 'there exist ... multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by natural laws, causal or otherwise' (Guba & Lincoln, 1991: 161). There is a distinction to be made between using rules to describe and predict social interaction, but quite another to suggest that social interaction follows or is controlled by rules.

Within the study, interacting individuals (interviewer and interviewee) are believed to invest socially constructed situations with meaning. Reality is seen as the consequence of the meaning-making process that individuals pursue in social situations.

The first search for theory involved an exploration of the data from a viewpoint that sees social reality as defined by agency, intentionality and complex interactedness. The result was a

theorising process that led to the identification of themes arising in the interview discourse. I theorised that there was evidence of an impetus to act and interpret arising from within the self as agent. I further theorised that by connecting episodes arising from the discourse I could present a coherent and meaningful narrative of the development of the agent in transition whilst in the process of acquiring and developing a teacher-self.

It follows from this constructivist perspective that it is within the province of the reader to construct meaning through the action of engaging with the text. Such a reading includes a search for resonance between meaning derived from one's own experience, and meaning offered in the text through my particular construction of a narrative of transition.

The evidence derived from the interview and elsewhere in the study points overwhelmingly to an inextricable interconnectedness of cognition, affect, action and intent, and to the powerful intervention of the past-as-present in the shaping of the subjects' lives. In order to theorise the development of a teacher-self, it was essential to work with a theoretical model that acknowledges complexity and ambiguity, tolerates interpretation, and recognises the influence of past events on actions and searches for meaning in the present.

I have drawn on psychodynamic models partly for these reasons, partly because of the potential for holism that characterises some psychodynamic models, and partly because of writers like Phillips, whose interest lies in:

The psychoanalysis that ... is prodigal in its use of analogy and promiscuous in its references because the very process of comparing and contrasting, mixing and matching, offers the possibility of more enlivening and diverse redescriptions. One sense in which a life is always unexamined - or endlessly examinable - is that it can always be described in different ways, from different points of view. (Phillips, 1993: xvi)

The second theorising process offered a model of interpretation (and meaning-making) that drew together the key constituents that were found in the data, viz.:

- interconnectedness of cognition, affect, action and intent;
- the powerful intervention of the past-as-present in the shaping of the lives of the subjects;
- lives that were complex, indefinable, and endlessly examinable.

The interpretations that were generated through this second theorising process subscribe to Spence's view that:

Interpretations are persuasive ... not because of their evidential value but because of their rhetorical appeal: conviction emerges because the fit is good. (Spence, 1982: 32)

9.1.2 Reviewing the study - limitations and weaknesses

Any study that encompasses seven years of active research and interpretation will fail to achieve some of the researcher's ambitions. I have found it useful to organise a review of the study's limitations in terms of:

- scope and focus;
- appropriateness;
- effectiveness;
- validation;
- procedural efficiency.

The scope of the study was broad and with hindsight more could have been made of the longitudinal study group. I could have relegated some of the self-sensitising work that I carried out in the preliminary investigations of my own development, and reported this in a briefer manner, allowing me greater opportunity to deal with the eight students in the longitudinal study. One of them failed the course and the data collected on her development is quite different from that selected for the study. Two men kept diaries, one wrote short

accounts in a notebook for me and discussed the accounts reflexively. One man taught for a year and then worked from home writing educational software. He continued to teach privately but hated the culture of schools which he found bullying and oppressive.

Exploration of these varied accounts of transition would not have changed the findings of this study but their absence is a regret because of the richness and diversity of their accounts.

I used repertory grids²² consistently with the interviewees. At the end of the first interview I showed interviewees how to construct a grid and generate constructs. They were asked to represent their current development by marking a place on a line joining the positive and negative poles of each construct. Following each subsequent interview I reviewed the constructs with them and asked them to consider how they had changed in respect to their constructs since the last interview. They then recorded a new position on each of the constructs to record the shifts they thought had taken place.

The time has not been available to make full use of the data. Initially I had planned to interpret the interview data and the repertory grids between one interview and the next so that I could use:

- the first interpretative turn to shape the subsequent interviews;
- to look for resonance between interview data and repertory grid data.

In the event, I left the repertory grid data untouched, but continued to accumulate more at each interview opportunity.

²² A useful discussion of the development and use of repertory grids appears in a PhD thesis by Smith (1990)

Initially, I was hopeful that interview data would provide rich evidence of students' developing classroom practice. This was not as abundant as I had hoped. My reasoning is that:

- students found it difficult to report on the aspects of classroom practice that interested me and which would have supported the study;
- I had not planned classroom visits because they were already had a heavy schedule of assessment visits and so I felt additional visits would be too pressurising. Had I been able to visit their classrooms I would have been able to use the data to formulate focused questions at interview in order to probe features of classroom practice that would have illuminated the study.

As a consequence it has not been possible to explore some psychological issues of teaching and learning mathematics that I hoped the study would be able to tackle. In particular, the work of Weyl-Kailey and the psychic material that Pimm (1994) discusses have remained beyond the scope of the study.

There was less opportunity for collaboration than I had originally planned. Collaboration with Nicola was easy and showed what the advantages were of regular contact during the training process for monitoring the development of a teacher-self. The advantages were demonstrated by the pilot where Sally generously reviewed my initial interpretation of the interview data. The lack of opportunity to send my interpretative accounts to students in the longitudinal study and to receive their responses prevented the production of collaborative accounts of transition. It is possible that I will receive material from interviewees but it will be too late to incorporate the material in the study.

9.1.2.1 Access, reactivity and reflexivity

Access procedures to the teaching contexts and the case studies were governed by my role as a tutor and the respondents' roles as students. Much of the earlier work derived from discussion within teaching episodes or informally with individuals and small groups between sessions. The main constraint for me was time. More frequent opportunities for discussion and interviews would have allowed me to follow-up areas that have remained relatively unexplored, such as the use of drawings and diagrams, which proved effective in the pilot study but which were not extended to the longitudinal study, and the use of repertory grids which has proved too complex to enter into at the present time and remains unexamined.

There has been little opportunity for me to work with students on their emotional response to training within the corpus of the training programme. My work in this area has been limited to small groups and individuals outside a formal curriculum which is increasingly dominated by concern over cognitive aspects of learning. If anything there has been an regression in teacher training towards greater adherence to a Cartesian duality. The study has been limited by this lack of opportunity.

The level of intimacy involved was a surprise to some participants. This did not appear to be seen as invasive, but rather it appeared that the interviewees did not think that intimate details of their lives would be relevant or interesting to an interviewer studying their development. This was not so much a surprise to me since my experience is that many students in training are highly focused on their performance in the classroom. Their attention is almost universally focused on; controlling pupils, managing the pace of lessons, building up relationships with pupils, teachers and parents, performing appropriately (and sometimes cynically) in front of tutors. It was hard for some of them to accept that I was interested in the relationships that existed within their families when they were children. Notwithstanding this, a review of the interview data indicates immense generosity, tolerance and forbearance

on behalf of the interviewees as well as an active interest in a joint pursuit of meaning - for which I am indebted to them.

If time had permitted, access could have been more carefully orchestrated through preliminary discussions and interviews giving interviewees time to orient themselves to my focus before a main interview. Giving interviewees time to reflect between preliminary and main interview might have yielded richer data. Modifying the research procedure would inevitably lead to different data sets, perhaps richer and even more revealing, but probably not contradicting what has emerged here.

Obviously I was a central component of the research. Contextual variability, informant and researcher idiosyncrasies, all go to influence the quality and the quantity of data produced. The key is transparency. I have tried to ensure research transparency. Where this has been achieved there is value in engaging with the text and the ideas expressed. I have tried to ensure that there is nothing else to know that might change significantly one's perception of my intent and the flow of the study. The question is whether the data as presented, reflects the informants' lives as I have represented them.

It is impossible to resolve the problem of bias brought about by researcher participation. The method of addressing these important topics was by providing rich and multi-layered texts that seek to provide evidence of a measure of interconnectedness that the reader can judge as either demonstrating reliable and well validated 'joined-up' research or not. I have sought to discuss and accommodate subjectivity within the research paradigm. It is likely that my involvement with the students has influenced them in some way. The ethical issues of highly interactive and participant research have been discussed within the thesis and these discussions were an important part of the research process. Notwithstanding the above comments and criticisms of the study, I do not judge the limitations and weaknesses to have

invalidated the study or its findings. I remain confident that a professional readership will contribute to the validation process further by critically examining the case that I have made.

9.1.3 Implications and recommendations

The study has obvious limitations in terms of scope, breadth and duration. It commenced with a study of a single teacher, the author, moved to an examination of a small number of lessons and was completed with a study of three informants. Although the overall time span is some thirty years, the longitudinal case studies could have been carried out more intensively over the time period, with more frequent meetings, and with data from more of the original group. I am not suggesting that one could come nearer to 'the truth' because I believe that I have adequately demonstrated my position that there is no 'truth-singularity' for one to arrive at. Instead, a longer study, more numerous informants and a more intensive interview schedule could have given rise to richer texts in which the reader could become immersed.

I believe that within the constraints of the current study, it would have been difficult to achieve greater depth of analysis of the data, and that the level of analysis is compatible with the conclusions drawn. The significance of the study lies in any contribution it makes to our understanding of the process of becoming a teacher.

There is evidence from the study that the transition to teaching is unpredictably problematic. In this respect the study supports earlier research that draws similar conclusions. I believe that this study advances our knowledge of the training process and contributes a different perspective - in that it suggests that when one is engaged in challenging tasks relating to initial training, reflection-in-the-moment on the eruption of intuitions, emotions, and cognitive processes, can be self-informing.

Knowing, prior to training, that the training process can evoke strong echoes from the past, in some trainees, is both a fore-warning and perhaps even educative. I believe the study shows that reflection-in-action can be fruitfully extended beyond a study of cognitive responses to behavioural objectives. There is a real opportunity to raise the quality of the training process by working with students on their development as teachers in a broader more holistic way. A broader exploration of trainees' responses to the various elements of training, encompassing exploration of emotional growth and development offers richer opportunities to mediate between practice and thinking. It would allow discourse between tutor and student about how one can draw on one's past and one's emotional present to further the quality of the work one does whilst training. It has the potential to stimulate introspective, internal dialogue of the type that Vygotsky (1986: 32) refers to as 'inner speech' and which he suggests is a mechanism that supports meaning-making.

It is my contention that if 'professional development' is to be effective, a cognitive and skills-based agenda is insufficient. This is particularly true when we consider completion rates. Some students, like Sally in the pilot study, are temporarily overwhelmed by the effects of starting the training process. Non-completion rates are important both at the level of the institution and at the level of the individual. Courses that incorporate a practical exploration of emotional growth and learning in relation to the development of a teacher-self in the training context may meet the needs of some students who otherwise could fail to complete their training.

Based on the above discussion the following research developments may be worthy of consideration:

1. There appeared to be a narrow research base offering insights into the use of critical incidents as a research tool. More research in this area could help guide and refine the methodology.

2. There is little research into the use of psychodynamic techniques in education. Some interesting work has been reported by Blanchard-Laville (1991), and in the book *Victoires sur les maths* by Weyl-Kailey (both based in France.) There is little evidence of work having been carried out in Britain.

3. Pimm (1994) indicated some potentially productive avenues in his chapter 'Another Psychology of Mathematics Education'. At the outset of the longitudinal study it was my intention to explore a hypothesis that emerged from my reading of Pimm.

The de-contextualised generalisability of mathematics makes it a suitable vehicle for carrying psychological data such that Pimm illustrates. In the terminology I use, *generalised mathematics* can be referred to as 'sticky stuff' which enables it to be used to explore not only specific mathematical cases but under certain conditions one can attach other specific meanings to mathematical ideas and symbols. Because generalised mathematics is content and context free it can act metaphorically and metonymically in relation to latent content. Where there is a strong emotional charge and an unconscious desire for expression the very nature of mathematics creates the conditions for conscious expression of previously unconscious content: as in the case of Katie the three-year-old who, Pimm reports, was unable to count a triad group of man, woman and child, *as a group of three* - although she says she knows the count is supposed to be one, two, three. Pimm then remembers that when he arrived as a visitor Katie had remarked, 'I nearly called you daddy.' Her father had been killed when she was nearly one. What does she make of a triad that is *one man, one woman and Katie?* (see Pimm's account in Pimm, 1994: 119-120.)

The language of my second hypothesis contradicts the first, and I wish the contradiction to be observed and worked on. It is that mathematics can be clean, sharp and incisive.

This view emerged from my reading of Weyl-Kailey (1985) who chose to use mathematical symbolism with a girl who had been good at maths until she entered secondary school and who subsequently failed to progress in anything. In therapeutic

interviews with her, it became clear she had lost her identity (her mother and father were diplomats who travelled widely and who were of different nationalities). The girl had suffered a crisis of identity, seeing herself as neither Swedish, nor Italian, (her parents' nationalities) nor French, (she was living in France at the time). Her reaction provoked a crisis of identity: She felt as though she belonged nowhere: she was nothing, a nobody! Weyl-Kailey skilfully used the mathematics of sets with her to emphasise the union of two sets. The mathematics was used to illuminate a wonderful possibility in her life. The mathematical rules pertaining to sets (in this case two Parents) requires that the result of the union belongs to both and has the attributes of both.

The girl came eventually to an internalised view of herself as having her being through the union of her parents' individual nationalities. A dramatic psychological shift resulted from seeing union as 'neither-one-nor-the-other' to the realisation of belonging to both. (As an aside the word 'union' in English also has sexual connotations.)

My hypothesis is that since mathematics is entirely about representation of real and imaginary worlds, mathematics can be employed to represent psychological and psychic states, and in so doing can make these states more amenable to exploration.

There is an opportunity here for further research albeit of a challenging and complex nature.

Transition to a teacher-self is also 'sticky' in the sense that it acts as a resonator where previously weak associations between past experiences and one's present life-course can become intense. One can easily be caught up in unexpected and potentially disturbing and overwhelming ways in the resonances between one's current-self and one's child, adolescent, student, or teacher-self.

4. Research is needed into ways of extending teacher training to include an holistic approach to teacher development that recognises the interconnectedness of cognition, affect and agency. What type of course would most effectively offer the opportunity to prepare students in a more holistic way?

9.1.4 Concluding remarks

This study generated more questions than it answered. This does not invalidate the work but offers lots of possibilities since many of the questions raised are ripe for further study and research. Some generalisations have been possible and the generalising process is carried out by following the process advocated by Davis (1992) of laying strands of experience against each other and exploring the extent to which the interwoven strands inform each other and are pertinent to the study of other contexts, other researchers, other teachers in training and other training situations. My immediate interest lies in exploring how to incorporate the findings more effectively into the day-to-day process of education.

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APPENDIX A

TRANSFORMING THE SELF:
A STUDY OF TRANSITION AND
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

SAMPLE
TRANSCRIPT

SALLY T.

Appendix Sally T 1

Transcript of discussion with Sally T.

Interviewer : Tony Brown

Discussion 1 - recorded 13.12.94

1 *TB: Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. As you know, I'm interested in how you managed the change*
2 *to becoming a student. How did you manage to get here?*

3 Sally: Right. Well, I decided I really wanted to get myself qualified because I realised that in my
4 situation as a wife and mother, I was looking at years and years of doing part time work, being paid very
5 little and hardly being able to cover the child minding fees that occur even with part time work. So I
6 had that option which would mean that I would probably not have any responsibility and have a fairly
7 easy life but there'd be no opportunity for learning, really.

8 *TB: So what was driving you then? Wanting to learn or wanting to do more than..*

9 Sally: Wanting to do something useful with the rest of my life really and just get back to work properly.
10 I wanted to do it properly. Cause that particular option doesn't really appeal to me. I mean I'm thirty
11 three now so probably thirty years more work left in me and I want to put it to some good use. Really.

12 *TB: So how did you decide what you really wanted to do?*

13 Sally: I talked around a lot. I went to see a careers officer in P.. That was really helpful because at the
14 time, even though I wanted to do something useful I felt as if I knew nothing about anything. I just felt
15 I'd been really immersed in child care. I've only had two, but even so, and the second one took a while
16 to come, so there was all that trauma in between. And I just felt that I'd got into this rut in a way.
17 Women joke and say they lose their brain along with the placenta in childbirth. I suppose it's not a very
18 nice expression but that's how I felt in some ways. So anyway, so I went to talk to him because I felt
19 that, or someone down there, because I felt that they would say "Well, no I don't really think that you'll,
20 they'd either think that no, I think that you should aim for this. I wanted someone else to give me an
21 idea of what I should be aiming for.

22 *TB: Why was that?*

23 Sally: Lack of confidence I suppose.

24 *TB: Of being in a rut? Of not being able to see what might be possible?*

25 Sally: That's right, yeah, yeah. Not knowing. I wanted to get the information about what was possible.
26 I had an idea that I might be applying to college and I wanted to do it properly.

27 *TB: Did you have teaching at the back of your mind? Or was it lots of things you could be doing?*

28 Sally: Yes it was at the back of my mind, because I had worked as a negotiator with a firm of estate
29 agents and I really loved it. I just loved the variety and I loved meeting lots of different people and
30 being able to see a project through from beginning to end. I felt a really valuable part of the team and
31 everything. When I had my first child they asked me to come back and work in their training
32 department because I think they thought my enthusiasm might be infectious.

33 *TB: Oh that's nice.*

34 Sally: Yes, it was nice, but ...

35 *TB: You managed to do that?*

36 Sally: I did but I wasn't comfortable with it because I was speaking to people who had been working in
37 the business for years longer than myself very often and I wasn't comfortable with that. And I didn't feel
38 I had been sufficiently trained as a trainer. My confidence wasn't high because I had been out, you
39 know, and had the baby, and so it wasn't totally comfortable. But I did like the idea of sharing ... with
40 people.

41 *TB: How did you manage with the baby?*

42 Sally: Well, my husband is a so he works shifts. So it was a mixture of the child-minder and
43 daddy being at home which I was comfortable with. It was part time but I also had to travel, up to
44 Somerset, and down to Cornwall. So I was happy that I wasn't leaving her with the child-minder all the
45 time because I don't feel very happy with that.

46 *TB: So there's a limit to how much you could make use of a child-minder.*

47 Sally: There is for me.

48 *TB: So how old are your children then? I know one has just started at nursery hasn't she.*

49 Sally: One is eight and the other one is three.

50 *TB: So eight and three.*

51 Sally: Yes. With the eight year old I did work from the time she was five months old, albeit part time.
52 With the second one, I did choose to stay at home with her.

53 *TB: So how was the birth? All right?*

54 Sally: What the second one?

55 *TB: Yeah.*

56 Sally: Well actually she was premature. (*Oh.*) She was very poorly. And the birth, the birth was all
57 right. My husband and I went to NCT classes both times. We knew what we wanted. And the midwife
58 allowed it, as far as she could. But it was a very strange onset of labour and when she was actually born
59 it was very quick in the end. So, and then she was in an incubator for six days. We were in SCBU for a
60 fortnight.

61 *TB: Very worrying then.*

62 Sally: Yes it was. But actually, when things are that worrying I've realised that shutters come down and
63 you just, I mean there were lots of questions I could have asked but I didn't even ask them, because I just
64 took every hour as it came.

65 *TB: And what happened to your eight-year-old? She was, what five?*

66 Sally: She was nearly five. It was a couple of weeks before her birthday.

67 *TB: How did she cope?*

68 Sally: She's a little trooper anyway. She's been in hospital quite a lot with asthma. And she's always
69 been a very mature little girl. Even when she was, when she was first talking, people would sort of
70 laugh and say, "Isn't it funny the way she talks, the things she says." And people still say it to me
71 because she comes across as a lot older than eight.

72 *TB: Very grown up.*

73 Sally: Yes. She had a new teacher come into her school, yesterday; he's going to replace her other
74 teacher. And she went along to see how her other teacher was, to make sure she was all right. In J's
75 eyes the teacher was shoved off into another class. (*Right.*) I think J. felt that wasn't fair. She went
76 along to see how she was. Unfortunately, there was a chicken pox epidemic in her class, when the baby
77 was born so she wasn't able to come into SCBU. So, I did go out a couple of times to see her. But she
78 was wonderful really.

79 *TB: Was she? She managed to cope with that? Some children could find that quite difficult.*

80 Sally: Yes, yes. Dad took time off work, and she did cope with it. She's very supportive. In a funny
81 sort of way.

82 *TB: Does she help with her baby sister. Well, her young sister, does she mother her a bit?*

83 Sally: Yes she does try to. As time has gone on, the little one isn't half as accommodating as the older
84 one, she's jealous. She's got a jealous side to her, so she's not always willing to let the older one help
85 her... or interfere with what she's doing.

86 *TB: (Imitative voice) "I do it myself!"*

87 Sally: Yeah. That's right. (*Imitative voice.*) "I'm talking to mummy, not you!" And, there's a lot of
88 that.

89 *TB: A bit jealous of that role, or that relationship that you have with J.*

90 Sally: Yeah. She's just got this ... she's just not as accommodating as J. {Pause}.

91 *TB: So I've got this picture now, this quite capable eight-year-old? (Yes). And did you talk to her
92 about coming to College?*

93 Sally: Yes I did, yes.

94 *TB: What did she think about that?*

95 Sally: Well she did say, "Oh. I don't want to go to a child-minder." Which I was surprised about really,
96 because it had always worked fairly well. We did have one bad episode with one but she was aware that
97 my time wouldn't be totally devoted to them as it had been. She cottoned on to that straightaway.
98 (*Right.*) And I said to her, yes but do you think you would like to be at home with children all the time
99 when you grow up? "Oh. No!" she said. I said, well I do love being with you, but I think really it'd be
100 very lazy of me to be at home all day, specially when C's at school. And I think I'll get pretty bored. I
101 said, "You know what it's like when you're home poorly. You get bored don't you?" She said yes, so we
102 talked about it just like that. And then she thought it would be great I would be a teacher and could I
103 come and be her teacher?

104 *TB: Oh right. So she could see another thing that could connect you together. So you could not just be
105 mother but teacher as well.*

106 Sally: Yes be her teacher as well. But I explained that I wouldn't be because by the time I'd qualified
107 she would be at secondary school. But she still thought yeah well great, you know.

108 *TB: Did the younger one have any idea? She's three.*

109 Sally: No I didn't sit down and explain it to her in great depth because she's, she didn't really need that.
110 And also she's very contrary. She'll, you know, she's very quick, to say, whatever we're planning to do.
111 "No!" So, I just, I let it go with the flow. I took a little part time job in a nursery around the time when

112 my college interview was coming up, because I thought, well, I'll be with a group of children, which I've
113 never been with before; albeit, they're a lot younger but it'll give me an idea of what it's like to have a big
114 group to get together with individually, whether I can manage to suss out what the needs are of several
115 children at once, and whether I can handle that. And also how they relate to me. So I did that for a
116 little while and it meant that we did use a child-minder and that. {Pause}

117 *TB: Was that in Hightown? (and that was a practice run).*

118 Sally: Yeah. *(and that worked all right? You enjoyed that?)* Yes to a certain extent. I found it a bit
119 limiting really because they were nought to three year olds.

120 *TB: Right. What was limiting? What you could do with them?*

121 Sally: Yes well I was only there as a assistant anyway... {Pause} and so yes it was a bit limiting. And I
122 was aware that I wouldn't be having any more free time if I did start college. And I felt it was eroding
123 my time with friends and activities so... I enjoyed it to a certain extent but, but it was a practice run
124 really as well because I hadn't had any commitments to fulfil for, you know, two or three years I wanted
125 to make sure that I could...

126 *TB: Did you ever feel you wanted to go back to being a negotiator?*

127 Sally: Well, it's not very compatible with having a family because the hours are so long, *(Right)* and you
128 have to work weekends. I would like to do it again, I did, I was offered a job with B & H in Hightown
129 but they wanted me to work on Saturdays and Sundays and I just can't do it because my husband works
130 Saturdays and Sundays so I, you know, wasn't prepared to do it. But there's always that... if it doesn't
131 work out.

132 *TB: So what do you think now that you've started? Have you made the right decision?*

133 Sally: I'm still not sure to be perfectly frank with you. A couple of weeks ago I did think why am I
134 putting us all through this? To be honest. Because, I thought at my age and at my, with my experience,
135 it would be like coming and doing a job of work. And I knew there would be work to do at home, but I
136 didn't think it would be as emotionally draining as my A levels were. But it is.

137 *TB: So what is the nature of the drain?*

138 Sally: I think it's um, I've sort of comforted myself with the thought that it's because it's the first lot of
139 assignments, and until you've done them and you've been assessed, I'm still not absolutely sure that I
140 should be here, that I'm going to be able to continue to be here, you know? So I've decided that's the big
141 stumbling block.

142 *TB: You want to know how well you've done? (Yes) So far.*

143 Sally: Yes. Although on the other hand, yes though on the other hand it was frightening because right
144 this is crunch time folks. I've got this assignment to do and if I don't, if I don't perform then I've taken
145 the wrong road, you know? *(Um)* *(Interruption)* I think that weighs quite heavily really. *(Well, yes,*
146 *yes.)* Have I made the right choice?

147 *TB: Yes and what would you do if it isn't the right choice.*

148 Sally: If it isn't the right choice. Although at least, I mean, that's why I didn't go to university at
149 nineteen, twenty because I was keen to get on with my life. To get some direction. So, at least I feel I
150 have a life. If it doesn't work out, it'll be a pity but I tried it.

151 *TB: But you do feel you have a life? (Yes. That's right. Yes.) So how would you describe yourself at*
152 *the moment then? If you have to introduce yourself to people that you don't know.*

153 Sally: Oh well yes the other night we were at a party and I said I've gone back to college actually and
154 they said, "Oh. Have you!" and I said yes that's right, teacher training. *(What do they say?)* That's
155 what I say. They say, "Ooh. That's interesting." or they say, "Oh. I couldn't go through all that again.
156 But I find I'm very often talking to people who have done their degrees you see, so ...

157 *TB: So they can appreciate wanting to do a degree? Is that a bit of it for you? That you want to do a*
158 *degree?*

159 Sally: Well no, actually. I want to be ... a useful working member of society I suppose. I want a really
160 useful role. It's not having a degree. If ... if it wasn't vocational I don't think I'd do it because ... I think
161 it would be too selfish, you know, on the family. I did say to my husband, actually, "Oh! apparently if
162 you don't get on very well with the teaching side of it, which actually isn't a problem, for me at the
163 moment, I feel very comfortable with that side, *(Right)*, but if you don't you can change to a BA. Well,
164 he said, what would be the point of that at your age? OK his support will go so far ...

165 *TB: Yes. His support is for vocational work.*

166 Sally: Yes. Which I think is fair enough really. I don't blame him for that. I think that's fair enough
167 because I think at my time of life, you know, if I came out of here in three years time, and was trying to

168 get a job, I suppose it would be in the personnel field that I would aim for then, but competing with
169 twenty-four year olds with degrees I don't see what edge I would have, whereas, I think being a parent
170 will help put me in good stead with teaching. Just life experience will hold me in good stead, with
171 teaching, but perhaps not with, with other jobs.
172 *TB: So was your husband supportive?*
173 Sally: Very. (*Very?*) Very. Right from the beginning. He said what about doing a degree course or
174 something, before I went to the careers office. I said, "I don't know." He said, "You can do it. You can
175 do it!" So he's always had a lot of faith.
176 *TB: And he's been supportive in a practical sense?*
177 Sally: Yes. Absolutely. Which again in a way I feel slightly that I'm only just making it. I'm not doing
178 anything at home. He's done all the shopping for weeks and cleaning and washing, you know? All the
179 domestic things he's taken from me. Which I don't feel is very real. in a way. But I'm hoping that next
180 term, I will be a bit more adept at everything. But then, on the other hand, he is there during the day
181 and whereas I have a sort of a daytime social life, he doesn't really bother with that. So, he, you know,
182 he's quite happy to, so long as he's got a video of rugby or cricket he'll stand and iron quite happily. But
183 I'm very grateful to him. But I feel it; I do feel it's unbalanced ...
184 *TB: And that would concern you, would it, if it were to continue? (Yes.) You would need to redress the*
185 *balance?*
186 Sally: Yes I want to redress the balance.
187 *TB: I think we need to stop now. That was lovely. Thank you.*

(The discussion stopped at this time by prior agreement and resumed after a break of two hours.)

188 *TB: When we left off we were talking about the support your husband was giving you. (Oh yes.) The*
189 *way in which, although he's doing a lot, you feel it's unbalanced. And you want to do something about*
190 *the balance. And, I suppose, I'm going to say why? What's unbalanced about it?*
191 Sally: Well, because it's all falling on him. (*Right.*) And it's never all fallen on me. We've always
192 shared it, although I've... I have done more since I've been at home. And he hasn't. Cause I used to do
193 all the domestic stuff so that when he was off, it was free time. So, I suppose in a way it's redressing that
194 balance but then, he is out earning a living as well, which I wasn't at the time. So, that's why.
195 *TB: And you're hoping that it will be different. (Pause.) I'm not sure whether you feel you can make it*
196 *different or not. I know you said part of it is waiting to see how you get on with the assessment of this*
197 *term, but I can't remember the phrase you used, you'll know you're getting it right, or something...*
198 Sally: Well, I'll know I've chosen the right thing to do. That I should be here.
199 *TB: I'm interested in the transition, how you are managing the transition and you're pointing to various*
200 *things. For each of the people in the family, you've identified something that you need to be aware of.*
201 *For your younger child you're aware that she is sometimes confrontational and says "No!" so she needs*
202 *a different approach to the older child, to J., (yeah that's right) who you could talk woman to woman*
203 *with her really, in a sense, (Yes.) And you even offered her the opportunity to put herself in your*
204 *position, and think about what it would be like to be at home all the time. You seem to me to be in a*
205 *very managing role, kind of maternal, if you like, role. You're looking after everybody else. You're*
206 *making sure that everybody else is being looked after and has a sense of being looked after. Even*
207 *though you are suggesting that the business of managing the home with your husband is to do with*
208 *being fair, and keeping a balance, it's still a very maternal, of looking, you're looking after him, it*
209 *seems to me in a way. Making sure that he's not put upon. (Yes I suppose so.) So it seems to me it's a*
210 *caring thing. You're not just saying, if he complains he complains, and we'll sort something out, (Oh no*
211 *we don't work like that.) You're much more aware of his needs and looking for how you might meet*
212 *those needs. (Yeah.) Whilst at the same time meeting your own. (Yeah.) It seems a very caring role*
213 *you have. I'm just wondering if you were to draw the family how you would draw them. That would be*
214 *something I would be interested in. Even if it was a little circle for each.*
215 Sally: In my mind then I saw the three of them inside a circle. When you actually said that.
216 *TB: Would you like to? There's some coloured pencils and pens.*
Sally: I haven't got to analyse them?

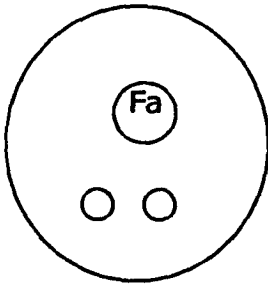


Fig 1

217 *TB: No. no. no. It's not an analysis. It's your representation that I'm interested in.*
 218 *Sally: It was the circle, just the circle really and um the three of them in it. (Pause.) Yes, that's what I*
 219 *saw. {Pause} But I suppose I feel I'm the circle in a way. Where am I?*
 220 *TB: Where are you? Yes! (Pointing to circle) You're this? This thing that's around them? (Yes. I*
 221 *suppose.) In a way? What is the circle? Is it the family? Not the family?*
 222 *Sally: I suppose it must be our family. I suppose it must be... {Pause} the lot of us.*
 223 *TB: And yet, that same circle...{Pause} is you? Where are you?*
 224 *Sally: Yes. I knew immediately where I would put them. I saw three of them in a circle. {Long pause}*
 225 *But I'm not, you see, because I'm not, I'm not performing this, this all-encompassing role now. You*
 226 *know. I'm sort of, I'm not out here. {Points outside the circle} But no, so I don't think I can honestly*
 227 *say I'm, that I'm the circle, {Long pause} in that sense. {Long pause}...*
 228 *TB: I suppose the other thing to ask is where would you like to be?*
 229 *Sally: I suppose I, yes, I would like to be the circle and be doing all the inside things which is an*
 230 *impossibility.*
 231 *TB: Maybe, maybe that's part of the transition? (Yeah.) That there we've highlighted something about*
 232 *becoming a student and moving from the situation you were in before, to now. (Yes.) That it's*
 233 *disturbed this (Yes.) (Pointing to Fig 1). Is this a picture that you could have drawn beforehand?*
 234 *Before you became a student? That there would be the three of them and you would be containing them*
 235 *as a family? As part of your role? Not all the time but as part of your role? Would it ever have been*
 236 *true?*
 237 *Sally: (Hesitant.) Probably. Yes. No. Maybe not really. Because I have always had my own interests*
 238 *and my own friends and things like that, so... {Pause}.*
 239 *TB: So where are you?*
Sally: So where am I? Possibles are... {Long pause} Suppose I'm there with him (laughs, sounds
relieved and draws herself in as a circle beside Fa.)...

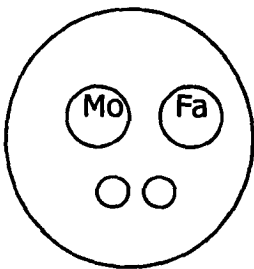


Fig 2

240 ...But then they'd have to be there. (Point to position closer to Fa.) If you're going to look at it like that.
 241 (Laughs and modifies drawing re-positioning herself further off). Yeah, I see the two of us, sort of,
 242 working, working for them in a way. Yeah.

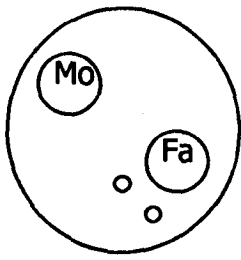


Fig 3

243 *TB: So, is that, is that how it is now? Or is that (Fig 3) how you would want it to be? Or how it used to*
 244 *be? {Long pause.} {Long pause.}*

245 *Sally: Um. I think perhaps it would, it would have been, before I started college, it would have been*
 246 *something like this. Where I would have been there, like that, (draws herself in close proximity to*
 247 *children)...*

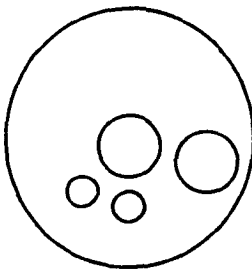
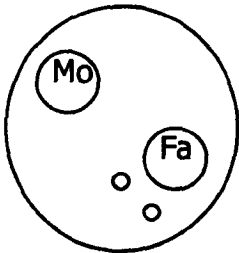


Fig 4.

...Then W. is slightly, {Pause} slightly out there. {Points to new positioning of Fa.}

248 *TB: So that's before. (Yes.) And this is now? Or this is how you would like it to be? (Refers back to*
 249 *Fig 3.)*

250



251

252

253 *Sally: {Long pause} Perhaps, perhaps that's how I would like it to be. That's, that's, what I'm aiming*
 254 *towards, I suppose. Because, if I was brutally honest, and did a time and motion study on myself, I*
 255 *suppose I might be, I might be, slightly smaller and over here. I don't know where really. I suppose it*
 256 *has to be like that because I'm not the one who's going everywhere with them, and, you know, cooking*
 257 *their meals for them, so I suppose, in reality, it's got to be a bit like that. (Mo displaced from the others.)*

258 *TB: So looking at that one (Fig 4) you were in the centre and W. has now moved into that place. And*
 259 *you've moved (No.) slightly away. (Yes. I haven't moved away as much {Pause}..) As much as he (as*
 260 *he would have done when I had the more central role I don't think.)*

261 *TB: But that's a classic mother's role, isn't it? With very young children. (Yes, I suppose.) And it*
 262 *would be...*

263 *Sally: Well, I've never, I mean I do think some women make real martyrs of themselves and they, you*
 264 *know, they take it all on board, and the man is very remote. And I hope that doesn't suggest that*
 265 *because it wasn't like that, I mean, because he's still, (No, I hear what you say.) because he's at home*
 266 *during the day he was involved with them, he ...*

267 TB: *And quite clearly he's able to take that role because that's exactly where you've drawn him now.*
 268 *(Yes.) So that helps me see part of that transition, (Transition) for you. That there's had to be a shift*
 269 *and what you've reported is that it's been negotiated and it's been a shift that both of you have felt*
 270 *comfortable with. (Um.) But there is something in the back of your mind, you are concerned (Yes, yes)*
 271 *that you don't want this to continue for too long. {Points to Fig 3.}*
 272 Sally: *Well I suppose it has to but I've got to get comfortable with it.*
 273 TB: *Oh right. That's different. That's different from taking over from him doing all the shopping and*
 274 *the ironing, and so on and you taking more of that...*
 275 Sally: *I suppose if we inter-linked a bit more there I would feel more comfortable. (Moves position of*
 276 *Mo towards centre and closer to the other three.)*

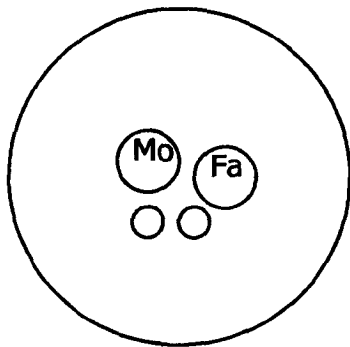


Fig 5

277 TB: *Has that put a strain on the relationship or has it all been fairly easy to manage?*
 278 Sally: *It hasn't put a strain on the relationship, but it's... it's put a strain on me. Because there are*
 279 *always things to feel guilty about. You know if I spend more time in college, as I am today, I know I'm*
 280 *clocking up the child-minder's bills. I know that they'll all have a late tea, not that we sit down rigidly*
 281 *for tea at a certain time but I am still aware that they will be having tea later, (And it's to do with you.)*
 282 *yeah, and it's to do with me being here. And I sort of compensate that by thinking hopefully that means*
 283 *I'll have a day in the holiday when I won't have to come in. Otherwise I will have to. So that's how I*
 284 *sort of justify it. But I do find I am constantly justifying, in my own mind. (To yourself?) Yes.*
 285 *Sometimes when I say it out loud to W. he laughs and says don't worry about it. But, but I do. I sort of*
 286 *think, well, OK. this is taking but I'll give back, there, sort of thing. (Yes, oh yes.)*
 287 TB: *I'm wondering what it was like for the younger one to start nursery and how you managed that.*
 288 *Because it feels as if it's quite different, looking at this picture, (Fig 4) than it would have been if you*
 289 *had still been in that role, {points to Fig 4} where you'd been quite close.*
 290 Sally: *She's very outgoing and sort of, happy at nursery, and with the child-minder. But, {Pause} I*
 291 *don't know what her behaviour would have been like with me anyway, because, my eldest one I found*
 292 *very difficult at this age, because {Pause} I encourage them to talk and make small decisions like what*
 293 *would you like to have for your lunch. But it sort of backfires on me because I find I haven't got the*
 294 *control, (laughs) that, perhaps {Pause} well I suppose that my mother had, that's the role that I've got.*
 295 *But then I've got, I set about it in a different way, consciously, so, but we won't go into all that. But you,*
 296 *but sometimes I sort of wonder well I wonder if she would be having this tantrum. Is it her way of*
 297 *saying I don't know where I am? I'm tired, I've had a long day without you and I don't know how I feel,*
 298 *so I'm cross. But then other friends are sort of saying that their children are the same. One little girl*
 299 *said to her mum, I wish you could go to college like Sally and I could go to S., the child-minder, so, it's*
 300 *difficult to weigh it up really. Perhaps if I was at home with her and she was behaving badly like that*
 301 *then I would be thinking (Yes.) Oh! I need to get out of here. I need something else, (Yes.) I need a*
 302 *break from it. So, I don't know. I don't feel, hand on heart that I'm causing her any major problems.*
 303 *There's no bed-wetting, going off her food, or looking listless, or anything like that. She's basically a*
 304 *very happy child. I'm sure of that, because I keep checking it. So, I really think she is. {Pause} I*
 305 *mean, I've seen deeper unhappiness in one of my own children when we moved. And J. was unhappy,*
 306 *and she'd never been unhappy before, not seriously. So although it was awful, now at least I know what*
 307 *real unhappiness is in them. (You've got something to measure her now.) Yes.*

308 *TB: So there's something on occasions then about nursery, no not nursery, about being where she is*
309 *now, as an eight year old, are we talking about the eight year old? (J. Yes.) Yes.*
310 *Sally: Oh no. When I was talking about the tantrums I was talking about the three-year-old.*
311 *TB: Right. I thought you were then I was confused.*
312 *Sally: No, I'm sorry. I've seen real unhappiness in my eight-year-old. (Right.) and I know they are two*
313 *different people (When you moved.) Yes, when we moved house.*
314 *TB: You said something about your mother and your childhood. So, are they very different childhood's*
315 *yours and your children's.*
316 *TB: I was interested that you talked about your own mother when you talked about your own*
317 *mothering.*

(Several minutes of discussion about Sally's relationship with her mother which have not been included in this transcript.)

318 *TB: I've got two last questions to ask you. One is about criticism. Whether you've faced any criticism*
319 *about making that transition from not being a student to being a student. You've spoken very positively*
320 *but I wondered whether there was any.*
321 *Sally: Yes. Yes there has been sort of covert criticism {Pause} and well I was talking to my mother at*
322 *the weekend, and at the time I was, feeling, and she said what news have you got? And I said I haven't*
323 *really got any news because it's felt like work, work, work and she said, oh well you've tried it, you can*
324 *always give it up, because, you know, the girls and W. must come first. So there was the implicit*
325 *criticism in that. (Right. That they're not coming first at the moment?) Yes. (And she just thought*
326 *she'd let you know!) Yes that's right! And, a fellow student said, and I'm sure she was unconscious of*
327 *what she was saying, but she said, oh well I could never leave my children with a child-minder. I'm just*
328 *not the sort of person who could do that. And I thought, oh, well what sort of person am I then? And*
329 *some people seem really hung up about the age. They say, in quite a friendly way, what's it like being*
330 *with all these eighteen year olds? And I say, well I'm not actually. I don't feel that I am really because a*
331 *lot of people are my sort of age, and some are even older. (Is that people outside college who don't know*
332 *there is such a mix here?) Yes, that's right, all sorts of people are here. So sometimes I wonder if there*
333 *is slightly implied criticism. (Right.) But perhaps then that's just coming from me. Perhaps it's*
334 *because, well I have thought to myself well, why didn't I get myself qualified years ago? Usually, people*
335 *have their career then they have their family. I've done it all the other way round. But there are reasons*
336 *why I did. And there are reasons why I'm glad of it.*
337 *TB: You said earlier that you wanted to make something of your life.*
338 *Sally: Yeah. Get out there and live life! I didn't want to be studying any more after I finished my 'A'*
339 *levels. But of course at that time I thought perhaps in a year or so I'll come back but life kind of took*
340 *over in a very positive and nice way. So that's why it didn't happen.*
341 *TB: My last question is what's been gained and what's been lost?*
342 *Sally: What's been gained? (Long pause.) I suppose in some ways I've been vindicated in the way that*
343 *I've felt here. It has been perfectly possible for me to join in and keep up with people. On the other*
344 *hand, quite a lot of sleep's been lost! Which I wasn't anticipating. Quite a bit of peace of mind has been*
345 *lost, I'm afraid, at the moment.*
346 *TB: You've said that some of that might be regained at the end of this term (I'm hoping so, I'm hoping*
347 *so) when you get some assignments back marked.*
348 *Sally: A sense of being in control has been lost actually. Because I feel as if I'm just hanging on by the*
349 *tips of my fingers. (Really.) Yes. (And that doesn't feel very comfortable.) No, I don't feel very*
350 *comfortable with it. Irritating things, where you are just not in control.*
351 *TB: And you've moved from being very much in control, if we look back to that {points to Fig 4}*
352 *Sally: Yes I had my time, I could organise my time...*
353 *TB: So some peace of mind has been lost.*
354 *Sally: And a sense of control and being in control. But I've always been the sort of person who's haring*
355 *here and there because I've always crammed a lot in. So I can't say I was always early for thing before*
356 *and now I'm always late because that's not true. I tend to be that sort of person. But {sighs} I just feel*
357 *that there's a lot to keep hold of. Sometimes it feels as if it's all {Pause.}*
358 *TB: And there's that interesting phrase again. That you're keeping hold of (Yeah.) because that*
359 *reminds me of what I said to you about keeping hold of the family.*

360 Sally: Yes. It's more the work, the college work, that I'm afraid of letting slip. And all these things as
361 well.
362 *TB: All these people who ask you to do extra things as well!*
363 Sally: And I want to as well! All of a sudden I want nothing better than to sit and I find myself being
364 pulled that way, {Pause.} *(Like what?)* For instance on Saturday, I had to do this essay, and it was
365 what mum, they hadn't been very well so I couldn't let them out to play, and I would much rather have
366 put away the typewriter and sat down with a puzzle, which is strange, because when I have had all the
367 time in the world to do puzzles, I didn't particularly want to do them. I did them but, so actually it's that
368 battle. So I've got my priorities slightly, slightly askew I suppose. *(Askew from what?)* From the college
369 point of view.
370 *TB: What do you see the college would want? That you should be doing the essay?*
371 Sally: Oh yes. That I should be doing the essay. I thought there would be more time at university to ...
372 go away and explore, but for me it's not like that at all. I haven't got spare time like that at all. So
373 whether it will come I don't know. It's hard to say what's been gained.
374 *TB: Yes, you were more hesitant about that. Perhaps it's a bit early for gains. You've gained a place*
375 *here. (I've gained a place.) and some insight into your commitment, you know you're committed. You*
376 *haven't said in any part of our conversation that you don't think you ought to be here or made the wrong*
377 *decision, but you want some confirmation...*
378 Sally: Yes, but I want some confirmation. But I don't feel that I don't know what these people are
379 talking about, fellow students. Even the lectures on the whole I feel as if I understand.
380 *TB: Do you feel a student?*
381 Sally: Do I feel a student? Yes I suppose I do in a way. *(Long pause.)* Yes I suppose I do.
382 *TB: Can I say thank you very much? It's been lovely. I've enjoyed listening to you. (It's been a bit one*
383 *sided.) Well that was quite deliberate because I wanted to hear from you what it was like to manage this*
384 *change.*

Categories for analysis

An initial analysis of the transcript was carried out in order to detect themes or issues, which had arisen in the course of the discussion. Six major themes were identified in this initial stage. They are:

motivation for change; parenting roles; relationships with partner; relationships extending beyond the family; preparing for the transition; adjusting to change.

The transcript was then examined in order to find examples of speech, which could be coded under this categorisation. These are represented below in brief. Numbers refer to the transcript in Appendix A where the account of each episode can be read more fully.

Motivation for change - sensing a personal need for change

Transcript line	Wording
005	hardly being able to cover the child-minding fees...
006	...responsibility...
007	...opportunity for learning...
009	...useful with the rest of my life...
011	...so probably thirty years more work left in me...
147	...that's why I didn't go to university at nineteen, twenty because I was keen to get on with my life.
158	I want to be ... a useful working member of society.

Role as parent

Transcript line	Wording
015	...knew nothing about anything ... just immersed in child care
016	...I've only had two, there was all that trauma in between
043	...it was a mixture of child-minder and daddy being being at home
051	With the eight year old I did work ...
052	with the second one I did choose to stay at home.
056	...she was premature
068	She's a little trooper
080	she's very supportive
091	Did you talk to her about coming to college?
095	... she was aware that my time wouldn't be totally devoted to them.
098	... well I do love love being with you but..
100	... I think I'll get pretty bored...
105	...be her teacher as well...
110	I just let it go with the flow
126	... it's not very compatible with being a parent...
168	I think being a parent will put me in good stead.
202	<i>so, the younger one needs a different approach to the older child?</i> (Yes.)
219	I suppose I feel I'm the circle in a way
254	I'm not the one who's going everywhere with them.
259	I haven't moved away as much as he would have done when I had the more central role.

279	They'll all have a late tea.
291	...my eldest one I found very difficult at this age...
293	...I haven't got the control
299	Perhaps if I was home with her...
303	I keep checking
326	...I could never leave my children with a child-minder
327	...what sort of person am I
334	Usually people have their career then they have their family
364	they hadn't been very well so I couldn't let them out to play.
367	I've got my priorities slightly askew

Relationship with partner

Transcript line	Wording
163	His support will go so far...
171	<i>So was your husband supportive? Very!</i>
177	He's done all the shopping...
190	It's all falling on him.
242	I see the two of us working for them

Perceptions of relationships

Transcript line	Wording
039	I did like the idea of sharing with people...
114	...and also how they relate to me...
122	And I felt it was eroding my time with my friends...
133	...why am I putting them through all this?
214	I saw three of them inside a circle
219	I feel I'm the circle in a way...
225	I'm not performing this all-encompassing role now
240	So where am I?
253	I might be slightly smaller and over here
262	I do think some women make real martyrs of themselves...
277	It hasn't put a strain on the relationship, but... it's put a strain on me.
277	There are always things to feel guilty about.

Preparing for the transition

Transcript line	Wording
013	I talked around a lot. I went to see a careers officer in P.
021	...what I should be aiming for...
025	I wanted to get the information about what was possible.
090	<i>Did you talk to her about coming to College? (Yes).</i>
110	I took a little part time job in a nursery...

Vulnerability

Transcript line	Wording
038	My confidence wasn't high...
278	...always things to feel guilty about...
292	I find I haven't got the control...
295	...I wonder if she would be having this tantrum...
320	...there has been sort of covert criticism...
323	...oh well you've tried, you can always give it up...
326	...I could never leave my child with a child-minder.
332	I wonder if there is a slightly implied criticism...
343	Quite a lot of peace of mind has been lost...
347	...a sense of being in control has been lost...
348	I don't feel very comfortable...
356	I just feel there's a lot to keep hold of...
377	...I want some confirmation...

Development of transcript analysis

This was written soon after the discussion and a copy sent to the informant who responded with a brief commentary

1. Sally is a friendly, outgoing and sociable person with a bubbling personality. She is frank and thoughtful. For Sally, a person whose life is fulfilled will have a self-directed sense of purpose. She has a clear sense of who she is. More precisely, she did have a clear sense of self prior to becoming a student. At the time of discussion she is uncomfortable with the ambiguity of her present situation but not disturbed by it. She knows that in the past she has been able to remain positive and purposeful when events have threatened to overwhelm her. She knows she can cope. The difficult birth of her second child is a story of success: although a stressful and worrying time, the family survived and was strengthened by the experience. Knowing she has been successful in the past is something Sally is able to use to confirm in herself and her family that she is able to come through difficult times.

2. Sally is a tolerant person. She accepts the views of others and is happy to "live and let live". She accepts that other people are different from her and she is happy to let them express beliefs which are very different from her own. She doesn't usually feel threatened by what other people say or believe and she doesn't try to foist her own views onto them. When Sally describes herself she doesn't do so in terms of how other people see her. She has a clear view of herself through her own life-story as a stable and continually developing person.

3. Sally sees adult life in terms of action. Making something of your life is about getting involved with others, being productive in a practical way. Being successful is related to "making your way" either in business, commerce or industry. She is a pragmatist and this influences her view of adult education. For Sally the main purpose of education is to study to improve your chances in life. For Sally education is not a way of life itself - except for a minority: a different kind of person.

4. Sally wants to be a valuable and valued member of society. This may have deep spiritual roots, originating in a belief about what a "good person" should be like.

5. Sally sometimes lacks confidence in new situations and may defer to authority figures. Males are seen as potentially in authority. Sally did not mention her father in the discussion so it is impossible to discuss his influence on Sally's childhood development directly. It may be possible to infer that by status if not by temperament Sally's father was a significant figure in her life though perhaps not a dominant one. Her mother did defer to her father and insisted Sally do the same. There are parallels in Sally's role as mother and the mothering she received. There appears to be an ambivalence to her mother who still tries to dominate Sally, while Sally resists this at the same time trying to remain friendly and respectful. She wants her mother's approval and works to achieve it at one level of the relationship. On another level, there is tension because Sally seeks to give her own children a different childhood experience from the one she received. The dilemma may be that she wishes to continue to have her mother's approval but she does not want to be the mother to her children that her mother was to her. Parental approval is not easy for Sally to achieve and there is perhaps some disappointment for Sally here, if not friction in the relationship.
6. Her new role as student has brought Sally some difficulties, though most were anticipated. It is characteristic of her relationship with W that both Sally and W together planned the process of Sally becoming a student. They support each other and Sally for her part finds W's encouragement supportive and reassuring; both because she trusts his judgement but also because W sees many things the way Sally does and so his view is comfortably confirming.
7. Sally wants to preserve the stability of the family. She is not anxious about this and sees it as robust and strong. The well-being of the family group takes precedence over her individual needs. She sees the need to further her own individual career as both temporary and beneficial to the family in the long term.
8. She has spent a lot of time considering her changing role. At a practical level, she has weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of returning to her old job. She has assessed her qualities and present qualifications including, characteristically, what she has gained from life so far.
9. The starting point for a desire for change came as Sally was able to see ahead to a time when both her children were in school. She understood herself well enough to realise she would not be fulfilled unless she had another role to play; and a role which had some possibility of meeting deep seated desires to be valued and valuable to society. Sally explored a number of options, but academic study (for a vocational course) was always in the background. The possibility of teaching has been a long held idea, but not a sharply focused one.
10. Sally did not discuss her ideal teacher in the discussion but it is possible to speculate that a "good teacher" would for Sally be one who achieves that remarkable double of being a fulfilled person themselves, while also being able to help others to gain fulfilment in their own lives. Thus although Sally is a pragmatist, she is also an idealist with strong beliefs about what is good and worth striving for.
11. Sally recognises the potential we all have for playing the martyr role and is determined not to play this role herself. It may be that Sally's specific reference to the martyr role is triggered by her perception of the role her mother played during Sally's childhood. It is problematic to criticise the martyr when you may have been one of the (unknowing) participants in the martyrdom process.

12. The task for Sally now is to adjust to the effects of the transition to student life. It is important not to imply that other aspects of life have necessarily been given up. For a person with children involved in a long term relationship with a partner, this period is a re-bonding process rather than a bond breaking one - bond breaking being more typical for those leaving home and loosening parental ties.

13. In the short term Sally wishes to gain an understanding of what one has to do to be a good student. She wants to get some feedback about her academic performance and is keen to have some formally assessed work returned from tutors, so she can see "how she's done". At the same time there is a sense of vulnerability stemming from anticipated criticism about becoming a student.

14. The transition has required a change of roles at home. Since Sally has defined herself partly in terms of a traditional role of mother, the transition has presented some difficulties. W has taken on a caring role which is not uncommon today. However, his new role can be read as having become more closely associated with a traditional female role of mother and this is still problematic for Sally since previously this is in part how she has chosen to define herself. Of most concern then, is not the shifting of roles per se, but the way roles have been used by Sally to define herself and her partner. With her role as mother now taken up successfully by her partner and accepted by her children, Sally may find herself excluded from a triad she once formed with the children. She is having to come to terms with the contrasting feelings arising from exclusion on the one hand and pleasure arising from the liberation it provides. She has yet to resolve how to define her new role as student-mother and this may prove to present some difficulties.

As Sally herself perceptively acknowledged, there have not been many gains yet for her. There have been losses. Sally has given up her role as the focal adult in the family and sees herself as having temporarily perhaps, moved to the edge of things. She has experienced a sense of loss of control. She expects to regain some control as she learns to manage the student part of her life and she may need to learn to accept the change in her family role. Although not life-threatening, the transition has brought some discomfort for Sally and it has taken courage to persevere. Her overall demeanour during the discussion was one of a successful, thoughtful person who was managing change well and enjoying her life.

Response by Sally T to the transcript analysis

Your comments in paragraph 1 were accurate at the time. A few weeks after this I experienced a severe lack of confidence and felt that I had lost my sense of self. After a couple of sessions with the counsellor, and talking it through with my partner some of my self-confidence has returned. However, in the last few days, feelings of panic at not being strong enough, intellectually and emotionally, for this course and the profession of teaching, have threatened to overwhelm me again and I have requested another appointment with the counsellor.

Par. 2. I am tolerant of others but often do feel threatened by what other people say and will sometimes make no comment rather than appear confrontational.

Par. 3. This was very accurate.

I agree with paragraph 4. It also stems from knowing what I need to feel fulfilled and worthwhile.

Paragraph 5 is spot on!

Paragraph 6. This is true.

I didn't understand what you meant in the last sentence of paragraph 7.

Paragraphs 8 - 12. I would agree with all this.

Paragraph 13. Although positive assessments have come through in my major and supportive subjects, I feel nervous at not being formally assessed in my professional studies.