UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS and SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Education

BEING AND BECOMING: a biographical study into the transformative learning processes of three trainee teachers.

by

Priscilla Kilty

Thesis for the degree of Doctorate of Education (EdD)

September 2010

TITLE

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Acknowledgements

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ABSTRACT
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This study employs both biographical and autobiographical approaches in order to develop an understanding of the complex and developmental nature of adult learning as a way of being and becoming a teacher in further education. Learning as a way of 'being' provides a substantive and lasting learning which is essential in today's constantly changing and challenging world (Vaill, 1996). The process of 'becoming' is narrated in the autobiographical stories of the three trainees and highlighted as part of their transformative learning process. These stories written by each trainee provide insight into the interactional moments and perspective transformative changes experienced by the trainees. Data analysis comprised of a hermeneutical interpretation of the trainee's autobiographies, using Denzin's biographical method, and a mapping of Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning. In addition the personal voices of each trainee as generated through in depth interviews were analysed using Mezirow's Five Stages of Perspective Transformation and Brookfield's Affective Domains of Adult Learning. This detailed analysis revealed the complexities of the transformative learning processes experienced by the three trainees. Thereby enabling conclusions to be drawn as to the extent to which they each followed Mezirow's stages of perspective transformation and Brookfield's affective domains.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Priscilla Kilty, declare that the thesis entitled

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and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as a result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

- where any art of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:

Date: 29 September 2010

Chapter 1   Introduction

My interest in both transformative learning theory and adult learning processes had developed over a period of time, through the teaching and tutoring of pre-service teacher trainees; and through my observation of the process involved in their being trainees and becoming teachers. There was an increasing awareness on my part of the intense developmental nature of teacher training courses and the complexity of the personal and professional transformations that, being adult learners, they experienced during the process of becoming teachers. This awareness was gained from a number of sources including my experience as an adult learner; my role as a lecturer and then as a staff development tutor in a further education college; and also through my role as the course leader of a pre-service teacher training course at a university in the south of England.

Beginning the Research Process

For my doctoral research I was keen to study the process of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2009) in order to gain a greater insight into the complexity of the processes involved in adult learning (Brookfield, 2000a). Policy changes in the further education teacher training agenda provided me with an opportunity to foster a transformative learning environment within the pre-service course I lectured on. This opportunity provided me with the basis on which to begin my research and enabled me to study in greater depth the world of adult learning and the transformative learning process.

As part of my contribution to generating new knowledge and insights, I was greatly encouraged in my approach to this study by Taylor (1997:54-55) who argues for the practice of fostering transformative learning as there has been little empirical research in this area.   Further Mezirow's (1991) view that as a transformative educator we 'may help others and perhaps ourselves, move towards a fuller and more dependable understanding of the meaning of our mutual experiences' supported my interest in exploring this area in more depth.

Cranton (2009:183) however provides a word of caution in so far as:

> Educators who have set up the goal of facilitating transformative
> learning in their practice can only set up an environment and
> create activities that have the potential to challenge participants
> habits of mind and engage in critical self-reflection.

It was clear that implementing a transformative learning environment would not necessarily provide the answers to my research study. However there was an expectation that this approach would support trainee teachers through a process of critical reflection and perspective transformation; and in the process provide the trainees with a greater insight into their teaching and learning processes, and a stronger sense of self-empowerment.

Mezirow (1997:10) describes a transformative learning environment as one in which those participating have full information and where they:

- are free from coercion and have equal opportunity to assume the various roles of discourse (to advance beliefs, challenge, defend, explain, assess evidence, and judge arguments)
- become critically reflective of assumptions
- are empathic and open to other perspectives
- are willing to listen and to search for common ground or a synthesis of different points of view
- and can make a tentative best judgment to guide action.

These are considered to be the ideal conditions not only for discourse but also for adult learning and education. The emphasis throughout transformational learning theory is on stimulating critical reflection and rational discourse; Mezirow (1997) believes that an essential aspect of transformational learning is the process of journal writing, the use of metaphors, life history exploration, learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies, and using literature to help stimulate critical consciousness, and further encourage discussion and exploration of concepts.

In my role as a transformative educator it was anticipated that this type of approach would ultimately foster transformative learning; and provide the ideal conditions and opportunities for trainees to effectively reflect on their professional practice and enhance their teaching competence. Chapman (2007:14) supports this approach and

argues that ' … graduate professional education needs to develop students beyond *knowing* (theory) and *doing* (practice) towards *becoming* transformed'; this in her view means being more critically reflective of the premises of their worldviews, open to and inclusive of other perspectives, and thus more capable of making sound judgments in the face of uncertainty.

Background to the study

The background to the one year full-time pre-service course is highlighted here as this provides an awareness of the time-scale and activities that the trainees were involved in during the academic year. Also identified is the educational autobiographical framework which provided the opportunity for the trainees to critically reflect on their personal and professional development during the course. It is the fourth stage of this framework which involved a practice-based enquiry assignment and where each trainee made the choice to write an educational autobiography, that is the focus for my research. The purpose was to encourage the trainees to identify and critically reflect on one or more specific teaching and learning experiences through the construction of a narrative story.

The pre-service course combines a taught input at Freespin University (a pseudonym) and guided teaching practice at a designated college placement during the academic year. This type of programme ensures that trainee teachers gain as much practical work experience as possible, and are able to be involved in the life of the college and the lives of the students therein. Attendance is normally two days a week at the university and three days at the college work-placement. The trainee teacher's work-placements are either in a sixth-form college or a further education college. The main differences in the placements being that the further education colleges offer a wider range of vocational and community-based courses as well as academic GCSEs and A-level courses, whereas the sixth form colleges are rather more focused on the latter courses.

Trainees attending the pre-service course range from those who have come straight from a degree programme onto the course; those who have some previous industry experience in training and wish to move into teaching; and others who after taking early retirement are looking to give something back to society. All trainees have undertaken graduate level education and have life and work experiences behind them; and therefore meet the overarching criteria of 'adult learners'. There is an expectation

from the University that as adult learners they would have an internal view of themselves as teachers and educators.

Fostering of a transformative learning environment

Pollard and Tann (1995:58) usefully discuss the factors that make up our personal biography, which include our 'social, cultural and educational background, experience and qualifications, position, interests and personality'. They state that these aspects can be seen to provide a 'unique sense of self ', (1995:58) and a concept of our 'being'. Rosenberg (1989) considers this sense of self is particularly important as it influences our perspectives, strategies and actions. Trainee teachers may also have a sense of an 'ideal self'; in terms of the characteristics that they wish to develop and the type of teacher they wish to 'become' (Pollard and Tann, 1995:58).

With this in mind I now outline the strategies which I put in place to encourage the trainee teachers to move from 'being to becoming'. The transformative learning environment was implemented gradually during the academic year, facilitating the development of a competent practitioner within an ethos of the 'teacher as researcher'. The focus was on 'experiential learning and 'personalised learning' with the specific function of encouraging the trainee teachers' learning and thinking processes. This involved the development of an educational autobiographical framework; which was to be implemented at several levels and stages throughout the course.

- The initial stage of the framework started with an autobiographical mind map; involving trainee teacher's identifying key moments in their life and discussing what had brought them to the pre-service course.
- The second stage was a move to the more pragmatic focus of a career development profile; one which included diagnostic tests as well as individual personal and professional skill level tests.
- The third stage incorporated 'action learning sets' which were configured in small subject –based groups, and provided trainees with the opportunity to openly discuss and share with their peers, any issues and concerns they had relating to their teaching placement, their teaching competence and professional practice.
- The fourth stage involved a practice-based enquiry assignment that provided the option for reviewing their professional practice through either an action research study; a case study or the writing of an educational autobiography.

It is this fourth stage of the educational autobiographical framework that has formed the main part of the data analysis for this research study. However there was also the need to ensure that the pre-course met the required Lifelong Learning UK Standards

(LLUK) so this fourth stage was embedded in a 4,500 word unit assignment called a Practice-Based Enquiry.

Taught inputs were arranged by me, for those trainees who had chosen to write an educational autobiography; and regular study group meetings were also arranged.

In terms of formative assessment, the trainees were given opportunities to hand in two drafts of their assignment; which I then discussed with them in tutorials and also provided written comments. This type of assessment provides structured feedback and a scaffolding approach during the learning process; supporting trainees by identifying how well they are doing and how they might best improve their work. For me this was a vitally important aspect of the teacher training process, as I believe a fundamental principle of fostering transformative learning is through the teaching role; and by establishing an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of a co-operative learning relationship.

Research Approach

The aim of this biographical study is to understand the complexity of the processes involved in adult learning through exploring the relationship between three trainee teachers' lived experiences and perspective transformation. The research questions explored as part of the study were framed so as to focus on the key aspects of adult education; the transformative moments that the trainees had experienced, and the processes involved in moving from transformative learning to perspective transformation.

The three key research questions are:

Question 1: What are the key aspects involved in adult education and learning? Data collection and analysis is through Brookfield's dimensions of adult learning which include both the cognitive and the affective domains of learning.

Question 2: What were the defining moments that created transformational experiences for the trainee teachers? Data collection and analysis is through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach (that employs Denzin's first five stages of his biographical method) to the written autobiographies of the three trainee teachers.

Question 3:　　How did the process of perspective transformation occur?
　　　　　　　Data collection and analysis is through Mezirow's ten phases of
　　　　　　　transformative learning and a conceptual framework of perspective
　　　　　　　transformation.

The purpose of the study therefore is to enable a deeper understanding and insight into the complexity and developmental nature of adult learning and the transformative learning process. The lived experiences of three trainee teachers narrated in their educational autobiographies; and written as the fourth part of a personalised autobiographical framework; are identified and linked together with the focused interviews to provide the basis for Chapter 5, Autobiographical Stories and Lived Experiences and Chapter 6, The Privilege of Discovering Myself within the study. The written narratives of the trainees together with focused interviews provide the basis for the data collection and analysis, so as to address the three research questions; and explore the actual process involved in tracking the move from transformative learning to perspective transformation.

An Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 begins with a focus on The Changing Nature of Adult Learning and provides the background context to the changes in adult education and the key theories of adult learning. These changes and theories have been reviewed as they clearly highlight the role of the cognitive and affective dimensions of adult learning; and provide a further basis for understanding the adult learning process. Brookfield's (2000a) research constructively defines the key domains that differentiate an adult's learning and thinking processes. The policy changes in the further education teacher training agenda leading to professional teaching qualifications are then reviewed. The fostering of a transformative learning environment that supported the changes in adult learning is identified as the beginning of the research study.

Chapter 3, Transitions and Transformations, builds on the changes identified in adult education and considers the key concepts of critical reflective practice and the theories of transformative learning. The process of learning through critical reflection and experience are discussed using Dewey's model of 'reflective practice'; and the move from reflective practice to critical reflection is highlighted. Four transformative

learning theories are examined and Mezirow's (1991, 2009) theory of perspective transformation and the ten phases of transformative learning identified and discussed. The key processes (Mezirow, 1991) of moving from transformative learning to perspective learning are clarified and provide a basis for analysing the personal voices of the three trainees.

Chapter 4, A Biographical Research Approach provides a discussion of the implications for the researcher involved in autobiography, life history and narrative approaches. Qualitative research methods and the role of narrative and experience are given careful consideration, because as Culler (1978:4) noted 'We still do not appreciate as fully as we ought the importance of narrative schemes and models in all aspects of our lives'. Implications of the biographical method (Denzin, 1989) and the hermeneutical process and hermeneutical phenomenology are considered in terms of the meaning and interpretation of the biographical method. The problematic of interviewing and the ethics of a research study are also explored.

The focus in Chapter 5, Autobiographical Stories and Lived Experiences is on the trainees' autobiographical accounts and highlights the key transformational moments in their professional and personal development. A hermeneutical interpretation of the written narrative texts, and the trainees lived experiences are explored; together with an interrogation of the transitions and transformations they experienced. The transformative learning process embedded within the trainees' autobiographies are carefully mapped to Mezirow's (1991) ten phases of transformative learning; and in so doing the complexity of the process through to perspective transformation is constructively highlighted. Each story presented illuminates their individual journeys through the course and allows an insight into their thoughts and feelings about their learning process, as demonstrated.

Chapter 6, The Privilege of Discovering Myself, allows further insights to be gained through the presentation of the personal voices of the three trainee teachers, and provides clear evidence of the process of transformative learning and the move to perspective transformation. The affective dimension of the adult learning process is highlighted as research shows that not sufficient attention has been given to the importance of understanding critical reflection as an emotional as well as a cognitive process (Brookfield, 2000a). He identified that there were 'few grounded depictions

of how adults feel their way through the process' and considered that 'the personal voice and subjective experience of the student is often curiously absent', (Brookfield, 2000a:10).

Finally in Chapter 7, Reflections and Conclusions, I reflect on the process of research and consider the effectiveness of the study in providing the answers to the three research questions. Evidence is provided to support the conclusions drawn from the analysis of data; and reference is made to the theoretical concepts of adult learning and the process of moving from transformative learning to perspective transformation.

Chapter 2: The Changing Nature of Adult Learning

This chapter considers the changing role of adult education in terms of the move to a concept of adult learning as part of the lifelong learning process; and its relevance to the process of transformative learning. Alongside this there is an examination of how teacher's professional knowledge is developed through the psychological and sociological theories of adult learning. The distinctive nature of adult learning and thinking is further considered through Brookfield's (2000a) review of the four capacities of adult learners. These aspects of adult learning and development provide the background for gaining a greater insight into the complexity of trainee teacher's learning processes. Finally the changes leading to new professional standards and qualifications for further education teacher training are reviewed, as these are part of the adult education agenda; and the catalyst for developing a transformative learning environment.

A Changing Educational World

In terms of adult education and learning, difficult questions are increasingly being asked by adult educators about what constitutes the field of adult education; as they are finding that the traditional values, purposes and practice of adult education are no longer meeting the needs of a changing educational world, (Usher *et al.* 1997:1). They argue that this learning needs to be re-structured and conceptualized to meet the ever changing and challenging social and economic context. A significant factor in this need for change has been the recent developments in computer and information technology, the use of the internet, mobile phones and the media in general which has advanced our ways of communicating and of learning over the last decade. These changes altered how information is obtained and also how the process of education and learning is viewed; and are factors which can be seen as having contributed to a 'de-centring of knowledge' which is accompanied by a 'de-centring of self', (Usher *et al.* 1997:10).

The traditional held view of adult education as part of a 'liberal curriculum' is now seen as being problematic due primarily to a 'valuing of different sources and forms of knowledge', (Usher *et al.*1997:9) and a de-valuing of specialist discipline-based

knowledge. The consequence of this is that there is now a 'greater uncertainty and conflict over the power and purpose of education'; and significantly it is now adult educators who find themselves 'increasingly governed by managerialism and the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness' (Usher *et al*.1997:14). The effect this has had on education can be seen in the DfES (2004) reform agenda and Lifelong Learning UK's approach to the development of professional standards in teacher training where

> Skilled performance embodied in 'competences' becomes an increasingly significant part of the agenda and an increasingly important and valued outcome of learning.
>
> (Usher *et al*.1997:14)

The change from Adult Learning to Lifelong Learning

Hillier (2002:30) identifies two distinct models of adult learning that of liberal education and that of radical education. Noting that 'with liberal education, it is assumed that people want to learn for learning's sake' and highlighting 'that they enjoy learning and …simply enjoy finding out about things'. Whereas the radical model of adult education considers that education has a more transformative potential; '… here people learn in order to make changes to their social and political situations'. The nature of adult education has clearly been affected by the move of government policies in the 1970s away from the concept of liberal education; and by the socio-economic problems of the 1980s which created a proliferation of adult training programmes; and this has led to the current focus of education and training being linked to employment. It was during the 1980s that adult education provision became linked to the rise of 'credentialism' and that of 'vocationalism'; due primarily to changes in government funding and policies. However it was not until the 1990s that phrases like 'adult education' and 'continuing education' changed to that of 'lifelong learning' (Hillier, 2002:39). The Dearing Report on Lifelong Learning (1997) and the Green Paper -The Learning Age (DfEE, 1998) clarified the government's focus on lifelong learning through a strategy of developing skills and knowledge for 'economic competitiveness and social inclusion'.

Usher *et al.* (1997:5) also argues that adult learning can be seen as part of the socio-economic dimension of modernity and post modernity and that

> Learning through life and lifelong learning have become not simply an aspect of neither economic instrumentalism nor an assertion of enlightened humanism but also a way of constituting meaning through consumption. … A desirable lifestyle is no longer about consuming in order to be the same as others but rather about consuming in order to be different.

This argument places the emphasis on a culture of 'consumption and lifestyle'; and the view that as we find that traditional boundaries of responsibility and fixed reference points have changed, the choices we make about the direction of our lives become more and more our responsibility as individuals.

Adult Learning: teacher's professional knowledge

According to Robson (2006) teachers in the post-compulsory sector have to first acquire specialist subject knowledge at an appropriate level and then secondly acquire the knowledge of how to teach. The knowledge and expertise therefore that is most important to teachers is their specific subject knowledge not their knowledge of teaching. However in order to support their practice and identify their professional knowledge base, teacher training courses have drawn on a range of theories and concepts of learning which are familiar to the field of adult education (Robson, 2006). These learning theories can be categorised into psychological learning theories which include cognitive and social constructivism and humanism and that can be seen as developmental processes; and those sociological theories which are more multi-disciplinary and which include andragogy, experiential learning and models of practical learning. It is the key concepts of these learning theories which are now considered in more detail.

Adult learning: Psychological theories

Constructivism and Social constructivism

Social constructivism is concerned with learning as an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge where knowledge is internalized by learners; and arose out of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget's (1970) stage theory described the four successive stages of development: sensori-motor stage from birth to age 2, pre-operational stage from ages 2-7, concrete operational stage from 7-12 and formal operations stage from 12 that children progress through. Piaget's theory is known as constructivism as it considered that children needed to be active participants in both

constructing an understanding of how they learn and the world around them. However it is only the stage of formal operations, which is considered as the last stage of a young adult's cognitive development, and the stage that applies to post-compulsory education.

Learning in constructivist theory is based on an individuals' personal experiences and how they process information about the environment; each individual having a different interpretation and construction of the knowledge process. This active processing of information and experiences Piaget identified as 'accommodation' and 'assimilation'; and he considered this to be the key for the integration of new knowledge into existing mental schemas. It is through this dialectic between accommodation and assimilation, that individuals are able to construct new knowledge from experience. Assimilation occurs when individuals incorporate new experiences into an already existing framework without changing that framework. This process occurs when an individuals' experience is aligned with their internal representations of the world, but it can also occur as a failure to change through misinterpreting that experience. Accommodation however occurs through the process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit new experiences and our internal view of the way the world works.

Jerome Bruner (1968) though viewed human beings as natural learners and focused on developing the learner as a self-sufficient problem-solver. His work on discovery learning suggests a cognitive strategy that underlies the motivation of self-directed learning. Bruner, (1979:88) argued that:

> The degree that one is able to approach a task of discovering
> something rather than 'learning about' it, to that degree there will
> be a tendency for the child to work with the autonomy of self-reward
> or, more properly be rewarded by discovery itself.

Piaget's (1970) and Bruner's (1979) theories both describe cognitive and social constructivism in terms of how a person understands and builds knowledge through developmental stages and networks of mental constructs and schemas. All learning is seen as an active process, and one that is essential in supporting and encouraging the mental re-organization of information. Another theorist Ausubel *et al*. (1968) also emphasized that learning is the process of constructing new meaning; an aspect that

Mezirow (1991) focused on in his work on perspective transformation. Mezirow (2000) considered that adults create cognitive change through learning to shift cognitive contexts and currently existing frames of reference.

Experiential Learning

Kolb (1984:41) based his theory of experiential learning on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget; and argued that 'learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'. His theory presents a cyclical model of learning, consisting of four stages shown below, where knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it.

The learning may begin at any stage, but each stage must follow the other in a cyclical sequence:

1. Concrete Experience   (CE)
2. Reflective Observation   (RO)
3. Abstract Conceptualisation   (AC)
4. Active Experimentation   (AE)

Kolb's (1984) learning cycle involves the transactions between the four-stages of the cycle. The first stage, *concrete experience* (CE), is where the learner actively experiences an activity in a practical way. The second stage, *reflective observation* (RO), is when the learner consciously reflects back on that experience. The third stage, *abstract conceptualization* (AC), is where the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed. The fourth stage, *active experimentation* (AE), is where the learner is trying to plan how to test a model or theory or plan for a forthcoming experience.

Kolb's theory argues for a dialectical relationship between learner and environment, in which two diametrically opposed modes of knowing provide the means through which we appropriate our experience and transform it. Coffield *et al.* (2004) clarified that the tension in the abstract-concrete dimension relies on conceptual interpretation or on immediate experience in order to grasp hold of the experience. However it is the tension in the active- reflective dimension which relies on internal reflection or on external manipulation in order to transform experience. This then is the argument for how we learn; which can either be through direct experience, through mediated forms of experience such as reading, watching television, using the internet or through being

trained or taught. Moon (2000) contends that experiential learning can result from an experience in its broadest conceptualisation, but argues that it is through reflection that it is subsequently interpreted in cognitive terms.

Adult learning: Sociological theories

Andragogy

Andragogy is linked with Malcolm Knowles' (1978) work which although having had a considerable impact on adult education is also seen as a controversial concept of adult learning. However as Jarvis (1995:93) notes one of the main reasons his work remains popular despite its failings is that it 'reflects the ideological currents of the present time' and that is still the case now. Knowles' work (1978:53-7) focused on the differences in the way adults learned and identified four main 'assumptions that differentiate pedagogy from andragogy'. These are:

- A change in self-concept, since adults need to be more self-directive;
- Experience, since mature individuals accumulate an expanding reservoir of experience which becomes an exceedingly rich source in learning;
- Readiness to learn, since adults want to learn in the problem areas with which they are confronted and which they regard as relevant;
- Orientation towards learning, since adults have a problem -centred orientation they are less likely to be subject centred.

There was much criticism of his theory at the time of publication regarding the differences between pedagogy and andragogy. However Knowles (1979:53) in revisiting his original work recognised that andragogy and pedagogy are not discrete processes and eventually claimed that 'some pedagogical assumptions are realistic for adults in some situations and some andragogical assumptions realistic for children in some situations'.

A more humanistic approach to learning

In contrast to a constructivist view of how the mind constructs and orders information, a humanistic approach to teaching and learning views the whole person as important.

Abraham Maslow's (1968) theory is concerned with the individual and how they are motivated and involves a ' hierarchy of needs' through which the adult learner progresses; starting from the lower levels that consist of basic needs, followed by

safety needs, through to the higher levels of love and belongingness, self-esteem needs and finally the need for self- actualization. Maslow's theory states that only when the lower level needs are satisfied can an individual move to the next higher level. The higher levels can be seen as a state of equilibrium, where a person makes full use of their capabilities, where they are rooted in self-knowledge and are in control of their lives (Hillier, 2002).

However it was Carl Rogers who emphasized the self-actualization of the learner and argued that the goal of education is a fully functioning person and his statement that 'teaching is in my estimation is a vastly over-rated function' (Rogers, 1983:119) has often been quoted by adult educators. He qualified this statement by identifying that the process of teaching and the imparting of knowledge did make sense but only in unchanging environments; and argued that we now live in a continually changing environment, one where 'the goal of education is now based on the facilitation of change and learning' (Rogers,1983:120). His argument is based around the fact that 'no knowledge is secure' and that the teaching of what he perceives as ' static knowledge' is no longer appropriate as education needs to focus on 'the process of seeking knowledge' (Rogers,1983:121). The way in which this should be approached according to Rogers (ibid) is 'through the facilitation of significant learning' and rests upon 'certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner'.

I agree with Roger's view that the facilitator who cares, who prizes and trusts the learner creates a climate for learning which is very different; and I also consider that 'empathic understanding' helps to 'establish a climate for self-initiated experiential learning' (Rogers, 1983:125).

The Distinctive Nature of Adult Learning and Thinking
Brookfield's (2000a) paper discusses in depth four strands of research into what is distinctive about the adult dimension of lifelong learning; and in the process highlights aspects of both learning and thinking skills. These he identifies as the capacity to think dialectically, the capacity to employ practical logic, the capacity to know what we know and the capacity for critical reflection. These capacities are now considered and related to transformative learning.

The capacity to think dialectically

Dialectic thinking was identified as a distinct form of adult reasoning by Reigel (1973) and seen as an ongoing dialectic process. Reigel's starting point was Piaget's theory of mental operations to which he added a fifth stage of dialectical operations; this stage he considered to be not only the highest mode of operation but also a main characteristic of adult thinking and development. Reigel's (1979:130) view was that the 'mature adult achieves a new apprehension of contradictions' one that sees them in a more positive way as the 'basic source for all activities' and that these then 'form the basis for any innovative and creative work'. Squires (1981) criticized Reigel's fifth stage arguing that 'a contingent model of mental operations would suggest that adults can deploy a range … of modes of thinking and vary them appropriately'; and are not always locked into one style but to 'some extent choose how to approach problems'.

Tennant (1995:133) describes dialectic-thinking as being:

> … a constant dialectic between the changing or developing person and the changing or evolving society. That is the person creates, and is created by the society in which he/she lives. … The person is construed as a changing person in a changing world and the dialectical approach is very much concerned with the dynamics of change.

It is this context of dialectic thinking that can be seen in terms of trainee teacher's classroom management; where the teacher exercises authority by setting limits and administering college regulations and discipline. Whilst a trainee teacher needs to be consistent when applying these rules, no two situations are the same; and their level of teacher and student interaction then has to take into consideration the importance of different contexts, and the validity of the situational or relativistic reasoning. The actual dialectic nature of learning is by its very nature a tension- and conflict-filled process. This process is identified in Piaget's cognitive theory, where the processes of accommodation of ideas to the external world and assimilation of experience into existing conceptual structures are the moving force for cognitive development (see also Kolb, 1995).

Mezirow (2003:60) supports this view and considers that 'learning to participate freely and fully in critical-dialectical discourse involves two distinctively adult

capabilities'. The first Kegan (2000) identified as 'our uniquely adult capacity to become critically self - reflective'; the second King and Kitchener (1994) identified as 'reflective judgement …involving the assessment of assumptions and expectations supporting beliefs, values and feelings', (Mezirow, 2003:60). In Mezirow's view the task of adult education includes critical reflection and dialectic discourse, and the task of the adult educator is in creating the conditions to develop the skills of effective adult reasoning and the disposition for transformative learning, (Mezirow, 2003:62).

The capacity to employ practical logic

Practical logic focuses on an adult's capacity to think contextually in a deep and critical way. Practical logic also combines an attention to verbal and non-verbal cues in behaviour as well as a mixture of knowledge. Where the skill has become so well practised that it enters the unconscious part of the brain this forms what is known as 'unconscious competence'; and what we term as ' second nature' or 'instinctive'. In terms of practical knowledge and practical logic, the process of adult logic and cognitive development is linked with the idea of postformal operations; which is seen as a progression from Piaget's formal operations (Sinnott, 1998).

This type and level of operation is seen by Sinnott (1998) as a process of complex logical thinking which adaptively solves problems and is developed through social experiences. The idea is that cognitive development involves an increase in social interaction and social cognitive experiences and leads to even greater cognitive development. Therefore postformal thought can therefore be seen to include both cognitive epistemology (the knowing of reality) and lifespan development. Sinnott (1998) also argues that a new type of cognitive coordination occurs at this postformal level and that there is a parallel coordination of perspectives which occurs at an emotional level.

Postformal thought in this theory has an impact on one's view of the self, the world of other people, changes over time and leads to a change in one's view of interpersonal reality. There are two central components to postformal operations; 'the ability to order several systems of formal operations or systems of truth' and the 'use of self-referential truth'. The table below identifies the complexity of the process that moves cognitive thinking from meta-theory through to self-referential thought. It can also be

used in data analysis, as it clarifies and describes the major criteria for identifying whether postformal operations are present in narratives and interview transcripts. The criteria considered by Sinnott (1998) to be required to be present in postformal thought are identified below as 1: Meta theory shift: 3: Process-product shift: 5: Pragmatism: 10: Paradox and 11: Self-referential thought: and it is at this last point that the adult is conscious of using postformal thought.

Postformal Complex Thinking Operations (Source: Table 3.5 Sinnott, 1991)

1: Meta theory shift: The shift between major ways of conceptualising the demands of a problem, for example, the shift between seeing a problem as an abstract versus a practical problem. This is a major paradigm –level, philosophical or epistemological shift.

2: Problem definition: Compared to operation 1, a relatively low level labelling of the problem.

3: Process-product shift: Developing both a general process that would fit most problems like this but that provides no concrete answer to this particular problem and a particular answer to this problem.

4: Parameter setting: Naming key variables that are limits to the solution to be created.

5: Pragmatism: Being able to select one of the several created solutions as 'best'.

6: Multiple solutions: Being able to create more than one ' correct solution.

7: Multiple goals: Giving several points, each of which, when arrived at, would mean the problem is 'solved'.

8: Multiple methods: Giving several ways to reach the same solution.

9: Multiple causality: Considering several causes operating in the problem.

10: Paradox: Statements that indicate that the solver sees inherent contradiction in reality.

11: Self-referential thought: Statement of respondent's awareness of being the only ultimate judge of the appropriateness of a chosen logic; a logic which is then used to create a preferred solution.

An example of postformal thought in action in relation to this study might be when:

> A trainee teacher must decide at a given point which teaching approach or method they intend on using, and must make a commitment to that approach or method; working within it, knowing all along that another approach or method is equally valid, though not perhaps as equally valid in that particular context.

Another example would be:

> As a trainee teacher you have to teach a particular class the following day and you know from experience you have had good and difficult lessons with them. You can go into the class expecting the best or the worst to happen during the lesson- knowing that this experience is partly up to you. If you expect the worst then your interactions with the class will probably lead to difficulties and confrontations. If you expect the best your interactions will be more likely to lead to a happier and better lesson. You yourself help decide the 'truth' of your interactions with the class and 'knowing' this is how it works, (adapted from Sinnott, 1998:24-25).

However Brookfield (2000a) suggests that logic that is practical doesn't follow formal rules of deductive reasoning but is seen as being experiential and inferential. In terms of capability Eraut (1994) considers that it is the personal knowledge that a person brings with them to new situations that enables them to think and act effectively in those situations. The evidence for this type of practical knowledge comes mainly from observations of practice and is usually acquired according to Eraut (1994) through a mixture of:

- published knowledge ready for use
- knowledge acquired through acculturation
- knowledge constructed from experience, social interaction and reflection
- skills developed through practice with feedback
- episodes, impressions and images that provide the foundations for informal knowledge

This links with the concept of practical theorising put forward by Usher and Bryant (1989) who focused on how informally developed theories guide practice. They argue that whilst actions taken by practitioners often appear instinctual they can be seen to be 'embedded in assumptions, readings and interpretations' which have developed over a period of time. They observed that it was through discussion in informal peer groups together with critical reviewing of their experiences, that adult practitioners developed a greater awareness and understanding of their own emerging theories aligned to formal theories of practice.

The capacity of learning to learn
The ability of adults to learn how to learn is consider to be an important aspect of adult education; particularly the focus on becoming skilled at learning in a range of different situations and through different approaches. Smith (1990) considers that

learning to learn or meta-cognition, as it is sometimes called, is an important intellectual activity but one that is not clearly defined. In general terms cognition refers to 'knowing' and meta-cognition refers to 'knowing about knowing'. The process of meta-cognition involves us as adults in developing clearer ideas of ourselves as learners; in how to develop strategies that allow us to recognise and organise information; and in how to monitor our progress and to remember. Baker and Brown (1984) highlighted two different aspects of meta-cognition; the first being personal knowledge and beliefs about cognition itself and the second is the process of regulating and controlling cognitive activity. These two skills of meta-cognition enable us as individuals to monitor our progress and the effectiveness of our efforts. However it is through meta-cognitive knowledge that we gain the ability to organise relevant information through identifying specific strategies and memory processes for different purposes that make it easier to learn.

Kitchener and King (1990) from their work on young adults, emphasize that learning to learn involves an epistemological awareness; meaning that adults possess a self-conscious awareness of how it is they come to know what they know; combined with an awareness of the reasoning, assumptions, evidence and justifications that underlie the belief that something is true. Hofer (2008) identifies that what has been called 'personal epistemology, ways of knowing, or epistemic cognition' is activated as we engage in learning and knowing. She clarifies that 'epistemology' is concerned with 'the origin , nature, limits and methods and justification of human knowledge'; whereas the term 'epistemic' relates to 'knowledge generally and to the conditions for acquiring it'. From an educational perspective the main focus of personal epistemology or epistemic cognition is seen as being related to:

> how the individual develops conceptions of knowledge and knowing and utilizes them in developing an understanding of the world. This includes beliefs about the definition of knowledge, how knowledge is constructed, how knowledge is evaluated, where knowledge resides and how knowing occurs.
>
> (Hofer, 2008:3-4)

There are clear links here to Sinnott's (1998) work and in particular to the stage of self-referential thought which is essential to postformal thought.

The capacity for critical reflection

It has been argued that to think critically is one of the most significant activities of adult life; and one which is important for adult lives and adult learning. Brookfield (1987:24) identifies that critical thinking often begins when as adults we perceive a contradiction between 'how the world is supposed to work and our own experiences of reality'. In Brookfield's (1987) view there are four components of critical thinking; the first component being about identifying and challenging assumptions which is central to critical thinking; and relates to the process of examining the accuracy and validity of those assumptions that form our ideas, beliefs, values and actions. The second component focuses on challenging the importance of context which is also seen as crucial to critical thinking; and relates to how we become aware of the way in which hidden and uncritically assimilated assumptions affect our perceptions, interpretation of the world and in turn our behaviours; and also knowing that these reflect the culture and the time in which we live. The third component concerns how critical thinkers try to imagine and explore alternatives; and relates to the capacity to imagine and explore new and alternative ways of thinking and living. Lastly the fourth component considers how imagining and exploring alternatives leads to reflective scepticism; and involves us in realising that there are alternatives and that belief systems, social systems and our own habitual behaviours are not actually fixed and immutable. At this stage and by questioning the status quo adults have now become more sceptical of claims to universal truths and the answer to life's problems. The outcome being that through critical thinking adult learners develop a better understanding of their own decision-making processes.

The process of becoming critical in Brookfield's view involves adult learners moving between different modes of thinking and knowing; some of which entail the use of practical logic. Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck (1994) argue that the process of critical enquiry needs to be reflexive and responsive to the needs of the learner and the context of their work. They state that this critical stance needs to encompass 'the social, moral and political context of that practice'; which in some instances will no doubt raise dilemmas for which transformational solutions must be found. Edwards *et al.* (2002:527) considers reflexivity as 'the capacity to develop critical awareness of the assumptions that underlies practice'. Brookfield's (1995) earlier work confirms this view and he points out that reflection only becomes critical through questioning previously held assumptions and practices.

The Context of Professional Change in Teacher Training:

It is against this background of changes and developments in adult education and learning that attention is now directed to the most recent professional changes in teacher training in the further education sector; and the significant issues arising from the professionalisation of that sector by the government and LLUK. In terms of this study these developments provided the catalyst for an educational intervention to promote a transformative learning environment; one which provided the basis for the biographical study of the three trainee teachers.

It was in the late 1980s that government policy increasingly reflected what Tapper and Salter (1978) called the economic ideology of education, and further education became more producer - dominated (Maclure, 1989). Nonetheless it was the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act which eventually and irrevocably changed the status of further education and sixth form colleges. Smithers and Robinson (2000:183-199) noted that the 1988 Education Reform Act was significant for further education in three main ways as:

- it confirmed that they were a separate sector from the polytechnics and major colleges of higher education
- FE was defined as excluding higher education and more clearly linked with what had been previously been regarded as adult education. The Act defined the legislative basis of further and higher education and the legal obligation of local authorities to provide further education was restated and clarified.
- it introduced changes to the funding and governance of colleges, delegating greater powers to their governing bodies- but at the same time local authorities no longer had a majority- but were expected to produce schemes of financial delegation to manage colleges to be more market – orientated, entrepreneurial and efficient.

Traditionally the further education sector recruited teaching staff from industry and placed a higher value on experience and professional qualifications rather than teaching qualifications. Although initial teacher training for the further education sector was seen as desirable by colleges there had been very little interest or concern over the actual nature of teacher training for this sector (Green and Lucas, 1999). Robson (2006:4) identified that further education colleges were seen as the providers of vocational education; and this accounted for its low status in a culture that favours the academic over the vocational (Raggat and Williams, 1999). The further education sector was referred to by Kenneth Baker as 'the Cinderella service' which

'encapsulated the prevalent view that the college was the inferior and much neglected sibling of the university and the school' (Piatt and Smithers, 2001). Hudderstone and Unwin, (1997) identified that this view was a factor in the lack of investment in the professional development of teachers in this sector; and the reason why the sector as a whole had become a strange mismatch of different approaches and philosophies. The publication and the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, encouraged further education colleges to offer teacher training qualifications to both full and part-time staff. Although there were further developments leading to part-time Graduate and Post-Graduate Certificate in Education level courses, it wasn't until later in 2000, that universities and higher education institutions were given permission to offer full-time undergraduate and postgraduate teacher training courses. This type of full-time course had previously been the domain of three or four teacher training colleges and higher education institutions. However there were still notable inconsistencies and anomalies within the range and the levels of qualifications offered at this time; and the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) was set up to develop national standards for the initial and in-service and qualification of teachers in the further education sector. The FENTO Standards were published in 1999; and from 2001 all teacher training programmes for the sector, provided by universities, colleges and national awarding bodies were required to be endorsed by FENTO as conforming to the standards.

The step-change in professional standards and qualifications

In November 2003, this sector of 'workforce development' became the subject of particular scrutiny following a DfES consultation document, 'The future of initial teacher education for the learning and skills sector: An Agenda for Reform' (DfES 2003). There was a response by FENTO to this consultation document in the form of a position paper called, 'Wider sector: wider perspectives – Securing an initial teacher education framework to underpin effective teaching' (FENTO January 2004). The paper called for support for a more radical step-change in teacher training and professional development. The suggestion was that the step-change would involve a move to a two-stage level of qualification, and would incorporate two phases; a period leading to an endorsed teaching qualification plus a period of workplace development. The overall vision for this step-change was to ensure that all learners are taught by appropriately qualified and skilled teachers able to deliver 'good, imaginative, modern

and relevant' teaching that promotes personalised learning. However FENTO were taken over in 2005 by Lifelong Learning UK and its verification arm Standards Verification UK and revised professional standards were developed for the sector. The DfES (2004) took up the proposals for a step-change identified in the paper and this was finally put into place in September 2007.

Anther aspect of the step-change involved a move to a professionalisation of the sector and the identification of a new teaching qualification called Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS); which was anticipated to be equivalent to the schools Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) qualification. These new professional standards (see below), were specifically designed for teacher, tutors and trainers in what was now termed 'the lifelong learning sector'; and covered six specific domain areas that were underpinned by professional values, professional knowledge and understanding and professional practice.

New Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector	
Domain A: Professional values and Practice	Domain D: Planning for learning
Domain B: Learning and teaching	Domain E: Assessment for learning
Domain C: Specialist learning and teaching	Domain F: Access and progression

Further information on the structure of these domains can be seen at www.lluk.org.uk and in the Appendices.

The content of teacher training programmes for further education teachers had not altered or changed radically over the last twenty years; however the new professional standards introduced a much stronger focus on the role of the teacher in facilitating learning and providing learning support for students. Nonetheless there was concern amongst many teacher trainers and educators who disliked LLUK's techno-rational approach to learning. This resulted in considerable debate over how and in what way these standards would change how teacher training courses were taught; together with the effect this would have on the development of personal and professional roles, (Moon 2004, Boyd and Fayles 1983, Jarvis 1992, Schon 1993). However Robson (2006) identified that one of the reasons for including an aspect of competence-based components in teacher training programmes was to ensure that trainee teachers had

some experience of the type of programmes that they would undoubtedly be teaching themselves. She also noted that as long as there were sufficient 'opportunities for reflection, critique and discussion about experience' many teacher educators were prepared to 'promote the use of competence –based assessment'; despite the fact that they considered them as being 'too mechanistic and an inappropriate emphasis on observable behaviour' (Robson, 2006:38).

It was this step-change in the teacher training agenda, which provided the catalyst and the opportunity for me to promote transformative education in the pre-service course. Course leaders have a certain amount of autonomy over the planning, organisation and development of these courses and this allowed me to embed a transformative learning environment; one which incorporated a central core of adult learning and was focused on the capacity for dialectical thinking, practical logic, learning to learn, and critical reflection.

Chapter 3: Transitions and Transformations

This chapter develops the focus on adult learning through considering the concepts and theoretical basis of transformative learning (Mezirow 1991, 2000, 2003, 2009) in the field of adult education. A key concept in Mezirow's (1991) theory is how critical reflection triggers transformative learning. To understand this concept the transition from reflection to critical reflection is reviewed through Dewey's (1933) theory and ideas; as these provide an understanding of 'reflective practice' and the process of becoming a 'reflective practitioner'. The key aspects of transformative learning and the process of perspective transformation are then examined through four theoretical perspectives of transformative learning; Mezirow's theory being the one chosen for this study it is therefore considered in greater depth.

The transition from reflective practice to critical reflection

Contemporary educational ideas relating to reflective practice can be traced back to Dewey's (1933:118) definition of reflective thought as:

> … an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form and knowledge in the light of the grounds that it supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends.

Dewey (1933:118) also expressed the view that the 'human being is a social being from the start' and that 'the collection of meanings that constitute the mind have a social origin'; therefore individual satisfaction and achievement could only be realised in the context of social habits and a supportive working experience. The learning process for him was an activity that involved a 'continual reorganisation and a reconstruction and transformation of experience' (Dewey, 1961:50); and the value of a person's experience was in their perception of relationships and links between events. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) supported his view that the basis of reflective thinking arose out of personal experiences which were also linked to problem-solving. Although Dewey viewed reflective practice more as an individual process, he also noted that this involved a person's immediate society, their experiences and environment. He contrasts the process of 'routine action' and 'reflective action'; defining 'routine action' as guided by factors such as 'tradition, habit and authority and by institutional definitions and expectations' and therefore

tending to be both static and unresponsive to changing priorities and circumstances (Pollard and Tann, 1995:8-9). Boyd and Fales (1983:100) though define reflection as the 'process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective'.

Dewey was clear that there needed to be a process of 'reflective action' which involved 'a greater willingness to engage in constant self-appraisal and development' to move out of the condition of 'routine action'. Both learning and the educational process itself are seen as one of 'a continual re-organisation, re-construction and transformation of experience' and that 'the value of experience lies in the perception of relationships or continuities among events' (Dewey, 1961:50).

The theoretical description of reflective thinking, resulted from Dewey's (1933:199-209) links with behaviourism, and focused on an identification of five phases of thinking. These related to: a 'real problem' that arose out of present experiences; the generation of suggestions for a possible solution; the intellectualization of difficulty or perplexity felt; and the collection of relevant data and a hypothesis formed, which was then acted upon and finally tested. However ccriticism of Dewey's work included the view that he did not have a real grasp of reflection as an interactive and dialogical process; and that there was 'a lack of attention to the ways in which people's sense of self, their frames of reference are formed in dialogue with others'.

The move from reflection to critical reflection

Bolton (2005) argues that reflective practice can only be learnt and developed through the examining of our experiences, through considering the perceptions of others, and through open discussion with peers in relating practice to theory and in clarifying relevant issues. Robson (2006) in addition is concerned that reflective practice in post-compulsory education is in danger of becoming meaningless; partly due to a lack of clarity about its 'underpinning values and purpose', and partly because reflection itself does not have to be critical. There has also been considerable debate concerning Schon's (1983) approach to reflective thinking as he has effectively taken the role of theory out of professional practice and focused instead on intuitive and personal reflection. Stressing the importance of an awareness of 'context', Boud and Walker

(2002) highlight the need to 'foster appropriate conditions' for reflection. These conditions in their view need to include, building trust and creating situations in which students are able to make their own meaning rather than having it imposed on them.

Jarvis (1992:180) considers reflective practice to be more than just 'thoughtful practice' and more as a 'form of practice that seeks to 'problematise' many situations of professional performance so that they can become potential learning situations'. He argues that it is only through a 'critically reflective' process that practitioners can 'learn, grow and develop'. However research by Boyd and Fayles (1983:100) considered critical reflection to be the difference between:

> Whether a person repeats the same experiences several times becoming highly proficient at one behaviour, or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is 'cognitively and affectively changed.

Fook (2006) takes this view further and argues that the reflective process in professional learning must involve 'an examination of the assumptions implicit in practices'; and considers that there are two main understandings of what distinguishes reflection and critical reflection. The first of these understandings is linked to the focus on the concept of critical being the 'unearthing of deeper assumptions or presuppositions' (Mezirow,1991:12) where as Cranton (1996:70-80) considers 'critical in this sense is about the ability to be transformative … and lead to some fundamental change in perspective'. The second of these understandings relates to how reflection becomes critical 'because of its focus on power' (Brookfield, 1995:6) and then becomes transformative because it focuses on the 'dominant or hegemonic assumptions', which may then influence our practice unconsciously, (Brookfield, 2000b:126).

Fook (2006:4) argues that by viewing the process of critical reflection in this way encourages 'an understanding of the way (socially dominant) assumptions' may be seen as restrictive and thereby opens the way for ' ... more empowering ideas and practices'. Mezirow (1991:369) over a decade earlier pointed out how critical reflection teaches the skill of divergence; 'opening ourselves up to the ideas of others, especially when these people provide a new angle of vision'.

Cranton (1994:48) identifies three types of reflection which are an essential part of the transformation process; and which are concerned with asking the question why, and considering the reasons for and the consequences of what we do:

- Content reflection: an examination of the content or description of a problem
- Process reflection: involving checking on the problem;
- Premise reflection: where individuals may question the relevance of the problem itself; the assumptions, beliefs, or values underlying the problem are questioned; or may reflect on the content or description of a problem.

Whilst Mezirow highlights the rationality of reflective learning, Brookfield (2000a) has identified the importance of understanding critical reflection as an emotive as well as cognitive process; and has also raised concern over the fact that there are so few detailed studies on the emotional dimensions of adult learning. This concern focuses on his view that the personal voice and the subjective experience of the student is often absent in studies of adult learning, a factor I seek to avoid in this research.

Four key theoretical perspectives of transformative learning

Transformative learning is often seen as a complicated idea but one nonetheless that offers considerable theoretical, practical and ethical challenges, in terms of what it means in practice. And whilst the theory of transformative learning has deepened our understanding of what it means to learn in adulthood, according to Dirkx (1998) the implementation within formal learning settings depends greatly on which of the theoretical perspectives of transformative learning is chosen by educators. The argument being that transformative educators are guided by different assumptions about the aim and processes of adult learning; and their approach to teaching and learning depends on the theories held about transformative learning.

In order to gain a greater understanding of transformative learning theories, four key theoretical perspectives that address both the socio-cultural and personal dimensions of transformative learning, are explored and critiqued. These are Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of transformative learning known as conscientization or consciousness-raising; Robert Boyd's ideas of transformative learning which are embedded within transformative education (Boyd & Myers, 1988); Larry Daloz (1986) whose perspective provides a central or organizing framework for understanding

transformative learning as developmental growth; and lastly the work of Jack Mezirow (1991) whose theory of transformative learning is grounded in both cognitive and developmental psychology.

Paulo Freire's (1970) approach to transformative learning is both emancipatory and liberating. His theory of critical consciousness refers to a process where learners develop the ability to analyze, pose questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts influencing and shaping their lives. Accordingly it is through this process of dialogue and problem-posing that learners develop a greater awareness of social inequality and oppression. Only through action and reflection in transactional or dialectical relationship with each other (praxis) and on their world, will learners be able to find the freedom for social change (Dirkx, 1998).

However the work of Robert Boyd (1991; Boyd and Myers, 1988) takes quite a different developmental perspective and is focused on the facilitation of personal transformation through 'transformative education' (Boyd and Myers, 1988). Boyd and Myer's work links closely to depth psychology and highlights the importance of consciousness in adult learning. Boyd's (1991) interest lies in the relationship of the expressive or emotional-spiritual dimensions of learning and how these can be interwoven both 'holistically and consciously within our daily experience of life'.

Other researchers have also focused specifically on depth psychology and the imaginative and spiritual aspects of transformative learning. Scott's (1997) work for example relates to personal transformation in terms of the feelings and sense of loss and grief that learners sometimes experience; whereas Nelson (1997) through his view of transformative learning as autobiography suggests that learners interpret their life story not only within the social context but through the use of imagination and critical reflection.

Larry Daloz's (1986) perspective provides a central or organizing framework for understanding transformative learning as growth. His theory of transformative learning relies on constructivist views of knowledge and learning; but it is seen as relating more to holistic and intuitive processes rather than rational, reflective practice. Daloz (1986) considers that one of the key factors that motivate adults to

experience formal learning is a need to find and construct meaning within their lives. Adults who participate in formal learning experiences are considered to be in-between phases of development, where the meaning structures of the old phase are no longer seen as relevant to their life experiences. Dirkx (1998) identifies that Daloz's theory is based around the movement into new developmental phases that require the adult learner to construct new meaning structures which allow them to make sense of their changing world. In so doing, adult learners are able to replace old ways of making sense of their lives and their sense of self, with a new construction of self. For Daloz it is the formal educational experiences which are viewed as playing a critical role in helping adults recognize this process of construction and meaning making. Interestingly his work is focused primarily within the context of the adult learner who is returning to higher education to complete undergraduate degrees. He takes a developmental view of growth and transformation that is similar to Mezirow's (1991) work; both of which are influenced by the socio-cultural context of an adult learner's educational experience.

The last focus on transformative learning theory is the work of Jack Mezirow who identifies the process by which we 'transform problematic frames of reference' i.e. mindsets, habits of mind and meaning perspectives- sets of assumptions and expectations- and in the process 'make them more inclusive, discriminating open, reflective and emotionally able to change'(Mezirow, 2004:26) .

It is Mezirow's theory of transformative learning that forms the underpinning theory for the curriculum change I undertook in the pre-service course; and also forms the basis for the research study and the analysis of data.

Mezirow (1991) views transformative learning as a psychological and cognitive approach to development; involving adults in a continuous journey toward increasingly complex levels of development. His approach is one in which adult learners interact with their environment and actively construct knowledge as opposed to responding to existing knowledge. Dirkx (1998) notes that in Mezirow's theory of transformative learning the core of the learning process itself is through a 'process of reflecting rationally and critically on one's assumptions and beliefs'. His view of rationality has more recently been contested and has been the subject of further

research specifically into the more emotional and spiritual areas of transformative learning.

The basis for Mezirow's theory of transformation learning evolved out of a comprehensive national study in 1978, of 'consciousness raising' to explain the unprecedented expansion in the number of women returning to higher education in the United States. From this study, Mezirow (2000:22) identified the following ten phases of learning as being involved in the transformative process:

1. A disorientating dilemma
2. Self-examination; with feelings of fear, anger, guilt and shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan
8. Provisionally trying out of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

These ten phases clearly define the process of how an individual moves to the level of transformative learning through ' disorienting dilemmas' which can be triggered by a life crisis, or a major life transition or even an accumulation of new transformations in their meaning schemes over a period of time. These dilemmas then prompting critical reflection and the development of new and different ways in which experiences are interpreted.

Mezirow's transformative learning theory is based on Habermas's (1984) fundamental distinction between instrumental and communicative learning. Instrumental learning involves task-orientated problem -solving i.e. how to do something or how to perform something; and reflection which involves looking at the content or procedural assumptions that guided the problem-solving process and also the effectiveness of the strategies and tactics used. Whereas communicative learning involves the process of critical reflection and dialogue and these combine together in the process of interpretation and understanding of what is meant by another through speech, writing, drama, art or dance (Mezirow, 1990). These processes involve incorporating the unfamiliar into existing meaning schemes and often involve collecting additional data

or comparing incidents and key concepts. This new information is then assimilated into existing schemas or accommodated into new meaning schemes; and finally incorporated into the learner's biography to be utilised in future experiences (Jarvis, 2009). It is this process that Mezirow describes as a 'continual move back and forth between the parts and the whole' and which follows the process often described as the hermeneutic circle.

In his article Contemporary Paradigms of Learning, Mezirow (1996:158- 173) identifies transformation theory as an evolving theory of adult learning; one which is a reconstructive theory; and one which explains the generic structure, dimensions and dynamics of the learning process. This is summarized below and identified through twelve key propositions:

1: A learning theory framed as a general abstract and idealized model, used to explain generic structure, dimensions and dynamics of the process of learning can be useful to action –orientated adult educators. A learning theory that is grounded in the nature of human communication and one which seeks agreement on our interpretations and beliefs and is central to human communication and the learning process.

2. Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future actions.

3. Making meaning by projecting images, symbolic models and meaning schemes based upon prior learning, onto our sensory experiences and imaginatively use analogies to interpret new experiences.

4. Construal of meaning may be intentional, propositional (unintentional, incidental) or presentational (without the use of words as when we discern or intuit presence, motion, directionality, kinesthetic experience and feelings).

5. Sense perceptions which are filtered through a frame of reference which selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition and feelings by predisposing our intentions, expectations and purposes.

6. A frame of reference is composed of two dimensions: a meaning perspective (habits of mind) consisting of broad, generalised, orienting predispositions; and a meaning scheme which is constituted by the cluster of specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes and value judgments that accompany and shape an interpretation. A more

fully developed frame of reference is one that is more inclusive; differentiating; permeable; critically reflective and integrative of experience.

7. A belief is a habit that guides action. Any action guided by a belief is also a test of that belief. When the actions dictated by beliefs (and the interpretations of them) fail in practice or become problematic through changing circumstances, our frames of reference may be transformed through critical reflection on their assumptions. Seeking agreement on our interpretations and beliefs and the possibility and potential of critical reflection are cardinal concepts in adult learning processes.

8. Learning occurs by elaborating existing meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes or transforming meaning perspectives. The most personally significant transformations involve a critique of premise regarding one's self.

9. There are two distinctive domains of learning with different purposes; logics of inquiry and modes of validating beliefs: involving instrumental learning i.e. learning to control and manipulate the environment or other people, and communicative learning i.e. learning what others mean when they communicate with you, (Habermas, 1984).

10. Establishing the validity of problematic beliefs in instrumental learning by empirically testing to determine the truth - that an assertion is as it purports to be. In communicative learning, we determine the justification of a problematic belief through appeal to tradition, authority or force, or rational discourse. Discourse involves an informed, objective, rational and intuitive assessment of reasons, evidence and arguments and leads towards a tentative, consensual, best judgment. Consensus building is an ongoing process and always subject to review by a broader group of participants.

11. Taking action on reflective insights often involves situational, emotional and informational constraints that often require new learning experiences. Transformative learning experiences therefore require that the learner makes an informed and reflective decision to act. This decision to act, may result in immediate action, delayed action caused by situational constraints or lack of information on how to act, or result in a reasoned reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action.

12. Development in adulthood is understood as a learning process. Instrumental competence in coping with the external world involves attainment of task- oriented performance skills that may involve reflective problem- solving and sometimes

problem posing. Communicative competence is the ability of the learner to negotiate his or her own purposes, values, and meanings rather than to simply accept those of others. A learner may acquire communicative competence by becoming more aware and critically reflective of assumptions, more able to freely and fully participate in discourse and to overcome constraints to taking reflective action.

Transformative learning according to Mezirow (1991, 1995, 1996; Cranton, 1994, 1996) is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Adults are seen as having acquired a coherent body of experience during their lives in terms of associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned response; and these become the frames of reference that define their life world. These frames of reference become the structures of assumptions, i.e. socially developed codes that involve our educational, political, religious, and psychological beliefs; and allow us as adults to understand our experiences; and which selectively shape and delimit our expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. They are also viewed as developing semi-automatically, in the move from one activity to another, either mentally or behaviourally; and during that process those ideas that are unfamiliar and fail to fit with our preconceptions are rejected. Habits of mind are linked to our habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting and are influenced by assumptions; which are influenced through attitudes, feelings and memories and shape the way we interpret experiences.

The principles here are that there is an inherent logic, ideal, and purpose in the process of transformative learning; one which involves transforming one's frame of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, reviewing one's beliefs through discourse and communicative learning, and through taking action on one's new perspective and insight and critically assessing it.

For Mezirow (1997:11) and for me, this understanding of the nature of significant adult learning provides the educator with 'a rationale for selecting appropriate educational practices and actively resisting social and cultural forces that distort and delimit adult learning'.

Chapter 4: A Biographical Research Approach

This chapter focuses on the interpretation of both biographical and autobiographical research approaches. In doing so autobiographical, life history and narrative methods are critically reviewed; together with issues arising from qualitative research and data collection methods and the relationship between hermeneutics and biography. Data analysis is clarified together and a rationale for choosing a semi-structured and focused interview approach is provided.

Biographical research

Biographical research can be seen as focusing on 'individuals as creators of meaning'; and views researchers as seeking to understand not only what is seen as important to individuals, but also how best to provide coherent interpretations of their stories and life experiences within their socio-cultural history' (Roberts, 2002:6-7). Reinhartz (1992) has raised concerns over the differing use of terms i.e oral history, personal narrative biography and autobiography- and their interchangeable use. Denzin (1989:7) usefully provides some clarification in identifying that the

> … subject matter of the biographical method is the life experience
> of a person. When written in the first person it is called an autobiography,
> life-story or life-history. When written by another person observing
> the life in question it is called a biography.

Denzin (1989:7) further identifies the biographical method as being concerned with 'the studied use and collection of life documents' that are linked to 'turning-point moments in the lives of individuals'. Roberts (2002:6) endorses the view that:

> The study of biographical research rests on a view of individuals
> as creators of meaning which form the basis of their everyday
> lives. Individuals act according to meanings through which they
> make sense of social existence.

Abbs (1974:7-8) however talks about the central concerns of autobiography as the development of the author's experience but also extends the discussion through links to individual memory time and historicity. He highlights how in autobiographical writing the experiences in the past become the present and the present become the future commenting:

> At the same time … I have described autobiography as being
> poised for flight into the future. It may have struck the reader as
> strange to stress the future tense in a form of writing which is

> palpably preoccupied with the past. And yet in the conclusion to
> autobiography one is invariably aware of this submerged concern
> with the immediate future boldly surfacing.

One of the key aspects for Abbs is the relationship between tutor and student and he highlights the emotional dilemmas and anxieties linked to the writing process. The fact that this process is seen as problematic can be placed in the context of reflexivity in terms of reflecting critically on the self as researcher. This aspect is picked up later in Chapter 5 in the comments on the autobiographical narratives of the trainees and in Chapter 6 through the theoretical analysis of the trainees' voices as adult learners. Reason and Rowan (1981) focus on the problematics of reflexivity in terms of how one becomes 'critically subjective'. Guba & Lincoln (1981:183) clarified this as a conscious experiencing of

> the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as
> the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself.

Bruner (1995) though focuses on the post-modern problem and process of clarifying what is the 'self', what is 'reality', and what is 'fiction'. He identifies how we make the 'self'' through our lived experiences whilst constrained by our own circumstances and history; and he links these processes to the development of a new constructivist psychology. In his view it is through the 're-writing of the self' not only as an interpretive approach but also as a re-collective one that enables us to generate self-understanding in terms of contemporary society. In terms of personal narratives, Plummer (1995:174) identifies that 'stories' have a tendency to gather people around them 'dialectically connecting both people and social movements'. And Schwartz (1999) who examined the ages at which we recall episodes in our lives concluded that biographical memory was better understood as being part of a social process and that as and when we start looking back we have a tendency to find ourselves remembering our lives more in terms of our experiences with other people.

The problematic of narrative

A key debate in the study of lives is that between realism versus constructivism; where realism considers that there is some objective knowledge of reality and where constructivism focuses on a narrative story where interpretation is shaped by the process of writing; and the analysis of narrative methods. There has also been

considerable discussion around 'life story accounts' which have focused on whether these should follow recognised qualitative research approaches; or develop and apply their own qualitative principles. Muller (1999:223) stresses that the idea of narrative '… is firmly grounded in qualitative traditions and stresses the 'lived experiences' of individuals' but at the same time highlighting 'the importance of multiple – perspectives, together with the existence of context-bound constructed social realities'. LaBoskey and Cline (2000:369) in providing support for the application of a narrative and storied approach in teacher training, highlight Van Manen's view of biographic approaches as encouraging new teachers to develop their `teacher personal identities' in that:

> Self-knowledge is related to the search for one's own life-story.
> Thus, by engaging in such narrative 'theorizing' teachers may further
> discover and shape their personal pedagogical identity, and through such
> stories they can give account of the way they have developed over time
> into the kind of persons they are now.

> (Van Manen, 1992:27).

There is also a view that narrative must also be 'told' and Sachs (1972, cited in Rosen, 1987:14) emphasizes that the telling is both a social act and a kind of performance. From an educational viewpoint such an approach is supported by Erben (2000), who advocates the importance of narrative for an understanding of selves.

Temple (1994:33) discusses Stanley's (1992) work on the 'autobiographical I' and explores:

> The interrelations between the researcher's own life autobiography
> and the biography of the researched subject. … and the complexity of
> experience, how the researcher and the researched influence each other
> and collate in biographical exchange.

This view mirrors this biographical study where the lived experiences, epiphanies and actions of the pre-service trainees during their course becomes 'the narrative'; which is then selected and interpreted by me to develop further meaning out of the complex nature of their experiences.

The relationship between Hermeneutics and Biography

Hermeneutics can be thought of as a method of textual analysis incorporating both socio-cultural and historical influence; as a theory or practice of the interpretation of texts i.e. biblical and religious texts; and as a process which enables us to return to a text and reconsider the social and historical influences involved and devise a new interpretation. This method of textual analysis enables a better understanding of the thinking process and the act of thought behind the production of the text.

Schleiermacher (1998) highlighted the need to understand both the individual writer's perspective and the culture of their language; and raised awareness that each form of interpretation is quite distinct and therefore excludes the other. He also argued that if during the process of interpretation the focus was far stronger on one aspect only, then the richness of both the 'objectivity' and the 'subjectivity' within the text would be missed. However it was Dilthey whose hermeneutical formula which encompassed experience, expression and understanding changed the focus of interpretation from 'not *what* a text says but *who* says it'; and from 'an interpretation of language to an interpretation of lived experience', (Thompson, 1981b:52). By developing a greater sense of 'universality' Dilthey had changed the central focus of hermeneutics away from an epistemological basis to an ontological basis. A crucial aspect of this move was the concept of 'inter-subjectivity' which allowed for and incorporated the sharing of a common world. The concepts of life and a lived experience and the understanding (Verstehen) of life-experiences are central to Dilthey's world. The importance of autobiography for Dilthey is that it is an extension of ordinary conceptions and mental activities. In relation to autobiography he stresses the fact that the person who understands it (the life) is the same person who created it. His argument here is that all lives are lived autobiographically, whether or not they are written down as formal documents, as he views autobiography as the understanding of oneself. It has been argued that an autobiographer is in some way driven by an inner compulsion to write about the self, and that the autobiographical act needs to involve a degree of difficulty both in the grasping of and in the communicating with the self.

Heidegger (1962) introduced the idea of 'a fundamental historicality' into the hermeneutic process by acknowledging that "being is itself time" and thereby allowing history to become a productive force in understanding rather than a

problematic obstacle. Heidegger's work moved his hermeneutic interpretation towards what he termed a more 'fundamental ontology'. This approach focuses on our way and knowledge of 'being in the world' rather than our 'knowledge about the world' (Thompson, 1981a:40). Heidegger (1962) argued that we always came to the interpretation of a text with an aspect of prior knowledge-a priori knowledge- and it is through this knowledge process that we develop our understanding, rather than through the 'signification of the text' or by trying to find out the thinking process of the author.

In any discussion of biographical research a clarification of the competing terms of 'being' (ontology) and of 'knowledge' (epistemology) is essential and the following discussion shows how these competing terms have implications not only for the research approach taken but also for the choice of research methods. Polyani's work (1996) draws on and explores the relationship between epistemology and ontology: knowing and being. Polyani (1996) places 'being' first and gives it more importance than 'knowing'. She argues that the lived life comes first and knowledge or wisdom that one acquires is a secondary product of the primary process of living. Epistemology has traditionally been concerned with different kinds of knowledge claims and specifically with the criteria that allows distinctions between 'knowledge' and non-knowledge' to be made (Scott and Usher, 1996:11). In research terms a positivist/empiricist epistemology is primarily concerned with the 'objectivity' gained through a systematic gathering and analysing of data; and in social and educational research is still considered by many to be the most influential. This does mean though that the researcher is seen as separate to the subject that is being researched. Ontology though has traditionally been focused on what exists, what is reality and what is the nature of the world. Discussions are related to whether knowledge is external and can be acquired or whether it is internal and has to be personally experienced. Depending on where the researcher places themselves in relation to these two epistemological bases, will affect the research approach adopted and the questions asked.

Implications of the biographical method
Denzin (1989:47) summarized the key concepts and terms used in defining the biographical method through the identification of twenty-six terms and methods. To cover all of these is not within the scope of this study; nonetheless I have identified

five below which are particularly relevant to my study, and now discuss them in detail. This approach provides an insight into the method, the key features and forms and meaning of this biographical study.

Term / Method	Key Features	Forms/ Variations
1: Method	A way of knowing	Subjective/Objective
2: Life Period of existence;	Partial/complete/edited lived experiences public/private	
3: Self	Ideas, images and thoughts of self	Self stories, auto- biographies
4: Experiences	Confronting and passing events	Problematic, routine through ritual
5: Epiphany	Moment of revelation in a life	Major, minor, relived illuminative

(Denzin, 1989:47-88)

The first term 'method' is one which Denzin describes as a 'way of knowing about the world' and which is gained through our own personal experiences and through drawing on other people's experiences. This knowledge allows us to develop a greater awareness and understanding of 'particular phenomenon'. Denzin identifies that we develop this knowledge in three ways; subjective, objective and inter-subjective. Subjective knowledge relates to the fact that we are consciously and unconsciously aware of being involved in our own personal experiences; and objective knowledge is concerned with the ability to 'stand outside an experience' and view the process in a less involved and more factual manner. The act of 'inter-subjective knowing' relates to the way in which the biographer and the object of the biography are able to share experiences.

This aspect of 'method' is covered in this biographical study through the following three ways. Firstly a hermeneutical phemenological interpretation of the texts is linked to the trainee's subjective knowledge through the autobiographical narratives of the three trainees. The aspect of objective knowledge is then uncovered through

further analysis of the autobiographies using Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning. Inter-subjective knowing is considered through a focus on the distinctiveness of adult learners; this is achieved by analysing the focused interviews in terms of the trainee's capacity to think dialectically; their capacity to employ practical logic; their capacity to know what we know; and their capacity for critical reasoning. Each aspect links to the way in which I have been able to share these experiences with the trainees through my role as course leader, as a teacher and as a personal tutor on the pre-service course.

The second term 'life' is covered by the context of the lived experiences of the trainees over the duration of an academic year. The lives of the trainees have been contextualised in their autobiographies in terms of: the university where they are viewed as a post-graduate student; their college teaching placements where they are viewed as a trainee teacher and in terms of their own personal lives where they are viewed as part of society.

The third term 'self' is discussed in relation to the five forms of self which are considered to be always present in a biographical text. These have been identified by Denzin (1989:31) as: the phenomenological self, the linguistic self, the self-as-commodity, the self-as-ideological subject, and the self as desire.

> *The phenomenological self is developed in Sullivan's view through experiences, and through a meta-cognition of 'being in the world', as well as through interpersonal relationships (Sullivan 1953 cited in Denzin, 1989:31). This 'self' is experienced by the trainees during the process of critical reflection on practice; through their awareness of the teacher–student relationships that are developed in the college classrooms and through the peer-peer relationships developed at the university.

> *The linguistic self is where Denzin has related this aspect of 'self' to the pronoun I, which he states is empty of meaning, until used by the writer in an autobiographical text. He argues that its use then has significance in terms of having a context, relationships and emotional meanings; 'Its use signifies, *this* person making *this* utterance, *this* claim or this statement'. This 'self' is

embedded throughout the narrative texts of the autobiographies of the trainees which in themselves provide a background context and where they identify their relationship to the college students in the role of trainee teacher; the emotional meanings linked to these experiences are highlighted in the analysis of the three autobiographies and in a discussion of Brookfield's theory of the affective dimensions to adult learning.

*The self as commodity considers the world of the self which in Denzin's view can only be entered through the disclosure of language and through words that already have meaning. It is these which aid the reader in exploring the life and the experiences of the 'self '; and which in an autobiographical context are seen as consisting 'of all a person calls his or hers at a particular moment in time'. This aspect of the 'self' is identified in Dilthey's view of a 'sociology of the individual' which relates to the trainees autobiographies; as their lives, the society they inhabited, the constraints of their gender and their relationships both familial and intimate are bound together in the narration of their stories.

*The ideological self is considered to be the 'imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations in which they live and which govern their existence' (Denzin, 1989:32). This places the self within a cultural and historical frame and within a certain moment in time. The problem of defining where individual choice ends and where society's influence begins, is clarified by Ricoeur's suggestion that they are co-joined and can not be considered as separate. This 'self' relates to that moment in time and place where the trainees were participants in the 'step-change' that resulted in new national standards for teacher training; and their experience of the implementation of a curriculum development involving a transformative learning environment.

*The self as desire, which Lacan (1977) views as having both sexuality and joissance at the centre of this form of self; and that self-identity is constructed in terms of 'sexual contact, desire and sexual activity'. Lindesmith, Strauss and Denzin, (1988:296) have placed the images of the sexual self into three clusters; the 'good sexual me'; the 'bad sexual me' and the 'not sexual me'.

Denzin argues that desire is always within a person's life and appears within the narrative text in the form of family, husband, wife or lover. These aspects of a person's life are clearly apparent in the autobiographies and the references to significant others in the trainees lives; and how they have impacted on their personal and professional development.

The fourth term 'experiences', considers Dilthey's (1988:8) view that 'something new is always coming into sight, displacing what was previously certain and seen'. In their autobiographical stories the trainees identify their educational experiences, and how this affected them prior to coming onto the pre-service course, and reflect on their learning journey during the academic year.

The fifth term 'moments of epiphany' are those interactional moments and experiences which provide both personal and professional insights. These are highlighted within the trainees autobiographies and relate to the key moments of realisation of both personal and professional transformations; to their 'epiphanies' within their experiences of teaching, some of which are instantaneous whilst others build more gradually and more insightfully; and to their experiences of being a trainee and becoming a teacher.

The Hermeneutical Circle

Denzin (1989:28) argues that there is also a need to focus on the meaning and the interpretation rather than merely on biographical method and for this to happen we need to involve the hermeneutical process.

> In biographical terms …the understanding and meaning of lives can in Ricoeurean hermeneutics only be approached through narrative analysis.
>
> (Erben, 1998:160)

The hermeneutical circle of re-examination and re-interpretation of the text is an essential aspect of ensuring a correct interpretation; and enabling in reality a kind of intuitive leap that occurs as one comes to understand how the whole and the parts fits together. Schleiermacher allowed for this experience of a 'dialectic process' where 'a partial understanding is used to understand still further'.

The concept of the hermeneutical circle involves a logical contradiction;

for if we grasp the whole before we can understand the parts then we shall never understand anything. Yet we have asserted that the part derives its meaning from the whole.

(Palmer, 1969: 87)

Usher *et al*. (1997:182) identified that an important characteristic of the hermeneutic circularity of interpretation is that it always takes place against a 'background of assumptions and presuppositions, beliefs and practices, of which both the subjects and objects of research are never fully aware'. They link this to adult education where in the process of negotiating a curriculum, both the learners and the teachers bring with them quite different backgrounds and experiences, which they may not be fully conscious of and which will 'give meaning to and play a vital role in their actions, perceptions and expectation'. This might be seen as posing problems for the researcher as they attempt to be 'objective' in the interpretation of data. However Gadamer argues that we should see them as the essential starting point for acquiring knowledge; by being aware of one's pre-understandings and recognising that they cannot be put aside but at the same time putting them to work. Usher *et al*. (1997:185) sees hermeneutic understanding as a learning experience involving a 'dialogue' between ourselves as researchers and that which we are trying to understand; and notes that the 'dialogue is always ongoing and never complete'.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The terms phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology are often referred to interchangeably, although Allen (1995) describes hermeneutic phenomenology as being focused on the meaning that arises from the interpretive interaction between that of historically produced texts and the reader. However the use of this type of methodology requires the ability to be reflective, insightful, sensitive to language and constantly open to experience (van Manen, 1997); as the process itself is inclined to be more cyclical than linear. Here the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed and set aside but rather embedded and essential to the interpretive process. The researcher needs to give considerable thought to their own experiences and to explicitly identify how and in what way their position or experience relates to the issues being researched. Polkinghorne (1989) observed that the research data gathered in hermeneutical phenomenology needs to include the researcher's own personal

reflections on the topic, as well as information gathered from research participants and depictions of the experience from outside the context of the research project itself.

Three participants selected for this study all have 'lived experiences' that are relevant in context and time; and all have been willing to share their experiences and most importantly they come from diverse backgrounds to ensure rich and varied data in the form of unique stories. The focused interviews established at the outset of the study with each of the participants, were held in an atmosphere of trust and safety and the context of a caring relationship, which according to Polkinghorne (1983) is crucial to this type of exploration.

Interviewing

Interviewing can be thought of as a useful way of discovering 'what the situation looks like from other people's point of view' (Elliot, 1993:80). Cohen and Manion (1989:307) consider the interview process as a 'conversation with a purpose' and one that is 'initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information'. Holstein and Gubrium (1995:1) take a broader view and consider an interview as 'a universal mode of systematic enquiry'. There is also the suggestion that society has now become over- familiar with using the interview process for obtaining information (see Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Silverman, 1993). However Cermier and Cermier (1985) warn that interviews can become a complex process of negotiation fraught with difficulties and liable to break down. Brody (1987:76) also urges that there is a need for interviewers to become more aware of their own meta-cognition during the interview process and identifies this as 'being aware of what is happening and being aware of being aware of what is happening'. Nonetheless Kvale (1983:171) is concerned that the interview although one of the most used methods of gathering data, is also one of the least analysed. Few would dispute though that the interview allows access to information that would otherwise not be accessible and provides a rich source of empirical data.

Newer ways in conducting interviews in this manner are classed as polyphonic interviewing in which the voices of the subjects are recorded and there is minimal influence from the interviewer. This type of interview is better suited to the longer unstructured interviews in which the interviewer uses their personal skills in

responding to the changing interactional situation of the interview process. Although this was an approach that I had considered might be constructive in terms of allowing me greater freedom to explore experiences, critical moments and emotional feelings that might emerge, my main concern was that the process might become too open-ended.

Accordingly a slight variation on this process more along the lines of a semi-structured interview was used, as I felt that it was critical to be as open as possible and only ask a few direct questions. The rationale for this being to stay as close as possible to the trainees' 'lived experiences'; Geertz (1973) described such a move as 'getting at what participants really experienced from the 'inside out' not simulations of what they thought they experienced. This is where my own awareness and understanding of the experiences of the trainees, together with the interactions I had with them during the course of the academic year were so valuable, and contributed to the authenticity of their stories.

Robson's (1993) description of the semi-structured interview allows for more flexibility during the 'interview conversation'; and hence the likelihood of a dialogue ensuing. The format of questions is usually identified prior to the interview, which it was in this study, and more interaction between the interviewer and the participant can be achieved in exploring areas of interest. I found this approach much easier to develop as additional information was more easily obtained through the use of probing questions or leaving questions out as appropriate. This style allowed me as the interviewer, far more freedom to follow a particular train of thought or discussion point which provided additional or more data being collected than anticipated.

The disadvantage in this type of interview is due to a certain lack of standardization; and that unless care is taken when interviewing each person, the interview process may take up more or less time and develop different focii within each one. However there is also an argument that this can be seen as an advantage and would in fact allow the researcher to achieve a greater depth and breadth in the data collected. In this research study as an interviewer my primary interest was in the story that was being told from the participant's perspective. One of the problems I needed to be aware of was that one of the participants may have a 'bee in their bonnet' or a specific bias and

without realising it only focus on that specific issue. Nonetheless it was also important to allow each participant to develop a particular aspect in more detail if that was important for them. Being able to identify the interview focus with each participant beforehand allowed them time to consider responses; and because I knew that each interview would be slightly different I was able to prepare and use further probing questions so as to follow the participant's thoughts and views.

I was keen to ensure a certain level of standardization with the research process, so the questions asked were initially the same for each person (see Appendix D); however I was also able to slightly adjust some of the wording and to probe deeper if further clarification was required. In fact this approach was clearly evident in the transcripts of the interviews; and it was interesting to note how my questioning and probing varied slightly with each interview.

A clear advantage of this type of interview process was that it provided me with two extremely rich areas of data collection; first the ability to focus on the type and style of verbal language used and second the non-verbal behaviour exhibited. This included observation of an open and closed body posture, the mirroring between interviewer and interviewee, the changes in voice tone and the emotionality of facial expressions which can be considered as a form of reciprocal interaction. Goleman (1998) has identified that these behaviours are often unconscious and uncontrolled, as the unconscious episodic and semantic aspects of memory allow for an emotional response almost before a verbal response is made; this process revealing far more to the interviewer than just words alone.

Many of the skills used in interviewing can be linked to those within guidance and counselling in terms of active listening and reflecting; therefore the skilled listener also needs to be an active listener. I attempted to be the latter type of interviewer and 'actively listen'; as well as re-phrasing and responding when necessary to extend the discussion or probe in more depth.

Purposive sampling

For this study the trainees were chosen on the basis of which ones (out of the ten trainees who chose the option of writing an educational autobiography) initially responded to my letter of enquiry; and who were available to be interviewed within the timescale of the research study. Four trainees were originally identified but finally three were selected as being a representative sample from the pre-service course. This was due to the in depth nature of the analysis of the data and the word limit of the study. However the three trainees (2 female and 1 male) chosen came from different educational backgrounds and as will be shown had quite different lived experiences and stories to tell.

Focused Interviews

Focused interviews were held with each of the three trainees at the colleges where they worked; and approximately one hour was allowed for each of the interviews. This ensured that there was a limit to any probing and further questioning which might have altered the original line of questioning. Letters were sent out to each trainee beforehand with a request for permission to use their written autobiographies for data analysis and with a further request to interview them. An outline of the research and the questions that I intended asking at the interview was also included with the letter. The reason for sending the outline of the questions was the time scale of the request. It had been almost a year since the successful completion of the pre-service course and the trainees were now in teaching positions at sixth- form colleges.

Each of the interviews was voice recorded and then transcribed into a hard copy for ease of analysis and to ensure accuracy. This was a preferred method rather than the process of taking copious notes during the interview that would have been quite intrusive. The documentation of the autobiographies had been requested as a hard copy prior to the interview stage; and a request for an email attachment of each of the assignments was also made.

During this research each trainee was given the opportunity to clarify the wording of the questions at the start of the interview. This initial discussion was considered crucial to ensure clarification of the meaning of the questions and to help start a rapport between us. It is also the skill of the interviewer in being able to know when to stick to the research questions and when to improvise and allow changes to be

made as the interview progresses. Rubin and Rubin (1995) highlight not only the importance in developing skills of empathy, sensitivity, humour and sincerity but also how the mood and attitude of the interviewer regarding the interview process can affect the results in a positive or negative way. Interviewers need to have an ability to understand and relate to people, to be interested in what they have to say and what they do as an essential part of developing good interviewing skills. One of the ways of doing this is to be aware of the level and intensity of the questions asked during the opening stage of the interview, during the interview and when closing the interview. I was very much aware that the opening stage is where a rapport is established and where the interviewer can establish their credentials in terms of the current research study. During the interview is where interpersonal skills and active listening skills come into their own; and it was important here for me to be aware of any changes in verbal or non-verbal behaviour.

At the close of the interview process with each trainee teacher, it was crucial for me to ensure that they left the room with a feeling of successful completion and also knowing what happens next in terms of, what I would be doing with the data and when they would be able to see a draft of the report. The last stage then was to write to thank the interviewee for taking part.

Interview Ethics

 It is generally considered that as social researchers we have responsibilities to fulfil in terms of the rights and welfare of the various groups and individuals who are involved in the research process (Holden, 1979). Arksey and Knight (1999) identify that codes of ethics are often very general but do provide a useful practical model which can be applied during the research process.

Key areas for consideration relate to the need to obtain informed consent from the interviewee together with the necessity to protect and safeguard their welfare and rights to privacy and the ensuring and maintaining of confidentiality during and after the research study. In the former it is often a question of whether it would be right or wrong to develop a particular line of questioning.

What can and does happen as an interview progresses is that the interviewee finds themselves becoming more involved in the process, and the questions asked start probing into aspects that they may either prefer not to discuss or may come to regret

answering afterwards. This is why it is important that a draft report is offered to the respondent to comment on; despite the fact that this can sometimes cause problems for the researcher; as the respondent may ask for some of the information to be taken out of the report, thereby affecting the content and depth of the study. Fortunately this did not happen in the three interviews for this study.

Qualitative interviews are intrinsically more difficult for the researcher to keep totally confidential due to the fact that there is a greater complexity of data that is collected through a variety of methods. In this study confidentiality has been kept through not disclosing individual and organisational names and identities, and ensuring that only information that has been consented to is actually used and published.
Being ethical is in essence about being aware of the moral obligations to those who are involved in and are affected by the research project; as both a researcher and an interviewer, it is essential that you establish your own professional integrity (Clarke 2004).

Chapter 5: Autobiographical Stories and Lived Experiences

This chapter focuses on the lived experiences and the autobiographical stories of three trainee teachers. The analysis follows their individual journeys during the pre-service course and focuses on the actual process of transformational learning, highlighting those transformational experiences in their professional life which eventually lead to a greater sense of self-empowerment. The complexity of the adult learning process demonstrates how the interaction of cognition and emotion are integrated in developing learning. Bruner (2003:210) states that

> we constantly construct and re-construct a self to meet the needs
> of the situations we encounter and we do so with the guidance of
> our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future,
> resulting in the stories we tell about ourselves- our autobiographies.

The autobiographical stories of each trainee provides an insight into the transition and transformations of themselves from student to teacher; and the way in which they become more responsible for their learning and more confident in their ability to teach. The complexity of the transitions and transformations experienced by the trainees, both personally and professionally, is provided through a hermeneutical approach to the autobiographical narrative texts; using the first five stages of Denzin's biographical method. This approach has allowed me to analyse and comment on the key moments and lived experiences of each trainee; from my own perspective and from their narrative stories. These analytical comments are seen interspersed within the text in italics.

In highlighting both the transformative learning and the key transformations that were taking place concurrently within the trainee's narrative text, further analytical comments include identification of where each of Mezirow's (1981) ten phases of transformative learning have been observed. Cranton (2009:190) identifies that:

> transformative learning is about individual stories - the breakthrough
> moments, the recognition of a long-held unquestioned assumption, the
> dawning of an understanding of a new perspective, the seeing of the
> self in a new way. … each person's transformative experience is unique
> and to be treasured for its uniqueness.

It is this uniqueness that is now considered in the following three autobiographical narratives and my interpretations (in italics) of their experiences.

Autobiography 1: Rosemary's Story

This first autobiography is narrated by Rosemary, a mature female student in her mid-forties. Rosemary decided to explore the process and progress of 'being a trainee and becoming a teacher'. Throughout the process of writing her autobiography Rosemary made a conscious decision that she would identify herself in the text as 'she'. The autobiography starts with 'she' receiving a letter from the university and provides an initial insight into her educational background.

An autobiographical study: from student to teacher

The idea of she coming onto the teacher training course was prompted by a letter she received from the university asking if she had considered teaching as a career. She had left school with no qualifications and had hated school which had been a tortuous experience. She had frequently run away from both her home and school and would probably have been classed as functionally illiterate. At school she was always bottom in areas such as spelling and could not recite the multiplication tables or tell the time.

Rosemary's background at home did not help her self-confidence or self-esteem and she became accustomed to her 'rather Victorian' father making comments such as 'I have more brains in my big toe than you have' and 'what's wrong with you'; as well as her mother insisting that 'education was wasted on girls, as a women's place is in the home looking after her man and children'. Not surprisingly Rosemary was quite a rebellious teenager but one who was soon married and producing five children; all of whom also hated school and struggled to learn. She started to take on the Local Education Authority in relation to one of her daughter's problems and eventually won the battle for an appropriate place in a special school for her daughter, where she blossomed as a person. Rosemary's own failure in education was concerning her more and more and eventually she decided to try again.

There was a small voice inside her that kept whispering 'you're not really thick' and that day - that big day will never be forgotten. She stood outside shivering although it wasn't cold. She could not bring herself to face the scary well dressed lady behind the desk, so eventually a friend went and booked her a place on the Access course. No one from her family had ever undertaken this. Her mother was illiterate and her

siblings had learning difficulties. Well that was the beginning of a new experience - and some very special people helped build her confidence and knowledge. The more she learnt the more she wanted to learn. She now questioned more knowledgeably her intelligence and the evidence was gathering that she was not thick or stupid.

Four of Rosemary's five children had been diagnosed with dyslexia and R now began to consider the possibility of a genetic predisposition. This aspect of Rosemary's development relates to the phases of Mezirow's transformative learning where the adult learner experiences a disorientating dilemma which is then followed by self-examination together with feelings of fear and anger. This happened to Rosemary after being tested at the college as part of the Access course she was attending. All of the old difficulties and feelings of inadequacy came flooding back and overwhelmed the process to the extent that Rosemary sobbed throughout the testing. Having been diagnosed as dyslexic did mean though that she was given appropriate support and guidance, and provided her with a critical assessment of assumption.

The level of her academic improvement allowed Rosemary to apply for a university place to study psychology; and this clearly demonstrates that Rosemary was at the phase of Mezirow's transformative learning, where there was a recognition of a connection between one's disconnect and the process of transformation. The process of transformation starting when Rosemary began to build a career as a counselor; as this involved a considerable amount of teaching and training, as well as a supervisory role. It was in this role that Rosemary became the person that other people would seek out for advice and guidance; and as the person who also helped her peers during the psychology course.

The word 'teacher' had come up before but never in a way that she thought of herself as a teacher, perhaps because she still felt a lot of resentment towards them. She believed that all schools should be abolished and the teachers too. However her experience at college had been very different and there was a shift in her internalized beliefs about teachers. The letter asking if she wanted to teach challenged her belief system and allowed a spark of enthusiasm to ignite. She had many good … as well as bad role models on which to build a new image of a teacher. She could do this, she could make a difference and she could be a good teacher. Fear and excitement surged through her as she applied for the course.

The teacher training course started in October and Rosemary had no problems with the practice micro-teaching and other trainees responded to her very well. However when the first assignment was handed in it became apparent that Rosemary had gone off at a rather odd tangent. After meeting with Rosemary and explaining what had happened, both myself as course leader and the psychology action learning set tutor were able to provide further guidance and support; as did her peers. Further academic support was provided by the university in the form of an external specialist dyslexia tutor.

This tutor did however contact me by phone expressing her concern at Rosemary's level of ability to complete this type of course. In discussion with the other tutors teaching on the course it was decided to allow Rosemary to continue and provide extra support for her. After all Rosemary had completed a psychology degree at the university and gained a first so her academic work was clearly at an appropriate level. Problems then started to crop up in the teaching placement as Rosemary had been asked to teach Basic Skills first and then later move onto teaching her specialist subject of Psychology. Unfortunately there was an over estimation of Rosemary's ability to be able to teach and support the Basic Skills literacy classes; the view had been that because of her own struggles Rosemary might be well placed to support and help other students in the college. This proved not to be the case.

Basic Skills were too difficult for her and she was unable to help the other students. Lesson after lesson she left feeling humiliated and inadequate. This challenged her confidence and she struggled to maintain the image of herself as a teacher. She was ready to run away … She sat desolate in the college canteen wondering whether to stay for her first chance at teaching psychology or if she should make a clean getaway and forget the whole foolish idea of being a teacher.

Fortunately Rosemary's professional mentor at the college happened to come into the canteen just at that moment and he sat down beside her and listened as she talked about the difficulties she was experiencing. He immediately decided to move her into a different subject area; that of Health and Social Care, where the teaching would be related more towards the areas of her Psychology degree and would, in his view suit her far better. The difficulties that Rosemary was experiencing are a continuation of Mezirow's phases of self-examination and are linked to fears of fear, anger, guilt and

shame. However Rosemary can be seen as still progressing through the phase of recognition of a connection between one's disconnect and the process of transformation.

She thanked him and walked into the courtyard feeling supported but her confidence was at an all time low. She lit a cigarette when the teacher M came rushing over - C the psychology teacher was unable to come in and M wanted me to take the class. She surprised herself by smiling and saying yes. She felt terrified but elated. Some of the confidence was fighting its way back. She walked into the classroom - a group of adults looked at her expectantly. She took a breath, introduced herself and explained the situation. She worked with the students working out what had to be done and how they could tackle it. The students were responsive and the lesson went well. She pondered over what had happened that day, how She had moved from a place of despair and feeling of incompetence to a place of hope and excitement. This was a critical point for she a turning point; she had reached rock bottom but clearly her confidence was not as fragile as she had thought.

When Rosemary moved into the Health and Social Care department of the college, her success with the Access students followed her and she received a lot of positive feedback and was warmly welcomed by staff and students. This aspect of Rosemary's development continues Mezirow's phases of recognition between disconnect and transformation but also moves her into an exploration of options for new roles, relationships and action. The course team was all very supportive and her confidence started to grow again with the planning and teaching and successful observations of her lessons. This is the stage when Rosemary gains in confidence and begins to focus on developing her teaching and classroom management skills. It is also the start of Mezirow's phase of planning a course of action and acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan.

… a problem with discipline had crept in. The students would talk while she was talking or answer their phones. Two students had even started to apply make-up during a lesson. Then K went off sick and she was asked to cover her lesson. The students were the level one's that did not have a good reputation. She entered the class feeling a little dubious. At first although loud the class was manageable, by the end of the day this had gone. One student in particular was shouting, climbing on tables and

throwing things across the room. She searched her mind for answers and remembered what she had been taught and asked the student to go with her into the corridor where she asked if there was a problem; explaining that by not working the student would not be able to claim her EMA (Educational Maintenance Grant). The student didn't care and the response was rather abusive. She kept calm and suggested that if the student didn't want to work she should go home. This was met with contempt and the student walked back into the classroom. She was wondering what to do next … and if teaching was after all a good profession for her. She consoled herself with blaming the students; it was that class and no-one could handle them.

However Rosemary found that shortly afterwards she failed a teaching observation where she was teaching a good class and they also were talking and laughing through the lesson. This made her re-think her classroom management strategy and Rosemary began to realize that the problem was that she was being too familiar with the students and not becoming the teacher in the classroom. It is here that Rosemary's development has now retuned to Mezirow's phases of exploration of her options for new roles, relationships, and action and the need for planning a course of action. Nonetheless Rosemary is also acquiring new knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan and through this process provisionally trying out new roles.

She needed to move, not so far away that she could not relate to the students but far enough to have the confidence and therefore the authority to teach a class. This awareness along with observations of other teachers enabled a small shift to take place. By doing nothing too different but expecting more the students began to respond differently. She would stop and wait and they would stop and apologise for talking.

The next stage of confrontation came when Rosemary covered another level one class and was met with uproar and abusive language. Eventually the classroom teacher came back but was also met with even more abuse. Some students were moved out of the class and the groups were re-organised with new work and a new finish time; and Rosemary was once again left to manage the class.

Now Rosemary's development continues Mezirow's phases of acquiring new knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan, provisionally trying out of new

roles but moves onto the phase of building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.

She decided that it was no use fighting them so she sat down within the horseshoe with them and started talking to them about everyday things. The students settled down and a conversation developed between them, the monsters were only students after all and mostly rather pleasant students. It was okay to negotiate with students but more importantly she learnt … the importance of communication.

Rosemary was also possibly drawing on her previous skills and experience as a counsellor here in the way she instinctively responded and reacted knowingly to the student's behaviour. Rather than relying on theory and playing the role of the teacher Rosemary had learnt to respond and communicate and reduce staff-student conflict. This phase again consolidates Mezirow's phases of acquiring new knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan, provisionally trying out of new roles. The phase of building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships continues with Rosemary's next developmental stage which involved a teaching observation. Rosemary had been asked to incorporate a group discussion with the students and this lesson was being observed by her teaching practice tutor.

She stood in front of the class and her mouth was dry, her legs felt like jelly … . After a tentative start the lesson took shape and the students were responding and she was enjoying it. She was taken over by a new feeling, one of confidence and something new. She didn't care if she failed this was a good lesson, she liked it and the students liked it. …that feeling, that different feeling of knowing inside that it was a good lesson, and not needing the approval of the mentors was for she a feeling to be treasured; a moment she could return to when things were not going good. The feeling that she was now a teacher.

There is now a clear recognition that Rosemary's development has arrived at Mezirow's final phase of a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective and the stage of perspective transformation. Rosemary finishes her autobiography recognizing the process and progress she has made from being a student to becoming a teacher.

I have come from a background of failure in education and academically have progressed slowly but consistently. History has an important place in the development of a teacher, it is part of who I am and will have an impact on my values and beliefs thus affecting my attitudes and approaches to teaching. My shift from a person with an angry and antagonistic attitude towards teachers to a person who will be teaching is huge and valuable. In line with this was an understanding that theory is good and can help you but it is through practice that you pick up the complexity and subtleness of the processes involved.

After successful completion of the pre-service teacher training course Rosemary went on to gain a teaching role at a sixth form college as Head of Psychology. And as Nelson (2008:216) so aptly suggests 'reflection and narrative is about coming to understand how unique events in our teaching lives can shift our understanding of ourselves and the work that we do'.

It has been interesting to follow Rosemary's process of transition and transformation (Mezirow, 1991) as her move to perspective transformation can be seen as a cyclical process. This involved Rosemary in moving backwards and forwards through some phases, whilst consolidating others, and then moving forward until finally emerging, rather like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, into perspective transformation.

Autobiography 2: Deborah's story

The second autobiography is by Deborah, a single female in her late twenties who previously worked in the Engineering industry. Deborah's parents were against her going to university and she had been quite intimidated by them and followed their wishes by working in computer design for an engineering company who paid for her to study for an HNC. After a few years Deborah realised that she was not very happy in her job and decided to return to university as a mature student in study for a psychology degree. After successfully completing the degree she looked towards a teaching career initially as a primary school teacher but then realised she would prefer working with 16 year olds and decided to enrol on the PGCE pre-service teacher training course.

Deborah's autobiography has been written as a case study with an autobiographical approach; and the focus is on the role of Neuro -Linguistic Programme (NLP) techniques to support and enable more effective communication in the classroom.

The Teaching and Learning Issue

As a student teacher, I constantly reflect back on my own teaching experience and ponder, what makes a good teacher? As a student, I always respected a teacher that spent more time teaching than managing the class. I was fortunate enough to be one of these teachers in my first teaching placement at a further education college, where I taught psychology to Level 3 Access and BTEC students. These students, on the whole, did not provide me with any behavioural problems that detracted from my teaching. However, my teaching placement was changed and I began teaching psychology A Level and GCSE at a Sixth Form College. The A Level students were well behaved but the GCSE students were not. The GCSE group became the subject of this autobiographical case study, which documents the various techniques I employed in order to manage this difficult class.

It was then Deborah made the discovery that the GCSE Psychology syllabus she was teaching was much broader even than the AS syllabus; also that the level of research methods she had been asked to cover was equal to the AS level syllabus. This discovery presented immediate problems in terms of how to teach students who were already 'disenfranchised' and been considered failures at school; and who did not

know how to learn or study at the level required of them. The particular GCSE group that Deborah was given were in her words 'the group from hell, as they literally raised the roof, they fought, they argued and they danced and were anything but compliant'. This aspect of Deborah's teaching development relates to the phase of Mezirow's transformative learning as experiencing a disorientating dilemma which is followed by self-examination; in this case the feeling was one of anger. The use of the term 'compliant' by Deborah is interesting; as she clearly expected the group to do as she requested in terms of teaching and learning. In my experience it is not unusual for some college teachers to offload groups that they were finding difficult to teach onto new trainee teachers.

The Level 2 GCSE Psychology group is very small comprising only fifteen students and of these students, only eleven attend regularly. Of the fifteen students, thirteen are retaking their GCSE's after having failed to achieve sufficient grades at school, while two of the students are taking this GCSE alongside other Level 3 qualifications. The group's behaviour is very disruptive and ultimately not conducive to learning, with the exception of two group members who are cooperative, hard working and seem genuinely irritated by the rest of the groups' misbehaviour.

The two hardworking students are the students that are taking this GCSE alongside Level 3 qualifications, therefore the students that present me with disruptive behaviour are all working towards Level 2 qualifications alone. This autobiographical case study will focus on these Level 2 students. This group exhibited the following various behaviours during lessons that acted as barriers to learning;

- No or little awareness that it's wrong to answer mobile phones/play music aloud on their phones during lessons.
- Lack of respect for staff/other students/ the classroom situation e.g. eating and drinking.
- Graffiti on college, and other students' property; drawing on themselves and other's bodies.
- Bullying of other students e.g. heckling when asking / answering questions
- Constant talking, arguing and fighting amongst the students
- Punctuality
- No understanding of importance of good behaviour
- Questioning assessments and tasks
- Little or no motivation
- Little if any interest in the subject (psychology)

This was clearly a difficult class to manage but it is often the case that when new teachers come into a college with newer and fresher ideas, they can make a difference by turning the group around. While this might have been too much of a challenge for some new trainee teachers, Deborah did not hesitate to take on the challenge and showed that she was willing to work with the group on and was determined to alter their classroom behaviour. This demonstrates Mezirow's phase of a critical assessment of assumption, together with a recognition of a connection between one's disconnect and the process of transformation.

Deborah identifies here that these behaviours were clearly affecting the students' ability to learn and her ability to teach them the subject matter required for the GCSE syllabus. However having made further enquiries in the staff room she found that the group's behaviour was not confined to her classes but also prevalent in classes taught not only by her subject mentor but also with another subject tutor.

Whilst on the pre-service course each trainee is provided with an Action Learning Set (ALS) tutor whose specific role was to run small group tutorials with subject specific trainee's and also provide relevant teaching practice guidance and support for that group. Deborah's ALS tutor had observed the problems she was having with the GCSE group and as she was herself an experienced NLP practitioner suggested that she tried a different approach with them. Deborah's development now moves into Mezirow's phases of a recognition of an exploration of options for new roles, relationships and action and planning a course of action.

On reflection about these problems, I tried various techniques but to little avail. I initially decided to focus on planning fun and engaging lessons, proposing that the behavioural problems were a direct result of boring non-engaging subject delivery or tasks. One example of the way I varied my teaching approach was when teaching the students about stress. I asked students to complete a drawing and colouring task whereby students indicated the physiological changes that result in the body during periods of stress. This task proved ineffective, as the students would not concentrate on starting let alone completing this task. The misbehaviour was present in almost all tasks I tried regardless of how fun they seemed, to me, to be. I also tried out the 'proximity, eye contact and questioning' behavioural techniques recommended by Petty (2004). This technique involves the teacher altering their proximity by moving

towards students that are behaving inappropriately.   Also gaining eye contact and asking the students questions such as "why haven't you started?" This technique has proved effective with other groups but this technique proved only to promote further conversation and invite excuses, as opposed to compliance with this particular group.

As such, I knew that a completely new approach was required, but I was not sure what that approach should be. At this point in the reflection process, I decided it was time to speak to my university Action Learning set about the issues I was having. The action learning set (ALS) I belong to is made up of 7 psychology or sociology students and our mentor who leads and chairs the group meetings. Action learning sets provide an opportunity to learn from our peers and take part in shared learning as well as tackling the issues and problems that individuals face together as a group. When I approached the group, I was given various suggestions. One suggestion particularly intrigued me and that was the idea of applying techniques of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) in the classroom. This idea formed the basis of this autobiographical case study that will document my attempts to employ NLP within the classroom and any changes in behaviour from my students. This incorporates: effective communication; effective thinking processes; taking positive action. I am going to change my own behaviour in the hope that it will have a positive effect on the behaviour of my students.

Deborah talks here about using an autobiographical approach to reflect and analyse the outcome of the NLP techniques. Also identifying that time was allowed after every lesson with this group for detailed reflections on the results of the NLP technique. This development consolidates Mezirow's phase of acquiring new knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan and moves onto the phase of provisionally trying out of new roles.

Deborah's teaching approach with the group is then linked to the NLP approach called Matching and Mirroring; a technique developed by Erikson (1970) in his work with clinical hypnotherapy. Interestingly Deborah highlights how she decided to change her body language and her attitude to the group.

Matching and mirroring does not mean copying, it means to adopt a similar body posture, similar gestures, styles of behaviour and tone and speed of voice. This

process works by making the unconscious mind of the person you are thinking think that you are alike and this is why it helps to build rapport (Churches and Terry, 2008). With this new knowledge in mind, I set about changing my body and verbal language in line with the principles of matching and mirroring. In line with matching and mirroring, I dramatically reduced the amount of time I spent standing while talking to the students, I started to sit with them more and work with students individually. I also changed the room layout so that we could all sit together as one group and therefore I was able to avoid the situation where any students sat with their back to me. This proved to have a positive effect on the student's behaviour. They responded positively to my attempts to teach them when we were all sat down together in a group. As teachers' we should try to experience the situation in a different way. … I used this technique to imagine myself as one of my students; completely new to the study of psychology. From this perspective, I would ascertain the key points that my students need to understand about a subject. This technique proved extremely effective with the GCSE students. Once I began illustrating the material with examples they could relate to, they seemed to grasp material quicker.

Deborah's discussion has shown the importance of communicating and building a rapport with the students. This has been achieved by taking a greater interest in the students, i.e. by learning something about their interests, hobbies; by interacting more and being less didactic in her teaching; and by rewarding their comments and questions with verbal praise, all of which has increased her rapport with the group. Deborah's development consolidates Mezirow's phases of acquiring new knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan and provisionally trying out of new roles. The next stage is where Deborah tries out the technique of Pacing which is all about meeting your students half way and matching them where they currently are (pacing) and then directing them to where you want them to go (lead).

The technique of Pacing did not initially work with the first few individuals I tried it on. Upon reflection, I realised that this process would work more effectively if I used it with key individuals from the group. In every group, there are individuals that act as leaders and these are the ones I need to gain rapport with. If I effectively pace these individuals until I have gained a rapport, then I can lead them and the rest of the group will follow. I tried this method on these individuals and I was able to lead a

group discussion for the first time since teaching this group. I was still mindful of all the other NLP techniques I had learnt and incorporated them into all of my lessons from that point onwards.

Now Deborah's development begins Mezirow's phases of building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. As another approach that Deborah tried related to a learning styles model called VAK- Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic; this is used in the majority of further education and sixth form colleges as part of a personalised learning approach to an individual student's learning needs. The use of VAK also ensured that all teachers provided a variety of teaching and learning techniques in each class they teach therefore ensuring active learning.

Knowing a students' preferred learning style allowed me to tailor my explanation through their preferred sense. This technique has really enhanced my one to one explanations with the students as I can personally sit down with a student and reason with them in a way that they learn best, such as diagrams for visual learners and verbal discussions for auditory learners. I have also been able to use the language of their preferred sense, which is called matching their sensory preference. Having utilised this approach and observed positive changes in student behaviour, I am starting to wonder whether the behavioural problems I was facing were due to a failure on my part by presenting complicated information in a format that my students can't understand.   Given that the behavioural problems are not presented by the two level 3 students (these two students are taking this GCSE alongside other Level 3 qualifications). I am starting to realise that psychology is an extremely difficult subject to teach to Level 2 students and as such, extra thought needs to be given to ways in which it can be made easier to learn.

This study has documented my personal journey through teaching a difficult subject (psychology) to Level 2 (GCSE) students and the behaviour management issues I have faced with this group. The techniques have already improved my rapport with the group and had the effect of improving my student's behaviour. The group are now more receptive and are no longer displaying the behavioural issues that they first presented:

- Mobile phones are now off during the lesson.
- Attitude has improved as rapport has increased. Eating and drinking has ceased. Graffiti has decreased.
- Bullying of other students has ceased. Students listen much more now to each other's questions and answers.
- Talking about irrelevant material has lessened and arguing and fighting amongst the students has ceased.
- Punctuality has increased.
- Students are far more receptive to the assessment and tasks that I set.
- Students seem much more motivated.
- Greater interest in the subject (psychology)

Carrying out the research … with an autobiographical approach, was definitely the most appropriate method … this enquiry has been a positive experience for me to undertake at this point in my teaching career. In addition to improved rapport with my students, I have much more insight into the struggles my students face when trying to learn psychology. I can confidently say that I can communicate more effectively and ultimately enhance my students learning.

Deborah is clearly 'delighted with the improvements in the student's behaviour' and has shown that by using the NLP techniques her rapport with the students has greatly improved. However she is also aware that the behavioural changes might not all have been as a result of the NLP techniques and that her own approaches and attitude initially to the group was coloured by other people's views.

There is often a difficulty for new teachers in finding the right level at which to pitch their teaching; one which the majority of the group can cope with and understand. As many trainees last experience of education was a three year degree course, they tend to have forgotten their own initial struggles at GCSE and A Level.

Deborah has now achieved Mezirow's final phase of a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. Deborah's transition and transformation (Mezirow, 1991), followed quite a structured and linear manner to the final achievement of her perspective transformation.

Following her successful completion of the pre-service teacher training course Deborah went on to gain a teaching role at a Sixth Form college as a Psychology teacher.

Autobiography 3: Matt's Story

The third autobiography is told by Matt a young man in his late twenties who had studied English and Drama at university; and then during the following year took several part-time jobs before deciding to apply for a teacher training course. The focus of his autobiography is his professional development in terms of his experiences of the teaching and learning process together with issues he encountered with his approach to classroom management.

Exploring how to manage a classroom of students

I knew they felt like failures and some couldn't see the point in conforming when they might fail again, I knew that many act up to cover the inadequacies they feel and I also knew that some are fine until they see that it is an activity they have problems with and then they become the problem. But there were a few things I hadn't come across. It took me a while to grasp the exact class dynamic – what students you have to move where to get better results etc. And I also had no idea how I would react if in a situation where students were trying to leave and I had to make sure they stayed whilst still teaching the lesson. …. . I didn't want to study a moment in time, I wanted to trace my journey back and pick out key moments that made that journey.

Matt was attracted to the idea of studying a situation deep enough so that you don't just come up with one answer about why certain things happened but several answers. The reason he chose autobiography as a method was because he didn't know all the reasons why this class misbehaved; and with autobiography he would be able to investigate why he still didn't know and how it affected his feelings and future practise. This aspect of Matt's development relates to the phases of Mezirow's transformative learning where the adult learner experiences a disorientating dilemma which is followed by self-examination; although there is no insight at this stage as to what his feelings involved, although one might surmise that they included fear and anger. Matt also wanted to tell the story of 'how these issues begin, what feeds and threatens their genesis, and how they are confronted in the classroom'; and for him this was the perfect way of describing how he experienced these problems. He then starts his story by describing his experiences at school and college and provides a link to classroom management issues.

When it came to junior school I was very much set in the bookish yet silly mould I find myself encased in today. Around this time I developed a brief fascination for shepherding after reading a few too many [read: all] Dick King-Smith books. We shall return to this later in an excellent allegory for classroom management. I wanted to be an author. It is still an ambition that burns brightly alongside teaching.

There were two teachers there that inspired me so much I thought being like them would be brilliant. The first was Mr L. I have met several of his pupils over the years that are either already teachers or training to be one, all because of him. He would read captivating stories in assembly and no one would want to leave. He made all lessons an event without seemingly trying. He was my career inspiration.

The other teacher was Mr B, he of the 'lessons should be fun' ethos. I stick by this – how else are you going to learn? Though if I ever have class control problems now, they are probably down to him – his lessons were so entertaining that I tried to replicate his school teaching in my college teaching, and that may have undermined my authority over a class. But the notion that your job could enhance your happiness rather than stifle it was one that, at the age of ten, I was firmly behind. Even today, I refuse to abandon it. Moving onto senior school, and I read everything in the library and acquired a third ambition: drama teacher.

This establishment was essential to my experience of classroom management. Two of the best teachers died and left respectively, teachers stopped coming in and the ones who replaced them had breakdowns in class. The really good teachers could control a class, but we didn't see a lot of it. I knew it was possible – I had seen it for many years. It didn't put me off teaching!

College was where Matt found out who he was – a sensitive soul who loved a girl called Amelia. He enjoyed college life and he deepened his love of both English and Drama; it was at this time that his thoughts turned not only to becoming a writer but possibly a drama teacher. In his writing the beginnings of Matt's own approach to teaching in his reference to the 'lessons should be fun' ethos which clearly made an impression upon him as a student can be identified. Here Matt's development starts the process of relating to Mezirow's (2000) critical assessment of assumptions, as he

highlights where he had experienced two very good teachers that had left an indelible impression upon him; and other teachers who clearly were unable to cope with classroom teaching.

University was alien for the first year and I only stuck it out because I lived so near by it would be silly not to turn up. I had opted for a part English, part Drama course and quickly discovered that I would rather be doing one or the other. I applied myself more, enjoyed learning and completed my fourth musical with a writing partner. We put the musical on at a local theatre and directing it was the best practise for teaching I can think of. So much planning, so many balls in the air at the same time – having to tell people things at the same time as making sure they are on task… by the end of the degree I was finally ready to do what had been in my head for years.

*Here Matt has moved into Mezirow's (2000) phase of experiencing one's disconnect and the process of transformation exploration of options for new roles, relationships and action. Now he was ready t*o *train to be a teacher and he went ahead and applied for the pre-service course not really expecting anything to come of it; so when he received the congratulations letter he initially considered it a happy mistake.*

The beginning of the course gave me the opportunity to slowly put into practise all that I was learning ….   I gradually began to carve out my own niche in teaching styles … I was becoming a fan of the humanist style… I was encountering the principles of Carl Rogers for the first time and it really spoke to me… he said things like 'negotiate with learners as to how the teaching outcomes can be achieved' which completely turned my traditional view of teaching on its head.

In my world, you managed a class, told them what to do and they did it. Negotiation – and therefore breaking down that barrier – seemed an alien concept, how on Earth could you then go back to having power? Well it turns out that I was confusing power with control. It's not about being better than them but working together to develop their learning. Classroom management is there to create the boundaries and a relationship where you can tell them off and still be respected. One thing was sure; I couldn't manage learners unless I knew what I was like as a teacher.

Matt took the Myers Briggs Type Inventory test (MBTI) which each trainee is asked to complete as part of a diagnostic assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Matt's test showed that he has good ideas but worries about 'his ability to make others listen to them'. Although he makes it clear that his real fear was more about the students not listening to him, rather than not being able to put the subject across. The MBTI tests also showed that he was very visually minded and that he tended to think in pictures; which encouraged Matt to look at new ways of planning his lessons.

Matt's development here consolidates Mezirow's (2000) phase of experiencing one's disconnect and the process of transformation; where he confuses power and control and finds the theories of Carl Rogers. However he also begins an exploration of new roles, relationships and action, particularly in terms of becoming a teacher and his style of teaching.

The placement itself was great. Getting into actual teaching was both a shock and a pleasure in equal measure. I didn't intend that to rhyme. I was taken aback by how empty and full your classes can seem when you are managing them well or badly. What I mean by this is that, how much of a presence you have, can control and even create the mood in the class. And once you have the mood, the atmosphere of the students, you can make it a positive one and lead them to the information at the same time they are enjoying themselves – you are in charge of them and they didn't even put up a fight because they didn't see it happening. Of course, once you get to this stage I quickly learnt that you need to make them aware that you are in charge, turn what was unconscious into conscious. I was especially keen to see how good I would be at classroom management.

Matt was consolidating Mezirow's (2000) phase of planning a course of action where he was clearly focusing on classroom management. However, he then had what might be termed a minor epiphany, as he realised that it wasn't just about controlling a class; because as he said ' that was sometimes an issue and sometimes it wasn't and sometimes it did not matter if you made it fun'. What he was surprised about was that he discovered that the students had to be there in order to collect their maintenance grants, and that often some of the students actually didn't want to be there; and then realising that teaching some of the GCSE groups wasn't necessarily going to be easy.

And it is here the story really begins; sheep and all. Right, the sheep bit. Stick with this, it may all go wrong. The way I see it, I am the shepherd of the students learning. I face the classic dilemma of teaching – how to lead students (sheep) to the information but at the same time keep them under control? It is that dual nature of teaching that fascinates me – the healthy balance every shepherd must have. Obviously I would need sheepdogs to guide me and show me the way (the college teachers). They helped me learn how to keep sheep under control whilst at the same time keeping them within the fence (the curriculum) and making sure the grass (resources) was the right kind and appropriate for their training. When I arrived at the farm the sheep sensed that I was new. They ran amok compared to how they behaved with the other shepherds. It was insulting, quite frankly. I needed to become better at the job and fast. The sheep were ignoring my instructions and would not immediately stop bleating when I told them off. In short, they did not respect me. I looked into a few theories but nothing really grabbed me.

I realised I had fallen into one of the stick 'types' we were warned about becoming – the trendy teacher. Not in a cool way, in a trying to be their friend way … and my own experience as a learner had heavily influenced my approach to teaching. What I needed to do was to place myself mentally in the shoes of the learner. What would make them sit in a lesson calmly and get on with work? If I could work out how the learner felt, I could control how they behaved. All I needed now was to work out how they felt.

college to retake their GCSEs, so he took the decision to restructure his lesson plans and devise tasks that they would be able to successfully achieve; thereby making them realise they were not stupid. Matt's development here highlights the importance in teaching terms of Mezirow's (2000) phase of building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. His idea was that rather than teaching the whole class as a group he would treat each student as an individual person and encourage them to participate in their own learning. The next step for him was again about classroom management and how to stop the group talking so much, but with the right level of authority.

There were a couple of other things I tried myself … . The first was to stand very still while dissent was going on and wait for them all to finish. Of course this can backfire and they can just ignore you. But I wasn't a bad shepherd / teacher in other regards and I picked an authoritative, arms crossed sort of stance that looked vaguely oppressive. Gradually, I began to notice a change. It began with an A2 Literature class. Their tone seemed less light with me and they stopped more often when I tried to quell their chatter. I was eager to develop this manner and turned to a variety of body language books to aid my progression. I've never trained myself to be aware of how I am physically before. I just exist and move a certain way, like we all do. I have moved this way all of my life and not been aware of how I am doing it or the impact it has. When I was forced into noticing how my movements affected the respect I got from students I began to eradicate my nervous habits to make my overall appearance more professional. My bad traits were all symptoms of nervous behaviour, tapping my foot, arms held inward, that sort of thing. I taught myself to use hand gestures more and that killed two birds with one gentle, metaphorical stone – I was occupying my hands positively and moving around more in doing so.

Matt now began to realise that he had been looking at classroom management as a quick fix, without really understanding that the way he introduced his lessons i.e. without any aims or objectives and how explained the tasks descriptions might be at the heart of the problem.   By re thinking through his lesson planning and identifying how to introduce more activities, the students began to respond and concentrate on their work. Matt was now at the stage of consolidating Mezirow's (2000) phase of building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships;and he

noticed after a short while that classroom management was a lot less of an issue for him.

The second big help to the initial changes I made was through my mentor's suggestion to go out on the field and yell loudly. She thought my control would improve when my projection did, and she was right. It was too meek at the beginning. I didn't feel I was good enough to be there and my voice reacted to this impulse. But my voice grew with my confidence and slowly classroom management improved as a result of my teaching and authority levels finally matching up closer. Later, on the day of yelling on the field, I was able to tell off an A2 pupil for distracting the class.

There is a traditional view in teaching that you need to be firm and strict to start with and then gradually ease off the pressure and control. It was when he gained greater self-confidence, that this change in attitude to being a teacher also changed his manner and voice tone; both of which gave him a stronger presence in the classroom; and perhaps it was this as much as anything else that the students responded to. As he himself identified, he began to 'mean it when I tried to take charge of a class, because I was starting to 'mean' teaching'.

I gauged my success at managing the GCSE class by how much work they did. The more work, the more they understood and wanted to learn, the better my teaching and clarity of descriptions.

Matt's collected data relating to the amount of the work completed by the GCSE group over the year (see Appendix D) which consisted of keeping a graph, some quotes from teachers, his own journal entries and experiences; these all reflect key aspects from his mission to manage a class more effectively. Matt also devised a four point plan that acted as a check list and by using this he has been able to maintain classroom control and keep students focused on the lesson.
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So now I have finished my last official day at the College. The final day contained three sheep trials where the shepherd in me left and the sheepdog stepped in. There were no teachers in any of my lessons, it was just me and them – two revisions sessions and one normal lesson – sink or swim. And I swam. Groups of high exam

tension and potential worries and nervousness and I never once panicked something might go wrong – I just knew that I could do it. This was in stark contrast to the beginning where my rebukes were in a croaky voice and either not heard or not deemed relevant to their conversations. It was only when I began to include activities that students could complete that they saw they were not stupid, and that I must have had the belief in them to complete it. My position as a teacher in charge of their learning and behaviour looked much more convincing now. I am not claiming to be perfect, I will continue to make mistakes, but I have got better at spotting where they began and changing the circumstances that lead to them. I create learner centred lessons and you cannot succeed at these unless the learner respects you.

Matt has now achieved Mezirow's final phase of a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective; through a realisation that when he made the lessons clearer to the students at the beginning and more student-centred by focusing on the needs of the learners, that there was an immediate and almost drastic improvement in the teaching and learning process. He also took on board pupil's advice about how they learnt successfully and then began to structure his lessons to include more discussion and feedback than before.

I feel that I respect myself as a teacher more now and therefore respect the student's right to quality learning more. … I walk into classrooms now with an improved physical stance and an attitude of teaching this lesson well. I now have a wide experience of calling students on inappropriate behaviour that conflicts with what the whole class need to learn. I am comfortable with how I manage a classroom now. Still not perfect, but happy with myself about an issue that a few short months ago I was very unhappy about.

Once or twice I questioned established teacher ethics – where does the boundary lie between telling a student it is not good enough they have done no work and bullying? What is acceptable conduct for a teacher? Luckily I never got close to breaching that divide because I was meek to begin with and then got a little tougher (I am still weaker than I would like though!), but it was important for me to know these boundaries anyhow. There are many positive forces for good within my teaching now – I am a lot more enthusiastic, knowledgeable and commanding. I have really enjoyed

improving my practise as well as structuring lessons, research and of course learning how to manage a class.

Matt has followed closely the transitions of Mezirow's (2000) transformative learning phases and successfully achieved perspective transformation; but in a more steady and gradual manner i.e. by moving into a phase and then consolidating the process before moving onto the next phase/s.

After successful completion of the pre-service teacher training course Matt went on to gain a teaching role at a Sixth Form college, as a English and Drama teacher; and continues to make his lessons fun and enjoyable for the students and himself.

Chapter 6:   The Privilege of Discovering Myself

This chapter provides a greater insight into and an explanation of the trainee's inner experiences through the analysis of the actual process of transformative learning and transformative reflection (Mezirow, 2004:27-8). It is this approach to data analysis that provides a clearer understanding of the significance of the learning process from the 'inside'; and which is echoed in Gusdorf's (1980:35) view that:

> No one can know better than I what I have thought what I have wished; I alone have the privilege of discovering myself from the other side of the mirror.

This is a view that is supported by Biggs and Tang (2007) who considered the process of 'reflection' as 'standing in front of a mirror and only seeing yourself reflected back and who you are at that moment in time'; but clarify that transformative reflection is rather like the mirror in Snow White, where you are able to see what you might become. They argue that what is different about the mirror in transformative reflection is that this mirror uses theory to enable an individual to move from the unsatisfactory 'what is' to the more effective 'what might be'. The theory in this study is highlighted both through the trainees' own awareness of teaching and learning theories and the actual process of transformative learning. Mezirow (2004:27-28) identifies that the 'actual process of transformative learning' involves the adult learner in the following aspects of the learning process:

- reflecting critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions- our own and those of others

- instrumental learning; determining that something is true (as it is purported to be) by using empirical research method

- communicative learning; arriving at more justified beliefs by participating freely and fully in an informed continuing discourse

- taking action on our transformed perspective – we make a decision and live by what we have come to believe until we encounter new evidence, argument or a perspective that renders that orientation problematic and requires reassessment

- acquiring a disposition – to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions and those of others to seek validation of our transformative insights through more freely and fully participating in discourse and to follow through on our decision to act upon a transformed insight.

It is through examining each of the aspects of the transformative learning process that the important move from transformative learning to perspective transformation is identified; and insight gained into the process of becoming critically aware of 'how and why our assumptions have come to constraint the way we perceive, understand and feel about our world'. It is in the process of 'changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective'.; and finally the process of 'making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings' (Mezirow,1991:167) can become more transparent. This process is evidenced by using the trainees' personal voices, which have been extracted from their interviews and their written autobiographies; and highlights their critical reflections of their practice and experiences. I was also extremely aware that the affective dimensions of adult learning and adult experiences of learning are more complex than might be initially perceived.

Brookfield (2000a) has carefully considered this dimension and identifies that although there may be some 'heady moments of transformative breakthrough, empowerment, emancipation and liberation' there are other aspects equally dominant for those in varying stages of the 'critical process' that are not so often identified and discussed. According to Brookfield (2000a) the affective dimension includes the following dominant feelings of:

- 'impostership', in that they possess neither the talent nor the right to become learners; and are concerned about the rightness of taking a critical stance on academically expert and socially acknowledged ideas and views;
- cultural suicide, which is the threat adults experience from being seen as 'aspiring to the status of intellectual' and no longer being seen as 'one of us'.
- incremental fluctuation is where adults often describe a rhythm of learning that can be understood as two steps forward, one step back, followed by four steps forward, and so on in a series of fluctuations marked by overall movement forward. This is a rhythm of learning which provides evidence of an increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, a developing readiness to challenge assumptions. However there are also moments of apparent regression which adult learners have identified that they

find quite devastating experiences. It is during these periods that adult learners become anxious that they will never 'get' critical thinking, and prefer to return to tried and trusted ideas that are more comfortable, known and familiar.

- lost innocence being seen in this case as a belief in the promise that if they study hard and look long enough they will stumble on universal certainty as the reward for all their efforts. Although there is a positive and sometimes an almost euphoric view taken regarding self-empowerment and transformative learning, adults descriptions of their journeys as learners have quite often a note of sadness within them. Brookfield does though highlight that although this can be seen as representing a loss of epistemological innocence, it should also be seen as 'a corresponding growth in wisdom'.

- 'a recognition of the significance that membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community', is mentioned consistently in autobiographies of themselves as critical learners. The 'knowing' that one is not alone and that there are others thinking and feeling something similar is identified as 'an important step in coming to take one's own experience seriously'.

Grabov, (1997) however considers that transformative learning has two layers that at times seem to be in conflict: the cognitive, rational, and objective and the intuitive, imaginative, and subjective. The argument is that as educators there is a need to be aware of the role that both the rational and the affective play in transformative learning.

Within the following analysis of the three trainees' personal voices, I have ensured that the key aspects of the rational process of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2004) and the dominant feelings identified in Brookfield's (2000a) affective domains of adult learning, are both clearly identified and reflectively discussed.

Rosemary's Personal Voice

Rosemary's voice is one which integrates both her emotional responses to learning and her more cognitive thoughts on her progress in teaching and in managing students. In her autobiographical writing and interview, Rosemary is particularly insightful about her internal feelings as she progresses through the course and at key transformative moments in time.

> ❖ *This aspect of transformative learning is about reflecting critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions- our own and those of others; which can be found in Rosemary's reflections taken from her interview. Here there is a key transformation marking the stage when she realised she had 'become' a teacher; and which might be considered the perspective transformative stage.*

When it comes to the first lesson where I personally thought I had done a good job and it didn't actually matter what the observer said; that was a very different feeling for me because it was about the observer and them saying everything was ok and doing it by the book. My mentor at that time suggested I did a discussion with the students which I hadn't done before and I was terrified of doing it and I thought it was going to be a nightmare, and I was being observed. But actually, as I started the lesson I quite got into it and I loved the way the students were responding and talking and when I came out it didn't really matter what the observer said because I felt it was good and any lesson that feels like that at the end of it, as far as I am concerned that is going to be a good lesson, and that was a big shift from wanting the observer to tell me it was good to me thinking it was good, not really worrying what the observer said.

Further reflections from Rosemary taken from her autobiography indicate that she had at last realised that what 'she thought' mattered more than what the' mentor thought' about her; and with the stage and feeling of having 'become a teacher' also came a stage and feeling of self-empowerment . The assumption here concerns one of the affective domains of adult learning identified by Brookfield (2000a) as that of 'impostership'; and which is a theme that runs throughout Rosemary's story.

The feedback was good and she was left feeling very pleased but that feeling that different feeling of knowing inside that it was a good lesson, and not needing the approval of the mentor was for she a feeling to be treasured; a moment she could return to when things were not going so good; the feeling that she was a teacher.

- ❖ *The next aspect of transformative learning concerns instrumental learning - determining that something is true by using empirical research methods; and which link to Rosemary's reflections taken from her interview where she identifies the importance of reflecting on her practice and the coming together of her knowledge through the autobiographical assignment.*

I think my biggest thing was the reflection, it really was, it fitted me, I think that is what I tend to do, look back and grow from it, but doing it in that structured way. … I think I learnt doing that last bit of research (the educational autobiography) and it rounds everything up as well for me, all the learning that we done that stays in mind, I couldn't tell you what the other essays were that we done, but that one I can, I can remember the process of doing it, how I felt when I was doing it, how I felt after, so I think that was the one across the course that had the biggest impact.

Further reflections taken from Rosemary's autobiography highlight her struggles and experiences which helped her both reflect on and confirm her achievements. This awareness links to the affective domains of adult learning identified by Brookfield (2000a) as that of a disturbing loss of innocence and as representing a loss of epistemological innocence; but which Brookfield also notes can be viewed as a 'corresponding growth in wisdom'.

I have struggled during this busy and challenging year to grasp all that I have experienced. The time has flown and the opportunity to sit back and reflect on this journey has not been possible. My own experiences in reflecting on and learning from life's journey assure me that this (the autobiographical assignment) is an ideal way to consolidate learning. The autobiographical research would clearly benefit me as a practitioner as well as on a personal level. The possibilities for my own learning and integration made this the perfect choice for me. Choosing such a study could be a way of bringing closure to an intense and demanding year.

❖ *Another key aspect of transformative learning is that of communicative learning- arriving at more justified beliefs by participating freely and fully in an informed continuing discourse. In Rosemary's reflections taken from her interview she acknowledges the difficulties she has experienced due to her dyslexia; and recognises the importance of discussing her problems with her tutors and mentor and the role they have played in helping her.*

… you get to that point and the difference from when I was younger is that there are people to pull you out; like with the first essay… it was such a shock that I had done this so totally wrong, then there was the mentor that said lets try something different, try health and social care, I was beginning to realise then, hang on, I had this really awful experience where there was nobody to help and then actually, as I have grown up, and a lot of it has been asking for the help that you need, that actually I have moved on quicker.

…that is part of the process from you and from my tutor, and I had a special teacher helping me as well for the dyslexia, and I think the whole attitude has been picking up on the positive even when I have been devastated; and I have picked that up as a skill as I have gone along from people like you and my tutor and the dyslexia teacher and I can now look and think, well there must have been something good about it, even in my worst lessons I think well there must be something good about it, but it does help, you go home feeling better.

Further reflections taken from Rosemary's autobiography refer to the problems experienced with her classroom practice and the process of discussion and awareness of her own role as a teacher. There are links here to the affective domains of adult learning identified by Brookfield (2000a) as that of recognition of the significance of membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community.

… she realised that she had a problem with classroom management. As usual the team were very supportive and her tutor encouraged her to look at different ways to address this. She began to realise that she had aligned herself more closely with the students and the role of the learner. She was comfortable as a learner; this role of teacher was more difficult. She needed to move. Not so far away that she could not relate to the students but far enough to have the confidence and therefore the authority to teach the

class. This awareness along with observing other teachers enabled a small shift to take place.

> ❖ *This aspect of transformative learning involves taking action on our transformed perspective – where we make a decision and live by what we have come to believe until we encounter new evidence, argument or a perspective that renders that orientation problematic and requires reassessment. Evidence is provided in Rosemary's reflections taken from her interview when asked, 'what makes a good lesson for you?; and where she then highlights the process of teaching a class and creating a learning environment as:*

When there is a lot of interaction going on in the class and its not just me standing there talking to them, its when they are questioning bits, there is just a flow to it, it just feels very different, you get your normal lessons which are ok, and every so often you will get one where it just really clicks with everybody.

… and you build again, doing a lesson that was good and it seems that each time you can build it back up quicker. Initially on the course getting that essay wrong, that was the hardest to recover from and then it got better as we went along and each time I succeeded I was able to go back and grab it.

A further transformation linked to this aspect is evidenced in Rosemary's reflections taken from her autobiography: There are links here to the affective domains of adult learning identified by Brookfield (2000a) as that of an incremental fluctuation in the learning process.

… another small doubt had been creeping into her consciousness. 'I don't get it' had been said many times by the students about this new unit she was teaching. … but it was proving harder to put over in a way that the students could understand it. When L a very competent student expressed difficulty she knew there was something more for her to learn, but this was her last day. This she thought is my next learning curve. She had been looking through the comments on her observed lessons. How much she had learnt and how differently she felt now compared to the first observation. Her confidence had improved as had her competence but there was still so much to learn.

❖ *The last of the aspects of transformative learning is about acquiring a disposition – to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions and those of others to seek validation of our transformative insights through more freely and fully participating in discourse and to follow through on our decision to act upon a transformed insight. Rosemary's reflections taken from her interview refer to the skill of critically reflecting on her practice and that' being able to stop and think' about and acknowledge her development was such a useful part of the process.*

Yes, in terms of the skill that came with me, I think the books and what we learnt about teaching were so good, they gave you the ideas, but the idea of my learning, most of it came from that (the autobiography), and the fact that we did constantly have to reflect on the course. Having finished the autobiography … what I intend to do during the summer holidays is actually bring it back up because I have it on the Institute For Learning (IFL) site now as part of my professional development; and I am actually going to use the same approach with this years teaching; so I can actually stop, take a breath, look back and think this is what is good.

Further reflections taken from Rosemary's autobiography highlight the move from transformative learning to perspective transformation:

The process of putting down in words some of the processes I have been through this last year has highlighted the move from conscious incompetence to conscious competence. It has also highlighted the difference in my feelings of competence in my subject area compared to my ability to teach. This reminded me of when I first started teaching counselling skills. The same gap was apparent there initially. What stands out for me though is how much better I learnt those skills through teaching them and how there came a point when I felt equally confident in my ability to both teach and use the skills. This is also happening in the context of my further education teaching.

Deborah's Personal Voice

Deborah's voice is a very clear and positive one which integrates both her pragmatic responses to learning and her cognitive thoughts on her progress in teaching and in managing students. In her autobiographical writing and interview Deborah has reflected on her internal feelings as she progressed through the course, and used theory to relate to her key transformative moments.

> ❖ *This aspect of transformative learning is about reflecting critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions- our own and those of others; in Deborah's reflections taken from her interview she has identified the key difficulties in her teaching of the GCSE group and the assumptions made of them by other teachers; reflecting on how she reviewed the way she taught the group. And in response to my question, 'So that was quite a change for you in terms of the previous teaching and your theories about teaching, and perhaps challenging in different ways?' Deborah has reflected on the assumptions made of adult learners and the differences in teaching that group.*

… that reflection was crucial I have never been confronted with a group like that since, but who knows, maybe its because I now have a much more reflective way about myself that I would not have got myself into the bad patterns that I did so that the group did respond to me like that, apparently they respond to everyone like that, but then if everyone is told about them in such a negative way, why wouldn't they. I have had a GCSE group since and they are fine; but then I wouldn't have tried to teach them like an AS group. I come in and we play games and the whole strategy behind teaching them is so different to an AS or Access class. … you can't teach every class the same… .

… the Access group are the older students, need a lot of nurturing and they need a lot of support, and they thrive on group discussions in which they can bring their views to the table that is what they like… . They have a range of real world experiences that they can relate to, and you give them a chance to express that and it builds their

confidence, makes them feel like they have made a contribution, that's probably one of the things that I have learnt, … different groups, different techniques. You can't have one technique and expect that to work with all different groups because it won't.

Further reflections taken from Deborah's autobiography clearly demonstrate her ability to be critically reflective; and links to the affective domain of adult learning identified as that of an incremental fluctuation in the learning process. This is where there is a rhythm of learning which provides evidence of an increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, and where there is a developing readiness to challenge assumptions,(Brookfield, 2000a).

The GCSE group became the subject of this autobiographical case study. This group exhibit various behaviours during lessons that act as barriers to learning. I initially decided to focus on planning fun and engaging lessons, proposing that the behavioural problems were a direct result of boring non-engaging subject delivery or tasks. The misbehaviour was present in almost all tasks I tried regardless of how fun they seemed, to me, to be. I endeavoured to find out if these behavioural issues were present in the other subject classes that these students studied. Hence I began a dialogue with each student's tutor and I found out that the majority of students were exhibiting the same behavioural problems in all of their classes.

- ❖ *The next aspect of transformative learning concerns instrumental learning - determining that something is true by using empirical research methods; and which is evidenced in Deborah's reflections taken from her interview where she describes the research study she undertook to help solve the problem she faced in teaching a particular GCSE group.*

My study looked at behaviour management because I had a GCSE group, the GCSE group from hell, they literally were raising the roof, they fought, and they argued, they danced, they were anything but compliant. It is a level 2 group expected to do a subject which is very difficult and the GCSE specification is too broad, it is much broader than what we teach at AS level.

… I used NLP strategies; so I looked at my body language towards the group, and I didn't realise that I would approach the group with crossed arms, they would feel from my body language that I was negative and I think because other members of staff talked about them in quite a negative way as well before I even started, my expectations were negative, as opposed to being positive. So I looked at how I could positively mirror their body language.

Further reflections taken from Deborah's autobiography refer to a transformation in her perspective of the situation and the group.

As teachers, we need to be flexible in our approach to situations, to create new perspectives. Understanding that student's approach lessons from a different perspective as teachers can alleviate anxiety and help us to be more tolerant of challenging situations. This knowledge has helped me not to react angrily to my GCSE group's actions, inaction or comments. Instead, I changed my perspective and reduced the stress I was feeling by reminding myself that I may perceive the situation from a different 'map of reality' to my students. I found that by doing this my mood improved and my students responded better.

❖ *Another key aspect of transformative learning is that of communicative learning- arriving at more justified beliefs by participating freely and fully in an informed continuing discourse. In Deborah's reflections taken from her interview she acknowledges the helpfulness of the Action Learning Set (ALS) peer group meetings*
There are clear links here to the affective domain of adult learning identified as that of recognition of the significance of membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community (Brookfield, 2000a).

… and we had the Action Learning Sets; there was a regular meeting every week where we were all expressing what we had found effective and what we hadn't and

our ideas about teaching, so they were being evaluated by other people. Evaluation is saying what's good and what's bad and that's very much what happened; so it wasn't a case of us coming in and everyone pulling it to pieces, it was a lot of people actually saying that was really good I have been able to use that as well, as well as people saying have you thought of doing it like this? It was a very reflective open process of us evaluating our ideas about teaching and continually, every week I came away with new ideas of things that I wanted to try. It would be good if you had those reflective groups in your actual jobs. I think it is crucial and it created a good group dynamic as well, group bond.

Further reflections taken from Deborah's autobiography highlight how she has linked theory to practice and interestingly mentions the idea of a mirror and perceptual change; both of which have been identified earlier as key aspects of transformative reflection and learning.

In Buskist and Saville's (2001) study, students reported that rapport developed when teachers understood that students occasionally have issues arise that inadvertently hinder their progress in their courses. This understanding shown by the teacher clearly shows that the teacher can put themselves in their student's shoes, a key principle of NLP. As teachers' we should try to experience the situation in a different way. Literally, as though you were standing in someone else's shoes, which, is called the 'NLP Meta Mirror' or 'Perceptual Positions' (Burn and Hailstone, 2005). Teachers can use this strategy to empathise with their students. According to Churches and Terry (2007) effective teachers use this process when they plan lessons. As a teacher, I used this technique to imagine myself as one of my students; completely new to the study of psychology. From this perspective, I would ascertain the key points that my students need to understand about a subject. This technique proved extremely effective with the GCSE students. Once I began illustrating the material with examples they could relate to, they seemed to grasp material quicker.

❖ *This aspect of transformative learning involves taking action on our transformed perspective – where we make a decision and live by what we have come to believe until we encounter new evidence, argument or a perspective that renders that orientation problematic and requires reassessment. Evidence is provided in Deborah's reflections taken from her interview.*

I think it has come from when I had just become an examiner so I have just been marking exam papers and they are highlighting some of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner's theories and it was almost as though they were things that I was doing already and not even realising that they related to the theories. It was obviously there in my subconscious that has made me do it, but I didn't realise until I looked at it and I thought actually that's what I do, so it was a bit of an epiphany and really nice to know that someone said that it's a good idea because sometimes you were doing your best in the classroom but you don't know if it's the best approach, if you are teaching them as well as they could be taught. I would say it was towards the end of the course, when you start getting the rewards of the students relating things back to you, things that you taught them, so you are checking that learning and you know that they have learnt, the fact that you have tried doing it in that way and now they are showing that that has been effective.

Further reflections taken from Deborah's autobiography refer back to her reflections on her own behaviour towards the GCSE group and how she transformed her perspective about teaching the group. Again there are links to the affective domain of adult learning identified as that of an incremental fluctuation in the learning process. This is where there is evidence of an increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, and where there is a developing readiness to challenge assumptions (Brookfield, 2000a).

… I realised that my body language had been extremely negative towards this group. I stood facing the group with my arms folded while they sat down many with their back to me. On reflection, I started to wonder why I was behaving like this and I

realised something. Prior to teaching the GCSE psychology group, I had discussed the group with various members of staff and it soon became apparent that the expectations of the group were very low, there were negative beliefs and ways of thinking about the group between staff members. NLP posits that the way in which we think about things affects our behaviours and influences others around us. Therefore, I now realised that the other staff members could have biased my expectation of this group and I approached this group with negative belief and expectations, which were influencing my behaviour towards them and ultimately my communication.

> ❖ *The last of the aspects of transformative learning is about acquiring a disposition - to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions and those of others to seek validation of our transformative insights through more freely and fully participating in discourse and to follow through on our decision to act upon a transformed insight. In Deborah's reflections taken from her interview she describes her own personal transformation as:*

The best thing, it's a revelation isn't it to come from being a scared individual, actually quite worried about public speaking to the point where you can talk in front of 30 or 40 people and be comfortable in your skin, its just unbelievable, the transformation you go through in that year is unbelievable, the amount of knowledge you take in, the ability to apply some of the theories that you learn, its just incredible, you just cant imagine going through such a big transformation and the way that they turn people around, because up until that point, even at uni I used to panic and the thought of presentations, to the point where I can now stand up in front of a class and teach for an hour and a half, its unbelievable that they have helped you and guided you along that transformation.

Further reflections taken from Deborah's autobiography highlight the move from transformative learning to perspective transformation.

This practice-based enquiry has been a positive experience for me to undertake at this point in my teaching career. In addition to

improved rapport with my students, I have much more insight into the struggles my students face when trying to learn psychology. I personally did not study psychology at Level 2 (like the students featured) or at Level 3 (A Level). I began my studies in psychology after completing a university level qualification (Higher National Certificate in Civil Engineering). This meant that I had already studied at a high level, which meant I understood the subject quite easily. Having undertaken this enquiry, I am now much more informed about the needs of Level 2 students studying psychology. I can confidently say that because of this enquiry, I can communicate more effectively and ultimately enhance my students learning.

Matt's Personal Voice

Matt's personal voice is one which integrates both his emotional responses to learning and his more cognitive thoughts on his progress in teaching and in managing students. In his autobiographical writing and interviews Matt has been especially insightful about his internal feelings as he progressed through the course, and constructively reflected on the key transformative moments in time.

> ❖ *This aspect of transformative learning is about reflecting critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions- our own and those of others; in Matt's reflections taken from his interview he focuses on the problem of classroom management and his assumption that classroom control was about power but finding out it was really about negotiation.*

… that year it was classroom control and managing to get I think myself across so that I wasn't too friendly, wasn't too strict and wasn't too – something in between.

I have found that effective classroom management involves efficient planning of a lesson and careful description of tasks. The problem with my initial lessons was that they didn't feel like lessons and I didn't feel like a teacher. This mission of mine, coupled with sheer practise, has helped rectify that. At the beginning I set myself three goals. Learn more, manage more (classes) and be more (of a teacher). I definitely know more – simply teaching unfamiliar texts does that to someone, and as for being more like a teacher, after so many times reacting to different situations whilst still trying to put the learner first and get the information across you realise there is no better education than this!

Further reflections from Matt's autobiography highlight his changing perspective on his teaching methods and his learning to be more flexible. The link to the affective domain of adult learning is identified as that of an incremental fluctuation in the learning process (Brookfield,2000a);and provides clear evidence of Matt's increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, and demonstrates his developing readiness to challenge assumptions.

The beginning of the course gave me the opportunity to slowly put into practise all that I was learning and I had had an academic experience like that before. I would pick up a few pieces of advice about tricky students or incorporating Numeracy into Literature lessons and try it out on Monday. I gradually began to carve out my own niche in teaching styles – I was becoming a fan of the humanist style. …right now I was encountering the principles of Carl Rogers for the first time and it really spoke to me – he said things like "negotiate with learners as to how the teaching outcomes can be achieved" which completely turned my traditional view of teaching on its head. In my world, you managed a class, told them what to do and they did it. Negotiation – and therefore breaking down that barrier – seemed an alien concept, how on Earth could you then go back to having power? Well it turns out that I was confusing power with control. It's not about being better than them but working together to develop their learning.

❖ *The next aspect of transformative learning concerns instrumental learning - determining that something is true by using empirical research methods; and*

> *which is evidenced in Matt's reflections taken from his interview where he explains his reason for choosing the autobiography assignment.*

… and I think in this assignment, a bit was my autobiography as I sort of told a bit of my life somewhere and I think there were bits of college and things like that so what I wanted to do was to experience situations where I was taught and then look at how I would do it; and in a way that was quite reflective of what I was doing anyway and like I said …it was a nice balance. I think that it was a great way to end your assignments and to reflect on everything you have done because it included lots of bits of things that were bits in here and in my lesson reflections and my evaluations.

Further reflections from Matt's autobiography identify his approach to critically reflecting on his personal and professional development. The link to the affective domain of adult learning is seen as relating to an acknowledgement of a disturbing loss of innocence: however it is also seen as a corresponding growth in wisdom, (Brookfield:2000a).

At least with Autobiography I could be honest about the gaps because they would be part of my flaws as a teacher I am aiming to fix and I could discuss my process as a whole, even the bits that bewildered me. I just felt that … with Autobiography I can investigate *why* I still don't know and how it affected my feelings and future practise. ... I didn't want to study a moment in time, I wanted to trace my journey back and pick out key moments that made that journey. There were of course negative factors – a lot of it would rely on my opinion and less would be dependant on other people's perception of me. But when I consult someone on good practise it is still me who will be implementing it and I will still want to write about that. So I thought it crucial that I write it in story form to make it more personal to me. If I didn't do this I might not be able to describe how I am trying to put the learner's needs first and the students may be portrayed unsympathetically… . There were so many plusses, the freedom of writing, the chronological order, and the chance to write about my first hand experience in the first person, all the way through. I feel I will have a better chance of working out how I have solved my issues so far if I write how they occurred in the first place and how I felt! Autobiography will remind me what it was all like – I can gain better clarity of description through revisiting memories … .

❖ *Another key aspect of transformative learning is that of communicative learning- arriving at more justified beliefs by participating freely and fully in an informed continuing discourse. In Matt's reflections taken from his interview he discusses the process of the Action Learning Set in clarifying and enthusing about the concept of writing in an autobiographical style.*

Yes … we were speaking in the Action Learning Set (ALS) group, about what we wanted to do, because there were three options; action research, case study and autobiography, and some people had said, I wouldn't want to do autobiography, I wouldn't want to write about myself; but surely that is the easiest thing to write about though because that is what I tell people who are doing presentations now, people who are doing GCSE or study skills presentations, they say I have got nothing to say, nothing to write about. I ask them if they are passionate about anything and they would say no I haven't any interests; so I would say okay then you must know something about yourself, you are here, you are alive, you are breathing, tell us something about yourself for four minutes, that is the topic you know the most about so if I can't write about myself then who can really!!

Further reflections taken from Matt's autobiography provide an indication of the cyclical learning process he experienced in relating theory to practice. There are clear links here to the affective domain of adult learning identified as that of a recognition of the significance of membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community (Brookfield,2000a).

… and I started the autobiography assignment and I know we had to get a lot of theory in … and I started it like everyone started writing and wondering how we were going to fit some of this theory stuff in there and when it came to it I was looking it up the theory and tying it in with what I was writing and to be honest I was putting it in at the beginning and then I was thinking actually this is true, what I am putting down is true. I think I put down about Erikson's model and I am not sure if I spoke about the terms where you can use a list of adjectives, yes Bloom's Taxonomy, that was very helpful to me in my lesson planning and still is. So yes when I was writing these things down I was thinking actually that is right and I do that and I had this whole

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sheep metaphor going; but I found considering the students and again differentiating and looking at the stage of the student in your class really helped me think about how I would teach them.

> ❖ *This aspect of transformative learning involves taking action on our transformed perspective – where we make a decision and live by what we have come to believe until we encounter new evidence, argument or a perspective that renders that orientation problematic and requires reassessment. Matt's reflections taken from his interview provide evidence of his changing perspective in terms of being respectful and caring in a professional manner about the learning process of the students.*

Different range of abilities and planning extra activities and that sort of thing, I am still reading up on that now, and I find it really interesting and Every Child Matters as well is another thing; sometimes you are in lessons and sometimes you speak to teachers and just sometimes you get the feeling that they don't care about the students in their lessons just sometimes; and I wanted to care and Every Child Matters (EMS 2003) showed me that I could without breaking any boundaries between teacher and student and without breaking the respect; so sometimes I could still make it fun and sometimes I could still be respectful of any situations they are in so yes it taught me differentiation.

Further reflections taken from Matt's autobiography demonstrate a critically reflective approach to linking theory to practice and a transformation in his attitude to the teaching process.

The teacher can be likeable, but not friendly in the traditional sense and should have a presence commanding enough to switch convincingly to shouting or loudly chastising. The idea is not to have to control a class – these situations arise when students are given a chance to become distracted; if I am creating lesson plans that suit all learning styles and address their needs then I shouldn't have to tell students at the back off. They would already be working. Humanistic psychology believes that learning needs to involve the whole person; and if they have become distracted they have distanced themselves from the learning process. It is my job to reconnect them and help them

apply learning to their whole self once more. I put this into practise with one to one tutorials that offered advice directly before the lesson itself and found they worked wonderfully.

> ❖ *The last of the aspects of transformative learning is about acquiring a disposition - to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions and those of others to seek validation of our transformative insights through more freely and fully participating in discourse and to follow through on our decision to act upon a transformed insight. In Matt's reflections taken from his interview he is describing his move to perspective transformation; but in his own uniquely and personal style.*

So yes when I was writing these things down I was thinking actually that is right and I do actually do that; and I had this whole sheep metaphor going but I found … differentiating and looking at the stage of the student in your class really helped me think about how I would teach them. So actually I read it through the other day and actually it was true and for the time I wrote it, it was quite helpful if I was to follow it up. I could say I do this more now or I do this more now and reading it through the other day, reading it yesterday helped me think oh that was where I was then and hopefully I like to think I have gone further.

Further reflections taken from Matt's autobiography clearly highlight the role of the Myers- Briggs Type Indicator(MBTI) psychological test each trainee undertakes as part of the autobiographical framework; and which are used to help trainees identify strengths and weaknesses. In this instance they also provide a key transformative learning moment for Matt.

One thing was sure; I couldn't manage learners unless I knew what I was like as a teacher. That's why I am so grateful to the parts of the course that encouraged me to look at the teaching aspects of my personality, what was already there, what needed improvement etc. These tests were fundamentally important to me in developing the skills involved in temporarily shedding the parts of who you are that would just get in the way during teaching and picking them up again after the lesson. It turns out I have good ideas but worry about my ability to make others listen to them. I would mostly agree with this, except that my fear is (or was then) more that students won't want to

listen to what I have to say rather than me not being able to put it across. The tests also said that I was very visually minded and I had never realised how much I think in pictures before. I was then able to look into new ways of planning my lessons.

Chapter 7:   Reflections and Conclusions

This chapter reflects on the study and draws conclusions from the analysis of data of the autobiographical studies of the three trainees and the focused interviews. In so doing it relates these to the theoretical concepts of adult learning and the process of moving from transformative learning to perspective transformation. A more reflexive approach has been taken regarding the research process; in terms of its design and method of analysis in relation to the data and findings, and a personal reflexive approach has been taken regarding how this has changed me as a researcher.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to understand the complex and developmental nature of adult learning through exploring the transformational changes experienced by three trainee teachers. The trainees' autobiographies provided a narrative of their lived experiences and highlighted the move from transformative learning to perspective transformation will be shown below. The focused interviews provided a 'personal voice' that was discussed in terms of the cognitive process of perspective transformation and the affective dimension of adult learning.

The aim of the study and the three key research questions have been successfully addressed; and by reflecting on each one I now provide evidence to support and answer each of the research questions posed at the beginning of the study.

❖ **The first question asked was: what are the key aspects involved in adult education and learning?**

Evidence of this is provided in chapter 2 through a discussion of the recent key changes in adult education; and a careful consideration of how a teacher's knowledge is developed through both psychological and sociological theories of teaching and learning. References to constructivist and humanistic theories of learning and how they have been interpreted in practice are clearly identified in the narrative stories and experiences of the three trainees. Brookfield's (2000a) work on the distinctiveness of the adult dimension within the concept of lifelong learning is seen here as being crucial to adult thinking and learning. Whilst his focus on adult learning is

predominantly about cognitive and dialectical thinking, I have also presented his argument for considering the affective domains within the learning process.

There is evidence within this study to demonstrate that one of the three trainees, Rosemary, fits exactly into this pattern of emotional being; and this can be identified with each of the affective domains as evidenced in chapter 6, Rosemary's Personal Voice. The fact that Rosemary experienced all of the affective domains as identified in Brookfield's study can be considered in educational terms; as her return to higher education was as an adult learner, not having previously achieved either GCSE or A-level qualifications. It was through adult education that Rosemary was able to attend an Access to Higher Education course which then enabled her to progress onto higher education; her success in achieving a first class honours in her Psychology degree is testament to her strong will, ability and tenacity in overcoming her dyslexia and her anxieties as an adult learner.

In Deborah's Personal Voice there is evidence of only two of the affective domains of adult learning identified by Brookfield (2000a) these are: 'a recognition of the significance of membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community' and of 'an incremental fluctuation in the learning process'. This is evidence by an increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, and a developing readiness to challenge assumptions. Deborah identified that she had experienced some anxiety in teaching the GCSE group and needed to reduce her stress levels. This she managed by changing her perspective in terms of realising that the students had a different 'map of reality', and she found that this helped her attitude and her emotional reaction to some of the student's behaviour.

Interestingly in Matt's Personal Voice there is also evidence of two affective domains of adult learning as identified by Brookfield (2000a) these are: 'a recognition of the significance of membership of an emotionally sustaining learning community' and 'an acknowledgement of a disturbing loss of innocence'. The latter domain showing that the process can be seen as representing a loss of epistemological innocence, and involving 'a corresponding growth in wisdom'. This relates to the way Matt constructively reflected on how he could best help the students to learn; and how his

presence and his verbal and non-verbal behaviour affected how he was perceived by the students, i.e. as being a teacher.

In educational terms both Deborah and Matt achieved good GCSE and A-level grades and progressed onto higher education to take degrees in Psychology and English and Drama respectively. There is perhaps a greater expectation that their self-concept, in educational terms, would be positive and that they would have more confidence in their ability to learn.

- ❖ **The second question asked was: what were the key moments that created transformational experiences for the trainee teachers?**

Evidence of this is provided in chapter 5 through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to the written autobiographies of the three trainee teachers; and Denzin's first five stages of biographical method, i.e method, life, self, experiences and epiphanies. This approach allowed me to identify key extracts from each of the narrative stories and afforded a deep and rich insight into not only their 'lived experiences', but also into the five aspects of 'self' as perceived by each trainee. The key moments that caused the trainees a problem or confusion or resulted in a transformation have been highlighted throughout the text. In chapter 6, evidence of the hermeneutical circle of re-examination and re-interpretation is seen as a dialectical process; one which allows for a better understanding of how the whole and the parts fit together; and one which provides an insight into the cognitive and affective aspects of the 'lived experiences'.

- ❖ **The third question asked was: how did the process of perspective transformation occur?**

The three trainees' experiences leading to perspective transformation identified in their autobiographies are now reviewed.

Rosemary's narrated life in her autobiography, followed Mezirow's (2000:22) ten phases of transformative learning in a cyclical manner as she went back and forth

through the ten stages. It was quite clear in Rosemary's narrative and in her comments in the focused interview that her early educational life was both problematic and an emotional struggle. This had been caused by her dyslexia and resulted in her dropping out of education at an early age without any qualifications. Rosemary had later in life achieved a high level counselling qualification, and within her teaching had built on and used this prior experience to help her manage the more difficult students and classes. Her narrative story emphasised how she developed a more intuitive and more emotively empathetic manner which enabled her to relate to the students' difficulties and problems. However in my view, it was not until Rosemary gained in self-confidence as a teacher that she was able to develop a better self-concept; and then became able to take a more rational approach to the teaching and learning process. Only then did Rosemary start to move to the phase of perspective transformation.

Deborah's approach to the teaching and learning process was quite different, as from the beginning of her study she was quite clear about her goals and what she wanted to achieve. There was also evidence through her comments and insights into her ideas and thoughts about the process of NLP, identifying that she did progress through ten stages of transformative learning; but in a more linear way and structured manner. It could be argued that Deborah, having experienced a working environment and achieved an HNC in Computer Design before changing career and returning to education, already had a more rational approach to thinking and learning. Deborah's use of NLP as a clearly defined strategy helped her in achieving a better level of communication with the GCSE group, through a structured change in her use of both body language and verbal praise. In time this might build into a more intuitive approach to classroom management. Deborah's move to perspective transformation was a clearly defined process and achieved through her constructive and positive approach to learning and her ability to critically reflect on her own learning process.

Matt's goal in life and in teaching was to make it fun and he was clearly disappointed when he found that some students were not really interested in learning. The main challenge for Matt was to find a way of developing their interest and motivating them to learn. He changed his approach to that of a humanist one where he focused on the needs of the learner. Matt also became a critically reflective learner himself and used the MBTI analysis in developing his own skill levels, particularly in understanding

that he was a visual learner which helped him in terms of planning his lessons. He followed the stages of transformative learning and visibly demonstrated his awareness and understanding of the perspective transformation process in a change in behaviour and attitude to teaching students.

It is useful here to consider the links to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; and the fact that adult learners have to achieve a certain level before they can progress to the higher stages. Perhaps there is an argument to be made, and one that considers Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning as being not dissimilar, with adult learners moving back and forth between some phases before they are ready to progress to the higher phases. This process also relates to the relationship between a 'rational' approach and an 'emotional' approach to thinking and learning.

Having now identified and evidenced where the three research questions have been answered successfully in the study, I now move to discuss my own reflections on the research process.

Reflections on the research process

Initially I had to search within myself to place emerging interests in autobiography into a clearer perspective and focus; and in so doing discovered the need for more in depth research into the contemporary literature on adult learning and transformative learning.

The fact that this study was initially problematic for me can be placed in the context of 'reflexivity' as the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher (Guba &Lincoln, 1981). Reason and Rowan (1981) looked at how one becomes 'critically subjective' in terms of a conscious experiencing of 'the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and as learner'. This was helpful in terms of my concerns around my own involvement as a practitioner in the research process; and my role as course leader which involved a responsibility to meet external quality assurance procedures and national professional standards. Alcoff and Potter (1993) usefully discuss the process that reflexivity forces on us in making decisions and choices involving research and how this affects our 'multiple identities' and our 'fluid self'.

Whilst generally aware that my preference was for an autobiographical research framework, my thoughts oscillated around the need to develop a study that would be acceptable for a doctorate. Key questions and concerns surfaced about the feasibility of involving the life stories of adult trainees; about the possible implementation of a transformative learning environment and about the embedding an educational autobiographical focus within the pre-service course. These questions and concerns were in due course all resolved and eventually evolved into a biographical study of three trainee teachers focusing on their transformative learning processes.

Having successfully completed the first two years of the course it was somewhat disappointing for me that the actual completion of the thesis has taken far longer than anticipated. However I need to take into account that an OFSTED inspection of the post-compulsory teacher training courses for which I had responsibility took up the best part of one year. Also the step-change in educational policy, and the move to new teacher training standards and teaching qualifications for the further education sector, further involved me in the re-writing of three different levels of the post-compulsory teacher training courses; involving both the part-time and the full-time courses and this took another year. So four years in, and although I thought very little had been achieved, on reflection I had through the re-writing of the full-time pre-service course been able to implement a transformative learning environment; which was essential for data collection in the form of the trainees' autobiographies; and implemented, recorded and analysed the focused interviews. The next year or so seems to have flown by and despite several major life enhancing events taking place, there was still persistent progress being made and drafts of work submitted for assessment and discussion. A personal epiphany happened when I was writing the literature review, and I suddenly realised that the narrative stories were really about the changes in adult education, and the complexity of the processes involved in adult learning and thinking. In that moment I had a very clear picture of the structure of the thesis and the structure and format for the analysis of the written narratives and the focused interviews. Determination and tenacity in terms of my writing and finding my own voice has followed in finally achieving the completion of the thesis.

The next question to consider is what would I do differently if I was to start again? In many ways I am unsure, as this has been a developmental process and particularly so

in terms of the analysis of the data. This has been a process that can be seen as the hermeneutical circle, where re-examination leads to re-interpretation. The forwards and backwards aspects have been about finding new information; and reviewing when and what that has meant, and interpreting the meaning in terms of the models and theories used for the data analysis.

On reflection as to my own attitude to the study, it was not until I moved into a more rational approach to the writing and working process; and let go of the emotional ties that were holding me back, that I was able to move to what Mezirow (1991) identifies as perspective transformation. Overall I have learnt a great deal about the process of writing and structuring a conceptually coherent and academic body of work; and also about myself as a researcher in the process.

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APPENDIX A

Interview with Rosemary

The interview with Rosemary was held on Wednesday 8th July 2009 approximately one year after the completion of her PGCE course at the 6th Form college where she was working. The focus provides an insight into Rosemary's approach to teaching and learning and further background to her autobiography.

We are going to talk about the PGC course and ask you to reflect back on some of the key points on the transition points, learning points for you. A little bit initially about your reasons for coming on to the course.

It was quite interesting because I have never really thought about teaching at all and I was intending doing a doctorate in clinical psychology and that was where I was definitely heading, along that line somewhere and then when the letter came through and said had you thought about teaching, I thought yeah, and that was really why I went, it was just like that, just that letter, it hadn't been anything I had thought about at all. *And that was the letter sent from the School of Education at the end of your degree?* Yes, the letter did have an effect, because it is strange to be asked 'have you ever thought about teaching' and it was like, have I ever thought about teaching and then I did think about teaching and I thought yeah ok I could do that, and that was why I went on the course.

Did you think about teaching before, what did you think about teachers before?

I have a real problem with teachers, I hate them, and I think they all ought to be shot, I didn't have a very good experience myself educationally, but the fact that it was talking about college, which was where actually I had got help to move into education rather than school, that's why I thought, oh yeah college I could do, I would never actually go to school, because I still think I might blow them up.

Did you think of a difference in terms of lecturing and teaching at that stage?

I think it was just that image I had of the support, being diagnosed as dyslexic and supported in education (whilst at college) where as in school it was just a case of you know I was useless and there was nowhere to go with that, no support with that so I just dropped out uneducated, *so it was the support you received from the college that was really helpful?* Yes, and I thought I could do that, I could

teach people that wanted to learn, and that the college was much more supportive than the school and that environment I could work in whereas I wouldn't want to work in a school.

Did you have a specific theory of teaching or ideas of how you wanted to teach when you started?

Yes, it was almost fairytale and I was going to be this wonderful teacher with these wonderful students who listened and learnt and it was going to be great fun, which did change, but initially on my placement when the students played up and I was still putting it down to the students, these were a bad lot of students rather than anything to do with teaching in general, that rude awakening came when I got my job.

So you were thinking then actually it was about how you taught, or not so much how you taught, how the students behaved and responded that if you were teaching they should respond.

Yes, and if you had done an interesting lesson then they would be interested, particularly one group was not interested at all and very badly behaved and I actually had no idea how to deal with it whatsoever but I put that class over to one corner as a bad class rather than think about that's the reality of the students not wanting to learn and finding it quite funny to be disruptive, so all those sorts of behaviour were put over to that class.

Did you think back to any of the theories of learning and did they help you relate to teaching?

The one I remember was actually about when someone is being really disruptive, to take them outside of the classroom and speak to them, which I did and she gave me quite a shocking answer and actually walked back in the classroom and continued and I was left totally stumped and I had no idea what do and I thought, oh I haven't read the next chapter and I was very glad to get out of that class, but I do think I actually did learn, although I didn't realise I was learning in there, I think I did learn because I was thinking back when I was taking the students I take now to that class quite often, it is quite consoling, actually my students aren't so bad, it's the students rather than the teaching in general.

So instead of being teacher centred you become more student centred?

Yes, definitely.

We were talking about that and how that's changed, what were the change points do you think of changing your ideas?

When it comes to the first lesson I done where I personally thought I had done a good job and it didn't actually matter what the observation said, and that was a very different feeling for me because it was about the observer and them saying everything was ok and doing it by the book and my mentor at that time suggested I did a discussion with the students which I hadn't done before and I was terrified of doing it and I thought it was going to be a nightmare, and I was being observed, but actually, as I started the lesson I quite got into it and I loved the way the students were responding and talking and when I came out it didn't really matter what the observer said because I felt it was good and any lesson that feels like that at the end of it, as far as I am concerned that is going to be a good lesson, and that was a big shift from wanting the observer to tell me it was good to me thinking it was good, not really worrying what the observer said.

Did that stay with you? Yes, I still get lessons when I think, actually I don't care what anybody says, that was a good lesson and I do find that actually the students will respond with that, they will say, that was a really good lesson, whereas other lessons you think, oh my god it has gone so wrong and then I want to look for an observer again, which I have called for and been supported with so they can actually say, what about this, what about that.

.So you have almost developed your own theory of learning haven't you? Have I? Ok

It is a good approach to use, where you are questioning and asking them to find out about and do an activity base and very Vygotsky *where you are supporting them and scaffolding them as they are asking, enabling them to move on.*

I think what Vygotsky says makes a lot of sense.

What do you think you have taken away from the course, what have you learnt from the PGCE course

I think my biggest thing was the reflection, it really was, it fitted me, I think that is what I tend to do, look back and grow from it, but doing it in that structured way, *reflection in the action learning sets?* Yes. *You had a very structured group didn't you with the tutor with you, you all shared your ideas and thoughts, peer support was helpful for you?*

Yes, but not as helpful as being able to look back and see the different bits happening, I think I learnt doing that last bit of research and it rounds everything up as well for me, all the learning that we done that stays in mind, I couldn't tell you what the other essays were that we done, but that one I can, I can remember the

process of doing it, how I felt when I was doing it, how I felt after, so I think that was the one across the course that had the biggest impact.

Can you take me through some of that, some of the processes, your thoughts when you were doing it?

It was quite interesting because I wanted to start from the beginning, which was really of a failure because I came out of education as a failure and just kind of looking back and remembering it is really quite depressing and remembering some of the things people would say and the fact that my kids then had learning difficulties, so it was kind of like quagmire stuff and I wanted to get away from that, but when I quickly fell into it again, when I failed on that first essay, when I couldn't cope in the actual placement, it was like looking back and thinking oh my god how could I cope with that again, so noticing that I had coped with it and that each time I had found a solution, *did you find tutoring support helpful?* Definitely, my tutor J, in particular was very supportive of me, she was wonderful, you get to that point and the difference from when I was younger is that there are people to pull you out of, with the first essay, I think we found somebody else to help me find what you were looking for and that it was such a shock that I had done this so totally wrong, then there was the mentor that said lets try something different, try health and social care, I was beginning to realise then, hang on , I had this really awful experience where there was nobody to help and then actually, as I have grown up, and a lot of it has been asking for the help that you need, that actually I have moved on quicker. *The asking has made a difference for you?* Yes, and I think knowing that I had a learning disability which came in college, gave me more strength to stand there and say, no this isn't working, I need help with this, because I never would before, I would never ask for help, and now I will, and I did on the course, and I do as a teacher and I am much more willing now to say, *you have got more self confidence,* because that sense of being so stupid, no I don't want to cry, if I have to say to somebody I don't get it, I don't have that awful feeling, like end of the world stuff, I can actually say it now, and it is ok that I don't know, if we go back further, I wouldn't ask for help, I would have actually got very angry, because I didn't like crying, basically told you to get lost and storm off. That is the urge, when I get to these points, is to run but each time is has got easier not to run and got support. When I have said to Jean, I don't get this, its ok blah blah....then it feels different, I can move on, I may need a bit of help to move on, but I can move on whereas before you just sink further and further. *And you mentioned earlier the word 'crush point' you felt crushed?* Absolutely, at all those really important points for me it was that feeling of being crushed and back to the beginning, because those old feelings surface even now, they surface so quickly and that feeling of worthlessness and

being stupid, they are just there and it is very hard even now to deal with them and put them back where they belong because it feels so real. But now I can actually get a sense and remember actually we can move forward from this. *The learning process has been actually you can recover from that*. That is one of the biggest learning processes is the recovery and I have noticed from other students on the course as well, particularly in the action learning set, they come in and it will be the end of the world, one in particular, it was the end of the world, that was it, she couldn't do it and she was crushed, absolutely crushed and Jean was quite firm with her and we put some points over and very quickly she was back on her feet and she was great, and I also saw that same crush happening in other people and how they recovered and how some didn't as well. *It is an interesting term crushed because it has a very physical feeling to it.* Well it is very physical isn't it, when you get that sense, because it is destroyed, you have built this confidence up and it is very fragile and it crushes it, bang it has gone and somehow you have got to pick those pieces up and try and build that confidence back up again and it is pieces that build it because you cant just recapture that feeling you had. *Is this a change factor for you at this stage then*? Yes, and you build again, doing a lesson that was good and it seems that each time you can build it back up quicker. Initially on the course getting that essay wrong, that was the hardest to recover from and then it got better as we went along and each time I succeeded I was able to go back and grab it. *Did you find each time was different and was it easier, was the crush less each time?* I don't think the crush was less I think the rebuilding was less, each time the crush was totally devastating but the recovering from that, the bit that you can actually look back and think, I can build from this, I can build from that and a good mark on an essay, a good compliment from the course and even something that other students have said to you that was good, then you have more there to build up each time. The first essay, I know I had my degree but I had nothing to actually support me in my idea of being a teacher, I had a degree in psychology, I had nothing to support me being a teacher, *so it was a challenge asking you to write about being a teacher, reflecting on it?* Yes, I think it was the roles and responsibility of teaching, and it was totally alien, so when that went wrong I didn't have anything to rebuild that confidence with until I did it right and then I had one little bit to rebuild it with but it wasn't strong because I had to have help to do it, I hadn't understood it on my own, next time when I did it on my own, it was oh I can do this after all, it was just a misunderstanding, I can do it and then it gets stronger and then you get your next crush point, when I couldn't do the basic skills, oh no, this is the end of the world, no where to go with it, I cant do it and if I cant do it, I cant do it. *Because this was a subject area we had discussed and put you in for your placement,* but we did find somewhere and actually even when it seems like there is nowhere to go, and that same day the lesson with the

access students because I was in the refectory crying and basically saying I was going to leave, then my mentor said to me about the health and safety care, give that a try and I went out and the teacher came over and said the psychology teacher hadn't turned up and would I be happy to go up there and take the access students on my own, *so you were thrown in at the deep end?* Yes absolutely, *but in a subject you knew, which was perhaps different,* but because that went so well, and when you think that is the same day, we are not even talking about a different day, *from one extreme to another,* and they loved the lesson, they really enjoyed the lesson and I felt good, and I thought, I actually know what I am talking about, I can do this, so I literally had the two extremes in one day. Of course, those bits I can take with me. Even here sometimes when I sit, I think oh my god I am hopeless and all the rest of it, and I think about that first lesson with those psychology students and it is like, I can get that energy again, and I think that is why my students like their lessons because I like what I am teaching them. *So your enthusiasm and your motivation come over?* Yes. *What is interesting is your reflection, although you felt crushed because you felt something didn't go as well as you wanted it go, you're reflecting but actually your reflections are on the positive points.* Yes, where if you go back it would have been the negatives, I wouldn't have even been able to see the positives. *So the course has actually helped you look at the positive reflective points.* Yes bringing it all together gradually, *the course enabled you to review that and become more aware of the metacognition that was going* yes, and also to see those processes because you don't see them if you don't look back, but even actually stretching back that far to how it was right back then and seeing the same processes, but differently, even in the PGCE course and even now in teaching, *because of the time factor, having been through it, that feeling of being crushed and rebuilding, but at the end of the course, being able to look back and look over those key points and the rebuilding status,* and it also helps you get those rebuilding bits because you have stopped and you have looked and you can see the bits that are the strengths and you think yeah, actually I did that really well *so it was the positive points you took and built up on from there.* But that is part of the process from you and from my tutor J, and I had a special teacher helping me as well for the dyslexia, and I think the whole attitude has been picking up the positive, even when I have been devastated and I have picked that up as a skill as I have gone along from people like you and J and the dyslexia teacher and I can now look and think, well there must have been something good about it, even in my worst lessons I think well there must be something good about it, but it does help, you go home feeling better, you can't always find it. *Does it help you to understand the students having problems and struggling?* To an extent, but I think part of what I am struggling with here is because my process in education has been I have wanted to learn, I get very angry because

they don't want to learn and I actually find that a very difficult process to come up against and that is really quite a struggle and I really want to say to them if you don't want to learn I don't want to teach you, go away, but you are not allowed to because of teaching figures and this is part of my disillusionment that it is not about teaching and enjoying the subject, it is about getting good retention figures and I hate them but I actually do like the teaching bits.

Is there anything else you want to say or tell me or consider from your autobiography?

Well when I finished that autobiography and remember I got the job, what I now intend to do in the summer holidays is actually bring it back up because I have it on the IFL site now, as CPD and I am actually going to the same with year teaching so I can actually stop, take a breath, look back and think this is what is good, *you are going to use that process again for yourself,* yes, in terms of the skill that came with me, I think the books and what we learnt about teaching were good, they gave you the ideas, but the idea of my own learning, most of it came from that (the autobiography) and the fact that we did constantly have to reflect on the course and they do ruin it a bit in college I think because they want reflections on everything, so we do our training and then they want a reflection and then a reflection on your lessons and it loses that power of being able to look back and see what is happening. *It that a difference between reflecting on something you have been asked to do and reflecting over a time period on different processes,* you can see the process on one lesson or one training, I think you have to look over a period of time and then you start to seem the patterns emerging and my crush pattern, I can see that clearly, but if I had looked back over one week of the PGC I wouldn't have been able to see that and so I just think that it has actually been, overused, something like that so that actually I don't think people benefit from it, having to do it all the time these silly little exercises that are forced on you and when you look back you think well I don't care, I just want to get on with the next lesson, when actually it is very nice to sit down and look back and see where you have changed. *Do you think that the reflective practice, when you are asked to reflect on your assessments tends to focus on the negative rather than the positive,* actually I think it is negative, that is another reason why I struggled with it because normally it is about where you can improve rather than actually what you have done well and actually that is a demanding reflection that I didn't pick up from the PGC that the demand was being able to pull out the good, I am not sure what was different about the instructions if you like about that, but yes there is a big difference in these little reflections. I think you do it, doing it the other way around but I think looking for the areas where

you have grown, and then you want to grow more so then you pick up the bits that did go well, *because the emphasis on your autobiography was about your professional development,* yes, it is development so its good, helped you to develop, when you think of development, that is a growth isn't it. *You were looking at the growth points,* yes, rather than what was going wrong. *If I am asking how can I improve is that saying I have not done something very well?* Yes, exactly *and you tend to look at the negativity within it rather than the positive growth.* I don't tend to do very many of them, I don't like them, but I am looking forward to doing my reflection for the year, *that will be your CPD for the IFL,* yes, I put this one straight up there, put my hours up and felt really proud to have that and I got a prize for it as well, that was amazing. *You did work very hard and you did face a lot of crush points, you picked yourself up dusted yourself down and moved on.* And I think each time I picked myself up quicker; *and the feedback from your tutors and the students was excellent,* I get very good CCM's (Corporate Consultative meetings), I have to come in and talk to students, whether I am a good teacher, whether they learn, and I always get very good report. But sometimes it is also about telling them that to pull their socks up; *they need the parameters sometimes, it's not all about warm fuzzes.*

APPENDIX B

Interview with Deborah

The interview with Deborah was held on Friday 10th July 2009 approximately one year after the completion of her PGCE course at the 6th Form college where she was working. The focus provides an insight into Deborah's approach to teaching and learning and further background to her autobiography.

So really the focus of the interview is on your personal and professional development and your experiences during you PGC course, just a few key questions I would like to ask, but if there is anything else that you think is relevant, just add in and cast your mind back a year or so to when you were on the course. So we start with, what were your reasons for coming on to the PGC course?

Well, initially I didn't have this love for teaching that I do now, originally I had completed this degree course in psychology which I absolutely loved and would have potentially liked to have become a psychologist but it became quite clear towards the end of my degree that the transition into becoming a psychologist is not as straight forward as I had hoped, I would need more money to do more training, and not funded unless you were clever enough to get into a clinical PhD which I got a 2.1 for my degree and they tend to look at 1st, so my ideal profession was to become a psychologist,

teaching seemed a bit of a full back option at the time, but that is the absolute honest response, I had a pretty good job before I did my degree, I had a pretty good job in engineering and then I left that to do psychology, a massive change, *what was the reason for the change?* Engineering is not the right job for me, any of the diagnostic tests reveal that I am meant to be a teacher or a nurse, anything of that profession, some sort of counsellor, engineering would have been one of the careers that they would have said I was not suitable for, it was something I had fallen into out of college and I was making money, so I was reasonably happy but I never felt satisfied in it. *You were recommended by a teacher to go into it?* Into teaching, *or into engineering,* engineering no, basically my parents didn't want me to go to university, they were very against the idea and I was really imitated by that because I really wanted to go and instead of just doing it I followed their wishes and found myself a job and it just so happened that I found myself a job doing computer design for an engineering company and they would pay for me to do my HNC and so I thought well at least I am getting trained in something, so I did that for a few years, and was just not happy and so unfulfilled. So I thought I am going to go against what my parents want, I was living on my own at that point anyway, I thought I am going to do a degree, I would really like to do psychology, so I just threw myself in, did this degree, absolutely loved it, wish I had done it sooner and after that I had been thinking teaching is a good option, it is a great option if you want to have children, it's a career where you can give something back, its fulfilling, so I thought ok lets do the PGC, its funded so I have got nothing to lose in doing it, lets see how I get on in teaching, maybe later, once I have saved up the money I could go on and do my training and become a psychologist. So initially I never saw my career as staying as a teacher long term. I was originally going to be a primary school teacher, I got into a primary school PGCE and then I thought quite seriously about it and I thought I see myself more working with 16 year olds and up, that is where I think I would excel and so basically I joined the PGCE without much knowledge about teaching at all, *so no clear definition of how teaching might be or your role as a teacher particularly?* No. *You came in quite open minded,* very open minded/ignorant. *Of course you have always got the option having come into teaching to move on with your psychology into being and educational psychologist.* Definitely and being a teacher is never going to be a wasted career is it, it is always going to give you skills of imparting knowledge to people and helping them develop, its just invaluable, I mean I have had a complete turnaround now, I do see my career as staying in education but at the time I didn't.

Did you have a specific idea about teaching, but clearly you didn't?

No I didn't I learnt those on the PGC, and really its very much Bruner's idea of the spiral curriculum is the one that having done my PGCE and seeing that effective with my students just completely, introducing them to a topic, starting of with the basics and then revisiting it and getting them to give me more and each time revisiting and getting them to give me more and I give them less, now it has got to the point where you can get a student to answer the whole question themselves with very little direction but its just removing that scaffolding isn't it, which is very much Piaget's idea as well, so I didn't have any theories really about education, it wasn't even one of the areas I specialised in at university. *Well that is what I was going to ask, did the psychology degree give you any insight into that at all?* It did teach me about Piaget and Vygotsky and Bruner, but I wasn't really thinking about it when I started my teaching because I had done that in my first year at uni and hadn't revisited it again. *So having done that in your first year, three years later, there weren't the connections until you did the PGC course?* Very much, it didn't come to mind until I started applying things in the placement, *and making the connections there*, definitely. *Do you think your psychology background moved you towards a more cognitive and constructivist approach to teaching,* can you remind me of the cognitive essay, *its Piaget and Bruner, it is about more mental thinking construct and active learning,* a versus the idea of behaviourism or humanism, humanism is you self direct, I like all of them, and I think especially as students moving from AS to A2 I would like to see them moving more towards a more humanistic approach and what I have been doing, so I started off very much cognitivist absolutely, and a lot of praise and reward would be the behaviourist coming in, I am a massive user of praise to point when I even got, I am a little bit flamboyant and over the top sometimes when I teach, one of the observers thought I was being a bit insincere with my praise, he thought I was so over the top that it might sound a bit patronising, which is interesting, but that was just really because they didn't know me, because the students didn't respond like that, *because they understand and know how you are,* they understand, for instance if a student gives me a really good point, I would turn round and say to them, you're a genius, you are on fire today, they will giggle to themselves and feel quite happy with that, I can guarantee they weren't feeling patronised, but someone else observing that doesn't see the day to day rapport you have with your kids might have thought that. Very much now moving towards the humanistic, so as they have gone from AS they have that basic understanding of how psychology works and the different approaches, I would now like them to direct themselves more, so for instance, we have learnt about media and the role it has in violence, now I wanted the students to go of and make presentations on a different tragedy that somehow links media to violence, so there is the cases of the Columbine killings which has a link to media violence, Jamie Bulger, and let them choose a tragedy

and go off and present it back to me and it was almost like a jigsaw type approach, where different students had different tragedies and they then needed to teach the rest of the class about the different tragedies. It was good because they could pick the tragedy so they are directing their own learning which is more humanistic.

So gradually you developed your own theories as you worked through, and how what worked for you and what didn't.

Absolutely, I mean the spiral curriculum I think is one of the most effective things you can do in teaching.

Really from that, were there any particular, was that a change factor for you, were there any particular change for you as you went through that actually highlighted the teaching learning process or changed your approach to teaching?

I think it has come from when I had just become an examiner so I have just been marking exam papers and they are highlighting some of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner's theories and it was almost as though they were things that I was doing already and not even realising that they related to the theories, it is obviously there in the sub-conscious that has made me do it, but I didn't realise until I looked at it and I thought actually that's what I do, so it was a bit of an epiphany and really nice to know that someone said that it's a good idea because sometimes you were doing your best in the classroom but you don't know if it's the best approach, if you are teaching them as well as they could be taught, *so quite reassuring to know actually somebody else thought you were going in the right direction.* Absolutely, which sounds really ignorant? *Did that happen during the course?* It did happen during the course definitely, *can you think back and think at what stage or time that might have happened?* I would say it was towards the end, when you start getting the rewards of the students relating things back to you, things that you taught them, so you are checking that learning and you know that they have learnt, the fact that you have tried doing it in that way and now they are showing that that has been effective.

Were you able to test those ideas and evaluate your ideas about teaching during the course?

Yep, with the tutors very much so and we had that ALS set, there was a regular meeting every week where we were all expressing what we had found effective and what we hadn't and our ideas about teaching, so they were being evaluated by other people. Evaluation is saying what's good and what's bad and that's very much so it wasn't a case of us coming in and everyone pulling it to pieces, it was a lot of people actually saying that was really good I have been able to use that as well, as well as people saying have

you thought of doing it like this, it was a very reflective open process of us evaluating our ideas about teaching, continually, every week I came away with new ideas of things that I wanted to try. It would be good if you had those reflective groups in your actual jobs.

Yes, they do actually, it has come from outside industry, action learning sets. I think it is crucial and it created a good group dynamic as well, group bond.

So some of those change factors and epiphany's came through the ALS and more towards the end of the course for you, and that was a reflection on how you were teaching and what was happening in the teaching place?

Definitely, I wasn't afraid to try things. *Was there any key one or two that you can think back on?* K with her use of IT, I really was enthused by that because she had all these different games and she just helped me make starters to lessons, really fun, we did blockbusters, who wants to be a millionaire and you have this interactive game and at the beginning of every lesson we have a game that starts of and the game would be usually review of the key terms that they need to know for that unit, or different theories or concept and so I will let a student go up and they would be the quiz master, then the group would be split in two and they would know at the beginning of the game there would be a bit of assessment , not a traditional assessment, it is going to be fun. So that was something that K gave me that I was able to use and I am sure there are loads more.

Let's go on to the autobiographical assignment if you can remember that one.

I looked at behaviour management because I had a GCSE group, GCSE group from hell, they literally were raising the roof, they fought, and they argued, they danced, they were anything but compliant. It is a level 2 group expected to do a subject which is very difficult and the GCSE specification is too broad, it is much broader than what we teach at AS. *Is that difficult for the students to grasp and to teach?* The amount of research methods they need to know is the same as what they need to know on AS, and these were not GCSE students as far as them being at school, these were GCSE students at college, so these are students that bring with them emotional baggage of having failed a wide range of courses and are now retaking, so you have that apathy that you have to somehow, I think the term is disenfranchise, I remember talking to one student and trying to be supportive instead of confrontational and him saying 'I don't need a counsellor'. What did I do for my project, I used NLP strategies so I looked at my body language

towards the group, and I didn't realise that I would approach the group with crossed arms, they would feel from my body language that I was negative and I think because other members of staff talked about them in quite a negative way as well before I even started, my expectations were negative, as apposed to being positive. So I looked at how I could positively mirror their body language. The way I did it was, if they are sat down, I would pull up a chair and sit down with them at the same level. I don't stand over them but it still says a lot more to them, I totally scrapped the way I would normally teach an AS class and it just became much more practical tasks, so instead of trying to do chalk and talk which just wasn't going to work, I had to re-think it and I had to give them word searches, crosswords, much more active learning, I would give them a little bit of text and tell them about theory, but in the most basic forms and then I will say right this is the situation, can you apply it, and actually application theory is quite a high level skill but if you can make it basic enough, then they were able to do it and I also tried to relate it to themselves so much more than I would have in other classes. For instance we were going through Kohlberg's moral development and I would say to them, where do you feature on this moral development and we would have a bit of a laugh about it because they would say we are right at the top, the most moral, the other thing was trying to bring it down to their level, psychology is one of those subjects where you have the unique opportunity to do that, you can relate psychology to every day life and experiences that they have had, so with all that talk of prejudice and discrimination I would talk about football because that is something that most of them know about and that was the epiphany for that. So I did manage to bring them into compliance, not necessarily a motivated group of young people but at least they were compliant and they were learning. *And became more motivated do you think?* Yes definitely. The thing with motivation I was trying to be really positive in the end because I realised the power of language, so things like you can do it, *so their own self concept was quite low.* So you need to have a lot of optimism for change and being just really positive with them but not having unrealistic expectations, a step at a time, very much like with the scaffolding idea, tiny little steps because you cant expect them to be able achieve the same as an AS student.

Do you think that reflection was a useful one, a positive one?

Very much so, that reflection was crucial I have never been confronted with a group like that since, but who knows, maybe its because I now have a much more reflective way about myself that I would not have got myself into the bad patterns that I did so that the group did respond to me like that, apparently they respond to everyone like that, but then if everyone is told about them in such a negative way, why wouldn't they. So I have had a GCSE group since

and they are fine, but then I wouldn't have tried to teach them like an AS group, I come in and we play games the whole strategy behind teaching them is so different to an AS class. *So that was quite a change for you in terms of the previous teaching and your theories about teaching?* Completely, you can't teach every class the same, I taught GCSE this year, AS and Access. The Access group is the older students, *challenging in different ways?* Oh totally, they need a lot of nurturing and they need a lot of support, and they thrive on group discussions in which they can bring their views to the table, that is what they like, so there will be a lot more group discussion with the access students. They have a range of real world experiences that relate, you give them a chance to express that, it builds their confidence, makes them feel like they have made a contribution, that's probably one of the things that I have learnt, because I taught on so many diverse courses during my PGC and since I have been here, different groups, different techniques. You can't have one technique and expect that to work with all different groups because it doesn't.

So starting of from your spiral curriculum and the constructive the actual changes you have gone through and you are actually including all the theories within the classes? Absolutely and I would still very much so use this spiral curriculum for the AS and even for the GCSE, I can see how the spiral curriculum would be more effective, I still would use it.

What do you think overall that you have got out of the course personally and professionally?

The best thing, it's a revelation isn't it to come from being a scared individual, actually quite worried about public speaking to the point where you can talk in front of 30 or 40 people and be comfortable in your skin, its just unbelievable, the transformation you go through in that year is unbelievable, the amount of knowledge you take in, the ability to apply some of the theories that you learn, its just incredible, you just cant imagine going through such a big transformation and the way that they turn people around, because up until that point, even at uni I used to panic and the thought of presentations, to the point where I can now stand up in front of a class and teach for an hour and a half, its unbelievable that they have helped you and guided you along that transformation. For me it was very much a case of the ALS sets were a very positive process because I like to talk about myself, I love I and I love hearing what other people have got to say as well, personal experiences, the ALS sets were very useful. The lessons were good, assessment strategy, checking learning that was good, still use quite a lot of the brain storming ideas, I still use that a lot with the class because its that idea that you find out what they know already without presuming they have got a level of knowledge and then you build on that.

APPENDIX C

Interview with Matt

The interview with Matt was held on Friday 10th July 2009 approximately one year after the completion of his PGCE course at the 6th Form college where he was working. The focus provides an insight into Matt's approach to teaching and learning and further background to his autobiography.

What were your reasons for coming onto the PGCE course?

I have been thinking about this and I think my main reason was I still wanted to be around my subject area but in a different way, so I wanted to still to be in English and Drama to be around the subject to learn about them and possibly to teach them – but it was more that I wanted to stick with what I know. So there was a career progression but mostly rather than learning about it to teach it -would be a different change-it was the subject the idea I could be passing on what I had learnt to other people that was largely behind it.

How did you get to know about the course?

It was hard to remember first time I knew the course existed as the careers office pointed me in the direction of someone to speak to at the university; also a couple of people in my last year at university were going to become teachers at other places and told me about this course.

People often come from different routes but you had clearly made up your mind ?

Yes I took the year out after my degree and just worked for a bit but I had already made up my mind- so I applied on the off chance

You clearly wanted to teach your subject but did you have any ideas about the teaching process?

Not really I knew very little about it and I imagined it would be more about classroom control I was not really thinking about the syllabus and things like that. I wasn't thinking that is what you have to do as a teacher to overcome the fact that some people don't want to learn. So I was preparing myself that that would be the biggest hurdle *or difficulty?* I think like many people I assumed it was easier than it was.

Did you have a specific theory or ideas about teaching?

I did not know about all the theories that were covered but some of the theories you introduced us to, some of the psychology, I had picked up some of that before from other people but did not know they were connected to teaching. Maslow's hierarchy and things like that, my dad knew about that.

Did you have thoughts about people who had taught you, had they inspired you or encouraged you?

Yes I suppose being taught myself, I suppose my one theory was making it fun. I said that at an interview recently, and hey seemed to like that, I thought it was a bit obvious, come in as a young teacher and make it fun, that seems the way to go; I always found the best teachers, the ones I enjoyed learning from were ones who seemed to enjoy being there so that was my theory I suppose, go in and enjoy it and if you are not then pretend you are to try and encourage them to learn.

Did your ideas change as you went through the course?

Yes they did, I am not sure if that refers to the next question – it did because I learnt that it wasn't just about classroom management because that was sometimes an issue and sometimes it wasn't and sometimes it did not matter if you made it fun for example I did a lot of GCSE teaching at the College and I do a lot of teaching they have to be there and they don't want to be there so that was a surprise I suppose that it wasn't necessarily going to be easy.

Whereas you had anticipated that being post-compulsory they would be more motivated?

Yes yes I did, the old saying always goes that it is college and they want to be there but you can't rely on that, and largely they do but other factors like personal problems and I suppose all the differentiation (on the course) that really helped just seeing that would be an issue and teaching you ways to think around it.

But you learnt about the theories as you went through the course?

Different range of abilities and planning extra activities and that sort of thing, I am still reading up on that now I find it really interesting and Every Child Matters as well is another thing -*quite a key policy paper*- sometimes you are in lessons and sometimes you speak to teachers and just sometimes you get the feeling that they don't care about the students in their lessons just sometimes and I wanted to care and Every Child Matters showed me that I could without breaking any boundaries between teacher and student without breaking the respect so sometimes I could sill make it fun and sometimes I could still be respectful of any situations they are in so yes it taught me differentiation.

So your values were to a great extent about respectfulness and encouraging their learning but making it fun?

Yes, yes and then understanding that some don't want that some just want to learn, some don't want it to be fun, some just actually want to learn by rote method.

Do you think that was safer for them?

Yes I can think of a lesson I do at the moment – where one wants to learn that way and it is just a balance thing, I think the balance of subjects that they gave me to teach, GCSE,AS.A2,IB so I did see a range of abilities not just in one lesson but across the

board so the fact I was sent to a college and they gave me a wide range of subjects was very helpful. So I would not have learnt those things about differentiation if I was just teaching an A2 class where they all knew each other and were all on the same wave-length. Coming back onto the course as well to do three days at college and two days at university; you could be a teacher and then you could be a student for two days. You could teach students then appreciate what it was like being taught so it just made you think about the dual nature of their role.

I would like you to cast your mind back a bit to your autobiography- what were some of the key change factors or times when your ideas changed or you came up against a critical incident?

Largely that year it was due to classroom control. I am a lot on that now but that year that was my main concern, each year there is something I have had to overcome. Last year it was making sure that my activities for the syllabus etc were okay, that year it was classroom control and managing to get I think myself across so that I wasn't too friendly, wasn't too strict and wasn't too – something in between. I was reading my autobiography the other day there was a bit where one of my GCSE students tried to climb out of a first floor window; that was a nightmare lesson - only one and a half hours – one left about five minutes in because he found out that he wasn't going to pass the whole course and he said what is the point of me bring here and honestly I couldn't tell him because there wasn't really so he just left but then of course seeing him leave when he was always threatening to leave but never did, seeing him leave made some of the other students who were a bit rebellious think why should I be here and there was an open window behind one of them and he was trying to climb out; and it was difficult , I had had a rough week at that time and I managed to shout at them in a way that wasn't too horrible but at the same I was quite proud that there were a couple of students, there was one who had dyslexia and one who was struggling with the task and I managed to get them through the task and as far as I know they passed their GCSE and everything went well. After a while in that lesson I thought I could keep coming back to them I could keep them turning up and getting them to do the work but it just wasn't going to work. I didn't know at that time if that was a good tactic or not but I tried it anyway; I thought at the end of the lesson it was a sort of success because both students who did want to learn did do their work and I possibly wasn't going to get the other ones to do it. I talked to some of the other teachers afterwards and I mentioned that in my autobiography and they said 'when he doesn't want to do any work he never will and before he has also walked out of my lessons so you did well to keep there till the end'. Which at least is something even if he didn't do any work he was in the room; so yes the fact that I could do it when everything seemed to be going wrong, so that became quite a different lesson to the one I had planned; a very different lesson. I taught me tolerance but also improvisation because I used to do a lot of that in drama at university and I was away from, I was still doing the English side of things but I was away from the drama but I got to do that, you bring starter activities, you bring replacement activities for differentiation and things like that, so that the student is ahead. So the improvisation saying right okay so were going to be doing this but clearly it isn't working so how about we do this – is something which at the beginning of course I would not have thought we could do and certainly you were giving in these lesson plans and saying

the timing is important and it was but in that situation a lesson plan like that wouldn't have saved me. I had to improvise and it worked and it taught me a skill and it is a skill because if you had just taken someone off the street and put them in a lesson and the circumstances change that is the real test isn't it?

But the important thing is that learning is taking place and students understand what they are doing.

Yes it can become a trap a lesson plan sometime; I observed a lesson in my first year where someone was sticking so rigidly to their lesson plan they were saying okay five minutes is over and the student's hadn't understood it but she was sticking rigidly to her lesson plan but I think that was because I was there and she wanted to show me how it should be done.

Yes, I agree, the lesson plans are there to help you know where you are going, but you have to be able to move away and yet still come back and know where you were..

I like doing that and if an activity takes longer than I had planned for it so sometimes it doesn't matter now because as long as they are getting it I would rather they got it because the next lesson is probably a continuation of that and if the haven't got it this lesson then the next lesson is ruined anyway and I have go to do a new lesson plan so it seems pointless.

The next question is about the autobiographical assignment and the process during the course that led up to that- and how useful that process was for you?

It was very useful and I started the autobiography assignment and I know we had to get a lot of theory in there and things like that and I started it like everyone started writing and wondering how we were going to fit some of this theory stuff in there and when it came to it I was looking it up the theory and tying it in with what I was writing and to be honest I was putting it in at the beginning and then I was thinking actually this is true, what I am putting down is true, I think I put down about Erikson's model and I am not sure if I spoke about the terms – uhm you can use a list of terms – you can use a list of adjectives – ' *yes Bloom's Taxonomy'* that was very helpful to me in my lesson planning and still is, so yes when I was writing these things down I was thinking actually that is right and I do that and I had this whole sheep metaphor going but I found considering the students and again differentiating and looking at the stage of the student in your class really helped me think about how I would teach them. So actually I read it through the other day and actually it was true and for the time I wrote it, it was quite helpful if I was to follow it up. I could say I do this more now or I do this more now and reading it through the other day, reading it yesterday helped me think oh that was where I was then and hopefully I like to think I have gone further.

The idea was that it wasn't just a piece of reflection but that it gave you the process of being able to look at where you had started from and how you had progressed.

Which is true and I think in this one as it was autobiography I sort of told a bit of my life somewhere and think there were bits of college and things like that so what I wanted to do was to experience situations where I was taught and then look at how I would do it and in a way that was quite reflective of what I was doing anyway and like I said about the three days at college and two days at university so it was a nice balance. I think that it was a great way to end your assignments and to reflect on everything you have done because lots of bits of things that were bits in here and in my lesson reflections and my evaluations.

Yes it really did because I really enjoyed writing about the lesson observations but I think I gave myself too much work, I had three pages for each one, but that is honestly how I felt, I could not properly sum it up unless I was truly thinking about it and I maybe gave myself too much work but I would rather properly evaluate it, that is think about it because that is how I reflected and how I still do.

You were clearly very good at reflecting- not everyone is!

I am not afraid to be critical and I think there were sometimes / a lot of times where I was new to it that I was really, really bad but that is how you learn.

That is all part of the learning process.

I was watching some of the people who did here presentations - the micro-teaching sessions at the beginning of the course – the very good ones, I was thinking you are too good where you have got to go to, I was thinking this is oppressive, but at the same time you could go straight into teaching. So I did get a lot out of the course so yes I thought the autobiography assignment was the best one. I still want to do writing and I still want to balance writing with teaching.

Do you think that was part of it for you- that it was an interesting process?

Yes some people, we were speaking (in the ALS group) about what we wanted to do, because there were three options; action research, case study and autobiography, and some people said I wouldn't want to do autobiography, I wouldn't want to write about myself- but surely that is the easiest thing to write about though because that is what I tell people who are doing presentations now, people who are doing GCSE or study skills presentations, they say I have got nothing to say, nothing to write about. I ask them if they are passionate about anything and they would say no I haven't any interests; so I would say okay then you must know something about yourself you are here, you are alive, you are breathing, tell us something about yourself for four minutes, that is the topic you know the most about so if I can't write about myself then who can really!!

APPENDIX D

Matt's Journal entries

In conducting this retrospective enquiry as to how I have improved over the year I am going to track my progress with the GCSE group, gathered from a few sources.

22nd January (Journal entry)

Back on the horse and a slight wobble, but I didn't fall off! Jake told me he wasn't going to do anything and I simply told him it did not bode well for his results and left him alone for the rest of the lesson. He was less noisy and stopped distracting others. I hadn't taught this class for exactly a month, I was worrying a lot that this would affect things negatively. It turns out all the reading I did on behaviourism and humanism over the holidays did me the world of good and it was a bit of distance and time to mentally prepare myself for coming back the tougher teacher that I needed to. When I first arrived at the College, I fair cowered at students like those described above. Now I take no nonsense like that and curb the misbehaviour immediately.

February (GCSE lesson)

I saw three students were not working. Two I expected, but the third was a decent student. I talked to her. She promised she would work but didn't. Instead of getting angry I thought about the situation, what she normally has trouble with. I talked to her afterwards and she told me she has dyslexia (which didn't show up on her profile) and extra help would be appreciated. I am now aware of different ways I can approach her learning in class and frequently hold 121's with her. This was around the time I was looking at Eriksson for the assignment and much taken with the idea of respecting an individual situation and the effect it has upon their personality. I began to frequently address or at the very least understand all special circumstances of students in my lesson to the point where I know so much about them and am able to teach them without offence, confusion or frustration that they can't see how to do something.

19th March (Journal entry)

Just taught the GCSE group 'The Beggar'! It was like they wanted to misbehave but I was relentless in stopping it. I am tired now, very tired and of course there must be a

way of doing this without feeling exhausted, but students all did their work in this lesson (a big feat for two of them) and stayed on task. Every time I saw a student leaning over to talk about something I would tell them to get back on task. The reason for this change was the wake up call of seeing this class in the hands of someone else and thinking 'they take control of the teachers. And that's the wrong way round'. I decided I wasn't going to take any crap from now on. I am not being harsh, I am still aware of potential issues and flexible in my lesson plans to allow for greater student development –I have just found that when I yell at students to be quiet, they do. It may be because I have grown as a teacher. I asked a student recently and he said "we preferred you at the beginning. You're just another teacher now". It sounds negative, but then he would say that – because I am more like a teacher now he has to act more like a student and work, which has been a shock to his system. I have finally learnt now that I am not there to be liked, they are there to learn. I doubt they did at first, but under my teaching they are now and that is really the main point.

23rd April (Observation)

It really is the little things that make it in teaching – this observation was standard fare, mostly focusing upon the Incentive (3rd) stage of the model by relating learning to passing their exams and focussing heavily at the start on expectancy. I was showing slow improvement, but my biggest achievement in teaching so far is getting a student who rejects the pen as a learning implement to write things down.

7th May (Journal entry

I had the most challenging lesson yet. Right at the end of the course as well! But the thing is – I just dealt with it. One student walked out because he is failing the course. I couldn't stop that. But it created dissent amongst the lazier learners and the entire hour involved keeping them in class while at the same time facilitating the learning of students who wanted to be there. I wouldn't say I did it brilliantly, but it definitely involved the 4th stage of the classroom management model – disciplinary – I would not let the students who were doing so well have their learning interrupted. I talked to them about their work and made suggestions, keeping an eye on the two students trying to sneak out. They think they are failing and have made that dangerous leap of deciding that their identities are people who are not good at English. I focused upon teaching student who were trying to achieve the opposite identity.

APPENDIX E: Research Interview Questions

University of Southampton

Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences

School of Education

Name of Supervisor: Dr Gill Clarke

Thesis for the degree of Doctorate of Education (EdD)

Being and Becoming: a biographical study into the transformative learning processes of three trainee teachers

The rationale for this research has come out of an interest and increasing awareness of the developmental nature of post-compulsory teacher training programmes; and the range of personal and professional changes that take place during the course of the academic year for many trainee teachers.

Autobiography Research Interview Questions

The focus of this interview is on your personal and professional development and your experiences during the PGCE course.

These are the questions that I would like to ask you, but do add in anything else which is relevant to you.

1: What were your reasons for coming onto the PGCE course?

2: Did you have a specific theory or idea about teaching prior to starting the course?

3: Did this change during the course and if so when and how?

4: What were the key 'change' factors or epiphanies for you during the course?

5: In what way did the auto-biographical assignment help you reflect on your personal and/or professional development?