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NAME

Mounter

Joy

Family

Given

UNIVERSITY REGISTRATION NO:

059085663

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

12 Staunton Fields

Whitchurch Village

Bristol BS14 0QD, B.A.N.E.S

EMAIL:joymounter@aol.com

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Title of Dissertation

As a Headteacher Researcher how can I demonstrate the impact and self-understandings drawn from Living Theory Action Research, as a form of Continual Professional Development in education?
--

Tutor

Dr Kate Bullock

Number of Words
(excluding References & Appendices)

21,767

Date of submission or date posted

31 st May 2012

For Office use only

IBTA Level 2 indicated on enrolment form? Yes / No

DATE RECEIVED..... SIGNED.....

**MA Dissertation submitted for examination to the University of
Bath, Department of Education, May 2012. Result expected in
November 2012.**

**As a Headteacher Researcher how can I demonstrate
the impact and self-understandings drawn from Living
Theory Action Research, as a form of Continual
Professional Development in education?**

This dissertation is submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education by completion of
three taught units, three educational enquiries and dissertation.

JOY MOUNTER

May 2012

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The opinions expressed in this work are entirely those of the author and do not represent in any way the views of her employer or the University of Bath.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been created from my journey as a Teacher Researcher and Head Teacher Researcher.

Two people have inspired me to be the very best, reflective practitioner that I can be. They have both encouraged, cajoled, inspired and believed in me. For their faith and belief I am eternally grateful. They do not know how much this has altered my life!

My deepest thanks to Jack Whitehead without whose inspirational support, I would have faltered long ago.

To my dear friend Marie Huxtable who has shared so much of my journey. Often over a cup of tea and long, fascinating conversations where we have explored the world, pushed our thinking and bounced around ideas. Our conversations renewed my enthusiasm for journeying, opened my eyes to new possibilities and always left me excited to continue. Thank you.

AUTHOR DECLARATION

The author has not been registered for any academic award during the period of registration for this study.

The material included in this dissertation has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award.

The programme of advanced study of which this dissertation is part has included completion of the following units:

- Gifts and Talents in Education
- Educational Enquiry
- Research Methods in Education
- Educational Enquiry
- Understanding Learners and Learning
- Educational Enquiry

Where any material has been previously submitted as part of an assignment within any of these units, it is clearly identified.

J. Mounter

May 2012

Abstract

Through the reflective gathering of my thoughts I have tried to show the layers of my journey and understandings, including staff learning, Loving Recognition and Nurturing Responsiveness, holding a 'learning space' within, and creative connectivity. As a female Headteacher and Headteacher Researcher I read with interest the writing of Bateson (1989), discussing the impact of female researchers in a predominantly male Academy of work.

'Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular. Perhaps we can discern in women honouring multiple commitments a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning.' (Bateson, 1989, 166)

I hope the layers of my learning journey are reflected clearly through the narrative form of presentation used to carefully reflect the steps taken and the emotional understandings felt. As Bateson highlights, I hope it offers a different understanding of the validity and role this form of research has and the impact on professional development and CPD.

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Introduction

Safe within Uncertainty

This dissertation will highlight the feelings of conflict I experience as a Headteacher Researcher in a primary school, both from government policy and the constraint I feel from the Academic form my writing should take. But I hope it also portrays the positive commitment I have to work within these bonds, whilst still living to the fullest, my ontological Living Values.

Through this dissertation I am endeavouring to elucidate my embodied living values as they became clearer and more sharply focused through my practice and this Living Theory Action Research Journey. I am offering my reflections on my journey, clarity of my Living Values and originality of academic learning, by articulating my growing understanding of 'Nurturing Responsiveness', 'Reflective Wisdom' and 'Co-creation of Knowledge' as my living value explanatory principles and living standards of judgement.

This dissertation is the culmination of a long Action Research journey and several essays. The journey as a Master's researcher has documented and offers explanations of my continuing professional development (CPD), by clarifying and evolving my explanatory principles of 'Nurturing Responsiveness', 'Reflective Wisdom' and 'Co-creation of Knowledge' in my living educational

theory. I am endeavouring to show how a professional educator can hold themselves responsible and accountable for living their educational values as fully as possible through their professional practice. This is not to say that my CPD journey is over, but this is the place I offer my reflections and understandings.

My introduction to the reader must include an explanation of my subheading above, 'Safe with Uncertainty'. This for me is an emotional response to starting to write for someone else, ordering my thoughts and reflections. It offers the reader in three small words a glimpse into the emotions felt on my Living Theory Action Research journey. I am a veteran journeyer, long periods of refining thoughts and enjoying the immersion within the moment and later the reflection. This dissertation will reflect the safety experienced of following a CPD Action Research cycle, but the uncertainty felt, not from the experiences themselves, but the learning and links from them, that changed the 'person' I am, the 'Headteacher' I am and the 'Headteacher Researcher' I am.

The main headings throughout this dissertation are signposts for the reader, and also points of order for myself. This dissertation is divided into three main sections. The first sets out the methodology used and how the style of the writing hints at the tension felt on this journey. The second begins to explore

how as a Headteacher Researcher, outside influences impact on education. I also explore how through the process of Living Theory Action Research I clarified and identified my ontological Living Values. The third section explores how as a Headteacher, I applied my understandings and learning to my school and pulls the threads together of my learning of self, professional and academic through Living Theory Action Research CPD.

Sections in this dissertation

Introduction

First Phase - Action Research - Living Theory Methodology

The Box Perspective - Societies 'Felt' Constraints

Second Phase - Headteacher's Perspective

Living Values -Values for Living

Third Phase - Walking the Talk

Future, Drawn from Finding Myself

For the first time I have re-ordered my writing to make more sense for the reader, rather than writing as a reflection of my learning and order of my

journey. This will give some structure of what to look out for whilst journeying and the understandings that will be explored.

I became a new Headteacher of a primary school in Somerset in 2008. It has been a strange transition from class teacher to my new role; I still find I miss the daily, direct link with the children. My previous essays explored how children's perceptions of learning change as they understand and explore the learner they are, and review theories about learning written by adults, for adults. For myself, I feel this research journey has enabled me to understand myself, the teacher/Headteacher Researcher I am, to explore and clarify my Living Values and to offer my own living theory, clarified through reflective creativity and the Living Theory Action Research Journey that I am on.

I have written, linking research essays over a period of five years, all leading towards my Masters Degree. On my research journey my thoughts are frequently recorded in poetic expression, notes and video extracts. I have written from the heart, as it flows. A commitment of words, spaces and lines to compliment and reflect the journey I feel I am on. It is a year since I have written or wanted to write; yet I find myself enjoying being immersed in the pleasure of forming language to represent my thoughts and emotions again. My journey has been complex and yet with the hindsight of a long journey, in many

ways it now feels so simple. The change I feel has come from constructing understandings, supported from exterior guidance and research, forming my beliefs and unthought-of values and the wisdom of complex understandings and heartfelt values: A sense of self-peace.

Whilst building one on the other, my previous essays all align from the pupil's sense of self and perspective. This is my summary, my conclusion, the pulling together of the singular threads and the intertwining together, through the sense of space that creates the understanding. 'Space' is the connection, the sense of bonding between the threads. But it is the creation of physical form and inner personal form that I am intrigued by. This I believe will link my hidden role and Living Values to the conclusions previously voiced, from the children's perspective.

I have suggested this piece of writing will form the conclusion to this series of essays. I hesitate though, over the use of the word 'conclusion'. This for me implies the end, the definitive thoughts, pulled together providing a clear answer or opinion.

' decision based on facts, final part of something'

(Encarta Dictionary, UK, 2011)

This writing and my thoughts about learning are that, my thoughts and perceptions at this moment in time upon my path. This momentary reflection of my journey and the understandings I am gaining will impact on my practice, this aspect is also discussed and shared by Morse (1992), which I will link in more fully later. Can it ever be a conclusion I am writing about, as it is not the final step?

Although my career may vary, the path change, all experiences will draw back and influence my Living Values, my beliefs and these reflections. As ripples on a pond continue to travel, so do my perceptions and understandings as experience moves me from the 'moment' to a perspective of hindsight. Other interactions affect the person I am and ultimately my perspective on experiences I have noted. This can at this time be a summary of my understandings, learning, reflections, but it cannot be more.

First Phase - Action Research - Living Theory Methodology

The term action research can have several definitions, starting in the United States in the 1940's by a social psychologist researcher, Kurt Lewin.

'Lewin is credited with coining the term 'action research' to describe work that did not separate the investigation from the action needed to solve the problem'

(McFarland and Stansell, 1993, 14)

By the 1950's Corey (1953) was discussing the benefits within educational practice of action research by the teacher immersing themselves within the process.

For me, traditional scientific research, based in the social sciences, is about proving a statement to be right or wrong. This is done by investigating a hypothesis, making observations, statistical analysis and working towards drawing a conclusion. This often provides quantifiable data to be examined against the conclusions drawn. Cohen and Manion, (1995) champion this form of 'scholarly research'. This I can see is useful if I was comparing two forms of assessment or focusing on a specific closed question. But for my research to

improve my practice and enable myself to be part of the research and not stand outside, this form is not suitable. Whitty (2005) further defines the role a researcher takes in 'Education Research', from the perspectives of the disciplines of education. This is not a role I can, or would want to take in my classroom. Educational Research is about improving my practice through living experiences, reflection, questioning, linking to research, reflection, understandings, almost a spiral action.... A form of research I can embrace and one argued for by Whitehead and McNiff (2006).

In contrast Waters-Adams (2006) discusses the limitations and highlights criticisms of Action Research, whilst agreeing with the importance of the researcher being involved in the research. He points out how difficult it can be to maintain rigour when you are in the middle of the process, often busy and limited for time. He also points to a researcher's interests causing bias in the research data gathering and analysis.

In stark contrast to the social sciences perspective of research, Living Theory Action Research integrates my role as researcher and classroom teacher/Headteacher within the process of the research cycle, drawing on experience to test emergent theories, by generating evidence in relation to values and standards of judgement to improve my practice. This is then tested

against my own living theory. I use a form of 'social validation' to strengthen the validity of my writings. (Appendix 1).

This form of Action Research enables me to look at my own role in my classroom/ school as well as the learning of the children. Snow (2001) and Eisner (1988, 1993, 1997) both challenge the rigour and validity demonstrated in this form of research. I hope to show through my work the relevance and improving practice in my school, the sharing of my developing educational theory and the knowledge I offer through my research for validation by the Academy.

Hutchinson (1998) describes the '... empowering nature of research which takes the form of action research...'. This I believe will impact on my ontological values as an educational practitioner and also on the children as stakeholders.

Validity and Rigour in Research

The Living Theory Action Research approach I am using is based on validity and rigour. Offering this dissertation for 'validation' I draw on Habermas's ideas to strengthen my account using his four criteria of social validity:

1. Uttering something understandably;
2. Giving (the hearer) something to understand;
3. Making him/ herself thereby understandable. And
4. Coming to an understanding with another person.

' The speaker must have the intention of communicating a true proposition (or a propositional content, the existential presuppositions of which are satisfied) so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker.'

(Habermas, 1976, 2-3)

As part of this enquiry these critical standards of judgement will remain at the heart of my writing, my personal review and sharing within my university group, to form a social validation.

The group, convened by Jack Whitehead, I join weekly in Bath enables me to work collaboratively, discuss my changing perception of my practice in relation to my research, and refine my understanding by explaining to others and listening to their feedback. This process of social validity offers us changes to our practice as we carry out the action research, but this in itself raises new questions for us to consider and so the process continues.

Often when writing we are pulled into the experience and reflections, writing for ourselves and for clarification, forgetting the change to a 'readerly text': A

space I have to fight to retain. These four criteria will refocus my writing, ensuring it is in the best form of understanding for the reader, the statements and content are justified, clear and supported by evidence trails. The criteria will also ensure that my work is trustworthy and genuine, clarifying that my claimed values are explained and fully lived through my changing practice. This process of social validity challenges the perceptions we hide behind, the assumptions we sometimes make and link my developing understandings to a collective of research, bringing the forefront of educational development and practice to my school.

Entitlement - Teachers as Action Researchers

It is still a minority of teachers carrying out Action Research in schools, although this has improved recently with funded Maths Master units offered to primary teachers. I worry that this 'pathway of journeying' will become lost in the mire of the economic freefall we seem to be in. Economic predictions say this could last 10 years. The momentum of change and research by teachers informing their practice could be delayed or even lost at this fragile juncture:

'We are convinced that the disposition to study...the consequences of our own teaching is more likely to change and improve our practices than is reading about what someone else has discovered of his

teaching.'

(Corey, 1953, 70)

I believe that if we are to be a profession that can argue policy through practice and develop teaching and learning in a form we believe reflects the community we are in and the needs of the children, then Living Theory Action Research needs to be introduced during professional training at university as something that is integral to the job description and an entitlement. This I firmly believe will enable teachers to hold the profession in the highest esteem as practitioners who are forging policy, working with government policy makers and are forward thinkers.

'Action research (for that matter all kinds of research) is more than just doing activities. It is a form of practice which involves data gathering, reflection on the action as it is presented through the data, generating evidence through the data, and making claims to knowledge based on conclusions drawn from validated evidence.'

(McNiff: 2002.16)

Frost (2012) explores critically the impact of CPD, not only as a way of introducing new initiatives and to 'nourish' teachers, but encouraging Teacher Leadership. Frost argues CPD should enable Teacher Leaders to lead innovation, build professional knowledge, whilst developing their own leadership skills and influencing practice in their school. Ideas I am drawn to, but not his early conclusion that as an outside researcher, the influence is diluted and results in small scale research projects within the classroom, having no impact on whole school policy:

'... although there are robust claims made about teacher research as a form of CPD, it has serious limitations. Classroom research tends to be individualistic and small scale, which leads to a lack of impact in the school as a whole. This is partly a problem of coherence and synergy, but perhaps even more problematic is that the norms and language of research tend to draw teachers away from the challenge of leading change.'

(Frost,2012, 208)

Frost's research raises more questions for me, than it answers. His work is consistent with the traditional social science form of research undertaken from someone outside looking in, without being personally involved. I have since found he is a university professor. He makes judgements on the impact of a person's research, using his own criteria of success, looking in from outside. My journey as a researcher has evolved and changed, partly as my understandings of the process of Living Theory Action Research has grown and my own living theories have developed.

This living theory narrative offers a view of my professional learning from the inside as a researcher fully immersed in my own learning. It offers the reader a glimpse of the paths I have followed, my self discovery and my changing perspective of my role and that of outside influences. My narrative demonstrates the Nurturing Responsiveness and Loving Recognition I offer, developed through the clarification, understanding and living of my ontological Living Values. I feel a deep sense of commitment to the children in my care and to my own self belief to not only live my professional values fully, but to communicate them and how they have helped me to grow professionally and 'touched' the children, as ripples of Nurturing Responsive Connectors through the narrative of my research. Frost casts doubt on the impact of teacher research going beyond small scale projects, although I do not think he fully

explains why these norms and the language draw teachers away from leading change. Leading implies for me to be the vessel of knowledge or skill, the instigator and controller. For research to truly impact and create leaders (why only Teacher Leaders?) the process has to engage all, to be driven by self and impact on self, seen through the values we live as learner practitioners. The ripples will engage others at many levels, children arguing learning theory with adults, Teaching Assistants exploring courses as a form of CPD, perhaps those that they haven't considered before.

The opportunity to discover and clarify your ontological Living Values for yourself is amazing, this will impact on your self-belief, the teacher you are and your desire to make changes. This process has taught me so much. I started as a teacher wanting to simply be the best teacher I could be. This process has awakened dissatisfaction with many areas of policy surrounding education, and a wish to find answers or just more questions for myself. I have discovered a voice, an energy to share, but never to direct change because I know the answers. More a willingness to explore, to share the passion for self journeying with anyone I connect with through understanding and offering my Nurturing Responsiveness. This essay will share my learning, the pleasure I have found within the research process, the deep learning that has taken place, the creation of knowledge and the impact on those around me, both in policy

impacting practice and directly with the staff and children. It will demonstrate the growth of my understandings through the process of researching, but also the integration of those understandings 'to' the research process.

This dissertation is formed through Living Theory Action Research, telling the story of my journey as a teacher, Headteacher Researcher. This should enable the reader to share the journey I have been on to improve my practice, my reflections in the moment, and later, as well as critiquing and linking scholarly research to my work, fully immersing myself in the process.

“The challenge is to enhance the value of
personal knowledge and personal experience
for practice.”

(Snow, 2001, 3-9)

Connelly and Clandinin, (1988, 1995) explore the relevance of a teacher's life experiences and life stories in effecting and improving practice. This research pushes the boundaries of traditional recording and research methodology in its style, as they explore means and ways of recognising these experiences and reflections as academic research.

"Increasingly, as our work progressed, we came to see teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life history, as storied life compositions. These stories, these narratives of experience, are both personal, reflecting a person's life history - and social - reflecting the milieu, the contexts in which teachers life."

(Clandinin and Connelly, 1995, 4-5)

The more I read of this research the more it resonates with the style and form my research recording is taking. A reflection of my journey, improving practice and clarification of my ontological Living Values through this Living Theory Action Research process. I feel a deep resonance with my writing, a reflection of my living learning and heartfelt understandings, a reflection of my qualities as a human being and of my perspective of self value.

I am struggling with two issues as I journey. The justification of the methodologies I am using Living Theory Action Research and Narrative Inquiry Method as a form of presentation, which I will discuss in more detail later. Both are far removed from the traditional social science forms. I struggled

considerably when I was asked to write an essay about research methodologies in education, just the terminology to start with, but also the complex theories and beliefs held, so strongly by some. But with hindsight I truly see the value and critical importance of fully exploring this area, especially early on in my journey of self learning. I believe more teachers would be researching their own practice and impacting on the lives of children for the better, if there was a greater understanding of the potential and possibilities for reflecting on their interactions, valuing their life experiences and reflective stories as Living Theory Action Research.

Form and Presentation

Eisner (1993) and Hymer (2007), Whitehead and Huxtable (2009), all challenge us to consider the form educational research can take and the traditionally held judgement values, that, in light of this work, we need to consider. Through ICT and video, through poetic language, for example Lyotard (1984) below; traditionally held Academic perspectives on research and the form they are presented are challenged.

'The [postmodern] artist and the writer, are
working without rules in order to formulate
the rules of what will have been done.'

(Lyotard, 1984, 81)

Narrative Inquiry has developed within the field of qualitative enquiry, as we struggle to formulate evidence from research within the Living Theory Action Research cycle, which is far removed from the traditional social science form of research. Rather than storytelling, a term which my tutor recently used to describe my work, Narrative Inquiry focuses not on what happened, but on the meaning(s) drawn from the experience(s),

“Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study.

(Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, 375)

Connelly and Clandinin further define Narrative Inquiry as a method of using interviews, life experiences, notes, work samples, diaries and photographs as qualitative evidence, from which to draw understandings and further one's practice. All of these evidence bases I will draw into my research evidence trail.

Narrative Inquiry enables the focus not only to be on the understandings collected, but the manner as a human being we order, store, reflect upon and come to understandings and conclusions from them. This process acknowledges both the validity of the knowledge collected in whatever forms that may be, as well as the connections between them and conclusions drawn. The telling of the experiences, as a narrative text helps the researcher move from the understandings of a 'writerly text' to the understandings drawn from considering a 'readerly text'.

Linking nicely for me is the work of Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), building upon the work of Dewey (1997), who state that all research is based upon experience, an 'ontological, fundamental category', a starting point from which all research starts.

Transactional Ontology defines the representation as being not a 'faithful representation' but rather a new understanding of the researcher and their environment and experiences. Our (as one of these researchers) narrative will therefore reflect our experiences and drawback to these and the changes that have arisen for validation. The work of Dewey (1997), Clandinin and Connelly (2006) and Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), draw the threads of my work together and the representation my essay will take. The three strands that Dewey

highlights focus on the Social Dimension, the core of my work, looking at relationships, life experiences reflecting back through my ontological beliefs and values.

My knowledge generation takes place through the reflections from within the lived moment of my research and the step back reflections with the hindsight of further experiences. These all tie together and form the third strand as my experiences change practice, beliefs and my ontological Living Values. I have deliberately added 'living ' here, as this process and Narrative Method reflects my life experiences through my 'story' as a researcher and continues to ripple through my life beyond the period of reflective research. It changes the perception of experiences from dormant happenings to experiences of learning and reflection, heartfelt timely understandings and changing values. These we live as one human being, interacting and learning from, and contributing to, the world and connections we make. Told at times formally, through Narrative Method, as transitional places of experience, at others as quiet reflections of thought. Both have the quiet impact on who I am, on the person I am, on the way I interact with the world around me, on my values, which I live in my daily life, and form the heart of who I am and how I am perceived.

The structure of this dissertation has been carefully chosen to safely guide the reader through the story of my journey and reflections, whilst experiencing glimpses of my struggle through journal extracts and my style of writing. I hope the format of my writing will offer the reader the feeling of uncertainty and at times, vulnerability I feel journeying, through the language used and structure of the sentences. Also the formality of the steps of the Living Theory Action Research highlighted as the structure of this dissertation, which initially in its first draft reflected the research journey, but has now been rearranged to bring understanding to the reader.

Having to articulate my dissertation as a 'readerly text' for you, and not a 'writerly text' (to explore my own understandings for myself) has helped me to clarify my own understandings and offer for evaluation the validity of my epistemological knowledge-creation. D'Arcy (1989) explores how we 'learn', how we explore the world around us, make sense of it, shape meanings and communicate that to ourselves and others. Large sections of her thesis focus on writing as a means of making sense as well as communicating to others. I am particularly drawn to the focus on writing as an active process where we write for ourselves, to forge clarity and understanding of the experiences we have collected and struggle to process and draw meaning from. For me this links to the feelings of inner space I explore through my journey and the sense of

reflective learning I have developed through the Living Theory Action Research process. I use poetic writing to express my thoughts and feelings throughout my journey:

'... writing is an ACTIVITY. It is what happens inside our heads as we grasp our pen or tap the keys. Doing it makes thoughts, feelings and all kinds of recollections visible for us... It is also a process of re-discovery- a powerful means of attracting into consciousness retained experience that has already undergone some reprocessing in the inner recesses of the mind.'

(D'Arcy, 1989,22-23)

The words I write, the choices made, words left unsaid, the poetry of thought created, for me, are as important as the words of my journey. I feel antagonistic towards the guidance presented to me for the format of my recordings, the criteria of the university. They constrain my words, break the poetry of the journey and create stiltedness where there should be 'fluidity' of thought and reflection. This is the reason my pen has not written for you this past year.

The constraint grips my mind like a vice, blocking my link to the research group convened in Bath that frees my thoughts and my wish to write. The reflections are ripples created as part of my journeying, written in a sequence of the path I meander and in a way to express my love of journeying. I cannot link to the guidance and the form of presentation. My energy draws me back to my space, my thoughts become for me, twisting and growing in form, but fed by the negative push from the guidance.

This means telling a story that is acceptable in terms of normative conventions, what people expect to hear as part of the orthodox canon. Difficulties, however, now set in, because often research stories, especially practitioners' stories about the generation of their living theories of practice, tend to step outside the orthodox canon and fall into a category of unauthorized knowledge.'

(McNiff, 2006, 309)

I read this with a smile for the understanding of the predicament I feel, the conflict I face and the uncertainty my writing must take.

Months pass and the 'space' feeds me, churns with knowledge for me, the odd question or doubt rolls and tucks beneath the knowledge that I can't conform. This space I hold and feel within me, is the result of reflective practice through my Living Theory Action Research. The process encourages yourself to become immersed within the reflective, questioning cycle. Skills of stepping back, of challenging your own understandings, sharing and seeing different perspectives with others are all refined, creating a reflective practitioner and person. For me this has developed my own identity as a teacher and as a mother and for myself. It has also over the years, enabled me to hold a space within, where I can rewind memories, question perspectives and create knowledge and wisdom. This process has become integral to my way of thinking and working. This has been summed up clearly by Bogner and Zovko (2008) in their research looking at young children as action researchers in school.

'We realise that action research is not a teaching strategy for gaining better educational results, neither is it a preparation for life: it is life itself.'

It feels part of the way I think, how I make sense of the world around me and the interactions I engage in. I no longer consciously think of the Living Theory Action Research cycle, but feel it is an integral part of the way I am.

The further I journey the more I feel myself withdrawing into the space I feel and hold within me. The space to manipulate ideas, create wisdom and understanding, the freedom to link ideas and lead myself. This feeling of understanding and peace with myself, is something I haven't experienced before. It draws me in, feeds my soul and pours as liquid values through my living practice.

Layered deep I feel just an edge of doubt; a thought that took me a long time to face up to. One person, a person I trust, just prodded at the layers; patient for a response to my imposed isolation. For as stark as it sounds, that is how it began to feel. I missed writing, the feel of the words in my mind and the enjoyment of reliving moments that are now reflections. I read and surf the web, reading the conclusions of researches. I feel discontentment with the words, but offer no thought or word to disagree or challenge. This now troubles me.

This feels like a tremendous shift in perspective, but I had to travel my space and revel in its pull, before I felt the wish to challenge. This is what I think; this is what my pupils feel and have to share. Change can come from within but then it cannot be seen. It comes from brave souls willing to lay their heart on

the line and stand up to cross examination, even if that feels scary. It may cause a small ripple, but in time that may knock a hole and open a window in someone else's world.

I find myself asking, will my account make sense to anyone else? Will it in its self, raise questions or thoughts and awaken a new path option to someone else.

Even in the negative, if someone strongly disagrees with my research and summaries, this will still hopefully raise questions, thoughts or challenges.

Morse, (1992) explores in detail the idea that our research as practitioners is deciphered by ourselves, we draw our own conclusions, which in turn are reviewed and considered by others. As Morse states, so close to my own heart, this is the space I have allowed myself to be caught in. But as he argues we provide a new perspective, consider our practice and offer new theories for consideration:

'... theories are not fact. They are not the truth. They are tools.

They are merely abstractions, conjectures, and organisations of reality, and as such, are malleable, changeable, and modifiable'

(Morse, 1992, 3)

Throughout my action research and essays towards my Masters Degree, I have explored learning in my classroom and now as a Headteacher in my school. For the first time I have read through my work from the first assignment to the last. There is a distinct change in style and format as you read through my essays in date order. From the beginning when I structure easily within the criteria set by the university, then as I began to realise the 'box' I felt contained within, to the exploration of learning and the reflection of that change of state of mind in the freer style of writing. To this point, when I feel real frustration with the criteria and the format my writing should take.

'Perhaps the issue is not a fixed knowledge of the good, the single focus that millenia of monotheism have made us idealize, but a kind of attention that is open, not focused on a single point. Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular.'

(Bateson, 1989, 166)

I feel conflict with the way I learn, the way I am encouraging learning in my school and the traditional format required here. The structure I feel restraining thought is cold and clinical in form, forming in its own image. This is so far from the Nurturing Responsiveness I have with my pupils, the warmth and encouraging exploration we share. Dadds and Hart (2001) explore the conditions that facilitate methodological inventiveness by action research practitioners, stating 'we need to encourage new understandings, even if the research method does not follow traditional lines'. They describe how this will benefit and empower the practitioner and those in their care. For me the most important aspect is the clarity with which they argue that for some practitioner researchers, the path they choose, and how they follow it are as important to them as the focus with which they are working. In this work, I feel they are talking to me:

'No methodology is, or should, cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods of techniques.'

(Dadds & Hart, 2001, 169)

As you read my essays hold in mind that I write in a way that is important to me, one that reflects the depth of the journey I am on. I hope you will 'feel' the ebb and flow of my Living Values through the change in style and flow of my words. The structure of my writing will hold the conflict within the tension of style.

Alone you can feel the excitement of the journey and the moments you need to hold for your own. But now I realise some of the energy comes from the sharing of the excitement. I can feel without sharing; I can feel the excitement and generate my need. The conflict lurks between writing for myself and the voice that pushes me to connect with others. This is a quiet whisper in my ear, one I feel a struggle with still, one that surfaces and challenges me from within.

Construction for Meaning

Why is paper so comforting? I never see an empty page without the urge to begin. I don't always know what, but it draws to me. I often find saying what I want a hindrance, but words can say so much, literally, but for me it shapes and reflects the journey within the construction. The flow of words, the missing of words, the pace, order and meaning can impact more than a carefully worded explanation. Leggo a Canadian poet, professor and researcher encourages people to test and experiment with the use of language, 'to create, to know, to engage creatively and imaginatively with experience.' (Leggo,2009). This is the true

reflection of my journey, the importance of the language used effectively to create images of understandings whilst meandering, through carefully selected words, phrases and the construction.

Leggo in his Blog writes:

'I write poetry
as a way
to make sense
in words.

I write poetry
as a way
to make sense
in the world.'

(Leggo, 2010)

Simply but beautifully put!

Journal Note- Indulgent Introspection

'Writing my dissertation is now, and for the first time I can't see the entirety of it in my head. As my writing has progressed, so I feel it is saying what I

want, in a way that is important. The style and meaning behind the words and between the lines hold the truth. Not the sentences themselves. I write for me, not you. But that is wrong. I am told. That is behind me. But it is not. It hangs like a claw in my last thought and lingers into the next. For me the value diminishes as the meaning conforms.'

A friendly voice has prompted me to look again at the thought of writing for myself only, and the learning that can come from structuring my thoughts for others, as once again my mind veers from this truth.



Sometimes we have to look at things from
a new perspective

Perhaps a truth, I need to draw back to. In part the journey has made me introspective, as I burrowed beneath the surface moment and reflect from different dimensions. The more I journeyed away from my box, the more I got caught inside the moment, forgetting the learning that also can come from sharing and the joint understandings and conversations. But this is also part of my journey of understanding and perspective of self. The beauty of writing and

sharing only now seems so obvious and right. Before, I struggled with an inner-peace, which excluded the need to clarify to others. But as the drip of water on stone can erode and leave its mark, so has the timelessness of thought 'in' my journey and the friendly reminders.

How would we manage if everyone felt as I did? Another friendly prod....

Drawing back the thread, what do I feel I should offer? My answer has to be the same as when I started this. But my understanding of my meaning has changed by the sharing of my thoughts. But can this be sharing in the true sense of the word?

I write to construct for you, but I know nothing of your background, areas of interest or expertise. This is a one way conversation, an ordering of my journey for you, with only my perceptions. I hesitate writing, my fingers poised over the keys at this realisation. The strength or 'passing' of this dissertation is in its connection to you. Therefore the depth of its impact can only be seen through interactions with others? A statement of my belief or a question I am suddenly considering? The later, as I have no answer. My offer is in the form of an essay, a requirement, a challenge to the Academy!

I often meander when a straight path could be used, but I enjoy meandering.

The isolation is still the point I would offer, as at the beginning. But I think the understanding that the isolation is self created, as is the box, explains all and

nothing. I want to. I need to offer a balance. A way to begin the awareness of 'box' for others to consider. The sensing of something and nothing, which draws, but frightens. Enough for some to shrink back, but quietly beckons, when we try to ignore it. Meandering sometimes means looping back and considering what we have written...

Now I find myself re- reading, linking my journey for you, moving paragraphs to enhance the meaning of the journey, not necessarily as a true reflection of it, as I felt it, but an enhanced, narrative reflection of the meaning for you.

'I read the criteria and feel the framing quashing the meaning of my writing. It feels a contradiction in everything I am exploring' (Journal Note).

I keep being drawn to the framing, the criteria. Instead of seeing the tightening of bonds, I now see (even if I don't want to, if I am completely honest) the linking of possibilities to others, a connecting linkage from the perspective of self to collective meanderings and future thinking and actions.

The Box Perspective - Societies 'Felt' Constraints Journal Extract

I feel I am hesitating, on the edge, but nervous of the next step.

'My journey has been long, tangled, and full of moments to treasure, wanderings, searching perhaps, discovering, and exploring the unknown. My journey only began after the realisation that there was a path that went beyond the safe 'box' of familiarity and comfort. At first it was just a sense of space and something, although I hesitated to look beyond the familiar and safe to risk the unknown.'

The box began from the moment I switched on my brain for myself. The structure, rules and hidden messages in society, manners, expectations of the sexes, and my period in time, all added to the walls and tempered, without 'I' even being aware of the 'conditioning'. The infant's perspective is inquisitive, questioning, and without any preconceived limitations. To touch, to taste, to experience and learn from self, rippling outward, interacting with the world around them, as ripples on a pond. This is the magic of curious inquisitiveness that I want my school to reflect: The lack of a 'box' perspective.

For me, this symbolises the safety and perhaps, unawareness I had that the way I was teaching was not as creative or engaging as it could have been for the children in my class. I went through teacher training at the time of the launch of the Literacy Hour and I remember being handed a laminated clock as I took up my first post, showing the timings I had to stick to in my Literacy lessons

daily. I struggled to manage plans, marking and feedback, staff meetings etcetera, contemplating how the children were learning had never been an issue or thought about, even during my training?

The box as I said symbolises my world, I am inside, safe, I have a framework to my world and I know the size, space and expectations within it. But as my confidence grew as a teacher and the discontent that perhaps the Government in their wisdom, may not be the font of all educational knowledge in their policies, I began to query the box I had created for myself.

That is quite a scary prospect, to break through a frame and not know what you want to (or will) find beyond, brings apprehension and sometimes for the feint hearted a retreat into the safety of the frame (box) they know. But not for me!

The more I pushed and made a window for myself to view options beyond the mainstream view, the more I wanted desperately to find a door to escape not to find my own path, which suggests someone has trod and created the path before, but to forge my own way ahead.

Thought to Wisdom-Strength of Inner Space and Creative Reflection

As my journey flows and I step further along my own forged path of creative, CPD, I feel a growing awareness of policy and the opposition through living my

values. I feel a sense of isolation inside of my thinking and beliefs, I feel detached from the wisdom of government educational policy we uphold as educators. I feel protective of the children in my care, this means providing the very, best learning environment and opportunities. I see others without the courage to break through their box, unsure of the emptiness they will have to fill beyond. For others their eyes have yet to open to the box, for some it is the heart that must see the conflict of policy and the pull of your values.

Flexible Net - Living Theory Action Research Skills

So, my offering would be a mesh so fragile to be almost invisible, surrounding their box: A flexible, comforting net of Living Theory Action Research skills, (begun at school as a pupil, perfected at university as a student and enjoyed through CPD professionally). Not to bind, block or even hold, but to comfort against the nothingness perceived beyond the box. To prod if needed through questions, but never push or offer answers. To offer a suggested path, but never guide. To provide a first step but never a pathway of action research, but a step from which to leap and fly free on their own reflective journey.

My mind weaves and slides through layers of reflections and memories I hold, always open, seeking and reflecting. This curious mind set of Living Theory Action Research cycles has, I feel, stood me in good stead, as it encourages a want to gain a perspective from all angles of any subject. The more I engage

with myself as a Headteacher Researcher, the more I want to tread other people's paths in my own way, add offshoots to them or create my own meanderings. The process of being a researcher will, through this essay, demonstrate the validity and value of teacher researchers through the clarification and understandings I draw, but also through the initiatives introduced into my school, impacting every day on the children and staff.

Looking from the perspective of self, I have drawn back to what is most important to me, beginning here as a point to offer others. My instinctive response would be not to feel isolated on my journeying. But when I begin to unravel this initial response, I am surprised at the reason. It is not as I immediately wanted to say, but when peeling the layers, the truth can warm, and surprise. The first couple of years of my journey felt alone.

My mind and heart felt isolated from the lack of comfort I felt from being in my box, being unable to feel the walls, not as restrictions, but safe, supporting pillars of scaffolding. Although realising it was there and that I could create a door, then a window and slowly disintegrate it entirely was liberating, but also scary and left a void, a feeling of loneliness. Perhaps this upon reflection is the feeling of forging a new path. These feelings of uncertainty and self-exploration are explored in my previous essays (Mounter, 2006, 2007, 2008).

In time I joined a group of likeminded, curious individuals, all battling with their own boxes, in different ways (MA Group in Bath led by Jack Whitehead). It creates its own space and energy, own expectations and gently waits for you to ask. It may not be aloud, it may be to yourself. The energy ripples and shifts, prising, encouraging but most importantly feeding your heart. It is not about seeing a 'door' in my box, but awareness initially, to even look for one.

Reflective Note, To Offer or Not - a Living Contradiction

'Recently at our MA group we had a visiting lecturer from Australia. I was intrigued by her presentation of her life work as conclusions and theory she was sharing. I wanted to ask why she had waited so long? Why hadn't she shared her research earlier and developed her thinking wider, bouncing theory and ideas, evolving into new? Then I thought of myself, how can I ask such a question, as I have withdrawn my own ideas and I hesitate to share and put myself in a place I am challenging her about?'

I feel I should change the heading above. **To Offer - Living Contradiction.**

Second Phase - A Headteacher's Perspective

The second phase of my dissertation leads the reader through the feelings of tension experienced as a Headteacher Researcher finding their own perspective. It explores the beliefs and deep learning experienced creating Living Theory. Exploring self-creation energy, as a force to open the 'space' we hold, before introducing Loving Recognition and Nurturing Responsiveness. This is the heartfelt reflections through much journeying and soul searching as an understanding of my ontological Living Values.

A National Box

The pressure upon schools and ultimately the Headteacher to achieve, in the narrowest view that is acceptable (SAT results), or face the consequences feels a heavy burden.

This comes from league tables, OFSTED, County, my School Improvement Partner and governors. I want to swim against the current I feel sucking me under, but, being honest to myself, I waver under the pressure for results and the acceptability these bring. But I will not run a school that goes against everything I hold true and believe in. I have struggled to reach this point in my life, to lead, to understand myself and my Living Values. I feel I will betray the Headteacher I am and strive to be, if I don't at least try.

To a certain point it feels like the assignment I am struggling to write, pushing against the criteria I feel constrains my thoughts, as I struggle to hold my head above the flow of conformity that threatens to suck me under.

Similarly in school I have to play the game to a certain point, to gain the freedom to explore, to create and to inspire. One I believe will lift the other. One which will raise the sacred results we are all held up against and judged by, but will engender children with the self belief and creative minds to forge the future they dream of.

The logical step is to focus purely on the quality of teaching and the standards in Maths and English, nothing else matters, until we get these right. Until we can jump through the narrowing hoops we are given, nothing else should matter. I read this, which I should believe and a part of my heart dies, whilst if honest, the other part of me fears the risk, we are taking.

My whole world feels as if it surrounds and is inside learning in its many forms. My life is a school, the pleasure, energy and life affirming values generated from being immersed and connected to the future, every day. For they are my dream of peace, eradication of world hunger, the next breakthrough in medicine, the creation of a true artist or the love of understanding, one for another; something this journey has made me more aware of.

The more I journey as a Living Theory Action Researcher the more understandings I gain about the research process, about myself as a Teacher Researcher, and now as a Headteacher Researcher, but also as a learner. The cyclical process as an Action Researcher draws you to reflect on the learning and experiences past, and applying those to the future. For me this process has included several essays as well as keeping a reflective diary, sometimes within a note book, others on line. But for a child action researcher, this would need to be carefully framed as a mesh, to support but not hold.

Memories, experiences, connections are all pulled together through the Living Theory Action Research CPD process; through this essay I am demonstrating my own learning through the initiatives and changes I have introduced into my school. I also show how they alter the child's experiences and move towards an experience of learning, as a researcher of hands-on, experiential learning. This encourages the children to explore the world through the eyes of Living Theory Action Research and understand themselves as a learner. Being able to track their growth as a learner and store experiences as memories is key.

In my previous work I explored how children could record their development as a learner throughout their time at school. This led to the development of the Rainbow of Skills (Mounter, 2008). This comprises of the seven colours of the

rainbow, which represent a learning skill. This is further broken down within each colour. This provides children with statements about the learning skill they can focus on and record when they are using it, by using photographs and comments written on sticky notes. These are then stuck into the Rainbow of Skills as a dated record of how they grow as a learner.

Through my research it soon became obvious that how we are as a person impacts on the learner we are/become and how we connect with the world around us. From here, 'Spirals' was developed as a joint project between Marie Huxtable and myself. It is divided into three sections, the first being all about myself as a person. Prompts help you to understand yourself by drawing, recording and remembering things that are important to you. The second section, the Rainbow of Skills, allows you to record your developing learning skills. The third section is called MeSearch. This is for the learner to apply the Living-Theory TASC (Huxtable, 2012) research process to their own life. Where they can reflect on the learner they are, as well as the person on a deeper level, pulling threads and reflections together, developing creative wisdom within, stored to reflect upon at any point in time.

Self-Creation of Space

'Today in school I was chatting to a young boy, aged 9 (child T) whilst he was working, he really made me smile when he told me that beyond the universe are squiggly things, zig zags that control things and make everything work. He talked of a control panel working the Earth. All the time he frowned, struggling to find the words to express the clear picture I could sense he could see in his thoughts. His body language and tone of voice portrayed reflective interest and concentration, a desire to connect with another person and explain his thoughts.'

It was his sense of joy and pleasure sharing his ideas, connecting to another, that made me make a note of this in my diary. He understood something, which has taken me so long!

The same day whilst outside at playtime, I watched the children running and playing, enjoying themselves. Afterwards the children talked of their friends and games and their eyes lit up with excitement and energy, the world holding its own sense of magic and discovery for them, an energy endlessly feeding them, as they reflected. These are just moments, odd glimpses into the energy and thinking of the children. But they are important, they, I believe hold the key, the energy I have been searching for.

'How can I transfer that energy, in its raw form, that sense of passion and inquisitiveness, to an environment built to constrain?' Journal note.

Desks, neat spaces, sit together, timetables, no choice or blue sky. Windows often high, or told not to look out, just listen and focus. But cannot my dream inspire the mind, bringing that surge of energy that is often so elusive to us teachers in our pupils. My mind rambles, but I feel as though we are forcing conformity, of history and tradition and a sense of replication. Is this tradition, the future or just safety within the 'box'? *'How can I create that sense of space, freedom, exploration, hands on, mucky, intrigue in my school?'* (Journal Note).

It sometimes easier to pose questions and to keep on journeying, than to have to stop, reflect and link to find answers. It is that sense of curiosity I seek, that burns, and even though you know you mustn't, you just have to.

"I didn't know learning wasn't boring? (Child B)

The contradiction in this statement fascinates me. The pleasure comes from knowing I have engaged this child, in a way that he hadn't expected or experienced before. But it makes my heart sink at the same time, as this child was in Year 5 and so switched off by the system and schooling he has received that hasn't connected or engaged him. I want to make a difference.

I was asked a while ago, how I would summarise my journey? What was the most important thing I had learned? How do answer such a question without long explanations and heartfelt contemplation? With difficulty, I think. I have

thought about this question a lot, as a thorn, it has stuck in the back of my mind, niggling the 'space' within.

I want to hold learners confidently in a place of uncertainty.

This may sound an odd answer to give, but I feel strongly that all learners should be confident action researchers, developing their own learning theories and forms of research, starting whilst young and at school. If you can work confidently in a place of uncertainty you have self confidence. Learned. You have the joy of the unknown and knowledge creation, forging your own path.

An intriguing question to be asked.

From 'Hole in the Mole' (Rayner) to 'Space within a Child' (Mounter)

Recently I read a short verse by Rayner (2001), a traditional poem that I recognise the pattern and rhythm of. The pattern appealed and the sense of linking some of the quest I am on, to explore and explain 'the space'. This space is the safety to explore, the trust in self, the belief of risk that can drive the search for knowledge, the creation of deep learning and wisdom. It is that inner belief, fed from 'the space' that I seek to create (Appendix 4).

The flow of the simplicity of this poem appeals to me aesthetically, whilst it encourages the reader to savour the depth of the few words chosen and shared.

I find myself drawn at this moment to the writings of West Burnham (2006) and his description of surface, deep and profound learning. West Burnham provides a concise description and definition of deep learning. He defines modes of learning into categories and it is the aspect of deep learning that the learner holds within them self, in the 'space' they create and hold. He describes understanding, reflection, transfer, knowledge, intrinsic, interpretation and independence as aspects of deep learning. It is within this 'space' the learner holds, that the cycle of the journey impacts and blends these skills leading to wisdom, interdependence rather than independence and meaning. These are aspects he describes as profound learning.

A greater in depth look at his work is explored in Mounter (2007) and Mounter (2008). Here the children in my old class review his work and respond through descriptive writing.

This resonates so clearly with my own beliefs about the creative energy (profound learning-PL) and forming opinions, beliefs, values, knowledge and wisdom from reflections and memories contemplated within this 'space', and stored for perusal in 'Spirals'. These are the complex reflections and understandings encouraged through the MeSearch section.

The aspects of deep learning categorised by West Burnham (2006) aptly describes the transference of ideas, conversations and thinking reflections over a period of time that the children's Learning Logs (Spirals) encourage. It is also a process I feel a connection to as I have journeyed and developed my ontological Living Values. The momentary pause in my journey is reflected below. The lack of a conclusion for this assignment or use in the sentence above is deliberate and ties with my beliefs of the use of the word in a life journey. I would need to re define the definition, before I would feel it had a place in my assignment.

Life Affirming - Self-Creation Energy

For me this is the most important aspect of life that we can give any child. It is the ability to define a space within themselves and use it to strengthen learning as a reflective researcher. One that they can hold within themselves, a safe curiosity of time that allows the person to gather, organises, discard,

manipulate and create for them self. A place to grow the belief of self, the openness to risk, curiosity, to link your inner ideas and develop wisdom with outer strands, which can strengthen, whilst dismissing drains to self. This is 'the space' the feeling, timelessness that we carry within us, once we are confident users. With time we develop the skills to become self creators, inner threads that join to others, that strengthen through exploration and error, which layers thinking and challenge self and others positively. The space we carry within us as a bubble, ready to expand and link with others. Perhaps as an energy we can manipulate and encompass, we can strengthen ourselves, ignite others in thought and as we grow in self-creation, so we burn from the inner glow.

This space once found, can be an inner comfort, a place of experimentation of thought, a network of storage and creativity instantly accessible.

I stumble over my explanation as I am writing as the ideas emerge from a plethora of thoughts, but it feels important, an aspect I need to explore.

This extract by Crotty (2009), seems to describe externally, that which I have been trying to describe internally:

'I have been working at co-creating an educational

space which fosters growth, instils confidence,
develops self and others, encourages innovation and
promotes fun and dynamic engagement with learning.'

(Crotty, 2009, 2)

The description above is a joint effort between the children and me. The description and belief of an inner 'space' we hold for ourselves. If I have learned nothing else on this journey, it is that this 'space' can enable, create, build, link, define, discard but develop, the negative becomes positive through the merging of learning and reflective thought, creating knowledge, understandings and creative wisdom.

Self - Connectiveness

It is a humbling step to feel we can develop our thinking critically and creatively. The difference from regurgitating knowledge, to being able to create knowledge and wisdom for ourselves and others.

I feel I have grown as a person; I have enjoyed so much, the feeling of connecting with the children in a meaningful way, where we are both learners and the flow of coaching moves both ways, flowing freely. I feel reinvigorated

to define my educational values and to follow them. Not to feel guilty as they are quashed by new initiatives from on high.

I have found this journey has heightened my senses. I feel the pull of the 'creative space', almost as a whirlpool grabs anything near to its centre. I sometimes, almost feel swallowed within, as I enjoy the play of ideas, the random notes I make and sense of pleasure created. Through the process of beginning to identify threads for my dissertation, I have been reading my work. I write once my thoughts and ideas are secure. I never read through an assignment or edit my work. This is just my style. I feel drawn by the words on the page and the story I am writing. It flows through my fingers and is set out to convey the meaning I believe in.

Reading with the perspective of hindsight, my writing changes. The style becomes more important throughout the journey of my essays. The words set the path, but the meaning is also hidden between the flow of the spaces. The written word is almost a conversation between myself and the creative space I feel within.

Inclusion or Inclusionality

Searching, I have found research by Rayner (2004) that has really excited me. He discusses the difference between inclusion and inclusionality, as the 'space' that surrounds us. Spaces we create and maintain on different levels, depending on the relationship and trust present with the person we are communicating with. This resonates so much with my research, this flexible space that can be generated between two people or more. I feel it is this space that allows the development of bonds that clarify the Loving Recognition (Huxtable, 2012) within the created space.

Inclusionality expresses the idea that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete, massy objects, is a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organization, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication.'

(Rayner, 2004)

Rayner explores the difference between the existence of boundaries and the perception of them. He argues that far from being discrete limits they should be viewed as pivotal places where relationships can co-create knowledge and

wisdom. My initial perception of a boundary is of a solid fence, an edge. But through discussions with Marie Huxtable, I see it as a shading of space between an end and beginning. The gradual perception of depth, the greying of space, as the shading of a pencil which offers connectivity with others. A softening of perceived distance to an offer of engagement through which, Loving Recognition (Huxtable, 2012) and the opportunity to link, where thought with thought may occur.

Journeying (as a teacher and Headteacher Researcher) focused initially on the children and the Loving Recognition (Huxtable, 2012) we shared as co-learners and educators, both thriving under the warmth of the shared experience. Cho, (2005) explores the concept of love being imperative in educational relationships, demonstrated as knowledge-creation. This idea of Loving Recognition forging a bond through a shared sense of space as explored by Huxtable, (2009, 2012), linking so clearly through my own research:

'... love means the pursuit of real knowledge, knowledge that is no longer limited to particular content passed from one to the other, but rather knowledge that can only be attained by each partner seeking it in the world. To put this differently, knowledge is by definition the inquiry we

make into the world, which is a pursuit inaugurated by a loving encounter with a teacher. With love, education becomes an open space for thought from which emerges knowledge. If education is to be a space where teacher and student search for knowledge, then we must strongly affirm that "Yes, a teacher and student can and must love each other.' (Cho, 2005, 94)

I couldn't have explored previously my role through my research; my eyes focused outwardly seeing the developing warmth, respect and trust as a key to both of us learning cooperatively. Not just learning, but developing skills to grow our own self esteem, to believe in ourselves and master the concepts of learning to our own benefit. It is with the ability to reflect, look upon the path the journey has followed and begin to see and understand the constants, that enable learners to develop their Learning to Learn skills so successfully. Within this, I can clarify my role in developing the 'Space' that is the consistent thread. This I hope will become clearer as my work unfolds and the explanation sharpens.

This journey has developed a teacher and a co-creator of knowledge, who shares her embodied knowledge consistently through her practice, giving a new depth of meaning to herself and to the children she is sharing the journey with. These values are lived daily, through thought and action. They are me. I live through

them. 'The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.' Benjamin Disraeli.

This essay of my journeying strengthens my own path of self-discovery, the forging of my role within that process, as I perceive it. The hidden threads that enable this space of co-creation to exist, sharing my living, ontological values and educational theories, which have emerged and been clarified through the continual cycle of Living Theory Action Research of my embodied knowledge.

This story is mine, my narrative, my reflections, theories and created wisdom. An offering for you to question. As Morse (1992), explores further the understanding that theories are not necessarily truth, but the perception of truth from the view point of the researcher.

'...theories are not fact. They are not the truth. They are tools. They are merely abstractions, conjectures, and organisations of reality, and as such, are malleable, changeable, and modifiable'.

(Morse, 1992, 3)

Living Values-Values for Living

Through the many essays I have written, I have used Living Theory Action Research to explore my practice and help me to define my Living Values. I hope this assignment will demonstrate how I live my values and how they have refined through my journey of essays, so that I can articulate them through the reflective cycle of this process.

Action Research by its nature is a reflective cycle of posing questions based upon our practice in the classroom, issues that concern us, or looking at ways to improve certain areas in our daily teaching, issues that are of concern or interest. The hope I hold when undertaking this process is a deep care for the children I teach, a self-critical nature and a wish to improve my practice if at all possible:

'Perhaps learning is a journey we undertake our whole lives, by realising the quality of the experiences on the journey and not the results, we learn more about ourselves and our values grow and change'.

(Wallace, 2004)

My values have become clear enough for me to hear, to begin to share with others and now after journeying, I feel that I am living them. They are integral to my thinking, my sense of personal well being and the promise I hold in my heart every day, when I see the smile of expectation and trust in the eyes of the pupils at school. The trust for their self esteem, trust for their well being and sense of self. Trust for their future. Trust for their connection with learning, with life and with self worth.

The trust that I feel is as solid as the conviction that I can make a difference. The meander of my essays reflects my growing awareness of my exploration and confirmation of my Living Values. Through my writing I am sharing the joy I feel when I am with the children, the joy of shared learning and the connections that embody my values within. Can we separate our Living Values from the person we are? Do we consciously think of them?

For a while I struggled with a lack of clarity of my values, but as time passed and the essays I wrote forced my reflection in the moment and with hindsight, I saw the living, in Living Values, drew meaning and found a sense of peace. I finally feel I understand the term, I have over time been able to define the person I am, also the person I want to be, from the clarification of my Living Values.

I use the word 'feel' frequently, often in contexts where you might usually use 'talking' or 'seeing'. But for me the truth of actually living, honestly and openly my values, that are so engrained that I am the values, those which I have struggled to explain, is the moment of truth. For me to live my values, so that they are me, the child must feel them. Not gauge by talking or seeing, but 'feel' the truth and understand that this is me. This is the connection we both grow from and the space we find and share.

To tie this research into a whole, to make sense of my journey I need to explore my ontological values which have, as I journeyed brought a deeper sense of myself, forcing me to explore links and ideas in a way I haven't before. This understanding has brought confidence as well as belligerence to how I share my embodied knowledge through my practice and the connections I make.

1. Every child is a learner capable of amazing thought and reflection.
2. Children should be encouraged to explore and discover their gifts and talents and offer them to others.
3. Every child should be responsible for themselves as a learner and have an opportunity to create the 'space' within..
4. Be encouraged to find their own path and explore it.

5. Being challenged is a *GOOD FEELING*. Taking a risk with your learning is a *GOOD FEELING*.
6. Creative learning in and out- sense of fun and awe and wonder.
7. Reflective discovery, action research
8. Belief in themselves and that they have gifts to offer.
9. Sense of inner peace, safety - Nurturing Responsiveness offered and received.
10. Self belief, self worth.

I have never stopped and had to make a list like this before. I have run INSET days (training days) when I have introduced my beliefs in learning, the belief that children themselves are a gift and the sense of responsibility we hold for the future. This process has clarified why I teach in such a stressful and changing political climate. The reasons I care and take things to heart. This process being an Action Researcher has strengthened my understanding of myself and my practice. This in turn drives my pleasure and desire to continually improve and enrich opportunities for the children.

It is simple with hindsight; I started my journey to the realisation of my box. My initial journeying was slow, often within a tight framework of my question,

but as my connection with the style of reflective learning has grown from the Living Theory Action Research process, I find myself crystallising what is important, an understanding of the play of emotions, linked through my space and now part of my learning. I was attracted to the idea developed by Syed (2010) that we develop as a person and as a teacher the more we reflect and research our practice:

'Overtime through practice, we utterly transform the people we are. Practice is like downloading very specialised software that enables us to engage more successfully in whatever area we are practising in... Champions are not born, they are made.'

(Syed, 2010, 35)

I truly believe we transform not only the teacher we are but the person we hide as well. Perhaps part of this transformation is as much about listening to ourselves more. Finding the confidence to stop and think, to notice and in turn to reflect and make connections. We can develop the confidence to understand and articulate our values and beliefs about teaching, the type of education we

offer in our classroom/ school and the connections we make with the children in our care. We have to trust, in ourselves, in the people we meet, to be open to learning experiences in all forms and to Living Theory Action Research as a core offer for CPD. I have discovered a sense of professional peace as an element of the research process, something I had not anticipated. I see the world, both work and beyond through the eyes of a reflective practitioner. One whose thoughts are constantly shifting, ideas and questions, one who enjoys the elements of risk to learn and the knowledge that I reflect my core values in everything I do and all that I am.

Whitehead (2005) also discusses a linking theme in his work on Living Theory Action Research, the emergence of a practitioners ontological values through their research.

I believe the journey of reflection should be an integral part of being a teacher, as it helps us continually to demonstrate our educational Living Values in the interactions we have daily, with the way we set up our classroom and the manner in which we teach and plan the curriculum. Whether we consciously think about those values and have a need to articulate them, we demonstrate them continuously. The action research cycle has helped me to be able to articulate them to another person as well as to myself. But as I have previously mentioned

you need to feel them, to fully understand them. This links with Whitehead's work on video recording as a medium of sharing our learning theories and Living Values visually. *'For to understand my values, I can list them, demonstrate some through a video you watch or a narrative you read, but the understanding comes from how you 'feel' (Journal note).* This side path will be explored more fully, later on my journey:

'...each practitioner researcher clarifies, in the course of their emergence, in the practice of educational enquiry, the embodied ontological values to which they hold themselves accountable in their professional practice.'

(Whitehead, 2005)

The strength of my educational theory is from the Action Research process that enables me as the teacher to refine, reflect, change and evaluate within the moment and with hindsight. I worry that some educational theory is written by practitioners removed from the 'chalk face' of education. This sort of theory was challenged by the children in my old class (Mounter, 2007) who examined the work of Claxton and his 4Rs Theory. The children believed he had not talked

to children and didn't understand them, because of the words he chose to use for children as learners. This small note by Quinn (1973) reinforces, for me, this message that the strength of Educational Action Research comes through from teacher researchers, researching their own practice. This has implications for supply funding, course costs and time out of the classroom to study during a teacher's career.

'... theory that is rooted in practice is a better thing, even as theory.'

(Quinn, 1997, 3)

I have only recently read some of the work of Quinn who explores Critical Thinking, which Hymer (2007) links through his research to Philosophy for Children and the work of Fisher.

Whilst reading some of Quinn's work, I found by chance another passage, containing an assumption he made about the work of teacher researchers as well as the changes we find from government research departments.

'My fourth and saddest assumption is that you are

suffering, at whatever level you teach, from waves
and layers of innovation, of fresh accountability and
of pervasive pressure to 'deliver' 'results'.

(Quinn, 1997,4)

I read Quinn's generalisation and sadness he felt at the 'waves of innovation' and the following meekly to gain results. Yes, we are under extreme pressure, particularly at the moment both financially, from the media and from changes from on high (the government). But we also as Headteachers have more freedom now to forge our own school ethos and curriculum, than we have ever had before. This in part, is from the continual high quality, ground breaking research pushing preconceived ideas, rooted in the past. For if we stand back decrying all that we are given, we only have ourselves to blame. But we are keen to carry out Educational Research in our own right; we do want to make a difference. We are creative, innovative teachers working skilfully within the constraints we feel. Innovation provides us with a new perspective, a time to try something new and make a difference. I couldn't find in his work, how he came to his conclusion, whether through actually talking to teachers as part of his research or a general opinion from paper reports and secondary sources. His assumption makes me believe he is researching from outside of the classroom, looking in.

Perhaps I am reading more into the statement than he meant some of his work links clearly to my own research and supports my belief in quality action research for all teachers as a statutory right and commitment.

Hymer also works with the writings of Quinn and included in his abstract of his doctoral thesis (2007) this quote from Quinn (1997) about criteria judgements, asking for his work to be judged on criteria that he avows. This, for me, leapt off of the page and pulled at my heart. In one short sentence he summarily combines all of my worries about the flow of words I write reflecting my journey, and the criteria I feel binding my words.

'Finally, I ask that if this account is judged to be unconvincing, it will have been judged so 'on criteria that I avow, not on criteria that I disown.'

(Quinn, 1997, 4-5)

This resonates so much for me, the tension from conforming to the criteria for a Masters assignment and the form I feel truly reflecting my journey. The struggle for me is to conform enough to pass the criteria, whilst remaining true to my journey. I have re-ordered to enhance the meaning for the reader to a

point. But in some places as my thinking has clarified, areas are re-visited later in the essay, bringing the thread again, to the forefront of my thinking and for the reader.

Visual Narratives - Alternative Methods of Judgement

Whitehead describes the important use of video to capture the Loving Recognition explored by Huxtable (2012) and the living of ontological values in the classroom, seen between learners that cannot be captured on paper. I have watched video clips and listened to Whitehead's explanation and see so much more. His description allows you to see through his eyes, the pleasure and relationships between learner and teacher in fluid motion. In slow motion it is very powerful and informative.

In contrast I do believe that there is the potential for it to shine through the written word too. I have explored how I feel the constraint of writing to a form that doesn't reflect my heart, or the journey I am on, this I believe, is the key. Loving Recognition (Huxtable, 2012) is between the words, hidden in the beauty and flow of the sentence, to be felt, not necessarily seen. But as the writing unfolds and the path becomes clearer, so does the sharing of my ontological values which forge the tentative threads of Loving Recognition between learners, both exploring and sharing their embodied knowledge and ontological

values. That flow of energy can be captured on paper in poetic description, as you paint a picture with words, as well as on film. This draws to the 'feel', not the seen or said as I have previously discussed. Yes captured and seen on film, but felt equally through the quality of words and construction of flow on paper. Although Whitehead does confirm that to understand what you are seeing on film, requires an explanation.

'I often find images carry more meaning than words, although I usually need words to communicate the significance the image has for me.'

Whitehead, (2005)

I am really drawn to the work of Huxtable (2012) exploring Loving Recognition through her thesis. Finding a positive recognition between two people, enabling other connections to develop and learning to take place. Perhaps the recognition of a positive, open person? Someone who sees the positive in another individual, one who is able to listen, respond in a positive way and engage with others. Loving Recognition- dropping of barriers.

In a learning environment where the traditional label of teacher and pupil still reverberates, I feel I want more. I have struggled with labelling or naming the space I feel we create and can hold within us. A space of creative energy, connections and developing of our thinking, deep learning and knowledge creation.

The relationship needed to create this space, to feel it, to be able to hold and carry it, is special, something you can't see, but feel inside. The tentative connectors we offer to another can be responded to in so many ways. Ways that close the offer down, some that make us feel inadequate, a space we withdraw ourselves into. Even those that make us want to protect our thoughts, which we keep and therefore don't offer, or a connection that enables us to open up and flourish.

As a teacher and a human being I offer my beliefs in my values, which I try to hold and live fully, even when restrictions around me feel as though they are grinding my beliefs away. The connectors I offer are always positively given, with the belief that the person I am engaging with feels the same, however many experiences may make us believe otherwise. We have to positively offer and expect to receive likewise; otherwise our offer becomes tainted with nervousness and disbelief. This I often find is easier with children, who are so

open and willing to engage, not worn with a nervous or edgy shell. This energy I offer as a connector is given with the hope that we will feel a connection that will tentatively open the creative space and hold it as a workable energy between us. As the teacher I work with children mostly, but want them to be able to feel the space for themselves. To know themselves in a positive way and hold the space as a creative energy, both within and as a shooting connector, enabling them to connect positively with others. To store, create, mould, discard, connect and deepen their understanding and self esteem in themselves and their connections with the world around them. This is more than recognising a like minded soul, but the gentle, guiding of how the space can feel the prompt of a reflective question encouraging introspection and the absolute conviction that we all have gifts to offer others. Gifts that will deepen our understanding of ourselves, our knowledge base and skill base, as well as giving us the opportunities to knowledge create. For me, this feels more like the job description I should have:

'In some ways it is not personal, there is no recognition of the individual uniqueness of the other, it is an expression of a human desire to make contact, to reach out and touch and be touched by, emotionally, physically, intellectually... the other as

a fellow human being. In that I see a respectful connectedness, which requires a mutual trust that boundaries and spaces will not be violated.'

(Huxtable, 2012, 11)

Practice to Theory - Loving Recognition or Nurturing Responsiveness?

Or Both?

This is an educational theory that I offer for discussion and examination by the Academy. '*Nurturing Responsiveness*' describes the delicate role I hold, the balance between demonstrating and modelling skills to creating opportunities for self discovery. A definition of nurturing is:

'to encourage somebody to grow, to develop, to thrive and be successful foster, tender care, protection to a young child, to keep a feeling in the mind for a long time, allowing it to grow or deepen'.

(Encarta Dictionary, 2011,English.UK)

The combination of Nurturing Responsiveness in a setting of Loving Recognition is the key. Nurturing can only be done to its optimum if you know the child you are working with well, trust and a bond develops, the time invested to know their idiosyncrasies is well spent and deepens the Nurturing Responsiveness. Responsiveness is also as important as the Nurturing element. A definition is:

' Showing positive response: reacting quickly, strongly or favourably to something.'

(Encarta, 2011, English. UK)

If as a teacher I feel empathy towards the children I am working with, I know them well so that I can support them as necessary and I encourage creative thinking, mulling of thoughts and discussion. I must also be receptive to not only pick up on the subtle signals given, to support gently as required, to prod with a question or extend thinking, but to receive the gifts they are offering. In this environment of 'Loving Recognition' (Huxtable, 2012) and 'Nurturing Responsiveness', connections are made, trust is shared and the 'space' can be developed and held. Over time this 'space' can be found within, a space for self - growth of thought, knowledge, skills and self- belief.

Connecting to someone we don't know, as an adult, is a little more uncertain. I offer connectedness through Loving Recognition and Nurturing Responsiveness. This is the flow of change I apply to a situation that I am becoming familiar with, I live it, without the confidence of previous connections. Nurturing responses, I flow and change, adapt to the return signals I 'feel', generating more depth to the connection and the element of possibilities.

For the child as they journey through our education system they will experience many types of learning. Some value driven by the teachers they interact with, some defined by tests or systems from national directives, sometimes influenced by the ethos of the establishment they move from and to. But whatever the system or ethos the child encounters if they have experienced Nurturing Responsiveness over a period of time and know themselves well as a learner, they can, I believe, hold the space and skills they have developed within themselves and use, for the lack of a better description, the elements of the establishment and system they find themselves in that will continue to help them to grow. Even if that means for a time, they have to work within a system that doesn't feel true to them. They can fight the sense of loss of control, hold the space and feel for like minded souls. The inner reflection from this space can be both nurturing and confining if care isn't taken. This is a reflection of self, a space I found myself in for quite a time.

I drifted from a group of like minded thinkers when I changed jobs and travelling prohibited us meeting regularly. I found myself using the 'space' I hold as a space for reflective learning on the journey I have been on with the children I work with. I wrote for me, of my journey, clarifying my thoughts, but never for the reader. It felt indulgent, but the more I travelled through my reflections and was caught within this space, the less I wanted to share or worried about the world outside. Gradually I have found my path back to write to the world beyond, but even as my fingers type this, the words are from my 'space' and I feel my reflections drawing me in, as might a secret diary. The flow of words between the page and myself feels like a special conversation, the paper knows the power of the flow of words and brings me full circle back to my earlier deliberations and the tension I feel between the establishment and form of my writing, and the feeling of truth for myself. This space can be creative and nurturing, but I also feel it can draw you into a reflective cycle of self-thinking and self-journeying. This for me hasn't been a bad thing, I have learned so much about myself and how I interact with the world around me, it has been a very useful part of the Living Theory Action Research process.

My role has changed, my needs have changed, and so have the children I work with. Often my direct influence with the children is watered down as I trust the staff in the school I am Headteacher of. I hold the ethos tightly in my heart, I

plan training and our School Improvement Plan, but this needs commitment, a belief in thinking outside of the box and as I have said before, an awareness that the box is there in the first place. I offer below notes from initiatives we have introduced as a school. They reflect the learning I have experienced as an Action Researcher, but applied to the children. All of them lead the child to greater understanding of themselves as a person, as a learner through the skills they use and the subject skills they prefer. But the initiatives also reflect my own reflective understandings, knowledge creation and awareness of the cycle of Living Theory Action Research as a Headteacher Researcher.

Third Phase -Walking the Talk

The third phase guides the reader through some of the initiatives introduced into my school, developed through my reflections and understandings on my Living Theory Action Research journey. Elements encourage creative thinking through the curriculum, to how lessons are planned and led, clubs we plan using research TASC (Wallace.2004) as a basis, to opportunities as a learner, to develop the skills of a master researcher, creating Nurturing Responsiveness, creative thinking and reflective wisdom in a 'space' held within. It includes the following initiatives:

M.A.D Club - Making a Difference to Myself and to Others I Connect To.

Action Research by Children

Change of Position, Change of Perspective

Reception Year, Celebration of Learning

Skeleton Key Curriculum -Living the Values We Believe In

Key Stage One - Merry - Go - Round

Independent Learning - Key Stage Two, Fab Friday

Fab Friday, Chatting with Year 4 Pupils

Reflective Practitioner - Journal Note

Reflective Creativity-My Own Theory

Reflective Creativity to Reflective Wisdom

This third phase shows the ecological complexity of the multiple activities that are included in my life as a Headteacher and in the plurality and multiple commitments I engage with that are part of my continuing professional development (CPD) and that continue to stimulate new possibilities of learning.

This dissertation concludes with:

Future, Drawn from Finding Myself

M.A.D Club - Making a Difference to Myself and to Others I Connect To.

This is a club I run after school each week, open to all pupils, regardless of age. MAD, stands for 'Make A Difference', which may seem strange to outsiders. It was inspired by a colleague Huxtable (2011) who used the name for a course she ran for students. For me this encapsulates my wish for the club, for the children to make a difference to themselves as a person and as a learner, but also wider, impacting on others. The children begin the tentative steps as Living Theory Action researchers using the TASC Wheel by Wallace (2004). The children research or follow a path they are interested in, any area at all. We have children creating PowerPoint presentations, posters, dance routines, wire models, short films etcetera. It provides an opportunity for the children to learn independently, plan for themselves and develop areas they are interested in. Find their passions, develop gifts and talents to offer others.

Talking to the children at my MAD Club tonight, I found myself in conversation with three Year 6 boys. We started talking about learning and working with others. They all enjoy working with a partner, but prefer working with a partner they know well.

"It feels like it is just the two of you in your own world. Someone to keep you going." (T) I found this really interesting, reflecting back on the Nurturing Responsiveness and the 'space' we can create.

"You are trusting them with your ideas, linking into theirs and making a more interesting idea." (U)

"If you know each other well, you know their strengths and weaknesses and how to help each other." (T) Being receptive to the needs of others, helps the connections you make develop.

"You have to trust them, listen and share, cooperate together. You have more confidence with someone else." (H)

"You know it doesn't matter if you get something wrong, because your partner will always help you." (U)

"I can't really get it wrong they can help." (T)

"Joining what you can do with someone else, gives you more powerful thinking."

(G)

"You can combine what you've got as a single skill." (H)

M.A.D Club and Fab Friday are all ways in which we encourage the children to be Active Learners, responsible for their own learning. We provide opportunities to develop learning skills through Living Theory Action Research, TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context, Wallace., 2004) developing the skills of Pupil Researchers. This I hope, will develop within the child the self-confidence and knowledge of themselves as a learner to interact positively within any environment and to perceive the world as a learner of life.

Action Research by Children

Although there are different types of action research, for the children I work with, TASC by Wallace, (2004) forms a clear cycle of action research that they can follow themselves.

Action Research through TASC is a format open to anyone to use. I have used the TASC Wheel with Reception children (aged 4 years), with Year 6 pupils (aged 11 years) and myself for my Masters Degree. The format is simple and so complex at the same time, encouraging organising, planning, sharing, reflection

and learning from learning experiences. For me, the last quarter of the wheel is the most important, this is the area in which the user can really focus on the learning, reflect, make connections and develop their understandings. This section of the wheel encourages reflecting on the subject knowledge learned, the subject skills tried and the learning skills focused on.

By sharing, the section of the wheel I got lost in for a while, we can clarify understandings from a different perspective and deepen learning. On my wall I turn the wheel, as we always read the TASC Wheel as we do a clock, so that this vital last quarter, becomes the top and focus point. Once confident with the format and in yourself as an action researcher, you follow the steps automatically, instinctively, with one subtle difference. The last quarter stays with you, beneath your conscious thought, extracting data from your experiences, making links, deepening your understanding of self as a person, as you interact with the world and people around you and as a constant learner. You find yourself, not following the segments, one after another as they appear on the wheel, but sliding one to another, across the wheel, jumping as necessary during your research. You then draw into your inner 'space' developing opinions, values, beliefs and memorable experience links. This is nicely summarised by McNiff.

' Remember that things do not often proceed in a neat, linear fashion. Most people experience research as a zigzag process of continual review and re-adjustment."

(McNiff, 2002)

I found myself with a struggle to acknowledge the support from sharing, and the joy I felt learning and just being mentally in my 'space'. Action research can be limiting in its effectiveness if the research isn't shared. The understanding that can be gained from a different time or perspective can greatly enhance the impact on practice as well as offering new methodologies to the Academy and a far wider audience.

Change of Position, Change of Perspective

It is very easy for us, as teachers, to introduce a new element we are interested in, whether Philosophical Thinking or TASC . Elements that stand alone, or enable creative thinking and learning or a collection of attitudes and skills we can teach and develop in our pupils. But is that enough? Is it not still fragmented elements of a curriculum, which will leave pupils with skills they can

utilise in a variety of situations, but can we truly say they are reflective, driven by self - creating energy?

This is the challenge facing my thoughts and plans for St. Aldhelm's.

For a while, I struggled with the idea of trying to introduce a creative learning environment as a whole and not elements or separate parts. In many ways my struggle to define the necessary elements and how to weave into a whole has clarified my thinking from the perspective of a classroom to a whole school.

A hesitating ripple of unease has happened several times to me when I have introduced a task that is quite open. One that encourages the children to think for themselves, use their own interests and skills applied to the topic we have been studying. What does she want? What am I supposed to do? What should it look like?

'Giving a group a large box full of a wide range of resources, I gave the group a wide brief that they could interpret in any way they were interested. The group looked through the box, which they had placed on the table between them. They read the brief and looked again at the resources available. This was a mixed ability group of Year 4 and Year 6 children, our oldest, not our youngest. One

member of the group gave each child a plain white A4 piece of paper and a plain pencil. Two members of the group then came and asked what they should do.'

(Journal note).

I return to this point and it continues to run through my mind, like a cinema reel, stuck in some alternative universe, where education must be about conformity. Group thinking and lack of independent thought.

The box didn't excite them, but scared them. I talked to them about the experience afterwards and was quite intrigued by their answers. Looking back this was a watershed moment for me and helped plant the seed of the values I now hold as sacred. (Journal Note)

They explained that in a normal lesson, the use of this word made me hesitate in my note taking and look at the group I was talking to. A normal lesson. In a normal lesson they only have the resources they will need; they know the Learning Intention (LI), what it is they are going to learn and the success criteria, what the teacher will be looking for if my piece of work is good. Please re read these couple of paragraphs, as I have done many times on my journey. Highlighted, underlined until finally scrubbed out in frustration. They fear the

unknown, the thinking for themselves and lack the skills to plan their own learning.

Still the criteria of a good lesson is that the LI and SC (Success Criteria) are clear to the children, they are displayed and mentioned during the lesson. To move to an outstanding lesson, the children judge their success as a learner by marking themselves against the SC. This is still the framework we follow. The criteria by which we are judged as a school. The judgement that appears in the paper and on government success or failure lists. For that is how it feels. The criteria prospective parents judge us by.

Through developing our ideas as a team, we have defined how we feel children learn best, the type of curriculum we want to offer and one they deserve. Part of this is exploring how children learn. I have agreed with my Maths Subject Leader and member of our Senior Leadership Team, to observe a lesson, how we think they should be taught and generate our own observation criteria. Then we will compare how the lesson would have been graded against current standards. This is an exciting step, one I feel is pushing the boundaries declaring the type of school we are and the passion we feel about learning and the opportunities we provide. This process of Living Theory Action Research looking at ourselves as inside researchers is also being explored by my Maths Subject Leader, a

merging of paths at this point as we both meet to look at the structure of a lesson that will encourage the skills of research learning within a standard lesson.

The discussion following this will be very interesting as I believe our governing body will not see, or want to see the value of this exercise. They are judged by outside criteria, however strongly we struggle, we have to work within the framework we have. This I cannot argue against, as a Headteacher it is part of my role to make sure we succeed within this framework. But I do believe we can learn to flex it, to share our discoveries and thoughts, backed with evidence of children learning, successfully and enthusiastically. As the lack of a 'box' scares the children, the sense of a box, scares me.

Children are born, full of inquisitiveness, curious, wanting to touch, taste and explore. They learn in Reception whilst playing, 80% planned by themselves. Dispositions and attitudes observed alongside maths skills, reading and writing. Somewhere during the summer holidays before the start of Year 1, some magical transformation happens and the curriculum we offer changes and narrows considerable. Suddenly their date of birth within the year doesn't matter, their disposition or attitudes, ability to work independently all changes. Learning is suddenly all planned by the teacher, unless it is the 20 minutes a

week we offer for choosing time on a Friday afternoon. Learning Objectives are clapped and sang, Success Criteria talked about and we start to judge if we are a success by putting our thumbs up in front of everyone if we, have sideways if not quite and thumbs down if we haven't. The pressure of a narrowed view of success and my place in the order of things begins as a sudden, heavy weight. I look with interest for work related to children as Action Researchers, Pupil Leadership, rather than Frost's (2012) narrower view of Teacher Leadership. But the work, such as Bognar (2007), talks of young researchers as being of secondary school age. Where as through my research I believe it is a way of thinking and looking at the world as an Active Researcher and not Active Learner we should be encouraging.

Reception Year, Celebration of Learning

This year everything feels right, the children are outside, hands on, planning for themselves and enthusiastic about school and their day. This provides us so many opportunities to celebrate and show their developing self esteem, skills and knowledge. We endlessly take photographs, desperate to record moments in time that reflect the sense of pleasure we feel just being with them. We record on stickers comments they make, those that make you smile at the step they have taken as well as keeping things they do and make. We hold a treasury of such moments that should be kept as a sacred part of their journey. For us this

began the introduction of Learning Logs. Simple, but special books, with red covers and black paper divided into sections based around the EYFS (Early Years foundation Stage) Curriculum. Each term, 6 times a year we invite our Reception parents to come into school and update their child's Learning Log. This is always an exciting event of chatting, swapping of 'moments' and gaining an understanding of the time their child is in school. The feedback from parents when they receive a copy is always delight, something they will treasure. I feel a sense of pride in these and the shared pleasure between child and parent as they talk about the moment captured on a sticky note or on film. This links back to my meandering path looking at Nurturing Responsiveness and the connectedness we share with parents through this experience, but also the emotions and dialogue between child and parent.

My question from here is how we plan a curriculum that enables all children whatever year group to feel the sense of independence and enthusiasm for possibilities experienced in Reception?

A Learning Log, as they grow, will need to capture more than the skills or knowledge they learn within the curriculum we offer, but those elements as well. It will need to be a place of introspection, reflection and thought. A private diary, a collection of mad thinking and ideas, space to experiment in safety.

Something that is special and appealing, that grows nurturing Living Theory Action Research reflection them.

At times odd thoughts whizz and break my train of thought and the flow of words I wish to tell. If we achieve what we want for our pupils, a school that is designed for children, to grow and not to constrain, to experiment and not to copy, to discover and explore producing confident, risk takers ready to challenge the world. What will happen to them when they go to secondary school? Will they take up the challenge, or will they stifle the confidence and independent learners we send?

Will they except the constraints as part of the process and still follow their Learning Log or will it make them unhappy, dissatisfied or even confused?

This is something I cannot answer truthfully, but which struggles for notice and niggles at the back of my mind. A path I have to leave for now.

So many new strategies come into school, often packaged in nice boxes with colour coordinated files, paperwork and CD Roms. We call them lunch boxes, ready to serve, no thinking required, just follow the step by step plan and you will be a success. This horror of assuming the needs of all communities across the country and all children must be the same, I find astonishing.

We try new initiatives, including TASC by Wallace, Circle Time by Mosley, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning as well as Philosophy for Children with Hymer.

I have also, as part of my learning journey, explored different learning theories, including work by Claxton, the 4 Rs. I watch extracts of creative learning weeks or days that schools initiate, as well as focuses on some of the options above.

These to me, are all bolt - ons. Ways to bring creativity and learning skills to a traditional curriculum. The way forward is shrouded in grey and mystery, I feel frustrated at the lack of cohesiveness and the piece meal feel.

I want a sense of wholeness, a Curriculum Map that reflects creativity, independent research (TASC.Wallace, 2004) and learning to learn skills. Held in a frame that encourages planning, strategic thinking and reflection. Pupil Leadership Researchers.

Skeleton Key Curriculum -Living the Values We Believe In

We are a dedicated team of teachers who care about the education and learning environment our children experience whilst with us. We began by considering the strengths and challenges of our school and the impact that had on the curriculum we offer. We have considered our strengths, skills



and passions as a staff and the potential of the locality that we are in. Please see Appendix 2. This format of analysis came from a discussion with another local Headteacher, Rosemary Bailey. From this sound base of understanding we talked about our educational values. Strangely as educators this is something we found quite tricky initially. But shared discussions enabled us to clarify the sort of school we wanted to be. From here we started to think about the framework around which we would build our Curriculum Map, how it would be presented and the vital part, the content. Please see Appendix 3.

We considered carefully the frame upon which to hang and wrap our curriculum, this for the children would be the way or tool, which they would use to access, plan and interact fully. There is only one learning theory that I have experience of, that engages with children, that assumes they are able to be confident learners, able to plan and develop their thinking, TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) by Wallace. Previous essays in my research journey have explored this learning theory in the classroom (Mounter, 2008).



Our curriculum is organised to engage the children as Active Researchers, developing their knowledge, subject skills and learning skills as well as their self confidence and self esteem. Children's learning in each theme is introduced by a

'skeleton key'. This is an event or activity that 'opens up' the theme in an exciting way, to inspire and engage. At the end of the term the learning is brought together with a 'lock' event, to celebrate children's achievements and embed learning, locking in skills. This may be through an exhibition, a presentation or performance, decided by the children.

The TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) Wheel created by Wallace is the frame upon which our curriculum hangs. It is used to encourage children to share what they already know, highlight areas to develop and how they feel it is best to engage with the theme. It also supports learning during the process and enables the children to carefully work towards the 'lock' event.

Part of each theme will enable the children to plan and learn independently. This will enable them to develop areas of particular interest and apply their active learning skills independently. For example Year One has been finding out about dinosaurs and began the topic with a visit to Lyme Regis (key event) and a walk along the beach looking for fossils. A dinosaur expert has visited the class and lots of exciting activities have taken place. The lock down event was carefully planned to include all of the children's parents. The children all made dinosaur costumes to wear in the afternoon and a round-robin of activities were laid out in the hall. These included digging up dinosaur bones, making play dough dinosaur eggs and games to play. Parents were invited to share the activities with their

child. Everyone came and enjoyed looking around the classroom at the work the children had done as well as share in the fun in the hall. This is something I believe the children will remember for a long time, the sense of shared pleasure with parents.

At the heart of this framework and key and lock down is our Curriculum Map.

Originally, like most other schools took the QCA units provided by the government as the gospel we should follow if we expect to be judged as good.

But as time passes and my confidence in the sort of curriculum I feel we should offer grew, I felt dissatisfaction with the framework and its constraints.

It felt a huge step initially to break away and acknowledge that I was bored with some of the units and I am sure the children must be too. Now

expectations have changed and to be good/ outstanding with OFSTED you have to show you are creative, work beyond the classroom and engage children in a

way that extends opportunities and skills. My journey has, at times felt like a struggle. A struggle against constraint and such a narrow focus, that all children of a certain age, regardless of location and environment, should study the same QCA units.

Times change and I would like to think that in a little way is because of the influence and weight of action research produced by academics and teachers.

We are in a period of uncertainty. Which path the new government curriculum will take when launched in 2013, we are unsure of.

For once I do not feel any anxiety of what may come. I feel a certain sense of resignation that we cannot change it, so to wait in limbo seems unnecessary. We have as a team started forging our own path; to stop and wait to check we are not too far from the main route feels a contradiction in all we believe in. So we forge ahead with the confidence of those who know their own heart and values. Of those willing to take a risk to create the type of learning environment we believe the children deserve.

Our Curriculum Map is designed to run over four days each week and over a two year cycle. On the fifth day we run Fab Friday for Key Stage Two children and Merry - Go - Round for Key Stage One children.

Our Curriculum Map has been refined over the two years we have trialled it. Initially we had six units, one per term for each year group, but with so many distractions throughout the year we found covering them properly was very difficult. This year as we go through year two, we have altered the units to run over two terms and moved the extra units to Fab Friday or Merry - Go - Round. We have put our heart and soul into the design, included ideas from the children and tried to make it as interactive as possible.

Trips have been planned so that we can track visits and experiences year by year. These include Lyme Regis fossil hunting for Year 1, Egyptian Experience for Years 3 and 4, staying in London for Year 6, local quarry for Year 4 and to Carrymore Dump and Recycling Centre for Year 5. To encourage the children to enjoy being outdoors and to learn about our local environment we have planned in three trips each year to Beacon Hill Woods. This is a fabulous old wood, with barrows and a strong historical role in our locality. We held the first trip in the autumn hiring two toilets as the children would be there all day and hoped for the best. The Beacon Hill Woodland trust and Local Historical Society all provided experts who ran sessions for the children. Divided into groups we spent the whole day outdoors having fun and learning at the same time.

The children built dens, learned about the flora and fauna as well as the links to the Romans and first settlers in the area. We listened as we discovered the wood was once under the sea and explored and found pebbles left behind, still there today. This was history brought to life. The children were mesmerised when they heard about the young girl buried on the site, back when the first settlers lived on the land and to find the pebbles as evidence left by the sea was amazing! One child kept the pebble and began collecting other stones and rocks, having quite a (heavy) collection by the end of the day. He was inspired

and totally engaged all day. This is a child who finds learning a challenge, finds social rules and boundaries difficult.

We plan the next visit for the spring term, just as the weather is warming and we hope the children will be able to see, to hear and experience the changes in the wood. It is important that the children are curious naturally, inquisitive to know why, what... That innate sense of I can or I can eventually if I persevere. Lots of the knowledge we teach will be forgotten, I care about what they remember, things that will make them smile years later. Moments that create self confidence and self esteem, forge friendships and learning skills they hold within.

For then and only then will a child learn.

For then and only then will a child discover the gifts they have to offer.

For then and only then will a child interact with the world around them with curiosity, empathy and trust.

For then and only then will they find peace and the space within them for themselves.

Each term in our Curriculum Map we have a theme across the school; these include a history theme, science, geography and art/ DT themes. Within that

theme each year group has a specific focus. The key for me is not how creative or imaginative the unit title is, but how engaging the teacher makes it. Anything can be dry and switch children off; equally with some creative thinking most topics can draw children in, encouraging their interest. Less work sheets more practical, creative activities, less direct teaching more independently planned research.

As a school we have struggled to move from barely satisfactory (OFSTED view) to a school making our own decisions and following our own path successfully. I wanted all of our hard work recognised. I wanted other schools to know of our successes and not just our struggles.

In November I was delighted to be asked to present a workshop to Somerset's Deputy Headteacher's Conference. The workshop was to cover how we teach a creative curriculum at our school. This request came on the back of our last OFSTED report in April 2011, when we achieved 'good' overall with 6 areas, including our curriculum, as 'outstanding'. I was pleased to be asked, to promote the work we are doing at school. The workshop went well and I have been asked by three schools to send details of the Curriculum Map and Learning Logs that we use. I shared my belief in the Living Theory Action Research process as being the skeleton around which everything else hangs. The way in which I have

engaged with myself as a researcher and my school. These brief summaries of initiatives we have introduced, highlight learning from reflections as part of that journey.

Key Stage One - Merry - Go - Round

Once a week our traditional curriculum is dropped for Years 1 and 2. The children work in mixed groups across, changing activities and teachers. Based around a theme for the term, the teachers and children plan activities they would like to do. There are lots of practical, music, art and drama sessions, all linked to the theme. The name *Merry - go - Round* came from the fact the children rotate through the classrooms and activities in a circular motion. It is also a concept the children understand and appeals to both boys and girls.

Weather permitting we try and make sure we use the outdoors as much as possible, whether that is using the grounds, local woods or the community within which we are located. Already the children are involved in planning not being led, asking rather than waiting to be told. They work with different children and adults, learning to make connections, opening up spaces and beginning the first step towards being an Active Researcher and not just an Active Learner.

Independent Learning - Key Stage Two, Fab Friday

Children describe this as the best day of the week! Each Friday Key Stage Two, which are Years 3,4,5 and 6 work in mixed groups. Year 3 mix with Year 4 and Year 5 with Year 6. Four adults lead four workshops throughout the day, which the children rotate through. One workshop is run by a professional sports coach, two by teachers and the fourth by a very good HLTA. The theme for Fab Fridays this term is lights, Camera, Action. For example the older children have been researching silent movies, looking at mime and are now making their own movies.

We are fortunate to have two members of staff (one a teacher and one an HLTA) who are working on a maths masters degree. This means that we run a maths workshop on a Fab Friday, but it is taught in a very different, hands on, practical, problem solving way. Challenging thinking and encouraging a love of maths. Staff teacher what they are skilled at and passionate about. This is a deliberate policy and the enthusiasm and imagination shown, oozes through the children.

It gives the children an opportunity to lead their own learning, to have an opportunity to apply learning skills we teach independently and to be organised and plan resources and locations throughout the day. We feel it is also an

excellent way for the children to experience routines they will have at secondary school.

The staff are enthusiastic about the subject they teach, but do so every fortnight, meaning that every other Friday the teacher has as PPA time. We have blocked it once a fortnight, rather than weekly so that teachers have a good and usable block of time available. Teachers manage to stay on top of planning, preparation and assessment, as well as being refreshed when they are in the classroom.

I am expecting a lot from staff continuously, especially during our drive to be a good school. We are now in the process of embedding all of the initiatives we have developed over the last three years, before it is 'heads down' again and we begin the drive to be an 'outstanding' school. If I am expecting this high level of commitment and energy, the staff need clear blocks of quality PPA time. This process of organising the curriculum on a Friday works for the creative, self-responsible learners we are developing as well as supporting staff to work at such a high level continuously.

Fab Friday, Chatting with Year 4 Pupils

Please see Appendix 5, for the children's comments and my notes.

All of these initiatives build skills in Pupil Leadership. Children as researchers of their world, knowledge creators, of the learning and of themselves. Journeying themselves as I continue to Journey. My offering through these initiatives is a 'net' so fragile as to support and guide to the first step only, and then to allow true Pupil Leadership, as through the reflective cycle of Living Theory Action Research they self discover.

Reflective Practitioner - Journal Note

'As a teacher I am not the font of all knowledge, there to fill the empty vessel of the child. I am there to inspire, to guide, at times to share knowledge and encourage skills and a positive self belief in the gifts we all have to offer.

Someone recently asked me, who I feel accountable to, because of the way I write to myself and the tension I feel with the criteria at university. I considered for a moment, only a moment mind you, the government who provide the framework I have to work within, OFSTED who judge me, governors who pay me, parent's who trust their child to me?'

My answer must be none of the above. I hold myself accountable to each and every child I teach. Ultimately my actions will impact on their life, their self esteem, their view of the world, which is a huge trust and responsibility.

Reflective Creativity-My Own Theory

It is at this point my understandings hesitate and I find myself using Reflective Creativity within the 'space' I hold open. I have throughout this journey kept notes and reflections made within the moment, recorded as files on my computer, sometimes as questions, as narratives, as a poem or just notes or images. These form the basis of my living journey for contemplation within my 'Reflective Creativity', especially now with the beauty of hindsight to add a different perspective. I have used an Action Research format for my work, initially using the work of Whitehead (Living Theory Action Research, 1998) and Wallace (Thinking **A**ctively in a **S**ocial **C**ontext, 2004) to guide me. But with the confidence of an experienced journeyer, I find myself exploring my own Living Theory and format for research. I am drawn at this point in my reflections to the work of Huxtable (2012) on Living-Theory TASC as the closest description reflecting the format of my journey.

Reflective Creativity to Reflective Wisdom

The image (and accompanying narrative) in Appendix 6 is a 2dimensional drawing, a representation of a fluid energy within 5 dimensional form (as described by a child I worked with, see Mounter, 2007). A two dimensional image for an Action Research cycle, linking time as the fourth dimension and space as the fifth variable. I have used this image as a summary of the flow of energy and the

cycle I have explored as a Headteacher Researcher, certainly different from being a Teacher Researcher. Reflecting on the Journeying steps and meanders, certain steps of protocol become evident and challenge my Living Theory Action Research stance, as my preferred form of Journeying.

Please see Appendix 6.

Within the heart of this image, holding the energy as a creative force, is the 'space'. The centre and the energy of the Action Narrative Research and within us, generated through our journey as a reflective Active Researcher. Here we consciously flow our energy and focus between segments, often more than one at a time, using Reflective Creativity to pull the threads together, to explore, revisit understandings, make links, question and re-organise, before we can transform that energy into Reflective Wisdom. Reflective Creativity enables the formulation of clarity of our Living Values, whilst the Reflective Wisdom forms the basis of our Living Theories.

Future, Drawn from Finding Myself-Perspectives Can Change

The last ten years we have seen a renewed interest in how children learn, an examination of the historical paradigm held fast for so long. When I went through university to train as a teacher, I never had a lecture considering the way I delivered/ planned a lesson. The model of 'I' as the teacher imparting

knowledge was still held. The emphasis was on group learning, but the judgement was based on the teacher teaching. Even OFSTED have shifted recently in their perspective. Now the judgement of teaching and learning are separate. The expectation is for the learner to be working harder than the teacher, moving on their own learning. There is a great importance on the learner understanding themselves as a learner and the responsibility they hold for their learning. Now we have another government and another perspective. A new National Curriculum coming next September, with whispers of returning to good, old fashion values in education. History, PE, discipline...

We are grasping our future with caring hands and a firm conviction of our Living Values that creates our school ethos. I feel a strong sense of responsibility as a Headteacher Researcher to share my journey in a way that will inspire discussion and the possibility of someone else realising their own box. It has taken a long time for me to realise the power of sharing my thoughts, reflections and understandings through my Living Theory Action Research. I have written, I am writing, I will write and as I do, the story of my journeying will be told. I want to share in a form that holds the reader safely, whilst sharing the feeling of uncertainty journeying holds for me. To inspire discussion, challenge preconceptions and to strengthen the voice of the Headteacher

Researcher in the Academy. As a Headteacher Researcher, researching my practice, I offer my work on Nurturing Responsiveness, Reflective Wisdom and Co-creation of Knowledge as my educational theory and as such, a contribution to knowledge creation. But I also hope this journey has offered you, an understanding of the depth of the impact on my professional development and of those I make 'connectors' with.

I return to this thread, mentioned before and included as my abstract, tying the beginning and end as circle of reflective learning. As a circle has no definitive start or end, so my dissertation is but a pause and brief summary to date, neither the beginning of my journey as a master researcher or the conclusion. But I offer this thread again, as the link. Here as a reflection of my understandings at this moment within my journey, how the exploration of my meanderings over time had to be gone through to draw the understandings as reflections of the stones trod. So I offer at the beginning to bring an understanding of the multiple layers of understanding that this journey has inspired, but again at the end as a reminder that clarity only comes with journeying.

Through the reflective gathering of my thoughts I have tried to show the layers of my journey and understandings, including staff learning, Nurturing Responsiveness, holding a 'learning space' within, and creative connectivity. As a female Headteacher and Headteacher Researcher I read with interest the writing of Bateson (1989), discussing the impact of female researchers in a predominantly male Academy of work:

'Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular. Perhaps we can discern in women honouring multiple commitments a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning.

(Bateson, 1989, 166)

I hope the layers of my learning journey are reflected clearly through the narrative form of presentation used to carefully reflect the steps taken and the emotional understandings felt. As Bateson highlights, I hope it offers a

different understanding of the validity and role this form of research has and the impact on professional development and CPD.

Joy Munter

Headteacher Researcher

Word Count: 21,747

Appendices

Appendix 1

'What is my concern?

Why am I concerned?

What experiences can I describe to show why I am concerned?

What can I do about it?

What will I do about it?

What kind of data will I gather to show the situation as it unfolds?

How will I explain my educational influence in learning?

How will I show that any conclusions I come to are reasonable, fair and accurate?

How do I evaluate the evidence-based account of my learning?

How do I modify my concerns, ideas and practices in the light of my evaluations?

(Whitehead & McNiff, 2005. P.12)

Appendix 2

What are the Strengths and Challenges within our Community?

Signature	Strengths	Challenges	Impact on Curriculum Design
Being rural	Large grounds, different areas to play & learn Forest School	Far from museums etc Children that travel to & from school Wider community	Forest School Wednesday Welly Walks 'Awe and Wonder' Compare localities
White Mono Culture	English as first language for all Continuity of family generations locally	Lack of cultural diversity Lack of faith members other than Christian Minority black Caribbean/ white Minority Irish traveller children	Focus countries whole school International Schools Gold Award International meals & tuck shop Staff/Pupil/Governor exchanges Partner schools in England, Spain & Germany Link with Indian community Tradition specialist MFL teaching Visit to other places of worship Visit by members of other faith communities Empathy for differences and similarities
Being in Somerset	Rural area of country	Some children from local area Designated as area of deprivation	Far from large industrial/ historic cities Local resources used – quarry/ market town. Locality studies built in as

		Large diverse county	part of visits and residential trips for example London and Bristol
Having a local legacy	Church Railway Quarrying Parish Council Shared hall Farming Show Ground Glastonbury Festival	Hall isn't ours after school Historic expectations/ perceptions of the school	Strong community feel/ links to the school Strong links with the church Support Glastonbury Festival/ support us Bath & West Show – art work Local industry impact on locality studies
Being sustainable	Interested children & Parents HOW committee ECO School Knowledgeable & enthusiastic staff - Helen	'I can' culture Design/ build of school Budget restrictions Numbers and challenge of 7 classes not fed by locality solely	Incorporated into Curriculum Map Learning to Learn Skills Eco School Bronze award Strong Subject Leaders
Being on 'edge' of County	Transfer of personnel & strengths between counties	Village school – small, isolated Unnoticed Village/ Town catchments Courses far away	Do our own thing Own identity
Being in 21 st century	Global links embedded International Schools Award Exchange scheme children/ staff & Governors Small world, diverse	Fast pace of life and change Jobs changing Diverse society/ language Continual learning through life	Future vision and updating ICT important Needs for the future changing – the school needs to reflect this. Extended provision Family learning

	<p>communities</p> <p>MFL specialist staff</p>		
<p>Being a church school</p> <p>VC</p>	<p>Strong Christian values and sense of community</p> <p>Caring community</p> <p>Links to the village church & community</p> <p>Specialist teacher</p>	<p>SIAS & OFSTED Inspections and requirements</p> <p>Lack of active Christians in community</p> <p>Lack of members of other faiths</p>	<p>Strong sense of family/ belonging</p> <p>Christian values</p> <p>Specialist RE teaching of other faiths, visits, visitors</p> <p>Atmosphere/ behaviour/ manners impacts on learning</p> <p>Link with Trowbridge-diversity</p>
<p>Gold Arts mark</p>	<p>Arts are embedded and a commitment of the school</p> <p>Part of the character of the school</p> <p>PTA commitment to match fund NADFAS grant for Arts</p> <p>Action Track</p> <p>Music, instrumental & singing</p>	<p>Budget restraints</p> <p>Paperwork & evidence required to maintain/ renew the mark</p>	<p>Creative arts interwoven through the curriculum</p> <p>Links to national organisations</p> <p>Residential trip to London to theatre/ art galleries</p> <p>Artists/ dancers/ musicians in school</p> <p>All Year 3 learn musical instrument</p>
<p>Member of 'Sheppey Valley CLP'</p>	<p>Support from other schools</p> <p>Pooling of resources/ staff</p> <p>Shared projects</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>Funding CLP</p> <p>Shared vision meeting all needs</p> <p>Diverse needs of rural, village schools and town centre schools</p>	<p>Share resources to support curriculum</p> <p>Share specialist teachers – MFL</p> <p>Gifted & talented workshops organised</p> <p>Buy in trainers/ specialists</p>

Coin Through Time – Autumn 1	Digging up the Past (History)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penny for the Church • Family Heirloom • Tudor Rose Penny/ Explorers • Victorian Money Box • Rations for Vouchers • No more Farthings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dinosaur Diggers (significant person) • Dinosaur Diggers (significant person)- Lyme Regis 1/2 • Ancient Egypt – Bristol/ Dorset Museums/ Hindu Temple • Ancient Egypt • Greeks- Greek visitor in school • Roman Remains – Caerleon
Curtain Up – Autumn 2	Merry-Go-Round/ Fab Friday And.....Action! (Art/ICT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppet Theatres • Puppet Theatres • Carnival – floats/ costumes • Carnival – floats/ costumes • All the World’s a Stage • All the World’s a Stage <p>Whole school trip to a theatre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph Album - Visitors • Photograph Album • Cartoon Capers (cartoons/ stop animation) • Cartoon Capers • Silent Movies • Silent Movies
Around the World in 80 Days-Spring 1	Home is Where the Heart is (Geog.)
Geography Mapping Skills – all do this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place called home- Wells visit • Doultong/ Isle of Coll • Eurovision Song Contest - International Week whole school – Glade/ drumming/ storytelling • Eurovision Song Contest • Out of Africa • Out of Africa
Young Enterprise Project A Under the Hammer Spring 2	Young Enterprise Project B Kerching! (D&T)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns and Print • Patterns and Print • Art Auction: sketches/ paintings/ frames • Art Auction: sketches/ paintings/ frames • Sculptures • Sculptures <p>Map artists being used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biscuits and cakes • Biscuits and cakes • Cocktails • Cocktails Food Production visit/ WI • Picnic Box • Picnic Box <p>Design, cost, create, sell- Food Market/ Picnic</p>
Healthy Mind & Body Summer 1	Tell me More! (Science/ ICT)

<p>Friendship</p> <p>Healthy eating</p> <p>Healthy Lifestyles</p> <p>How my body functions?</p> <p>Sex education/ Exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's in my lunch box through Moving storybook & CD (levers/ sliders/ pop ups/ sound effects audio)- Magdalen Project, Chard • Reduce, Recycle, Reuse - Dimmer Dump/ Carymoor through Radio Mallet • Living Planet (topical issues)through the local newspaper the Doultling News (Earth Science Centre Visit)
<p>Waters of Life – Summer 2</p>	<p>Merry-Go-Round/ Fab Friday Independent Research</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Aldhelm's Well • Under the Waves • Polluted Pond • A River Study • Drought • Thames/Ganges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival • Survival • TASC Independent Research • TASC Independent Research • TASC Independent Research • TASC Independent Research <p>Launch visit</p>

Appendix 4

'Hole in the Mole' to 'Space within a Child'
Rayner Mounter

I am the space
That lingers in a child
That tempts the child
To reach for the stars
That pushes the edge
Beyond the safe
That creates an idea
That tempts and draws
That reaches to sky
That connects with stars
And wisdom unfurls
That the child explores
Into and beyond
That sparks the mind
That pushes boundaries
That condenses to thoughts
That carries the future
That brings the child
To life.

Appendix 5

Fab Friday, Chatting with Year 4 Pupils

"I take a greater part on Fab Fridays" (Child T)

This was a quiet, small comment, but the impact for the child is huge. Taking more of an active part in their learning, developing their self esteem and self confidence.

"I am more responsible for my learning." (Child U)

This is a life attitude, which will hopefully stand U in good stead. Not only being more responsible, but reflective and understanding of them self.

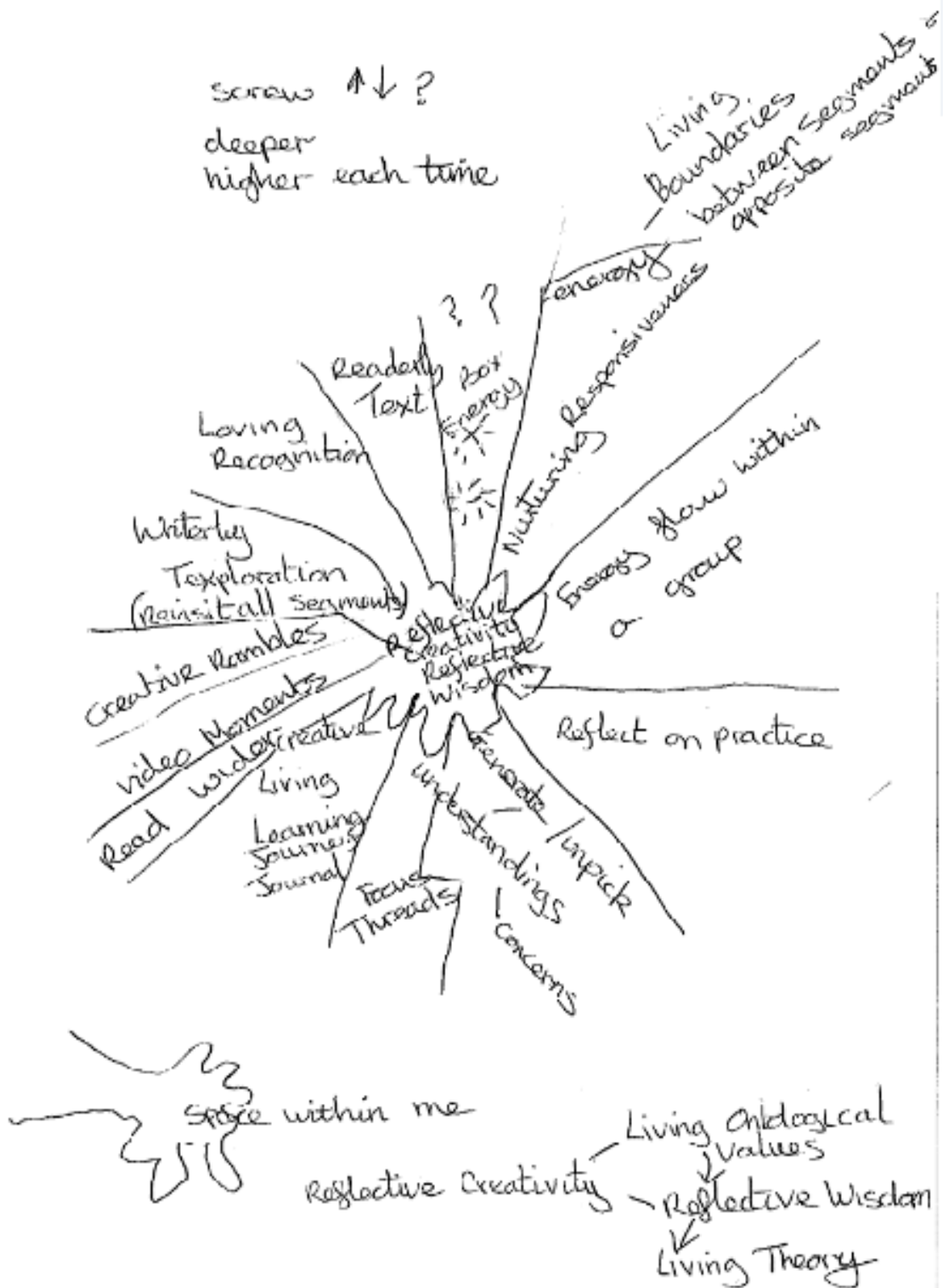
"Mixing you make new learning friends." (Child H)

This is a new phrase and links to the discussion I had previously with some Year 6 pupils. I am pleased not at the engagement of the child, but the reflection and understanding of the connections needed between people to make good, active learning.

"You learn to work together." (Child H)

Appendix 6

Journal Image



Journal Note - Living Theory Narrative Research

This format combines the first, second, fifth and seventh segments of the TASC Wheel, combined with the steps within Living Theory Action Research (Whitehead, 1993).

1-As a clock at 12 o'clock, the opening to possibilities and an awareness of self form the top segment of my Living Theory Narrative Research Wheel, also highlighted by + and - signs, showing the flow of energy to and from the researcher holding the space.

2-Followed by the Nurturing Responsiveness segment, an awareness of Living Boundaries and openness to explore (Huxtable, 2012), but with a positive awareness of the needs of others and self, forming the bond between the two.

3-A nurturing relationship of Reflective Creativity, prods of thought and questions to develop thinking and trust. This is the area of self exploration through the connections made with others, the forming of Reflective Creativity and development to Reflective Wisdom. This merging of like minded and opposing minds creates an energy of its own that feeds, refuels and snag the conscious thought within the Creative Group Energy segment. Providing refuelling stops within a pressured, constrained world of limits, opportunities to develop creative thoughts, to share and challenge perceptions. This creates within oneself an eagerness to explore and reflect on ones practice and values.

The boundaries between these segments are living energy, transformational with belief, fluid to the thought and a spiral in perspective, but whether raising or lowering is another question.

4-Reflections draw questions, thoughts for consideration and understandings and concerns, which formulates into Focus Threads to explore. This is the point at which I think we flow into the Living Diary.

5- Living Diary-the segment where we begin to record our journey as a learner(Living Learning Journeying Diary, LLJJ). This can be in many formats that inspire, provoke, remind the journeyier. For me this is often a poetic

narrative, not quite poetry but very near. I have also kept video clips, notes, images, scanned notes, work by staff and children, mind maps etcetera. I find myself drawn into these special moments on my journey and enjoy the play of words and images on paper. I can come back to it; revisit the moment by immersing myself in the recording.

6-I have included Contextual Reading here, making sense of your own developing thoughts by exploring the work of others and critically engaging with it.

7-I have recorded as the next segment Video Moments and Creative Rambles, you may think again, as I have already mentioned them before. But this is where I think we begin to see the use of video clips about our own practice as useful evidence and reflective tools, beginning to link critical analysis in our reading and reflective Creativity formulating 'Narrative Data Evidence'. This for me is the point of pleasure when I begin in the next segment to pull the strands of my Reflective Creativity together in the form of a Writerly Narrative.

8-I have named this segment Writerly Texploration, as it is the place we form and metamorphose the energy from meandering between, within, across from and next to each segment into our own understandings.

9-Huxtable, 2012 explores the concept of Loving Recognition as an understanding of self, recognising talents, skills, strengths and developing of self belief which I believe comes within the next segment. This leads to the final segment, linking to the seventh on the TASC Wheel transforming the Writerly Text into a Readerly Text.

10-You have written a form of collective exploration and energy meanderings between all segments, but this is the point when the formality of the Action Research cycle becomes important. It is at this point that I think it is necessary to engage with the criteria for examination and the steps within the Living Theory Action Research cycle. This process will help to focus the writer on identifying the clear threads of the journey, the key points to convey and the presentation format best suited to convey the message. This may be a style of presentation well understood within the Academy or a new Living Theory conveyed through the journey of the researcher/writer.

The 'spiral- screw' energy of this Action Narrative Research flows freely in a 3dimensional world, through the fourth dimension of time as the researcher is held within the moment, but is also able to reflect and revisit the moment with the beauty of perspective hindsight and thought. The fifth dimension of place, our place in the world, in our own understandings, in the political and social time of our age.

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