UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

An Exploration of the Adjustment of Authority in the Higher Education Classroom

Prepared by
Caroline Fleur Lloyd

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
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Doctor of Philosophy

AN EXPLORATION OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF AUTHORITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CLASSROOM

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The research illuminates current practice and the potential of higher education to educate the individual with regard to their awareness and understanding of their own learning through exploration of the tutor-student relationship. Within conventional tutor-student relations the tutor holds the authority. The research has explored that for students to increase responsibility for their learning, an 'adjustment of authority' needs to occur.

Case study data has been explored in line with a critically reflective action research approach with tutor as researcher in order to gain insight to the student experience of the 'adjustment of authority'. Examination of the data has resulted in the emergence of principles to practice that recognise the *relational* nature of authority and responsibility and which indicate the need for the development of an appropriate context in order that students are able to increase responsibility for their learning.

The research has also resulted in the nature of the practitioner being challenged and reconstructed through the continual exploration of practice. The practitioner is able to learn about their practice, whilst remaining open to further learning and whilst mindful of their situatedness.

Through critical reflexivity this research attempts to move beyond the limitations of practice and focus on the personal research journey which provides a dynamic structure for understanding the experiences offered within the research.

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Special thanks finally, to my partner Nick Udall for his vision, strength and love.

ABBREVIATIONS

Adj2 – adjustment of authority

Adj2r – adjustment of authority *role* elements

Adj2p – adjustment of authority *process* elements

Chapter One
Introduction to the Research

1.1 Responsibility for learning

The underlying purpose of this research is to identify ways of teaching that enable students to take responsibility for their learning. In the sense in which I use the term 'responsibility' I am referring to the individual's subjective experience of learning; and therefore responsibility refers to enabling the individual to develop understanding of their learning in order that they are able to develop awareness of those times where they are responsible for their learning and those times that they fall into dependence on the tutor, or other *authority*.

Authority in the teaching and learning situation is a complex issue. Rogers describes the traditional teaching and learning relationship as:

> 'the teacher as possessor of knowledge, the student as recipient' 'the teacher is possessor of power', resulting in there being 'great difference in status between instructor and student' (Rogers, 1978:69).

Shor (1992) develops this positing that:

> 'To one degree or another, average students are silenced in teacher-centred classrooms... having learned that education is something done to them, not something they do...they are exposed ... [to] a dependent relationship to authority. Students are developed into passive learners (1992: 132–3).

This points to education as a process of socialisation:

> 'Education can socialise students into critical thought or into dependence on authority, that is, into autonomous habits of mind or into passive habits of following authorities, waiting to be told what to do and what things mean' (Shor, 1992:13).

Apple (1979) notes that there is no simple socialisation of students into the existing order and no automatic reproduction of society through the classroom, that education is complex and contradictory. One perspective is that education is a socialising activity, funded and regulated by authorities setting a context to be managed by teachers. Education is a social experience for students coming into the classroom with their own dreams and aspirations, some of which fit with, and others which resist the intentions of the context and the teacher. It is the role of the teacher to mediate the teacher-student relationship in addition to those relationships between outside authorities, formal knowledge and students, and the relationships between students and with students. Teachers can present knowledge in many ways, and it is through this discourse and interaction between teacher and students that a key influence of socialisation takes place. How does the teacher interact with students? Is discussion encouraged? Is teacher talk proportional to how much students are encouraged to contribute? Is there transfer of knowledge between tutor and students? Are students free to respond to and disagree with other students and the tutor? Are students involved participants or alienated observers? Are students fed knowledge or encouraged to seek their own material? Are students encouraged to work cooperatively or in competition with each other? Is the outcome of learning tied wholly to assessment or is the value of learning given space to be viewed as broader than this?

Additionally, classrooms exist within a broader context of interaction. The curriculum, the learning process, the tutor-student relationship, student-student relationships, the physical environment, the structure of hierarchy of the organisation, and the funding of the organisation all influence the kind of education students receive and how students should anticipate and prepare for the world beyond the classroom.

An important question is how can education, given these contextual influences, be empowering? Osborne *et al* (1998) write that:

> 'the job of education [is] not to gain compliance but to help individuals work out matters for themselves... [and] to develop autonomous individuals who

use rationality, common sense and experience to inform personal values' (Osborne *et al*, 1998: 92).

It is important to work towards the development of the autonomous individual, but the real issue lies in the individual's ability to sustain this autonomy. The suggestion is then, that learners should go beyond autonomy and aim to become responsible for their learning. Stephenson suggests that:

> '...giving students opportunities to be responsible... for their own learning prepares them for effective performance in their personal and working lives, enhances their commitment to their studies, promotes deeper understanding, builds confidence in their ability to learn and helps the development of high level personal qualities and skills' (Stephenson and Yorke, 1998: 11).

For students to be enabled to work towards responsibility for their learning a key influence will be the role of the tutor. The tutor can choose to lecture, and in doing so reinforce their own security and authority over the teaching and learning situation. Or they can adopt an approach which enables students to participate in the teaching and learning process requiring them to share their authority, as Shor notes:

> 'It is ... more challenging to share their authority' (Shor, 1992: 103).

Student responsibility for learning becomes all the more important for an adjustment of authority to take place.

1.2 Adjustment of authority

The adjustment of authority relates to conventional teacher-student relations. It is concerned with addressing this issue of status, or authority, by making it explicit in the teaching and learning context and fundamentally adjusting the authority in order for students to experience a level of authority for themselves in the teaching and learning situation.

The adjustment of authority should not imply that the teacher has no status or specialist knowledge, the suggestion is that as the teacher enables students to take an increased level of responsibility for their learning, the teaching and learning relationship becomes redefined. The student-staff relationship will take on a level of ambiguity uncommon to the practice of teaching and learning, the staff-student distinction becomes secondary to the fundamental parity between individuals (Heron, 1992). In order for the authority of the teaching and learning situation to be adjusted, this requires that students develop responsibility for their learning. As much as tutors are responsible for the many elements involved in teaching, a shift in authority will also result in a shift in responsibility. It will become the responsibility of the learner to work with the new context towards the development of their knowledge regarding both the content and process of their learning; and it will be the responsibility of the tutor to provide a context that enables the student to experience authority and work towards the development of responsibility.

The intention of the adjustment of authority is that students should be enabled to perceive learning as their responsibility both in and beyond their educational career. If the context is provided it becomes possible that the student will develop responsibility for their learning rather than relying on old patterns of dependence on authority and thus be empowered to take responsibility for their learning.

1.3 The learning experience

I am not seeking to test or measure students' understanding of learning or achievement of learning responsibility, nor to compare one student against another student. My primary concern is *personal* development of learning responsibility, i.e., to focus on whether the student is able to subjectively explore, reflect upon, harness and experiment with their learning towards the development of responsibility for their learning. My analyses and evaluation of whether the student has developed responsibility for their learning relies upon the qualities (and the student's understanding of these qualities) of the student's reflective feedback. The emphasis is therefore not on the content of that being learned, i.e., learning the subject content, but on the *process* of that being learned, i.e., the subjective experience of learning

itself; learning how to learn, and how this leads to the development of responsibility for learning.

1.4 The research question

To what extent is it possible to develop student's understanding of their learning and responsibility for learning through exploration of the learning process?

The research question attempts to probe the potentialities of an educational culture whose attention to and understanding of conventional teaching and learning relationships is a fundamentally conditioned reality. The thesis is particularly concerned with teaching and learning processes which explore this conditioned reality regarding tutor-student relations, and foster students' awareness and understanding of the learning process at a subjective, reflective and experiential level. Therefore the issues rising from the research question are: the qualities of responsibility; and the potential of developing learners' understanding of their learning.

In turn the educational issues arising from this exploration include nothing less than a re-examination of the foundations upon which education presently exists. In the event that the answer to the research question is in the negative, it will be the case that the thesis has examined the parameters by which these issues can be addressed.

The formation of the research question

The central line of enquiry was borne out of my own experience of an Education studies undergraduate programme, through experiencing both aspects of the teacher-student dynamic; firstly as a student in higher education, and secondly as a visiting lecturer at undergraduate level. My learning experience at undergraduate level was multi-levelled, with vivid memories of exploring my own process of learning how to learn. However, this did not seem to be a common experience amongst my peers, and this dichotomy of enquiry motivated my interest in contextualising my learning experience.

On further reflection I was able to see that there were three elements to my learning experience. These elements consisted of:

a) learning about the actual discipline of Education, i.e., the particular subject of study and its content;
b) learning about the process of learning itself, i.e., those particular elements of a learning experience that motivate or enable the individual to learn – learning how to learn; and
c) understanding and sustaining both the content and process of learning, i.e., the individual takes responsibility for their learning.

From my educational experience it seemed that emphasis has been placed only on the first element (a), that of acquiring knowledge of the discipline. Little attention is given to the process of learning (b), suggesting that perhaps an implicit belief exists that through focusing on the first element the second just 'happens', resulting in a further implicit belief that exploring the process of learning is not as important as the acquisition of content knowledge. I cannot recall an occasion where I had sat with a tutor and explicitly explored my processes of thinking, or of seeing another student with the tutor exploring their learning, towards the development of understanding that learning (b), and beyond this whether I was capable of sustaining that learning through developing responsibility for my learning (c).

The third element (c) would seem to be the result of awareness of the second element, i.e. learning how to learn enables responsibility for learning; therefore the potential development of responsibility for learning is lost in the belief that the second element just 'happens'.

Within the student learning experience ideas would be discussed and developed, but there would be no support with regard to the subjective development of understanding learning itself. Responsibility for learning was only pursued through the act of exploring the subject *content*, but not through any direct subjective analysis of the learning *process*. Questioning my own experience led me to ask 'is it possible to develop a student's understanding of their learning and responsibility for their learning through exploration of the learning process itself?'

1.5 Research methodology

An action research approach was adopted in this investigation, with the tutor as researcher (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The nature of action research is that it is self-evaluative; modifications are continuously evaluated within the ongoing situation with the objective being to improve practice in some way. This has been exercised through the use of two cycles of case study research. An implication in adopting an action research approach is that a core element of the methodology will involve reflection upon practice:

> 'Reflection is oriented towards better understanding; practitioner development involves taking action which, when reflected upon, results in changes in practice' (Bryant, 1996:112).

The case studies have explored an undergraduate student population at varying stages of their degree attending one of several courses run by the tutor/researcher over the course of a twelve week teaching period. Data collection methods include student reflective learning journals, evaluative questionnaires, field notes and practitioner reflective learning journal. Adopting a multiple method approach to data collection has enabled the capturing of the whole without losing the value of individual perspectives. By ensuring diversity in the local demands of each case study e.g., variable population, any conclusion to which I might later aspire is certain to have a breadth of application. However, that the case studies have explored practice through participant observation suggests that any conclusion should also be seen to be potentially subjective, therefore the study is offered within an interpretive framework taking into account as far as possible the potential idiosyncracies of this approach, and offering any conclusions as illuminating the potential of the teaching method to enable learner responsibility as opposed to scientifically verified findings.

1.6 The structure and development of the research

My investigation begins by contextualising the research question through a review of theories of teaching and learning which explore and develop the phenomenographic

nature of this work. That is to suggest that the literature of teaching and learning and related concepts cannot be considered separately of each other due to the intrinsic link between the practices - they are 'relational'.

As the research has developed a further relational element has emerged, that of the reciprocal nature of the research with its emphasis on exploring the experience of both practitioner and students. This exploration of reflection on experience has resulted in a process of 'parallel' data collection; thus the relational nature of the data is introduced. Chapter three discusses and contextualises the research journey and issues relating to the development of the study. Methodological considerations are explored with reference to the relational nature of the data and some initial discussion of the situatedness of the researcher.

Chapter four explores the first cycle of research to include further exploration of the methodology and outlining the emergent research themes which are further discussed in chapter five as the discussion considers processes relating to practice. This leads to the identification of specific research themes explored within cycle two which form the body of chapter six.

Chapter seven considers the findings of the two cycles towards the development of principles to practice, leading to a discussion of the research findings and implications of the study in chapter eight. The thesis concludes in chapter nine with a final consideration of the implications of the study and the researcher's final reflections on the research journey.

A number of graphic elements are employed to clarify emphasis and point towards further information. Emphasis within quotes is secured by using bold text, whilst in the main body of the text this is achieved by italicising a word or phrase. The research data is identifiable in the text through italicising direct quotes. Square brackets are used to smooth paraphrased English or adapt a quote for the purpose of appropriate grammatical structure.

Chapter Two
Background to the Investigation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the fieldwork setting, that of teaching and learning in higher education. The discussion refers initially to my experience as a learner throughout formal education in positioning the experience and motivation behind the study. This is followed by my experiences as a learner and practitioner in higher education in order to inform the initial development of the research. Whilst themes are introduced and explored here in the light of the literature, it is relevant to note that due to the emergent nature of the study literature is referred to throughout the thesis as the themes are developed. This chapter positions the thesis within the literature, but it also points to the development of the study as experienced within two cycles of action research.

My story

I have memories of being an anxious learner. Perhaps this was due to early experiences of formal learning being punitive; at aged six I can remember one teacher who used a 'stick' to poke at the pupils who 'misbehaved' or who got the answers wrong, and I can remember lots of my own wrong answers from this time, made even more confusing as I had previously enjoyed learning and was usually 'right'. Later on I have memories of learning just about enough to get by as at least then poor results were because of a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability. A further issue was that of not always understanding what was required of me. Everyone else seemed to know what to do so why didn't I?

I do however have some very significant memories of learning in situations quite different to this. For example, learning to play the piano where I experienced some success and even pleasure in the pursuit. Here at last was something I was finally good at and at which I knew the 'rules'.

In relation to this I really quite enjoyed my weekly piano lessons as my teacher let me learn at my own pace, and was even pleased with my progress. An

additional factor was that we used to talk, about music and the world in general (well, at least the world as seen through adolescent eyes!). This was my first experience of a positive, open and supportive pupil-tutor relationship and was to be consistently maintained throughout my adolescence.

This experience of learning out of the formal school system was what I believe kept me engaged as a learner also within school, where my performance was always just above average; in the top 'set' for each subject, but rarely a high performer within the set. It seemed better to stay as anonymous as possible and continue getting by than to make myself known as a troublemaker or able student (although I now see that I had the capacity to be either or both of these!). Even with those teachers in school who I became familiar with and who encouraged me, even believed in me, I was never able to give fully of myself; perhaps through the fear that I would be humiliated in one way or another, through failure or misunderstanding the purpose of an activity. All in all I found the 'early' part of my formal education very confusing, sometimes frustrating, and rarely pleasurable.

I can see now that I had no confidence in my abilities, and that it was this lack of confidence, precipitated by the confusion I experienced, that caused me to be fearful of stepping out of my vulnerable position to ask where I was going wrong, to trust in any one teacher, or other 'grown up' or authority, to enable me to find my way in my learning.

Fortunately, moving on to university was to awaken my learning potential. I studied a combined education with music BA honours degree, and gradually through the experience of working with other students and developing positive relationships with my tutors, in addition to developing some independence in my learning, I found that I was able to navigate the 'rules'. So much so that over time I was able to redefine learning for myself; that it is a process, and that it is individual to each learner, and that I was just as capable of achieving the results I desired as any one else. This redefinition of learning as a *process* was significant for me, suggesting that I was able to contribute to this if I chose to rather than waiting for others to explain the rules. And so I tried harder, I took responsibility, and through tentative steps got results.

2.2 Background to the study

The study has grown out of an interest in the experience of learning as an empowering process. Through reflection on my experience as a learner in higher education I came to the understanding that learning is empowering when it enables the individual to learn something about themselves as a learner as it enables them to move away from dependence upon an authority to externally monitor the individual's learning, or reliance upon passing exams or grades to indicate achievement, and move towards a recognition of the intrinsic value of learning and learner responsibility. Reflection on my experience of higher education left me with some clear ideas about how I learn. I became able to see where I had come from and how I might go about improving personal learning experiences for myself. Through several significant learning experiences I was able to draw conclusions regarding my own development. For example, the experience of achieving a poor grade in a subject that I was actually quite interested in highlighted to me that it was my lack of effort and reliance upon the tutor to direct my learning that resulted in the poor grade. This enabled me to see that I had misjudged the learning situation on this occasion. Alternatively, the experience of presenting and discussing my final year dissertation in a supportive seminar context with an interested and enquiring tutor enabled me to see that my learning had been deep and effective in enabling the successful completion of this work and the achievement of not only a high grade but also awareness of the value of this learning experience.

An incidental developmental learning activity I undertook at this time was that of writing a learning journal. Through this wholly private exercise, I was able to see that this reflective work was uncovering some fundamental propositions in my process of learning that enabled me not only to increase my grade average, but also to substantially increase the intrinsic enjoyment of learning through the final stages of my undergraduate course. The propositions being exposed were that *significant* learning experiences and *reflection* upon these experiences enabled some development in *understanding* of my learning, and through this I was taking higher levels of *responsibility* for my learning. Hence, the awareness that failing a course

was nobody else's responsibility but my own, and conversely that high grades were my own responsibility and the learning gains deserved to be more than merely an increase in content knowledge.

Understanding

The undergraduate experience highlighted to me that my real learning had been in the process of *learning how to learn,* which Smith (1982: 19) defines as involving:

> '...processing, or acquiring, the knowledge and skill to learn effectively in whatever learning situation one encounters'.

This theme excited me, particularly as this refers not to content knowledge but to process knowledge; learning about the *process* of learning, which is transferable across disciplines and context:

> '...we describe the person who has learned how to learn as capable of learning efficiently, for many purposes, in a variety of situations' (ibid: 20),

This was a valuable discovery in my pursuit of learning and development, not least as this emphasised to me that learning was not and should not be entirely based on learning the subject content:

> 'The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realised that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of *seeking* knowledge gives a basis for security... a reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes sense...' (Rogers, 1983: 120, original italics).

Whilst I had a good understanding in some areas of the subject discipline and I was interested in the subjects I was studying, I was becoming aware of the temporary nature of that knowledge, '...that no knowledge is secure...' (ibid), I was

extremely motivated by this process of discovery and personal development and sought to continue exploring my emerging understanding of my learning.

Significant learning

This developing understanding of my learning led me to explore learning further in relation to my experience. I was developing my awareness of the importance of the process of learning, and was beginning to see that the significance of learning lay in the development of the individual's understanding:

> 'learning should be about changing the ways in which learners understand or experience, or conceptualise the world around them... By understanding, I mean the... idea of learning as a qualitative change in a person's view of reality' (Ramsden, 1992:4).

My developing understanding was enabling me to see that the value of learning was in the individual's involvement in that learning. Rogers (1983) writes of *significant learning:*

> 'It has a quality of personal involvement... it is self initiated. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. It is pervasive. It makes a difference in the behaviour, the attitudes, and perhaps even the personality of the learner. It is evaluated by the learner. She knows whether it is meeting her need, whether it leads towards what she wants to know. Its essence is meaning. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience' (Rogers, 1983:20)

Thus learning takes on a higher level of significance to the individual through their involvement in the process, and exploring the process of learning can lead to the development of greater significance. 'Learning' is about more than knowledge of the

subject, it takes on a level of significance when related to the experience of the learner.

Responsibility

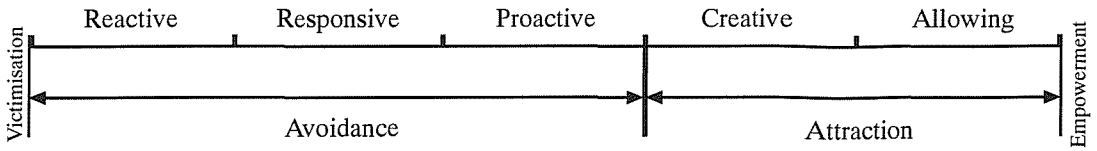
A further theme emerging from this developing awareness of my process of 'learning how to learn' was that of *responsibility* for learning, that is to suggest that I was aware of taking responsibility for the choices and outcomes of my learning (i.e., achievement of high or low grades). Benson (1991) offers insight to his developing awareness of responsibility:

> '... I could very clearly see areas where I constantly seemed to repeat 'mistakes'... where I had clear patterns of behaviour that did not work and corresponding patterns of reaction and blame to avoid my own responsibility in the matter... In more recent years I have been able to increase the areas of my life where I have taken clearer responsibility to create what I want... and correspondingly accept responsibility for the results I get in life...' (Benson, 1991:3).

In developing his perspective Benson offers a continuum of five levels a person might take toward life (figure 2.1) where victimisation lies at one end and self empowerment or self responsibility at the other. At the victim end our mode of operation is reactive; waiting for something to happen and then reacting often as a victim of circumstance, avoiding what you don't want. At the other end of the continuum we take responsibility for our condition and for changing it; setting out to create the results we choose to have in our lives:

> 'Most of us lie somewhere between these two pure states. The more responsibility we can honestly take for our lives, the more we learn...' (ibid: 3).

Figure 2.1 - Levels of responsibility (Benson, 1991)



This model has a level of congruence with my own experience as a learner, with my development from being a 'victim' in learning situations to that of 'self responsibility' clearly evident. However, it also indicates a further theme to be explored later in this chapter, that it is sometimes the responsibility of others (in my experience the teacher) to support the individual in enabling them to see where they might be going wrong and in the process help them to create the results they want.

Rogers (1983) discusses responsibility in the context of freedom and the potential of stepping into the unknown by accepting responsibility:

> 'It is the realisation that ' I can live myself, here and now, by my own choice'... It is the quality of courage which enables a person to step into the uncertainty of the unknown as she chooses herself. In the discovery of meaning from within oneself, meaning that comes from listening sensitively to the complexities of what one is experiencing. It is the burden of being responsible for the self one chooses to be. It is the recognition of a person that she is an emerging process, not a static end product' (1983:276).

This notion of the *process* of developing responsibility as in line with the exploration of the process of learning how to learn enabled greater congruence of thought and action as I continued to explore and *live* these as intertwined phenomena:

> 'On the learning front, the more I practiced at the upper end of the spectrum... the more I seemed to learn about myself and *the deeper the learning experience seemed to affect me*... Through the doorway of responsibility... I also began to develop a thirst for learning...' (Benson, 1991: 4 - 5).

I was becoming able, through striving towards self empowerment, of creating the results I wanted to have in my life whilst continuing to learn about the process. At the same time, however, I was aware that sometimes the contexts within which I operated were not all equal in enabling this. However, reflection upon my journey enabled me to see that whatever the context, this was a valuable learning experience and I was gradually becoming able to apply the principle of responsibility for learning into other areas of my life and in doing so developing as a person:

> 'The individual who sees himself and his situation clearly and who freely takes responsibility for that self and for that situation is a very different person from one who is simply in the grip of outside circumstances' (Rogers, 1983: 278).

Reflection

Upon beginning teaching in higher education I chose to continue writing the learning journal, but this time the journal included reflection upon my experience of teaching as well as upon my learning. This is in line with what Brockbank and McGill (1998), drawing on the work of Schon (1983 & 1987), discuss as *reflective practice*:

> 'consciously engaging in reflective practice enables the teacher to learn from and therefore potentially enhance their practice and learning about their practice. Practice... can include any of the myriad activities of the professional teacher' (1998: 72).

As my experience of teaching broadened, my appreciation of what it is to be a teacher also developed. Schon (1987) discusses this knowledge as 'knowing-in-action', referring to the sorts of knowledge revealed in 'intelligent action' (1987:25), where the knowing is in the action. I found that I was able to develop my practice 'in situ', which Schon refers to as reflection-in-action:

'When we have learned how to do something, we can execute smooth sequences of activity, recognition, decision and adjustment without having, as we say, 'to think about it'. Our spontaneous knowing-in-action gets us through the day. On occasion, however, it doesn't. A familiar routine produces an unexpected result... In an attempt to preserve... our patterns of knowing-in-action, we may respond... by brushing it aside... Alternatively we may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it...in cases like this... we reflect-*in*-action' (1987:26).

This reflective activity has critical significance with regard to the nature of our knowing-in-action:

'Reflection-in-action has a critical function, questioning the assumptional nature of knowing-in-action. We think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena, or ways of framing problems' (1987:28).

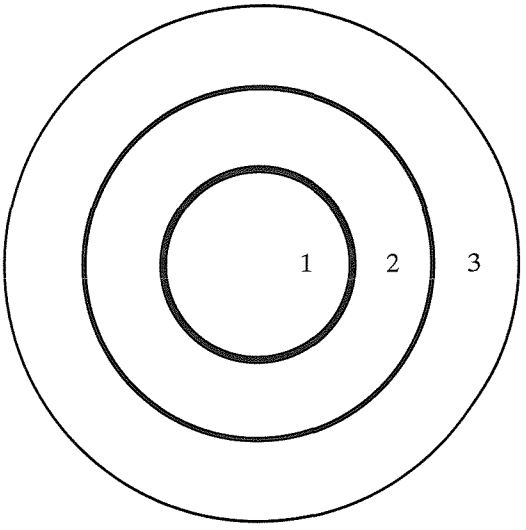
With reference to my experience, I noticed that it was possible to identify incidents within my practice that I could have an immediate effect upon in changing (*reflection-in-action*), in addition to those notes and ideas that accumulated over time developing into themes equally capable of enabling change to take place but with the outcome of greater understanding as to why events or incidences happened in the way they did and what effect they would have. I was 'reflecting-*on*-action' (Schon, 1987):

'... Or we may respond to it by reflection... We may reflect *on* action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome...' (1987:26).

An example my reflecting-*on*-action is my experience of using small group work; I realised that students working together in small groups were providing a

valuable source of support for the individual learner and found that by suggesting certain techniques for working together the small group became an even more effective and valuable learning experience. Brockbank and McGill (1998) indicate the importance of these different levels of reflection, which are indicated below in figure 2.2:

Figure 2.2 – Levels of Reflection



> '...reflection-in-action (2) is within the action (1) of the person engaged in the action and therefore part and parcel of the action. Reflection-on-action (3) can be undertaken by the person ...after the action. This personal reflection-on-action is important in the continuing internal dialogue about their practice and may influence their future action and reflections-in-action' (1998: 79, numbers added).

It is possible to develop the model further to include reflection upon reflection. This level requires the three previous levels of action, and reflection in and on that action:

> '... it is one thing to be able to reflect-in-action and quite another to be able to reflect *on* our reflection-in-action so as to produce a good verbal description

of it; and it is still another thing to be able to reflect on the resulting description' (Schon, 1987: 31, original italics).

Boud *et al* (1985) write of these levels as a re-evaluation of elements of a whole providing an approach to reflection-on-action within these four levels:

'*association*, that is relating of new data to that which is already known; *integration*, which is seeking relationships among the data; *validation* to determine the authenticity of the ideas and feelings which have resulted; and *appropriation*, that is making knowledge one's own...' (Boud, et al, 1985:30).

However difficult, this level of reflection is important in order that the learner is able to locate another dimension to their learning:

'Returning to the event enables the learner to engage in reflection on her actions...' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998:80).

It becomes possible to reflect on the reflection-on-action. At this level it is the significance of the learning itself which is being explored, that is, *learning about how I learn*. Thus the sequence of events becomes a five stage reflective process:

1. Action;
2. Reflection-in-action;
3. Description of the reflection-in-action;
4. Reflection on the description of the reflection-in-action (reflection-on-action);
5. Reflection on the reflection-on-action.

It is at this stage that the importance of reflective dialogue emerges as a significant factor. Reflection of practice may take place within action and after action, reflection may take the form of a conversation with oneself, or with others.

Brockbank and McGill (1998) argue that reflection-on-action in dialogue with others is important in order to avoid:

> '... self-deception, thereby limiting her range for potential reflection... the key ... is how best to engage in reflection-on-action in dialogue with others...' (1998:82).

Reflective dialogue

In undertaking reflection on my practice I was experiencing ongoing internal dialogue regarding my observations and actions. As I proceeded through my exploration, interactions with my PhD supervisor indicated that he and I were also engaging in reflective dialogue about my practice, a sort of reciprocal reflective dialogue, suggesting that we were together able to discuss concepts and results of action in order to develop both our understanding of my experience of practice. Whilst my own reflection-in-action was useful in determining action, it was helpful to engage in dialogue in order that the reflective process retains a level of detachment:

> '...without dialogue, reflection is limited to the insights of the individual (which are not to be underestimated)' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 58).

The suggestion is that dialogue can enable the reflection-on-action to retain detachment, and also that through dialogue I was able to test my understanding and therefore increase my learning of how I learn.

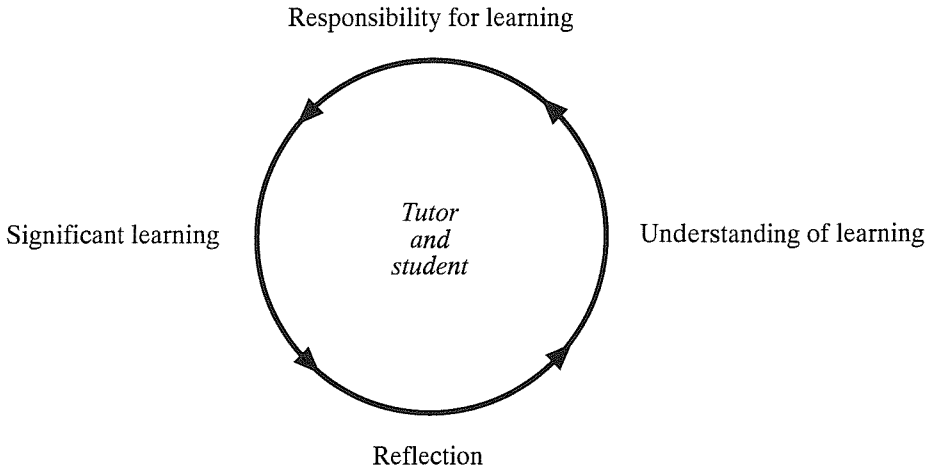
Schon discusses the relationship between student and 'coach' as contributing to the student's development through dialogue:

> 'In their dialogue, coach and student convey messages to each other ... The student tries to do what she seeks to learn and thereby reveals what she understands or misunderstands... When this dialogue works well, it takes the form of *reciprocal reflection-in-action'* (Schon, 1987:163).

Cycle of learning

After an initial period of teaching in higher education I decided that I wanted to explore the elements of my experience of learning how to learn and developing responsibility for learning as an intentional process of development for the students. Through the application of teaching processes incorporating *significant* learning I would encourage them to *reflect* upon and explore their learning, through this I hoped that students would develop *understanding* of their learning, and that this understanding and awareness would lead to students developing *responsibility* for their learning. This process can be represented as a cycle of learning (figure 2.3) with both teacher and students engaged in this developmental process.

Figure 2.3 - Cycle of learning



My own learning development would continue through exploring this approach to teaching through critical reflection upon my practice at all levels, to include reciprocal reflective dialogue. This would enable me to develop my understanding of the experience of teaching in line with the students' experience of learning leading to the development of practice through this reciprocal exploration. The value of this learning would be the learning itself.

Practitioner research

The problem I faced was how to go about exploring these issues within a learning context where students would be anticipating a traditional teaching and learning experience of context and relationship, and where 'practitioner research' may or may not be welcomed resulting in the need to work with these contextual expectations.

Practitioner research is not an unfamiliar undertaking, with many projects based in educational environments (Stenhouse, 1975; Ebbutt & Elliot, 1985). As Schon suggests:

> 'the practitioner has an interest in transforming the situation ... he also has an interest in understanding the situation, but it is in the service of his interest in change' (1983: 14).

However, it is necessary to acknowledge that practice is shaped to a degree by contextual factors beyond the practitioner's control, and by relying entirely on external theories teachers are placed in a situation where they are unable to do anything about these and as a result fail to live up to an 'ideal' model of practice (Elliott, 1991). In generating educational theory it is important to take contextual factors into account otherwise theories generated are of little value – they are unable to be realised due to issues beyond the practitioner's control.

Elliott (1991) suggests that:

> 'The fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice... the improvement of practice consists of realising those values which constitute its ends... Such ends are not simply manifested as the outcomes of practice. They are also manifested as intrinsic qualities of the practice themselves' (ibid: 49).

Teaching becomes an education practice through the manifestation of qualities which constitute it as an educational process capable of encouraging student learning outcomes. This joint reflection about the relationship between process and outcome

is central to reflective practice and action research. Reflective practice directs attention towards the values embedded in practice and the role that reflective critique can play in enabling practitioners to reconstruct their practice in ways which illuminate practical problems. Action research describes the quality of reflection about embedded values and is dependent upon quality data. So action research cannot improve practice independent of reflection (Elliott, 1991).

This points to what Usher and Bryant (1989) refer to as:

> ' a dialogical process which brings together the situatedness of the interpreter and the object of interpretation... fusion can only occur, however, through participation in the dialogue, in the process of 'encounter and engagement'; being a disinterested 'objective' observer will not do' (1989: 134).

The educational purpose of action research being the:

> '... intention to change through a development of one's understanding of the situatedness of any and all actions' (ibid: 118).

Through entering into reflective action research I have attempted to explore my understanding of what it is to teach, and how my teaching can enable students to develop responsibility for their learning. Inevitably this has resulted in the development of partial understandings through reflection in and on action, along with glimpses of the whole through reflection upon reflection on action, leading to a fuller appreciation of the whole as my own 'cycle of learning' has continued to be explored.

The initial themes of the research have now been introduced, and in order to develop a sense of the context in which I have worked it seems appropriate to expand the discussion to include further consideration of teaching and learning in higher education.

2.3 Relational nature of learning and teaching – Building a context for learner responsibility

Learning does not occur in a vacuum, it is socially constructed; a view that contrasts with theories of learners as 'empty vessels' to be filled until they are able to work within the context that is created for them. This view acknowledges that learning contexts in higher education are also socially constructed, as is the learning that takes place, and that when a learner enters and experiences higher education they enter a system that is not value free; where decisions can be made and power used to influence learning.

This can apply to the teacher in higher education who has the responsibility to create a context for learning to take place, and who is also working within a context where decisions made will influence teaching. The learning context perceived by the learner can have a powerful impact on their learning:

> 'The university, in the persons of its academic staff, has its own power here to replicate those systems and reinforce them, as well as imposing unconsciously the historically embedded philosophies of academia' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 34).

It is within the power of the context that there lies the capacity to enable the development of the learner through recognition of the need to change assumptions about the purposes and outcomes of learning and teaching.

Learning and teaching then are fundamentally related, that is to suggest that students' and teachers' experiences are not constituted independently of the world of teaching and learning, but in relation to each other. Marton and Booth (1997) discuss the phenomenographic perspective which suggests that the world, as experienced, is non-dualistic; the students' and teachers' experiences are always experiences of something. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) support this non-dualist argument suggesting that learning and teaching are *relational.* They discuss learning in terms of constitutionalist phenomena, which holds a non-dualistic view of learning as an internal relationship between the individual and the world. Individuals and the world

are internally related through the individual's awareness of the world – this world being an experienced world. The world is not experienced as individually constituted parts, therefore the internal structure of the mind is not composed of unrelated parts. The essence of this view is that meaning is constituted through an internal relationship between the individual and the world. As Prosser and Trigwell (1999) discuss, learning is about experiencing the object of study in a different way, where experience is a relationship between the person experiencing and the object experienced.

Learning and the development of responsibility

Student learning is relational, or 'constitutionalist'; each student will have a unique perception of his or her situation, and this perception will be related to his or her prior experience of other situations, approach to learning and their learning outcome; their assumptions about teaching and learning are all related to the approach to study they adopt (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999).

Students' learn in qualitatively different ways, and student learning has been the focus of many studies (Marton and Saljo, 1976; Biggs, 1978; Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983). Saljo (1982) has pointed out that once the learner defines the situation as a 'learning situation' their perception of it is contingent on what learning in general means to them. Saljo (1979) offers five ways in which students see learning, and development of these has resulted in a sixth way being added (Marton *et al*, 1993).

In table 2.1 I have outlined studies of student learning. It is possible to see from the table that any learning experience where the learner fails to internalise the experience, in other words where learning is treated as 'extrinsic' to the learner, results in low development; for example: memorising knowledge, or an intention to merely complete a task. Alternatively, learning that is internalised, which is treated as intrinsic to the learner results in high development, a key element here being the ability to relate concepts and make meaning. The table reads as a hierarchy with those elements of learning leading to development at the top and moving down towards those elements suggesting little or no development.

Table 2.1 – Studies of student learning

	Saljo (1982) *Conceptions of learning*	Marton (1975); Entwistle (1981); Entwistle and Wilson, 1977) *Approaches to learning*	Svensson (1977; 1984); Pask and Scott (1972) *Learning strategies*	Maslow (1970) *Orientations to learning*	Daniel (1975) *Learning strategies*
High development	Developing as a person (Marton *et al*, 1993)	Deep – concentrating on what the discourse is about; an active approach to learning; a desire to understand the main point; relating evidence to conclusions; relating new learning to previous knowledge	Holistic – emphasis is on meaning, attempting to contextualise new learning within what is already known, and looking for main points	Intrinsic – takes responsibility for learning and development; often developed only after leaving formal education. Recent findings confirm that orientations alter with time and are therefore learned (Taylor, 1983)	Holist – global learners witih an appreciation of complexity and the 'whole picture'; and who may be tempted to 'over-generalise'; able to teach back that learned, retaining a coherent sense of the material
Intermediate	An interpretation of the process aimed at interpreting reality The abstraction of meaning	Strategic – intention to complete task requirements; focus is on what will maximise grades (Entwistle, 1981)	Atomistic – focus is on detail, working in isolation, and in sequence; learners can change their approach when supportive learning environment is provided	Extrinsic – to 'earn a degree' (1978); Recent findings confirm that orientations alter with time and are therefore learned (Taylor, 1983)	Serialist – learn step by step; create new hypotheses as they go; may be unable to see the 'wood for the trees'; able to teach back via reproducing the material exactly
Limited	Acquisition of facts, methods, etc. which can be retained and used when necessary Memorizing A quantitative increase in knowledge	Surface – intention to complete task requirements; relying on memorizing for assessment purposes; un-reflectiveness about purpose or strategies; no integration of ideas			

One problem with some of the studies is the suggestion that learning styles are consistent within each student, and that these styles remain constant over different contexts and in relation to different subjects and learning outcomes.

Ramsden (1988) has questioned the consistency of learning styles, and the importance of context and subject have emerged as important factors influencing the learning process; as discussed by Brockbank and McGill:

> '...self report inventories focus on the learner as lone actor, neglecting the influence on learning of social and political factors, revealing an embedded assumption that learning takes place in a politically neutral context' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 37-8).

Also overlooked is the potential for students' own developing awareness through their own enquiry. This is somewhat supported by Maslow's 'orientations to learning' where it has been found, through further development, that students are able to change their learning orientation when provided with a supportive learning environment suggesting that at least in the 'local context' the teacher has a great effect upon student learning.

Ramsden (1992) builds upon this idea of development of understanding as an outcome of learning:

> 'Learning... should be about changing the ways in which learners understand, or experience, or conceptualise the world around them... By understanding, I mean the way in which students apprehend and discern phenomena related to the subject, rather than what they know about them or how they can manipulate them... The idea of learning as a qualitative change in a person's view of reality' (Ramsden, 1992: 4).

Ramsden's point develops the view of learning as a qualitative change in understanding introducing the notion of focusing on learning content or 'phenomena related to the subject' to facilitate development of understanding. Whilst

development of understanding through exploration of content is appropriate, this definition fails to go far enough in considering the importance of explicitly exploring the process of learning as a means of developing understanding *of learning*.

Studies with relevance to the development of learning are outlined in table 2.2 with 'higher' levels of learning listed from the top. Bateson (1973) offers levels of learning, with level III learning as particularly pertinent. Level III learning is reflective and the student is able to take a meta-view of not only content, but also the process of learning. It is here that the student is able to realise the contextual nature of truth and the power of the learner's framework in enabling learning to be truly reflective. This ability to contextualise the learning and de-construct it with others is an important component of reflection (Brockbank and McGill, 1998).

Bateson's learning levels (1973) are listed here with Argyris and Schon's single and double loop learning as both theories have awareness of the influence of context on development in learning. Double loop learning recognises the significance of the context where:

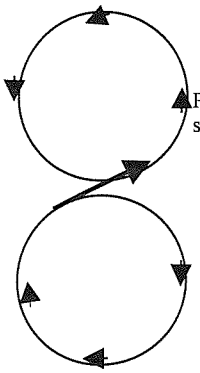
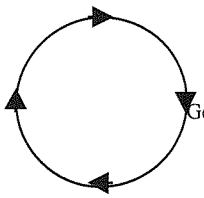
> 'discontinuities and uncertainty are rife... generating needs for new forms of social learning' (Weil, 1997:124).

Double loop learning appears congruent with Bateson's level III learning, where assumptions are challenged and underlying values, or the validity of previously held perceptions are changed, with the learning being about learning itself. This involves shifting a person's reality over time.

Single loop learning conforms to Level II learning, and is in line with Kolb's work (1984), where tasks are set, action taken, and reflection upon this experience leads to a new plan or task being devised. Movement towards double loop learning is enabled when the paradigm or context is questioned resulting in a paradigm shift (see Hawkins, 1997; table 2.2), returning to the lower circle in order to develop and explore a new task:

'accompanied by a new understanding..., a potential development in conception of self and values, and an emergent intention to act' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 45).

Table 2.2 – Levels of learning

	Bateson (1973) Learning levels	Argyris and Schon (1974) Single and double loop learning	Kolb (1984) Experiential learning P. Hawkins (1997)
Higher levels of learning	*Level III*: Third order learning involves discovering the ability to doubt the validity of previously held perceptions, the learning being about learning itself;	*Double loop learning*: assumptions are challenged and underlying values are changed; has the potential to threaten underlying values by challenging paradigms;	Emergent knowing New understanding Paradigm shift 
	Level II: Second order learning takes the learner outside the confining frame, enabling comparisons and connections to be made so that decisions are based on richer data, encompassing subjective factors as well as objective material. Learning by doing offers the opportunity for second order learning;	*Single loop learning*: 'instrumental' learning; underlying values and theories are unchanged; strategies and assumptions are changed, sometimes on the basis of experience.	*Experiential learning*: goals are set on the basis of theory; action is taken; on the basis of action, further action is devised.
Lower levels of learning	*Level I*: First order learning, where facts or skills are defined by context, e.g. the classroom.		Reflection Experience Generalisation Testing 

This movement from the single loop, the level of learning based in exploration but not requiring a paradigm shift in understanding and values is fuelled by the learners emotional being; the learner's 'thirst for knowledge' perhaps. Brookfield (1987) discusses how the development of critical thinking supports the

idea that emotion stimulates double-loop learning. Rogers (1983) distinguishes between what he calls learning' from the neck up' (involving the mind only, no personal meaning, lacking context), and 'significant learning':

> 'Significant learning combines the logical *and* the intuitive, the intellect *and* the feelings, the concept *and* the experience, the idea *and* the meaning' (Rogers, 1983: 20).

Table 2.3 outlines assumptions relevant to significant experiential learning as discussed by Rogers (1972) and presented by Knowles (1978).

Table 2.3 – Assumptions relevant to significant experiential learning (Knowles, 1978:102)

1. Human beings have a natural potentiality for learning;
2. Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as relevant to his own purposes;
3. Much significant learning is acquired through doing;
4. Learning is facilitated by student's responsible participation in the learning process;
5. Self initiated learning involving the whole person - feelings as well as intellect – is the most pervasive learning;
6. Creativity in learning is best facilitated when self-criticism and self evaluation are primary, and evaluation by others is of secondary importance;
7. The most social useful thing to learning in the modern world is the process of learning, a continuing openness to experience, an incorporation into oneself of the process of change

Rogers describes what he sees as fundamental elements to significant learning:

> '*It has a quality of personal involvement*... It is self initiated. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. It is *pervasive*. It makes a difference in the behaviour, the attitudes, and perhaps even the personality of the learner. *It is evaluated by the learner*. She knows

whether it is meeting her need, whether it leads toward what she *wants* to know... *Its essence is meaning*. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience...' (Rogers, 1983: 20).

This sort of learning would involve the student engaging not only with the content, but also with the process of learning and has the potential to lead to the development of responsibility.

Some critics in education have challenged Roger's 'new romanticism' for failing to recognise the significance of power relations and the wider context of learning. This decontextualisation of learning leads to the denial of the patterns of social inequality in the wider society (Reynolds, 1997), and the learner is offered a theory of personal growth which fails to acknowledge the significance of external social and political factors. However, this argument fails to recognise Roger's seminal thinking which includes *empathy*. Accurate empathy demands the appreciation of the other's world, the social systems in which they are embedded, and the impact on the self as a consequence (Brockbank and McGill, 1998). In drawing on Roger's work this discussion attempts to work with empathy in order that some recognition of the oppressive nature of social systems is enabled.

With this in mind, the context of learning cannot be ignored as this will affect the experience of the learner. It is from this perspective that again we are reminded that learning is not a lone activity and that learning is undertaken in a socially and politically constructed context, not least influenced - at the local level - by the teacher.

Teaching as building a context for responsibility

In the immediate context it is the teacher who has a great deal of influence upon student learning through their teaching style. Prosser *et al* (1994) identified six conceptions to teaching and five conceptions to learning. Trigwell and Prosser (1996) have found strong links between teachers' approach to teaching and learning and students' approach to learning. Kember and Gow (1994), in exploring the

relation between teaching and learning found substantial and consistent relationships between teacher's approach to teaching and students' approaches to learning. Trigwell *et al* (1998) has found and reconfirmed (Trigwell *et al*, 1999) a relationship between teaching approach and students' learning.

Teachers focus on different aspects of their teaching context and what is focused on is fundamentally related to how teaching is approached (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999). The result is that university teachers inevitably teach in qualitatively different ways, with qualitatively different conceptions of what constitutes teaching and learning underpinning these approaches. Teachers who focus on their students and students' learning tend to have students who focus on meaning and understanding in their work, while teachers who focus on themselves and what they are doing tend to have students who focus on reproduction of content (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999). The potential outcome in this context is for students to be unable to focus on meaning or explore their understanding, and presumably be unable to take responsibility for their learning.

Biggs (1989) argues that the outcomes of teaching need to be seen in terms of the quality of student learning. The outcome specific to this study is the development of students' responsibility for learning through exploration of their understanding of their learning. These studies confirm that teaching approach has an effect on students' learning approach and completes the link that teaching approach is related to high quality learning outcomes – defined as those linked to 'complete' conceptions of learning as discussed in the previous section.

Table 2.4 represents research that has explored teachers' conceptions of learning as related to their teaching approach. The studies are listed in a form of hierarchy with 'complete' conceptions of learning listed from the top, down towards the 'limited' conceptions.

Table 2.4- Summary of research on conceptions of teaching from a relational perspective (McKenzie, 1995)

	Dall'Alba (1991)	Martin and Balla (1991)	Samuelowicz and Bain (1992)	Prosser et al (1994)
Complete conceptions			Supporting student learning (postgraduate)	
	Bringing about conceptual change	Relating teaching to learning	An activity aimed at changing students' conceptions or understanding of the world	F: Helping students change conceptions
	Exploring ways of understanding from particular perspectives	Encouraging active learning: experiential focus vocational variation	Facilitating understanding	E: Helping students develop conceptions
	Developing the capacity to be an expert			
Intermediate conceptions	Developing concepts and their interrelations	Encouraging active learning:discussion focus	Transmission of knowledge and attitudes to knowledge within an academic discipline	Helping students acquire D: Teacher's knowledge C: Concepts of the syllabus
	Illustrating the application of theory to practice	Encouraging active learning: motivational focus		
	Transmitting information	Presenting information: content organisation focus		
	Imparting information	Presenting information: delivery focus	Imparting information	
Limited conceptions				Transmitting B: Teacher's knowledge A: Concepts of the syllabus

Dall'Alba argues for logical ordering, suggesting that there are conceptions of teaching which are more complete, going beyond the initial conceptions but not vice versa:

> 'The categories above are ordered from less to more complete understandings of teaching. At the lowest level, teaching is seen in terms of the teacher alone and, more particularly in terms of what the teacher does. From there, the focus shifts to incorporate the content and, at higher levels, students' understanding of the content becomes prominent. Finally the most complete conception focused on the relationship between teacher, students and content' (Dall'Alba, 1991).

In the initial conceptions the lecturer's awareness is only of herself and what she is doing. In the more complete conceptions the lecturer's awareness has been expanded to include herself, the content and students' understanding of the content (Martin and Ramsden, 1993). Entwistle (1998) discusses how at the initial stages of teaching, the lecturer is likely to be focused on matters of subject and of teaching technique, but it is important that teachers think beyond their 'teaching procedures' or 'experiential craft knowledge' and become able to link their experience to the broader context to include the experience of the students. However:

> 'Researchers have addressed learning issues often independently of each other and approaches have been strikingly different. There is little agreement among researchers about what learning is...' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 32).

This highlights an important theme for development within the discussion. How do I as a teaching practitioner define learning? This is an important question if I agree that there is a relationship between my teaching approach and students' approaches to learning.

My approach to teaching is underpinned by my experience as a learner and my desire to create a context in which students are able to explore their learning leading to responsibility for their learning. The suggestion is then that my focus, whilst on what I am doing in the classroom, also includes an interest in how the students experience teaching and learning. This results in a need to approach my teaching in such a way that my attention is drawn to the content, students' learning, and my approach to teaching. In other words, my awareness expands in line with the thinking of Dall'Alba, (1991) and Martin and Ramsden (1993), to include:

'...[my]self, the content and students' understanding of the content' (ibid).

But my interest extends beyond how students understand the content; I am interested in exploring how teaching affects the *process* of student learning and ultimately the achievement of *responsibility for learning*. My focus needs to be not only on myself, the content and the students' understanding of the content, but also on enabling students to develop understanding of their learning in order that they experience responsibility for their learning. This suggests that the need to consider the values underpinning teaching in order to explore further how teaching can influence learning and how teaching can be adapted in order that students are able to develop responsibility for their learning.

Assumptions and stance

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) posit that the teacher is able to construct the learning and teaching context and that approaches to teaching will influence the approach to learning students adopt. It is important to remain open to the many previous experiences, expectations and assumptions that the students would bring into the teaching and learning situation. It is also important to have some awareness of the underlying assumptions we each bring into the teaching context regarding our approaches to teaching. Brockbank and McGill (1998) suggest that openness to implicit assumptions is important in order that:

'Once I am aware of my process practice I have insight... Until my process practice is brought to my consciousness I do not know about it... My lack of knowledge and awareness of my process will influence my ability to reflect upon my practice. As soon as I am aware of process... I have choice and can then influence that practice' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 66).

This has required that my own assumptions and personal stance regarding teaching and learning be open to change and exploration. Brockbank and McGill (1998) suggest that a teacher may not be aware of displaying a mental stance about learner's resources, perhaps believing that learners are empty repositories to be filled, which will be exhibited in her behaviour towards them. Additionally, student expectations of higher education teaching might be in line with this teacher behaviour; the teacher talking, and students listening, taking in information and regarding the teacher as 'in control'.

Salmon (1989) discusses how the learner forms, usually unconsciously, some personal stance about the teaching and learning situation, towards the teacher and their apparent disposition towards the learner. How the learner 'sees' the teacher, and what the teacher says will frame the learner's understanding of the discipline as interpreted by the teacher. When we teach we:

'convey our own position, our stance toward it. This means that, as teachers, we do not just pass on the curriculum; we represent, even embody it. Knowledge – understanding – is no more separate from teachers than from learners' (Salmon, 1989:233).

The learner's interpretation of the context of teaching is also significant:

'the same authenticity applies to the processes we use that are intended to be conducive towards learning' (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 68).

From this one may argue that it is possible to form the assumption then that if a teacher's stance is representative of their belief in students as empty vessels, in line with Friere's 'banking' analogy, then students will interpret this and respond accordingly; becoming passive in the teaching and learning situation.

Bourdieu (1977) discusses education in terms of its role in understanding the contribution made by the education system to the reproduction of the power relationships. Teachers have traditionally controlled both what is taught and how it is taught. Salter and Tapper (1981) discuss this authority as generally exercised within socially agreed limits, therefore it is rarely called into question. Heron (1999) develops this point suggesting that conventional teaching assumes, as teachers have intellectual authority, that they should have total political authority making all educational decisions for their students. The teacher approaching teaching from this conventional stance decides what students will learn, how they will learn it and whether they have learnt it. Students take the role of passive learners, seeking answers in a tutor-led environment, following a route of prescribed learning. This develops Salmon's notion of 'stance' through the perpetuation of roles and expectations. Other writers (Esland, 1971; Schutz, 1967; Mead, 1934; Berger, 1965) also point to the implicit ideation contained in everyday interactions. Because they contain assumptions which lie within the methodologies and reality tests of teaching they powerfully define for teachers and learners what 'being educated' means:

> 'The relationship between teacher and pupils is essentially a reality sharing, world building enterprise. As participants in classroom interaction they inter-subjectively typify and interpret the actions of one another through vocabularies which they take for granted as plausible. In this way, zones of knowledge are constructed and sustained in the transactional processes of school learning, generating the inferential structures which become the co-ordinates of future interpreted experience... much of this knowledge is implicit and taken for granted' (Esland, 1971: 72 -3).

However, if a teacher's stance represents that of an individual who values the experience and knowledge of the learner, then the learner has the opportunity to adopt a stance to their own learning that is reflective of this. An important implication here is the power of the teacher's role in influencing the learner. In offering this discussion of teaching processes and student learning I am suggesting that learners and teachers should seek to interrogate this power relationship, and understand the world around them through critical exploration of the learning process in order that they develop their practice: learning and teaching. Learning and teaching takes place within a context, a context that is not value free:

> 'it must either work to change the world or to reinforce the status quo' (Boud, 1989: 42).

That is to say that teachers need to understand the context specific nature of knowledge, the values and individual stance that influence the process of teaching and learning, and to enable learners to appreciate their position and how this constrains how they learn. The link with critical pedagogy (Freire, 1973; Shor and Freire, 1987) is clear, but it should also be appreciated that my intentions as a facilitator have been congruent with learner-centred education (Rogers, 1983), working to enable learners to identify and explore their learning needs through the creation of a supportive context enabling learners to develop responsibility for learning:

> 'It would seem that to most people, teaching involves ... pouring forth facts, usually through lectures or text books, examinations, and setting grades. This stereotype is badly in need of overhauling (Rogers, 1983: 17-18).

Osborne (2000) offers the image of the new lecturer entering the profession from a position of a 'good student':

'probably without consciously comprehending how or why', coming from a conventional student experience where 'teachers taught, students studied, and dialogue would have centred on the syllabus and its mastery as the perceived route to good grades' (Osborne, 2000:30).

This lack of exploration of teaching and learning holds the risk of maintaining the habits picked up over a lifetime of educational experience. Brockbank and McGill (1998) offer a list of 'invisibles' to the process of teaching that may or may not be challenged by the teacher (table 2.5). This list is not definitive but rather the suggestion is for exploration of the 'invisibles' within practice in order that awareness is raised, practice is developed, habits and underlying assumptions are explored, and their value determined.

If these assumptions remain invisible to the teaching process then there remains the risk that the teacher will only focus on herself or the content, but not on the learner. The learner will be unable to focus on meaning and understanding in their work, and has little opportunity to develop awareness of themselves as a learner or experience responsibility for their learning.

Table 2.5 – Invisibles' of the process (Brockbank and McGill, 1998: 66)

- The values a person holds – in use as opposed to espoused;
- The extent to which we are aware of the modeling of our values, processes, and how we use our power;
- The feelings we as teachers may have at any one time;
- The extent of our own levels of learning in our domain, discipline or subject;
- The impact the above may have on learners;
- The feelings learners bring to the situation
- The implicit power relations that exists in the situation between teacher and learners, between learners in the wider context, the discourse that maintains these;
- The stance we as teachers convey to students and the stance they are each and collectively having towards us;
- The impact all the above have on the teaching/learning situation

Further assumptions implicit within education are outlined in table 2.6 (Knowles *et al*, 1998) in relation to pedagogic assumptions ('pedagogy' literally meaning the art and science of teaching children).

It would seem that if these assumptions are held then practitioners are assigning themselves to full responsibility for teaching and learning; the what, how, when, and if it has been learned. These assumptions leave the learner:

> 'only the submissive role of following a teacher's instructions' (Knowles *et al*, 1998:62).

Table 2.6 - Assumptions about learners (in Knowles *et al*, 1998)

1. The need to know: Learners only need to know that they must learn what the teacher teaches if they want to pass and get promoted; they do not need to know how what they learn will apply to their lives;
2. The learner's self concept: The teacher's concept of the learner is that of a dependent personality; therefore the learner's self concept eventually becomes that of a dependent personality;
3. The role of experience: the learner's experience is of little worth as a resource for learning; the experience that counts is that of the teacher, the textbook writer, the AV aids producer. Therefore transmittal techniques (e.g., lecture, assigned readings, etc.) are the backbone of pedagogical methodology;
4. Readiness to learn: Learners become ready to learn what the teacher tells them if they want to pass and get promoted;
5. Orientation to learning: Learners have a subject-centred orientation to learning; they see learning as acquiring subject matter content. Therefore, learning experiences are organized according to the logic of subject-matter content;
6. Motivation: Learners are motivated to learn by external motivation (e.g., grades, the teachers' approval or disapproval, parental pressures).

Learner dependency upon the teacher is potentially the result of a conventionally sustained pedagogic approach; instead of developing into autonomous learning as the learner matures this dependency remains part of the learner's expectation of the teaching and learning relationship. The void between the need and the ability to be a self-directing and autonomous learner produces tension (Knowles *et al*, 1998), and results in the learner being unable to develop their ability for responsibility for their learning in a context that works against this need. Students used to this type of teaching are not in a position to develop responsibility for their learning. Traditional teaching methods have given them few choices or experiences of responsibility:

'They expect the teacher to tell them what to do. They want to know right away the kind of authority they face and what is expected from them' (Shor, 1992: 157).

The task facing teachers is that of re-framing the teaching and learning situation towards that which enables the learner to increase responsibility for their learning. This requires a fundamental shift in the 'stance' of the teacher, from one of control and authority with the teacher at the centre of the teaching and learning experience towards one of valuing students' knowledge and contributions with the learner at the centre of the process.

This is in line with the androgogical model (table 2.7) proposed by Knowles (1973, 1975, 1984; Knowles *et al*, 1998) which is based on several assumptions that are different from those of the pedagogical model, and which:

'...draws attention to the unique goals and interests of individual learners and places these as central to the teaching and learning process' (Boud, 1989: 41).

Table 2.7 - Androgogical model Knowles *et al* (1998; adapted)

1. *The need to know*: adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it;
2. *The learner's self concept*: a self concept of being responsible for their decisions and lives;
3. *The role of the learner's experience*: greater quantity and quality of experience;
4. *Readiness to learn*: ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do so in order to be effective with the real-life situations;
5. *Orientation to learning*: life/task/problem centred in their orientation to learning;
6. *Motivation*: responding to external and internal motivators

Androgogy (the art and science of teaching the adult) works with the assumptions that the adult learner has a developed concept of 'self', and is able to take responsibility for decisions; development of responsibility being accelerated if the context the developing adult lives within encourages the development of responsibility. Rather than the two tables of pedagogic and androgogic assumptions existing in conflict, it is necessary to make a distinction between the ideology of

pedagogy which excludes androgogical assumptions, and the system of alternative assumptions that make up androgogy. It is a transactional model that acknowledges the characteristics of the learning situation, recognising that pedagogic principles may have relevance within the context also:

> 'The pedagog, perceiving the pedagogical assumptions to be the only realistic assumptions, will insist that the learners remain dependent on the teacher. On the other hand the androgog, perceiving that movement toward the androgogical assumptions is a desirable goal, will do everything possible to help the learners take increasing responsibility for their own learning' (Knowles *et al*, 1998: 70).

The relational nature of responsibility and authority

To experience responsibility for learning suggests that the learner has some element of control over the learning experience which points to student perceptions and expectations of teaching and learning. Student assumptions of a teaching and learning context might be expected to consist of the teacher as the authority through the possession of knowledge, expertise, and experience that students' lack (Brookfield and Preskill, 1999). These will continue to be prevalent images of teaching and learning held by both teachers and learners while this assumption or 'stance' of teacher as authority is not challenged:

> 'the teacher's assertion of unilateral authority does more than inform students about their position; it also confirms that position as subordinate... triggers student behaviour into its learned modes of silence, submission...' (Shor, 1992: 157).

Shor discusses the artificial divisions that are created:

'between teacher and students, and between students and students, between students and subject knowledge, and between knowledge and action' through the adoption of traditional teaching (ibid: 201).

He adds to this point, noting that:

'teachers function as delivery systems to transfer knowledge. Lectures followed by recitation questions, work-sheets, short-answer exams, and textbook assignments are the typical means for ... teaching' (ibid: 200).

Freire (1970) discusses how the traditional approach to teaching and learning is characterised by the belief that:

'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' and in doing this they are 'projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry' (1970:58).

Shor supports this and adds that:

'Such an approach is the dullest way to teach and learn. With its passive role for students, the transfer method also has the friendliest fit with top-down control, because it sends a disempowering message to students: knowledge and power are fixed from above, not negotiated or discovered from below' (1992: 200).

The lecturer has to recognise that teaching involves considerably more than helping students come to terms with the subject:

'The primary task of the teacher is to permit the student to learn' (Rogers, 1983: 18).

Any movement away from this traditional approach is referred to as a 'paradigm shift' (Kuhn, 1962) towards a critical paradigm, where students and teacher bring thought and action into the classroom:

'both have language, knowledge and intentions' (Shor, 1992: 200).

The suggestion is that both students and teacher are able to work within the realm of double loop learning in order that assumptions of teaching and learning can be challenged and values changed.

In order that students are enabled to experience responsibility for learning approaches to teaching need to place the students at the focus of activities resulting in student focused teaching:

'...students are seen to have to construct their own knowledge, and so the teacher has to focus on what the students are doing in the teaching and learning situation' (adapted from Trigwell and Prosser, 1999).

To the teacher adopting this approach it matters more what the student is doing and learning than what the teacher is doing or covering. The teacher encourages self-directed learning, makes time for the students to interact and discuss problems, provokes debate, questions students' ideas, and develops conversations with them in lectures (Trigwell and Prosser, 1994). This study has attempted to apply this perspective with the focus on the process of teaching rather than on content in an attempt to increase student responsibility for learning.

An important point here is of the *relational* nature of responsibility and authority in the teaching and learning context. The teacher must *adjust* their *authority* in order that students can take *responsibility* for their learning. If the teacher maintains control the student has no opportunity to take responsibility for learning.

Therefore in order that students can take responsibility for their learning the teacher must adjust their authority, requiring both students and tutor to experience a paradigm shift regarding their expectations and underlying assumptions regarding the process of teaching and learning.

The strategy appropriate to this study is thus:

'*student-focused; where the authority of the learning situation is adjusted to enable the development of responsibility for learning*'.

Rogers (1951) discusses 'student-centred teaching' which is based on 5 'basic hypotheses' (Table 2.8). The essence of this approach is characterised by Rogers:

'I should like to point out one final characteristic of these individuals as they strive to discover and become themselves. It is that the individual seems to become more content to be a process rather than a product' (1961:122).

Table 2.8 – Student-centred learning (Rogers, 1951)

1. We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate his learning
2. A person learns significantly only those things which he perceives as being involves in the maintenance of, or enhancement of, the structure of self
3. Experience which, if assimilated would involve a change in the organization of self, tends to be resisted through denial or distortion of symbolisation
4. The structure and organization of self appear to become more rigid under threat. Experience which is perceived as inconsistent with the self is relaxed and expanded to include it
5. The educational situation which most effectively promotes significant learning is one in which a) the threat to the learner is reduced to a minimum, and b) differentiated perception of the field is facilitated.

The student-centred or:

'... person-centred way... is something that one grows into. It is a set of values, not easy to achieve, placing emphasis on the dignity of the individual, the importance of personal choice, the significance of responsibility, the joy of

creativity. It is a philosophy, built on the foundation of the democratic way, empowering the individual' (Rogers, 1983: 95).

The suggestion is that in working with student responsibility for learning the teacher does not need to relinquish their authority, but instead needs to *adjust* their authority, and it is the teacher's responsibility to create the learning environment where students are able to develop responsibility for learning. As Durkheim (1956) suggests:

'it is not from the outside that the teacher can hold his authority, it is from himself; it can come to him only from an inner faith' (1956: 89),

The implication is that the authority of the teacher is determined by their perception of that which constitutes their own authority. The adjustment of authority is related then to the extent to which the teacher is prepared to adjust their authority.

Rogers (1978) who offers 'fundamental conditions' for person-centred learning, discusses the political implications of person-centred education where the student retains his power, sharing in responsible choices, with the facilitator providing the context. This relates to the context discussed by Knowles (1998):

'when people perceive the locus of control to reside within themselves, they are more creative and productive...and that the more they feel their unique potential is being used, the greater their achievement...' (Knowles et al, 1998: 205).

Thus emphasis is on the relational nature of authority and responsibility. Durkheim (1956) discusses this in terms of a connection between liberty and authority:

'In reality these terms imply rather than exclude each other. Liberty is the daughter of authority properly understood, for to be free is not to do as one

pleases; it is to be master of oneself, it is to know how to act with reason and to do one's duty. Now it is precisely to endow the child with this self mastery that the authority of the teacher should be employed' (1956: 89).

The challenge for teachers is to assimilate the tutor's authority with learner responsibility. To have a teaching and learning context with no educational authority would result in having to learn everything from the beginning. The tension lies between the need to pass on knowledge and skills accumulated, and the need to learn for one's self how to work with authority and responsibility. This creates a paradox that lies within the facilitator's authority to enable learner responsibility, and is evidence of a divide between two polarised educational cultures. Learners need leading into understanding their learning and developing responsibility as they enter a context requiring this and where these are affirmed as desirable educational values.

The qualities needed for teachers in higher education working with a student-focused approach to support learners in development of learning and responsibility for learning are those of a facilitator:

> 'if we are to survive in a continually changing environment...[the goal of education]... is the facilitation of change and learning... the facilitation of significant learning rests upon... qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and learner' (Rogers, 1983: 120).

Heron (1999) discusses three types of facilitator authority: tutelary, political and charismatic (table 2.9). The type of authority used by the facilitator will have an effect on the teaching and learning context. As Durkheim (ibid) has noted, what constitutes authority is internally defined and therefore an adjustment of authority will be related to the extent to which the teacher is prepared to adjust their authority.

Table 2.9 - Three types of facilitator authority (Heron, 1999: 19)

Tutelary authority: the facilitator is competent on some body of knowledge and skill; competent in teaching and learning methods; competent to communicate effectively with learners; an attentive guardian of learners' needs.
Political authority: involves the facilitator in the exercise of education decision making in respect to the objectives, programme, methods, resources and assessment of learning.
Charismatic authority: facilitators influence learners and the learning process by virtue of the presence, style and manner and the way this personal presence manifests within their exercise of tutelary and political authority. Charismatic facilitators empower people directly through their way of being and behaving.

The facilitator working with the student-focused approach is likely to require that their authority be adjusted in order that the student is able to experience development in their understanding of their learning. Studies of development in learning are outlined in table 2.10.

Table 2.10 –Theories of development in learning

Theory of development	Belenky *et al* (1986) ***Ways of knowing***	Perry (1970: 9-10) ***Developmental stages***	Chickering and Reisser (1993) *Psychosocial development*
High development/ responsibility; independence from authority Low development/ responsibility; dependence on authority	1. *Constructed knowledge* 2. *Procedural knowledge-separated knowing; connected knowing* 3. *Subjective knowledge* 4. *Received knowledge* 5. *Silence*	*1. Relativism/commitment* *2. Relativism subordinate* *3. Multiplicity* 4. *Dualism*	1. *Developing integrity* 2. *Developing purpose* 3. *Establishing identity* 4. *Developing mature interpersonal relationships* 5. *Moving through autonomy toward independence* 6. *Managing emotions* 7. *Developing competence*

The studies refer to the development of understanding of learning in terms of students giving meaning to their experience (Brockbank and McGill, 1998), with the studies listed in a form of hierarchy with 'high development' listed from the top, down towards lower levels of development. There is similarity in the studies with the

pattern of development from reliance on authorities for truth and knowledge to the construction of one's own knowledge. This increased independence from authority is linked to an increase in responsibility for learning, thus reinforcing the relational nature of responsibility and authority.

2.4 Summary

In discussing teaching and learning I have introduced many themes, some of which are explored here, and others which will be developed in subsequent chapters. I have discussed the background to the study with reference to my experience for the purpose of outlining the motivation behind the work and in order to clarify the methodological stance of practitioner as researcher, and as a way of informing the reader of my empathic approach to the study of teaching and learning.

This chapter has discussed teaching processes and student learning in order to establish the need for teachers and learners to explore their practice through critical exploration of the learning process. An additional need emerging is for the development of practice: both teaching and learning.

The task facing teachers is that of reframing the teaching and learning context in order that the learner can increase responsibility for her/his learning, requiring an adjustment of the teacher's authority. The intention of this approach is that students should be enabled to perceive learning as their responsibility, but it is the responsibility of the tutor, to clarify the new teaching and learning context – thus the inherently relational nature of this thesis is established.

> 'The individual who is thus deeply and courageously thinking her own thoughts, becoming her own uniqueness, responsibly choosing herself, may be fortunate in having hundreds of objective outer alternatives from which to choose, or she may be unfortunate in having none. But her freedom exists regardless. So we are first of all speaking of something that exists within the individual, something phenomenological rather than external, but nonetheless to be prized' (Rogers, 1983:276).

The following chapter will establish the methodological approach of the study in an attempt to develop a framework for examining how students experience a course and develop their learning through experiencing an 'adjustment of authority'.

Chapter Three

The Development of a Critically Reflective Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the aims of the research, matching them with the methodology to provide a framework for examining how students experience a course and develop responsibility for their learning. The theoretical framework underpinning this research is within the tradition of *critical theory* which is concerned with exploring social beliefs and how these contribute to the construction of reality. Since this perspective will involve consideration of values the chapter will include discussion of my own value position in relation to both the students' experience of learning and my own professional development as teacher and researcher.

The research has adopted a case study approach with multiple methods of data collection employed in order to capture the students' experiences across the duration of a course, this has a number of advantages over other methods, e.g. survey method alone. The case study has enabled me to employ a variety of methods that would penetrate the surface appearance of the course to reveal the deeper levels of the students' experience. The unique application of survey approach would be limiting in its method capturing only snapshots of the many views rather than uncovering the dynamics of development over time. The case study enabled me to gather data from sources in order to portray subjective experience whilst accounting for individual differences between student accounts. An added issue is that of 'teacher as researcher' - a further dynamic to be explored. The research process has generated data from both teacher and researcher perspectives. This situation might raise problems in terms of subjectivity of findings and subsequent development of the study. However, the reciprocal process of collecting student data has resulted in both volume and variety enabling triangulation of data and validation of findings.

3.2 The research journey

The process of research has been inextricably linked with my experience as both teacher and researcher and it is necessary to outline some of the pertinent factors here, not least the idea of 'self' as researcher.

There are practical the theoretical considerations regarding how to 'manage' the 'self' in the research process. Conventional research approaches might write the self out of the process. However, this research has taken a highly reflective stance resulting in exploration of practice resulting in a mix of styles in order to:

> '...give narrative space to different voices and to set conventional texts alongside less conventional counterparts' (Usher, et al, 1997: 218).

This has enabled the exploration of my developing understanding whilst avoiding over-subjectivity. One consideration regarding reflexivity might be to further develop understanding of self as a situated practitioner – one who is located within an organisational context, and also on a personal journey of self-understanding.

In considering my journey within the research I have been aware that the relationship between students and myself and the duality of myself as a researcher and a member of staff at the institution would be fundamental to the study's development and success. Defining my positionality had implications and consequences on the research process and I was forced to question elements of my research approach. Initially I had to learn that my role as a researcher involved developing new skills and developing expertise in managing my role within the different contexts I would find myself in through the duration of the study. This required continual questioning and reflection upon my position.

The chosen stance of teacher as researcher raises pertinent issues. I became aware of the fine line between the action research approach, the reflective practitioner, and the teacher researching the experience of her students in order to develop practice. Creswell (1994) discusses the complexity of this ethical journey for the researcher and raises the importance of the researcher's awareness of her role

within the research setting. Burgess (1984) recognises the complexity of acquiring this role in studying educational settings and he exposes real life problems associated with the researcher and the research process.

As I considered my role I reflected carefully on how I would present myself to the parties involved and how the research would potentially develop. I had to be clear before embarking on the research as the requirement to prepare the course documentation prior to the course meant I would have to use my past experience and project what I hoped would be the course of events in order to develop a sound 'learning contract' for the students involved. This document was to be the tool for conveying both the content of the course, and the expectations for the scope of the study (see appendix 3.1).

My role as a member of staff and therefore my position of authority had not escaped me in planning how to present myself to the students. My involvement with the programme created a level of compliance from the students, and development of research tools involved recognition of the level of parity in the relationship. From the first teaching session I had to establish that both the approach to teaching and the tutor-student relationship would involve challenging this authority implicit to the teaching role. Whilst I re-presented the implicit authority of the university context and role, the authority I presented to the students was that of charismatic facilitative authority, where the facilitator's influence on learners is by virtue of their presence, style and manner through their personal delivery of tutelary and political authority (Heron, 1999). Charismatic facilitative authority in this study has contributed to enabling the emergence of learner responsibility through my manner, my choice of language and tone of voice as a result of working with the adjustment of authority:

> 'Charismatic facilitators empower people directly by their presence of their own inner empowerment' (Heron, 1999: 35).

This expressive presence generates self-confidence and self-esteem in learners and enhances their motivation towards the development of learner responsibility. Whilst attempting to 'adjust the authority' in the teaching and learning relationship,

students clearly regarded me as more powerful due to the traditional expectations of the tutor role. It was necessary for me make this explicit and work with this expectation towards redefining my role from the beginning of the research. The role that I wanted to develop was that of a facilitator of learning. The relationship that I wanted to develop with students and between students was based on values of honesty, trust, and equality of contribution. The most effective way to establish this change in role was to 'contract' with the students, but it was more important for students to *experience* this change. I set the research up with a heavy emphasis on the role of evaluation and development of practice (mine and theirs), therefore inviting them to be honest and open with their feedback and their personal reflective work. I was inviting students to see that I was prepared to accept a level of vulnerability, and hoped that this would have an impact on the authority of my role. I became aware very quickly of the fine balance between this honesty and vulnerability, and the possibility that students might interpret this as inexperience or naivety Brookfield and Preskill (1999) suggest that the teacher's authority must be viewed as an opportunity to promote student growth, to constructively inspire students, help them find their own voice, model commitment to critical conversation, and honour individual and collective knowledge. They dismiss the idea that teacher authority can be reduced:

> 'In students' eyes, teachers have attained their position by virtue of their erudition and scholarship in a particular field. To pretend otherwise is seen by students as false humility, naiveté, or an abdication of ones' ... responsibilities' (Brookfield and Preskill, 1999: 53).

The adoption of facilitative charismatic authority can offer some security of the facilitative approach through recognition that the facilitator's influence on learners is by virtue of their presence through personal delivery of tutelary and political authority, and not inevitably leading to an abdication of ones' responsibilities. Rather, in the context of student-focused teaching, the 'adjustment of authority' which if managed appropriately can result in students experiencing

increased responsibility for their learning. Traditional conceptions of the tutor-student relationship were challenged and maintained from the outset of this study. I was careful to include discussion of the teaching process with regular re-contracting and clarity of my role along with the resulting change in the students' role as the process unfolded.

The research had to be designed to fit into requirements of the course as set by the institution. An outline of the course was articulated both verbally and within the course document (appendix 3.1). It is the responsibility of the facilitator to make clear the new context and expectations of the new approach. I was able to refer to the pre-course booklist in affirming prior notice of a different approach to teaching and learning and after the initial contracting session was clear to confirm that anyone not wishing to continue with the course was free to choose another course. This pre-course clarity has been vital in ensuring the commitment of the students, particularly as it was unlikely that they had experienced anything like this before in a formal educational context, and where it is likely that they would have been expecting a conventional teaching and learning context. The research was designed to 'map onto' the course, in other words, the research process itself was quite subtle. It was within the teaching approach that the research could be identified.

My profile within the programme was fairly restricted due to my visiting lecturer status and focus on research (within a different institution). I felt that I had a privileged position of having some insider knowledge whilst retaining a certain distance from the day-to-day business of the programme. I became aware of the level of ambiguity this brought however, as there were occasions of interaction with both administration and teaching staff and students were they would imply that my presence was more commonly regarded than not. I have become more aware of the success in my penetrating the culture partly perhaps due to the influences of my 'experienced' roles within the organisation – my earlier involvement in the programme enabling me to approach people, situations and contexts in negotiating the research.

I was able to discuss my position in the faculty as a researcher and a visiting lecturer and wanted to remain outside of the programme. In choosing the stance I

was obliged to clarify my role. Students were informed about my background and experience as both teacher and student and initially saw me in a position of empathy. This became evident during discussions in the early stages of the research where students asked for advice or asked further about the research. I was keen to clarify issues and focus on their experience rather than offer advice or 'answers'. This had the effect of further adjusting the authority between teacher and student. From these interactions I was able to review the values of trust, honesty and equality which I was attempting to bring into relationship. This position as teacher, combined with the ambiguity of 'researcher', took some getting used to, but eventually seemed to be accepted. The values I espoused as fundamental to the development of the relationship were experienced by the students and myself in our interactions, and confirmed by the data. The intention was that the tutor-student relationship would take on a level of ambiguity uncommon to the practice of teaching and learning as result of what Heron (1992) describes as the staff-student distinction becoming secondary to the fundamental parity between human beings. This ambiguity was openly worked with as a process of 'un-learning' in order to establish a new relationship between teacher and students. The fundamental values being worked with required that I was open about the demands of the research. Students were aware that the research depended on their participation in both the teaching process and the data gathering. I found that students would stop me for friendly chats, perhaps to test me out to see if I was a person to trust (this was confirmed not least by the number of confidential conversations I found myself party to, and required personal re-evaluation of my boundaries as teacher and researcher). I was not able (or keen) to develop this level of relationship with all participants in the research, but the response I received from individuals and small groups (the most frequent level of interaction) assured me that I was developing relationships built on trust, honesty and equality of contribution.

I found that relationships between staff became an issue also. I have been fortunate to have a group of peers with which to discuss some of my ideas and compare experiences. As my ideas have become more focused I have found (inevitable) disparity of professional values which has encouraged me to challenge

my own thinking. However, as I have further developed these ideas they have gone beyond implicit knowledge and have become theories in action (Schon, 1983). The focus on action research and reflective practice has caused some tension in relationships with staff. The evaluative emphasis has resulted in my accepting student scrutiny of practice, with my practice undergoing continual evaluation and rapid development and learning. The majority of staff have been interested in and supportive of the research, however.

The demands of balancing the many considerations has been eased by my distance from the programme, though this has had to be re-stated. The demands of the research required that I remained open to developments in the many contexts and relationships I was engaged in. I relied upon my past experiences as a learner at school, student, tutor and researcher in preparing myself for the role. There were many situations for which I could not be prepared however, and it was at these times that I was grateful for the personal approach I had taken to the research – that of openness to a rapid and continual learning experience of my own.

The following section will consider the research methodology which will be examined in the light of data collection. Techniques employed will be discussed and evaluated, and analysis and conclusions drawn.

3.3 Aims and approach

The research illuminates current practice and the potential of higher education to educate the individual with regard to their awareness and understanding of their own learning through exploration of the tutor-student relationship. The research illuminates by exploring in context rather than abstracting from reality (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). Within the higher education classroom the tutor has the authority. The research has explored that for students to increase responsibility for their learning, an 'adjustment of authority' needs to occur. The research attempts to illuminate how the student experiences the shift in the teaching and learning relationship.

An action research approach was applied to the research, with the tutor as researcher (Cohen and Manion, 1994). As discussed by Bryant (1996), there are practical reasons for using action research within educational contexts as it:

> 'offers a mode of enquiry and understanding in which the conventional dualisms and distinctions between internal and external accounts, subjectivity and objectivity, theory and practice, means and ends, teacher and taught, researcher and researched are dissolved' (ibid: 108).

The nature of action research is that it is self-evaluative; modifications are continuously evaluated within the ongoing situation with the objective being to improve practice in some way. This has been exercised through the use of two cycles of case study research over two years. An implication in adopting an action research approach is that a core element of the methodology will involve reflection upon practice:

> 'Reflection is oriented towards better understanding; practitioner development involves taking action which, when reflected upon, results in changes in practice' (ibid: 112).

The research has adopted a high level of critical practitioner reflection, with evaluative questionnaires and learning journals completed by students to provide a comparative and further illuminative element, and to also provide validity through triangulation of methods (Denzin, 1970). Reflection enables ideas, skills and insights learned in the classroom to be tested and experienced in practice. Essential to practice is the opportunity to reflect on experience:

> 'so that formal study is informed by some appreciation of reality' (Brookfield, 1990:50).

Brew (2001) discusses reflection with reference to the notion of 'looking again':

> 'Looking again introduces the idea of critical thinking into the process... Research of this nature will inevitably transform itself, for it has within it the means of and suggestions for transformation' (2001: 105).

This notion of reflection on reality leading to critical awareness is key to this study. Carr and Kemmis (1996) offer an account of action research built on a substantial theory of critique and reflection. Bryant (1997) discusses educational action research as critical social science, which as Carspecken (1996) suggests is an approach to research adopted by those who have rethought traditional ideas about knowledge and reality finding them wanting.

I adopted a framework that would access the ways in which students experience the process of teaching and learning. Capturing the whole without losing the value of individual perspectives was a crucial consideration in deciding how both the process and meaning of experience could be understood and represented. The theoretical framework experienced a simultaneous process of development with my own perspective as I further understood the different layers of the students' experience. The use of learning journals was intended to capture and value each individual's personal experience of the research. The views expressed were more than academic responses to the course, they derived from the individual's intimate experience of learning.

The use of multiple methods emerged as the most appropriate way of uncovering the different layers of experience. Case studies would provide the opportunity to build upon existing knowledge whilst incorporating a range of methods consistent with the study (Creswell, 1994). A broad range of methods were selected within the case study approach – journals, evaluative questionnaires, observation and field notes. This is in line with Yin's (1994) suggestion that the case study should be part of the total approach when a problem is to be defined broadly, when contextual conditions need to be included and where multiple sources of data

are to be relied upon. Triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of methods enables the case to be viewed from various view points and to correlate methods with perspectives (McKernan, 1996).

The design of the case studies was considered with this requirement for triangulation for validation of results. This approach also ensured a more complete picture of the students' experience. A further dimension is that of my own experience, and reflections on my role during the research. In considering the research design and the multiple methods of data collection I was careful to connect the theoretical paradigm with the methods of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

3.4 The study

This section will provide a brief overview of the stages of the study, including consideration of the research tools and methodological issues concerning each method; these issues are explored further in the following chapters. The research went through cycle one during spring 1997, and cycle two in spring 1998. Students attending the university represent a wide range of backgrounds and experiences with a high proportion of returning students based in the South London region. The Education programme has a high percentage of female students, and this was represented within the study by a ratio of 10:1. The courses of study being followed within the research were based within the field of developmental psychology, with students offered the choice of pursuing a course of either childhood and adolescence, or adult development. Students taking the programme are often seeking to pursue a teaching qualification upon completion of the degree and therefore a course in developmental psychology is seen to provide them with a broad understanding of issues relating to schooling and wider society relevant to their prospective career. Those students attending my classes during these semesters would be participants in the study. Students were aware prior to attending the course that a process of research was to be conducted – students had received information along with a book-list (an informal requirement of the programme; see appendix 3.2). The programme requirement of students per class ranges from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 30 therefore the final numbers would be somewhat unpredictable. Selection of

participants involved a process of students signing up for the course. Rather than opting for a self-selecting population of students I chose to adopt a random approach, to include all attending students in the study. The study was concerned with gaining information of the experience of a 'typical' cohort of students, to include those with little interest or ability in writing reflective journals (i.e., a typical class will include students whose purpose is not to develop their learning but to pass the course).

8 case studies were set up over the two cycles. Classes consisted of between 8 and 36 students, the cycle one cohort total numbering 94; year two numbering 87. Cycle one of the study set to explore four classes of undergraduate students' experiences of four different teaching approaches intended to bring about a deep approach to learning and subsequent increase in responsibility for learning. The cohorts involved in the first cycle made up 4 foundation level classes taught over 2 days (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 - Cycle one teaching timetable (i)

Cycle one	Monday	Thursday
9 – 10.45	**[1.1]**	
11 – 12.45	**[1.2]**	**[1.3]**
2 – 3.45		**[1.4]**
4 – 5.45		

Cycle two, developing upon the findings of cycle one, involved four classes of undergraduate students with the focus on the experience of the adjustment of authority method (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 - Cycle two teaching timetable (i)

Cycle two	Monday
9 – 10.45	**[2.1]**
11 – 12.45	**[2.2]**
2 – 3.45	**[2.3]**
4 – 5.45	**[2.4]**

The researcher adopted the 'reflective practitioner' approach (Schon, 1983) to data collection. The study incorporated a high level of reflection, with both researcher and students writing reflective journals using questions in order to provide a basic structure. With respect to the suggested structure the following questions were applied:

- What was good?
- What was tricky?
- What was useful?

These three questions were provided merely as a starting point for writing, the journal was employed as an opportunity for both students and researcher to record and develop thoughts as required. The journal was employed as part of the evaluative process in order to determine whether students' reflections indicated towards a deep approach to learning. Students were aware that practitioner access to these records would be required, and students were advised to keep 'private' information in an alternative journal. These journals were not incorporated into the course assessment due to the need for honest feedback. Assessment suggests the notion of 'right' and 'wrong, and the researcher could not take the risk that students might write what they thought the researcher wanted to hear rather than sharing their true experience. Also there is the added difficulty of determining how the journal might be assessed – how should one person's subjective interpretation of their experience be assessed as 'better' or 'worse' than anybody else's?

The nature of the research required that records of 'experiences' were documented resulting in qualitative data. Qualitative research recommendations (e.g. Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) resulted in field notes kept in sequential order creating 'diary' accounts of observations, impressions and notes.

The following list outlines the sequence of my record keeping:

1. An initial dated account of the observation session in the format of 'good, tricky, useful', sometimes with further notes added, reminders, student comments, significant points;
2. Notes would be compiled, allowing thoughts to be assimilated, and further thoughts to emerge before (and often during, and in retrospect of) the writing up;
3. As themes emerged through writing this 'diary' account additional notes would be added and themes stored together in relation to the initial theme;
4. On revisiting accounts additional notes may be added and dated, further storing of similar emergent themes.

Student data was based on the learning journal which was given time during the weekly session – in order that students recognise the value I placed on the process - in addition to out of session contributions, and evaluative questionnaires which where employed at both mid term stage and end of term. When a particular understanding or event was developed then the original materials would be revisited to clarify or question the interpretation. Cross-referencing between data sets was expanded and modified upon receipt of student evaluations, and subsequently the learning journals. The volume of data required rigorous cross-referencing as items of significance, similarity or difference emerged. As information accumulated and thoughts were developed, initial diagrams and visual representations of the intended research process were refined and subsequently further topics explored, and texts, flow charts and diagrams emerged.

As journal keeping is an advocated strategy for researchers I chose this method of keeping a formal account of the research. The process of 'good, tricky, useful' (that the students were also following) was intended as an initial structure for writing, and it soon became clear that this was a useful approach to writing initial notes, but often resulted in no expansion. I felt that this was due to the restrictions of time that I experienced between teaching sessions, (often having only 5 minutes or so as I finished one session - dealing with students, clearing up the room, changing site -

only to move to a different classroom also requiring some change in furniture arrangement and student contact.

The notes made though were enough to inspire me to further development of thought when writing up the account of the sessions. The diary was an informal method of note taking from the start, which developed into a diverse record of reflections, musings, interactions with students out of class (i.e. chance meetings in the library), questions, notes and quotations written on loose paper about different topics and in different genres etc (see appendices 3.3a & 3.3b).

Observations were primarily general and descriptive. With increasing familiarity, as discussed by Spradley (1980), I tended to focus and become selective. Focus and selectivity become possible when repetition or similarity are noticed and then tested against theoretical insights (Schon, 1987; Hammersley, 1992).

A further evaluative tool applied was the questionnaire or evaluation form which was employed for the purpose of collecting data regarding the students' experiences of the methods. For cycle one, questions related to both generic and specific experiences of the methods employed (see appendices 3.4a and 3.4b). Feedback, such as that shown below, enabled the researcher to see that group work and discussion were successful approaches in terms of student satisfaction and also towards the development of a deep approach to learning and responsibility for learning:

> *'it is the interaction between teacher and students, and students themselves that is at the heart of any learning experience.* ***Only by interacting with other people are we challenged to rethink our values, beliefs and ideas.*** *At the same time we widen our horizon by learning to see a problem from different angles. Through 'dialogue' we learn from each other - students from teacher (and the other way around) and from other students' (student evaluation).*

For cycle two questions again related to the generic and specific experiences of the method (see appendices 3.5a and 3.5b), with feedback again proving that group work and discussion were successful. More specific detail was sought on student experiences of the adjustment of authority. This term, unlike 'responsibility for

learning' which was discussed as a course outcome, was not initially employed but introduced once familiarity with the method was gained.

Responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the approach as these quotes from student evaluations show:

> *'I think that being allowed to take charge of my learning is a wonderful idea.* ***This allows me to think for myself and not just depend upon the tutors ideas. It also helps me to explore and look at the type of learner I am'*** *(student evaluation);*

> ***'I believe that this method should be used throughout the university programme*** *as it is less intimidating.* ***It also motivates the class*** *and we can bring our life experiences to many of the discussion' (student evaluation).*

3.5 Handling the data and the development of the study

From the start of collecting data it seemed necessary to transcribe all written information from both my notes and the accumulation of student writing. Student questionnaires held specific responses highly relevant to the study and were transcribed immediately after collection for the purpose of developing familiarity with the students' responses to the processes being experienced and in order to develop the processes if necessary.

Learning journals were more 'organic' with students interpreting the requirement of the journal very individually. At one end of the 'spectrum' students used the task to note down all details of learning related to the course: insights of group work, peer relationships, effects from other commitments, family responsibilities, reflections on the tasks completed, etc. At the other end of the 'spectrum' students had written in the barest details of their learning experience – whether this was due to limited understanding of the task, limited interpretation of the task, or limited insight to their learning has not been established. A further factor may be the task itself; journal writing does not appeal to everyone, and for those who prefer not to reflect upon their experience for whatever reason journal writing can become nothing more than a chore – this was certainly the experience for some students:

*'Tricky – **writing this journal'** (student learning journal).*

However, journal writing was a successful way of gaining access to the majority of students' developing awareness of the process of learning. None reported having written learning journals before, and many commented to the extent of its worth to their learning in their writing:

*'Useful – **reflecting on learning experiences past and present'***
(Student learning journal).

However, after some initial analysis of transcribed data it became clear that the amount of data was possibly overwhelming, and that not all information collected was directly relevant. At this stage the research had developed focus and clarity so it was decided that directly relevant data would be recorded, but all original data be stored for reference if necessary.

The student questionnaires provided an insight to the teaching processes, giving students the opportunity to contribute to the development of the processes with visible and immediate effects. The questionnaire was anonymous, and was carried out at mid term stage and at the end of term. The questionnaire was presented to the students as a primarily evaluative process in order to encourage honesty about their experiences. The action research approach adopted combined with the pace of the teaching semester requires that reflections and new understandings are acted upon quickly in order to make changes meaningful and to study the effects of this learning.

As the data was transcribed familiarity was gained, enabling some ease to the process of cross-referencing. The research approach required immediacy of change to the teaching methods therefore manual processes of transcription and analysis were chosen over computer based analysis packages. This had the added effect of ensuring a high level of familiarity with the data.

Data collection

In collecting data over the course of 2 research cycles it is inevitable that development in researcher thinking will have an effect on how the data is collected and analysed. I was mindful of the need to build on the stages of inquiry and also aware of the possible impact that teacher as researcher might have on the data. The nature of practitioner action research with the teacher as researcher requires that the impact of the tutor be considered. As discussed by Mc-Call (1969) the deleterious effects of participant observation have been widely considered - the features of the observer's role-relations with the subjects; personal characteristics of the observer; and characteristic of the observers frame of reference (McCall & Simons, 1969). The research has set out to explore the experience of the shift in relationship between teacher and student through the application of teaching methods encouraging responsibility for learning. The implication of this is that rather than having a deleterious effect, these elements would in fact be part of the data and emergent themes i.e., the tutor and student roles and relationship. Of course it is difficult to say how the characteristics of the researcher have impacted on the experience, but I propose that exploring the tutor-student relationship inevitably has characteristics of both students and tutor within it and that these are reported in the data of both students and tutor resulting in a rich diversity of perspectives.

If I had relied only upon collecting data at certain points, or by fewer means, the results would be seriously compromised. The learning journal has provided continuous data and I would suggest has had an impact on the approach students have taken in completing the evaluative questionnaire. Both forms of data have offered detailed insight to the student experience and have aided in the interpretation of my own experience. The open discussion of learning throughout the course will also have enabled more insightful personalised reflections about themes as they would arise.

In addition to the student data, observational field notes and my own learning journal gave further perspective. Reliance on one or two sources of data would have resulted in a less grounded perspective and less confidence in the emerging themes. Each method has its imperfections, but the emerging themes were supported by

relating the different sources. Greater perspective has been gained through the final evaluative questionnaire which was carried out after some discussion of the emergent themes. It was important at this stage to seek more specific responses which could be used to inform, support or disprove the developing research themes.

Interpretation

Interpretation of data began with my own learning journal which was added to during, after, and between each teaching session as thoughts arose. Themes might emerge during a session or between sessions which I would immediately note down and develop later that day. After a short time common themes were evident which enabled me to be more focused in my writing and in the development of the research.

Interpretation of the evaluative questionnaires enabled themes to emerge and development of practice. More immediately I was able to see if my experience of teaching and learning was at all similar to that of the students. Analysis of the learning journal data began with initial coding of words, phrases and ideas developed from the analysis of the evaluative questionnaires. These were then put into sequences in order to illustrate the experience of the students. It became clear however, that students would often describe the same experience in different words, and perhaps even use the same words with different experiences. Nevertheless, in order for the research to develop assumptions are needed. If several themes are referred to, then it is defensible to label the theme as common. Multiple data collection methods help with this. When students' accounts refer to themes emerging from the researcher's data and also to that dealt with within the literature the researcher can have further confidence in using them.

In drawing general conclusions it is necessary to be aware that this is data drawn from two cohorts reporting the teaching and learning experience of one tutor within a single programme. It has to be asked of the extent to which there is justification in coming to conclusions which are essentially parochial? The vulnerability of the qualitative researcher is clear.

However, there are benefits in such work that would be denied to the solely quantitative researcher. The detail, the lived experience of the students all provide

rich data complete with views, insights and learning. Qualitative data such as that within this study explores and questions current practice rather than offering answers. I feel that this encapsulates the approach taken to this study. I hope that I will draw from the entire data set as much as I can towards constructing a discussion that represents the broadest of perspectives, whilst remaining aware that this is ultimately a record of my experience as a practitioner. My intention has been to 'read' the experience I have collected, and it is the hope that readers of this work will align their own experiences with those researched here.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide a framework for examining how students experience a course and develop responsibility for learning. The data collection methods have enabled a detailed insight to the experiences of both students and tutor and have resulted in a rich diversity of perspectives. Use of multiple methods has enabled some confidence in the emerging themes, particularly through the application of a critically reflective approach.

This thesis offers an experiential view of research, where experiences are offered as provisional and subject to continuing critical review. Through critical reflexivity this thesis attempts to move beyond the limitations of practice and focus on the personal research journey which provides a dynamic structure for understanding the experience of my research.

The following chapter explores the first cycle of research, establishing the research model towards the emergence of key themes.

Chapter Four

The Research Model: Aim - Input - Outcome

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the initial stages of the research, briefly considering the contextual details and their influence. Themes emerging from the first cycle are explored, drawing upon both the experiences of the researcher and the students in developing the discussion, and building the chapter towards key themes for development in the following chapters. The ability to take responsibility for learning has been identified as a desirable outcome to be developed within students in higher education. It is suggested that a process of teaching can aim to develop understanding of learning leading to responsibility for learning as an outcome. The chapter considers the 'Aim-Input-Outcome' model (table 4.1) in the light of the first cycle of the research.

Table 4.1 – Aim-Input-Outcome (i)

Aim	Input	Outcome
to develop understanding of learning	teaching process	responsibility for learning

4.2 Contextual details

The research has been carried out within an Education Studies BA/BSc programme in an institute of higher education where the researcher was a part-time lecturer. The research was undertaken over 2 spring semesters as two cycles of action research with a cohort of undergraduate students (mainly foundation year: cycle 1 = 96; cycle 2 = 87) as discussed in chapter three.

While the teaching methods in each class of each cohort have been explored independently, the nature of action research is one of continuous evaluation and development. The weekly timetable (table 4.2) becomes relevant in considering the development of the research as I experienced inevitable overlap in my learning.

Table 4.2 -Cycle one teaching timetable (ii)

Spring 1997	Monday	Thursday
9 – 10.45	**[1.1] Groupwork**	
11 – 12.45	**[1.2] Seminar presentation**	**[1.3] Peer-tutoring**
2 – 3.45		**[1.4] Syndicate method**
4 – 5.45		

Table 4.3 outlines the simultaneous processes of research and teaching. The research activities have been italicised to separate from teaching activities, but the differentiation between the activities becomes difficult when the research is informing the teaching. Whilst the research involved six stages, and the teaching twelve weeks, this discussion has drawn on those points relevant to the development of the research in discussing cycle one.

Table 4.3 – Cycle one: Overview of teaching and *fieldwork*

Week one	***Stage one - Introduction to the research***
	• Introductory week: getting to know each other; establishing small groups and discussion work; contracting role of students and tutor
	• Course handbook/learning contract
	• *Presentation and discussion of research aims*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Students discuss their conceptions of learning*
	• *Observations and field notes and learning journal*
Week two & three	
	• Teaching methods active
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week four	***Stage two – feedback and clarification***
	• Tutor feedback to students; clarification of method
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week five & six	
	• Teaching methods active
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week seven	***Stage three – evaluation***
	• Final session before Easter vacation
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Mid-term course evaluation*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Easter vacation	
Week eight	***Stage four - reorientation***
	• Reorientation to the course
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Discussion of course evaluations/developed process*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week nine - eleven	
	• Teaching methods active
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week twelve	***Stage five - evaluation***
	• Final teaching session
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Final course evaluation*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
	Stage six - close
	• Hand in of course work and *student learning journals*

4.3 *Aim* of the research

In discussing the intended aim and outcome of the research it becomes necessary to consider the predetermined aims (table 4.4) and outcomes (table 4.5) of the programme within which the research was positioned. These aims and outcomes were developed by members of the faculty prior to my appointment. The programme aims to enable students to develop skills as published in the programme handbook (1997 – 1998).

Table 4.4 – Programme Aims

Programme Aims: *The main aims of this programme are to enable students to:*
• Develop critical understanding of education and its significance for the well-being of individual, group and nation;
• Realise this aim by participating in a programme which combines analytic rigour with a wide perspective from which to evaluate current ideas and practices in education;
• Have access to offer an interactive humanities base including history and policy, philosophy and theory, sociology and psychology, for the study of education;
• Gain knowledge that these disciplines and modes of learning have to offer and also the methods they use;
• Develop their powers of understanding and analysis;
• Acquire academic learning;
• Be equipped for higher level studies;
• Develop transferable skills which can be applied to a wide range of issues

Table 4.5 - Programme Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes: *Students who successfully complete the programme will:*
• Grasp the significance of principles of human development for educational understanding;
• Possess a historical perspective of educational change in both the state and independent sectors;
• Have sharpened their critical thinking, tools of thought and knowledge of substantive positions in the history of ideas, to deepen powers of critical understanding in education;
• Possess specialised learning for later professional training or advanced academic study;
• Be equipped to enter confidently into any course professionally related to their specialised studies;
• Be able to undertake, with initial competence, advanced education related to their selected courses;
• Possess the analytic and evaluative skills sufficient for employment in a wide range of work beyond the confines of education;
• Understand and evaluate the significance of the moral dimension to education;
• Be empowered to play a full part in discussion at local and national level of the significance of
• educational proposals and decisions.

The aim and outcome of the research link with the programme aims and outcomes through the desire to develop knowledge and understanding. However I

have been interested in developing understanding of learning as opposed to understanding of the subject alone.

The aims and outcomes of the programme have been developed upon in implementing the research aim and outcome which were for students to develop understanding of their learning, leading to responsibility for learning.

Research Aim: The main aims of this course are to enable students to:

- Develop awareness and understanding of their learning

Research Outcome: Students who successfully complete the course will:

- Develop responsibility for their learning.

The first cycle of research was set up as an exploration into students' understanding of their learning leading to the development of responsibility for learning. Teaching four classes over the course of a semester offered the opportunity to explore this through the application of four different teaching methods. The aim of understanding of learning leading to the outcome of responsibility for learning was designed to work within the programme and course aims and outcomes.

My intention was to apply teaching methods (input) that might enable students to develop understanding of their learning (aim), and so experience responsibility for learning (outcome). I chose methods that were supportive of the intended outcome, adopting a student-focused perspective with the student as the focus of teaching and learning. The research can be represented as in table 4.6, with the research intending to explore the effects of different input upon the development of the aim, and intended outcome.

Table 4.6 – Aim-Input-Outcome (ii)

Aim	Input	Outcome
Understanding of learning	Teaching methods – student focused: group work and discussion	Responsibility for learning

In line with a student-focused perspective I chose to employ small group work and discussion which require student participation. This was a direct attempt at encouraging responsibility for learning through application of teaching methods requiring students to interact with both the subject and each other. A feature of the small group and discussion work would be the access gained to the mutual exploration of their understanding of their learning through interacting with others.

To ensure some familiarity within the new teaching approach a structure for each week was made explicit and followed to include group and discussion work. Each weekly session followed fundamentally the same structure (as outlined in table 4.7 with the research element again italicised).

Table 4.7 - Session structure

1. Small group workshops and discussion to enrich and expand identified areas of interest and concern.
2. Presentation of small group findings to the larger group, and discussion.
3. Follow up lecture.
4. Further investigation into areas of interest.
5. Identification of areas of interest to be investigated for the next session.
6. *Reflective practice*

Four teaching methods were explored in the first cycle. The points within the structure were relevant to every teaching method but in different ways. The methods are briefly outlined below (table 4.8) to include a working definition of the method as applied within the research (bold figure indicates a code identifying the teaching method, i.e. **[1.1]** = cycle one/groupwork). The methods are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Table 4.8 - Input - Teaching methods

[1.1] Groupwork: emphasis on discussion work in small groups, with attention given to the group experience;
[1.2] Seminar presentation: group presentations, with whole class discussion;
[1.3] Peer tutoring; group presentations with opportunity for presenting group to act as peer-tutors for small groups in class;
[1.4] Syndicate group'; group studies both in and out of class; method requires a combination of student led work and tutor led classes;

'Groupwork' is a method requiring students to use the group experience to develop their learning. The method enables students to gain understanding of their learning through interaction in small groups. Groupwork would then be implicit to the structure with students working with the group experience.

'Seminar presentation' was intended to promote the intensive engagement of students with the issues under study, requiring them to present to the class and initiate discussion work. The thinking behind this process was that for students to present to the class would require understanding of the subject, and this learning was the responsibility of the students. Seminars were to feature in every session with all students contributing within their small group. Seminar presentation becomes a fundamental feature of the weekly session structure as represented in table 4.7, taking place at point 2.

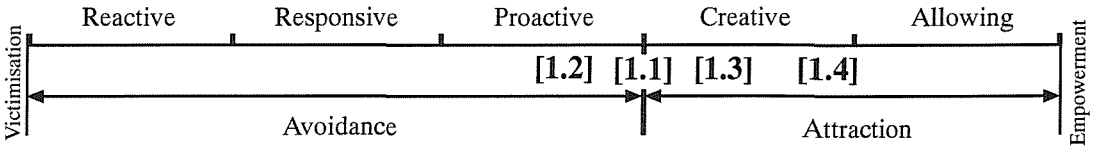
'Peer-tutoring' was also to be part of the weekly session structure, with students presenting seminars and then peer-tutoring small groups of students within the class. Students would again need to have understanding of the subject, and ultimately be able to take a higher level of responsibility for their own learning and the learning of the group through this participative role. Peer-tutoring was to feature in every session at point 2 of table 4.7 as a fundamental part of the weekly session structure.

The 'syndicate method' was to exist within the session structure offered in table 4.7 with the emphasis on student participation and contribution to the learning of the group. Each week students would be required to develop class discussion through their prior reading and preparation for the session, this again requiring

understanding, with no one group or individual entirely responsible, rather individual responsibility in addition to collective responsibility for learning.

Each of these teaching processes was intended to include small group and discussion work with the emphasis on student contribution to the learning of the class, resulting in responsibility for learning being a shared experience between tutor and students. Figure 4.1 (adapted from Benson, 1991) offers a visual representation of the predicted level of responsibility for learning achieved through the use of each method (indicated by **[1.1]**; **[1.2]**; etc); suggesting an increase in 'empowerment' or responsibility, and a decrease in 'victimisation' and away from dependence on the tutor such as that found in conventional, didactic teaching methods.

Figure 4.1 – Levels of responsibility (ii)
(adapted from Benson, 1991)



4.4 *Input*: Contracting the learning

The students involved in the study were self-selecting as discussed in chapter three (the population derived from those students electing to take the modules), so it was important to outline the research at the point of entry to the course. Students were notified before attending the course that research would be in process (appendix 3.2). The initial week was used as an introduction to the research with emphasis on explaining the relevant teaching method for each class. It was made clear from this beginning point that student commitment to the course was important from two perspectives; firstly due to the potential benefits of their own exploration into their learning and role; and secondly that the inter-linked evaluative and developmental nature of the research and teaching was dependent upon their role and commitment. In establishing a relationship appropriate for the students to want to be engaged in the research it was important to contract the learning experience with them. Each class

experienced a similar first week. I arranged each classroom into a circle of chairs so that we could all see each other (I sit in the circle with the students), and after an initial 'getting to know you' activity (in which I also took part), I ran through the course document. The course document outlines the weekly issues for study and discussion. Other features supportive of the research were added, including information regarding group work.

Table 4.9 - Excerpt from the course document: Group working

Groups During week one each of you will be allocated a group with whom you will be working for the duration of the course. It is expected that you will work together both in and out of class for the purpose of investigating identified areas of interest. It is your responsibility to get to know your peers, and to utilise and value each other as potential learning resources. *Group work* Each week you will have the opportunity to investigate a previously identified area of interest along with the other members of your group. It is anticipated that groups will meet out of session time in order to discuss the work and should divide the work load evenly. This will involve commitment from each individual to both the work and the group. Issues are expected to be well researched. Content should be precise and informative and class discussion will be encouraged.

Whilst it was important to provide information regarding the teaching approach, it was more important for the students to experience the process. Discussion took place regarding these issues and further information was given concerning the relevant teaching methods for each class. The success of the course (as opposed to the research) depended very much on the students' commitment to the course therefore opportunity was given for students to contribute to this initial contracting process. By the end of the first session the learning contract had been discussed and established. Students' commitment was observable, and demonstrated by the initial entries into the students' journals. Comments referred largely to the structure and also to the potential support provided by the group experience as revealed here in these student comments:

'Good - The whole session was good. ***I feel prepared to start the course*** *and* ***I like my group*** *(Student reflective journal – week 1 - 1.1);*

'Good - ***gained clear understanding of outline of course*** *- what is required, what we will be discussing, methods of teaching*
Useful - handy hints on ***how to structure work and follow course; ideas about working in a group'*** *(Student reflective journal – week 1 - 1.1);*

'Good - ***group work****; meeting members of my group*
Useful - ***knowing what presentations I will have to prepare for in the future'*** *(Student reflective journal – week 1 – 1.2);*

'Good - ***the whole course was outlined****, so we know exactly what is expected over the next 12 weeks; Seminars were organised straight away*
Useful - ***got to know my group for the semester and organise work*** *and who was responsible for what' (Student reflective journal – week 1 – 1.2);*

'Good - ***meeting other people from the group; understanding how the course works and what we will be doing***
Useful - having a course booklet so we know what is happening each week' (Student reflective journal – week 1 – 1.3);

'Good - meeting other students; ***working in groups to introduce the subject***
Useful - time to discuss the overall approach to the subject'
(Student reflective journal – week 1 – 1.4).

The course structure and content were pre-determined to include indication of required reading and preparatory questions for students to consider before attending class each week (point 5 within structure: table 4.7). This structure was provided to ensure regularity of approach in each session. The structure and teaching approach were likely to be different to that previously experienced, and I felt that by ensuring some repetition of structure students would develop familiarity with the process fairly quickly, leaving room for exploration or development in other areas as they emerged.

In addition, the process of contracting provided an opening from which to discuss student conceptions of learning. In doing this, I was aiming to involve the students from the start in contributing to the development of the research.

Students' understanding of learning

Students wrote in list form in response to the question 'what is learning?'. Upon analysis, I was not able to identify data directly related to responsibility for learning, but I was able to relate responses to learning conceptions and approaches as discussed by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983), specifically deep and surface approach which link to student's seeking understanding in their learning. The result was a rather eclectic mix of responses to the question.

Students referring to content or subject learning were identified as exemplifying a surface approach, with no interest in developing understanding. Students making little reference to learning as a process determined by them, often referring to learning from the tutor were situated within a surface approach – an approach to learning in line with passive learning; being given information, receiving or acquiring knowledge from a source other than oneself (i.e. lecture). Interaction with other students, or learning from others, was interpreted within a surface approach to learning as the indication was of an over-dependence on the knowledge of others, a one-way process of learning rather than a preferred reciprocal learning relationship. The following excerpts from students' learning definitions illustrate these points:

Surface approach - Content oriented

> *'**learning, books, educational - maths science, English, music, etc., Schooling, reading, writing arithmetic**';*

> *'Learning is a way of improving one's knowledge or awareness of things/subjects which is of interest to them.; Learning - getting to know about a subject either by reading a book, having lectures or working as a group; learning - **acquiring more knowledge**';*

Surface approach – acquiring knowledge from tutor

> *'a continual **process of taking on dates and views to increase someone's knowledge** of something';*

> *'**receiving information** that you didn't have before';*

*'It is the **process where one receives from the tutor**, digest and bring what is received to bear on his or her own store of knowledge; interaction; listening; sharing';*

*'**being given information** and turning it into knowledge; filling in the gaps where there is a lack of such knowledge; gaining what is necessary for that individual';*

*'**absorbing information**';*

*'learning is a process of **gaining knowledge whether from teachers** or anyone who knows the particular subjects';*

*'to be able to understand and **be assessed in what is being taught** to have a better sense of knowledge';*

Surface approach – acquiring knowledge from others

*'sharing knowledge; **learning from peers**... to see things from different point of view';*

*'**discussions with others**';*

*'**Having someone share something with me that I will take on board** and then be able to share with others';*

*'**learning with other people**; other ideas, views, comments'.*

A deep approach to learning was linked to the potential development of understanding and the recognition of responsibility for learning. Deep learning requires that the student seeks to understand, a key theme within the research. Learning as a process of development was particularly pertinent to the research with an indication of responsibility for learning:

Deep approach to learning

*'**being able to take information and apply it; understanding**; process; achievement';*

*'Finding out and **understanding new subjects and old ones in more depth**';*

Learning as a process of development

> *'the ability to understand that we are all the same and its what you make of yourself and your abilities;* ***to be able to better yourself and understand yourself more';***
>
> *'continuous process; knowledge; growth; discovering; understanding;* ***through discovering oneself****; finding out about the unknown';*
>
> *'to gain knowledge about new topics/subjects to continually improve understanding of the world around me. Also in the process,* ***learn more about myself****. Discussing with other people, learning through other's points of view';*
>
> *'****growth and development****';*

This initial analysis however, proved unsatisfactory in that the themes linking with the research aim and outcome (understanding learning and responsibility for learning) were not identifiable in many of the responses. I am conscious however, that the language used may not reflect the learning style or the real meaning of the student in defining learning, and that many issues may influence what the students have written (i.e., lack of language to describe their experience). The results were useful however in that I was able to determine that in order to gain specific details from the students regarding their experience of learning linked to themes related to responsibility for learning I would have to enable the students to develop a vocabulary of learning, and be more explicit in my questioning.

Developing a vocabulary of learning

The initial enquiry into learning developed into a discussion enabling the class to openly talk of experiences and hopes regarding their learning, and simultaneously began the process of open communication with the tutor as participant in the learning process. I offered experiences and perspectives, but was careful to mirror the language of the students. As the discussion proceeded, the language of past learning experiences made the leap into a language more closely related to the desired learning experience of the course, enabling students to redefine learning as shown here in

these examples from student learning definitions. This discussion however, did not involve terms specific to the research:

> *'experiential positive negative; fun; thinking; engaging; learning through play;* ***take risks playing around with ideas****';*
>
> *'****experimentation****';*
>
> *'****play; on going process; reflection****';*
>
> *'discussion; finding things out with the help of others;* ***finding things out for yourself****';*
>
> *'****to be able to better yourself and understand yourself more****';*
>
> *'prepare not to stop just at one level, but* ***have an open mind to learn more things in life****; failure - learning from mistakes';*
>
> *'to look at new ideas and* ***to ask questions****';*
>
> *'interaction; listening; sharing;* ***reflection****';*
>
> *'****fun****'.*

This development of language was important to the development of the research and to the learning experience as a whole. The teaching approach that I espouse is based within this vocabulary, therefore it was important to develop a dialogue as early as possible. Involving students in a dialogue about learning and initial development of language also enabled them to be involved in the development of the research. This inclusive process of development enabled the establishment of a shared language of learning and implied a new tutor-student relationship.

The facilitation role

I approached the teaching from a student-focused perspective:

> '...students are seen to have to construct their own knowledge, and so the teacher has to focus on what the students are doing in the teaching and learning situation.' (adapted from Trigwell and Prosser, 1999).

Trigwell and Prosser discuss the approach as having the student at the focus of activities. To the teacher adopting this approach it matters more what the student is doing and learning than what the teacher is doing or covering. The teacher encourages self-directed learning, makes time for the students to interact and discuss problems, provokes debate, questions students' ideas, and develops conversations with them in lectures (Trigwell and Prosser, 1994). The implication is of a shift in approach to teaching towards that of including the student in the process of teaching and learning. The resultant shift in tutor role requires boundaries to be set in an attempt to redefine the expectations that students have of the tutor.

To allow the teaching methods, group and discussion work to be successful I had to redefine my role as that of a facilitator of learning whose role was to support and guide, but not to 'teach'. In doing this I was further encouraging responsibility for learning to rest with the students as I would not, by implication, be 'providing' all of the 'learning'. The development of a new teaching and learning relationship between the students and myself was an important element as it was linked to the students' contribution and commitment to the research. In order to develop this type of relationship it was important to include in the contracting process some negotiation of the tutor role. The course document offered a description of my intentions as a facilitator and how this would link to their learning, reinforcing the reciprocal nature of the relationship (table 4.10).

Table 4.10 - Excerpt from the course document: Facilitator Role

My role, and the learning of the group As a facilitator I will be asking you to take responsibility for your own learning, your group's learning, and for the learning of the group as a collective... I will therefore employ various facilitation processes depending upon the specific needs and requirements of the group as the sessions unfold. It is my role to harness the uniqueness of this group.

I felt that it was more important for the students to 'experience' this role than have to refer to and rely on a written description. In providing this information I was

not committing myself to a role that I felt uncomfortable or restricted within, rather the facilitation role was there for me to develop 'in situ', with each class experiencing facilitation appropriate to their needs. The result of this was the flexibility required to incorporate the different teaching methods, and to be able to develop the role as I felt necessary. Whilst the implication is of a different facilitation approach for each class, and therefore possible divergence within the data, I maintain that my role was always carried out consistently and with the outcome of responsibility for learning as my first concern.

At stage two of the research (see table 4.3) I felt that the teaching processes and research were now established, yet might benefit from further clarification and remotivation. The reflective journal provided me with the opportunity and framework to offer feedback to each class. I reflected on the issues arising from each class group that I felt the class needed to hear for the development of each teaching method and for movement towards responsibility for learning:

> *'Started late – late comers – gave others 1st 3 questions to discuss. When all were here* ***gave feedback in terms of GTU – spoke honestly and frankly and reinforced research out of class****... After session: mature student – getting used to 'unstructured' course – lack of authority – wants tutorial re: essay – managed to allay fears re: essay title/ authority/ security!' (researcher's reflective journal – week 4 [1.1]);*
>
> *'Gave feedback – went OK.* ***Emphasised ... research necessary for the course****' (researcher's reflective journal – week 4 [1.2]).*

This open feedback made an impact on some students:

> *'Useful -* ***Caroline's feedback re: participation, learning, contract****, etc.' (student reflective journal – week 4 – [1.1]);*
>
> *'Useful -* ***feedback from Caroline about the course****' (student reflective journal – week 4 – [1.2]).*

It also seemed that students were becoming able to express their experiences both in their journals and to me, allowing me to perceive a level of success with the research, and on a personal level the tutor-student relationship:

*'Just had a really nice chat with 2 mature students (early 30's?), talking about workload and expectations of HE. Seems they are really enjoying being students again,...: **'you put a lot into it', 'not like traditional lecturers'. Seems they enjoy the course...'.** (researcher's reflective journal – week 4 [1.4]).*

Reflection

In attempting to capture a sense of the unfolding process and awareness of learning as experienced by the students, it seemed appropriate to introduce reflective journals into the process. The journal was discussed with the students to ensure that it would be an effective medium of expression for the students to record their unfolding experience without contamination from the researcher. A suggestion of a format for the diary was outlined in the course document (table 4.11) providing an initial structure, with room for their individual interpretation. As anticipated, some students were able and prepared to write more than others, entries varied in length and frequency.

Table 4.11 - Excerpt from the course document: Reflective Practice

'Good, Tricky and Useful': reflective practice At the end of each session there will be time allocated for each individual to reflect on their learning by addressing three questions; • What was good? • What was tricky? • What was useful? Reflective practice maximises learning, increases productivity, and encourages you to take responsibility for your learning. You will be asked to hand in copies of your reflective practice with your assignment.

Three considerations guided the dialogue between the students and myself which established trust in this aspect of the relationship. The first related to ownership of the diary, with students aware that the diary belonged to them and the purpose of the diary was to enable insight to their unfolding experience. The second was the understanding that the research was based in inquiry rather than judgement of them as individuals. The third related to the nature of the diary as a non-assessed

requirement of the course. This final factor was particularly important in establishing, advocating and maintaining an adjustment of authority. Requiring students to participate in the process of reflection upon the course gave them an element of responsibility and authority for their learning. The reflective learning journal provided the students with an opportunity to measure their own learning development, with no need to rely on an external 'authority' for the 'right' answers. The non-assessed nature of the journal allowed the medium to be an honest account of the course as experienced by the students, and gave them a voice which would enable their experience to be valued. This was reinforced through my feedback to the class group, and through my regular comments to the effect that I valued their opinion and reflections.

The journals provided a useful medium for recording experiences on the part of both tutor and students. The journals often highlighted issues of development or concern and I felt privileged to be in a position to see the students' working through these, and pleased to see evidence of responsibility for the process of learning such as that revealed in this excerpt (over 4 weeks) from a student reflective journal:

> **Week 2**
> *'Good - **Made my first contribution to session - but this was also 'tricky'***
> *Tricky - **Need to be more confident***
> *Useful – Research'*
> **Week 3**
> *'Good - Very interesting discussion ... - we all agreed on this which was heartening. I thought I would be alone on this but the feelings from the young students were the sane as mine. **I must not have pre-conceived ideas!'***
> **Week 5**
> *'Good - Discussion*
> *Tricky - **Group very chatty - found this distracting. I need to concentrate***
> *Useful - **Acknowledging this is a problem with me'***
> *(student's reflective journal - weeks 2, 3 &5 - **[1.1]**).*

The journal was a simple and effective method of gaining information from the students regarding their experience of learning. Upon receiving the journals (stage 6 of the research) I was able to see that the reflective work had gone beyond the intended method of data collection and had clearly become a key part in the

process of the students' understanding their learning as shown in this excerpt from one students journal over 3 weeks:

> **Week 2**
> *'Good - **the idea of researching ... before the seminar really helped** me as I had a few ideas with which I could discuss with the rest of the group and built on these during the discussion. Some of us had explored different theories and so, through sharing our knowledge, we gained an **understanding** of other theories...therefore broadening our minds'*
> **Week 3**
> *'Good - the mixture of group discussion, seminars and lectures gave a variety to this session. It was good that we were able to discuss the ideas we had researched in small groups before sharing them with the rest of the class. Hearing the work of other groups increased my knowledge.*
> *Useful - **Before today's session, I was unclear ..., but through discussion and given examples, I gained a firm base of knowledge of the topic which will, therefore be easier to further research on my own'***
> **Week 4**
> *'Good - today's session was extremely interesting. As a group we had a few similar ideas we had gained from research using books although personal experiences were the most useful...*
> *Useful - it was useful in that I am becoming used to working as part of a very large group and I have the courage to speak out in the lesson and not just within my small group of 4 people. **This is partly due to the deeper learning I am experiencing from the pre-session research as I have a good idea about the discussion before the session starts'***
> *(student's reflective journal - weeks 2, 3 &4 - [1.4]).*

Whilst the journal proved an effective method of accessing insight to students' development of understanding of their learning and responsibility for learning, I did not have access to these until the end of the course. In order to gain immediate and specific feedback a further mode of data collection was required. Information was accessed by a process of evaluation, a common method of feedback within the programme, and therefore a quickly accessible and acceptable method.

Evaluation: the emergence of responsibility (Outcome)

This process of evaluation was seen by the researcher as an opportunity to collect data in a way that was familiar to the students. Through using evaluation questionnaires I was aiming to gain specific feedback regarding understanding and responsibility for

learning. At stage three (table 4.3) of the research I was able to carry out a mid-term evaluation (see appendices 3.4a). In addition to some general information, the evaluation focused particularly on the responses to two questions:

What do you want to learn from this module and why?
How will you know when you have learnt it?

These questions were asked in order to access information regarding the students' experience of the process of learning – were they aware of their learning responsibility? Responses to the questions varied widely. However, whilst there was still a heavy emphasis on the content of learning, there was evidence that students were beginning to look beyond this and think about their own learning in qualitatively different ways as revealed by this student response:

'What do you want to learn from this module? And why?
I chose this module to follow on from [previous course] and carry on learning about why we do certain things and react [in] certain ways ... because it is interesting
How will you know when you have learnt it?
I know now that I have learnt something because I feel myself relating to some of the subjects that we discuss. I think about the issues and come up with my own answers allowing me to think for myself rather than just taking in information' *(student evaluation week 7 [1.1]).*

Other responses demonstrated the limitation of a surface approach, indicating that the learning was only reflected in the essay writing and completion of the course as opposed to finding learning intrinsically useful. The implication of this being that learning is only useful or valuable when it is attached to quality systems outside of the learner (ie. essay mark/ passing the course being determined by the tutor), and so reducing the level of responsibility the learner takes:

'What do you want to learn from this module? And why?
I want to learn more about the problems adolescence have to deal with and how society can help. So I can put this into use towards a career
How will you know when you have learnt it?
when I have written my essay' *(student evaluation week 7 [1.2]).*

Upon analysis of the mid-term evaluation questionnaires there was a strong indication that students were experiencing development in their understanding of their learning, but did not have the language to describe it:

> 'What do you want to learn from this module? And why?
> *I wanted to have a theoretical background ...*
> How will you know when you have learnt it?
> ***when I have theories and I am so involved with them that I make really reflective efforts about it. When it makes 'click' (sorry I don't know how to describe, but I've had it already)'***
> (student evaluation week 7 [1.2]).

Therefore, in re-orienting the students (stage 4 of the research; table 4.3) I gave feedback regarding the evaluations for the purpose of re-establishing the research and ensuring motivation in the final stages of the research.

Due to the lack of specific data regarding the process of learning the final evaluation questionnaire (stage 5; see appendices 3.4b) was developed to elicit information directly regarding the students' experience of learning over the 12 weeks of the research. Students were asked to choose from words based within the conceptions and approaches to learning as described by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983), these words intended only as a starting point for the student's responses. They were then invited to write about one of the words they had chosen, describing its significance in relation to their learning. As a result of this revised approach responses were more explicitly related to students experiences of learning, reflection, understanding of learning, and responsibility for learning:

> *'Understanding; motivation; interest*
> ***I have had motivation because I have understood what the sessions have been about due to good teaching and learning methods'*** *(student evaluation week 12 [1.2]);*

> *'Progress; sharing knowledge; interaction*
> ***Sharing knowledge*** *- comparing ideas and views about the subject benefited me as it made me look at something in a different view or standpoint.*

Independent learning allowed me to assess my progress independently throughout the course *' (student evaluation week 12 [1.2]);*

Problem-solving;understanding;motivation
Motivation *- If I am motivated I can do almost anything. I look more deeply into lectures and group* ***discussions and leave sessions thinking about the subject. I can also write essays confidently with enjoyment****. If I am not motivated I cannot concentrate and my mind goes blank and I feel tired and worthless' (student evaluation week 12 [1.3]);*

'Sharing knowledge;experience;interest
Sharing knowledge *- in this session the group discussion and exchange of information were successful and motivating. We had a wide range of experiences, ages and interests within the group, making each discussion different. This course was very interesting and made more so by the variety of ways of learning. Although some worked and others were less successful it was interesting to be offered a wide range of mediums to learn by.* ***It has opened my mind to considering different ways to approach my own learning patterns*** *' (student evaluation week 12 [1.3]);*

'Questioning;experience;interaction
Questioning *- 1) any theory must be questioned of their 'unique' value/worth.* ***Merely accepting what has already been said without questioning the relevance in 'present/ modern' society leads to a dead-end approach; 2) questioning others' thoughts and ideas, but also critically evaluating one's own are crucial for a deeper understanding*** *(student evaluation week 12 [1.4]);*

'Understanding;questioning;experience
Questioning is important as it aids learning in that you are finding out because you choose to' *(student evaluation week 12 [1.4]);*

'Sharing knowledge;questioning;challenge
Questioning *is vital to me.* ***As a mature student returning to study after many years I question all the new ideas I am learning****. This was not acceptable when I was at school, therefore I underachieved as a teenager.* ***It is exciting and refreshing to be able to access a wide range of ideas and apply them in different ways****. [Group work is highly dependent on] group dynamics - several members of the group were so negative and miserable it made discussions a chore' (student evaluation week 12 [1.4]).*

A further finding significant was the emphasis given to the tutor: student relationship:

> *'Interaction; sharing knowledge; interaction*
> ***Interaction** - this is important to me as it helps me to work through what I am learning with others, and maybe seeing their problems in learning are the same as mine and solving them together. **Interaction with the tutor is also beneficial** and I prefer this method of preparation before essays. Interaction with other students eases the learning process - making it less daunting knowing you have peer and tutor support' (student evaluation week 12 [1.2]);*
>
> *'Questioning;experience;interaction*
> ***Interaction - it is the interaction between teacher and students, and students themselves that is at the heart of any learning experience. Only by interacting with other people are we challenged to rethink our values, beliefs and ideas.** At the same time we widen our horizon by learning to see a problem from different angles. **Through 'dialogue' we learn from each other - students from teacher (and the other way around) and from other students**' (student evaluation week 12 [1.3]);*
>
> *'Achievement;questioning;interaction*
> ***Interaction** is probably the most important as I don't believe successful learning is achieved purely from reading books or attending lectures. **Interaction between the tutor and student and between the students themselves brings rise to questions which can be thought about and answered together**. Even if they cannot be answered- the questions are more thought provoking than just a lecture! (student evaluation week 12 [1.4]).*

The results of the final evaluation left me in no doubt that the research and approach to data collection had been successful not least through the explicit involvement of the students in evaluating the process of research. Responses suggested that students had developed their learning through small group work and discussion work. The process of reflection had moved beyond a method of data collection and become a developmental feature of students' learning, and therefore a core feature of the *input* process of the research.

4.5 Summary

Exploration of the experience of learning led to some development in the methodology and ultimately some interesting results regarding the process of

exploring responsibility for learning through the application of student-focused teaching methods. A further element emerging during the course of the first cycle, that of a shift in the power relationship implicit to the classroom, was to increase in profile as the research developed. The teaching role was fundamentally challenged from the outset of the teaching, through the contracting of learning, and in the development of a vocabulary of learning. In reviewing the research I was able to see that the facilitation role was key to the teaching enabling understanding of learning and responsibility for learning, involving a shift in the power relationship between teacher and student. The development of the tutor role had a far bigger impact on the research than expected. In adopting a student focused approach and facilitation role, along with the teaching methods, I had accessed something beyond the development of responsibility alone. I had also challenged that traditional teacher role and the tutor-student relationship implicit to this role. I became aware that an 'adjustment of authority' had taken place, resulting in a need to explore this phenomenon within the next cycle of research.

The following chapter explores the first cycle of research with regard to the specific teaching methods enabling further consideration of the emerging themes and contributing to the development of the research towards cycle two.

Chapter Five

Exploration of Cycle One: Emergence of Processes to Practice

5.1 Introduction: Aim – Input – Outcome

This study has been concerned with providing students with opportunities to experience significant learning and reflection upon learning for the purpose of developing understanding of their learning, thus enabling an increase in responsibility for learning. Baume (1994) notes that the importance of encouraging this approach is due to the rate of turnover of useful knowledge already being very high. Therefore the ability to decide what must be learned, and then to do it effectively, becomes a survival skill. Gray (1997) supports this noting that the secret of learning is in the process, not the outcome.

The research has been concerned with increasing responsibility for learning regarding choices not about content of learning, but about processes of learning, leading to understanding of learning. An implicit element within this is the concept of learning how to learn, or metacognition. Metacognition means thinking about thinking (Entwistle, 1992) involving reflection on experience (Cowan, 1998). It entails developing an awareness of learning processes, leading to selective choice of learning strategies which inform our choices. Osborne *et al* (1998) develop this point with regard to responsibility for learning suggesting that the job of education is to help individuals work out matters for themselves:

> '... [and] to develop autonomous individuals who use rationality, common sense and experience to inform personal values' (Osborne, *et al*, 1998:92).

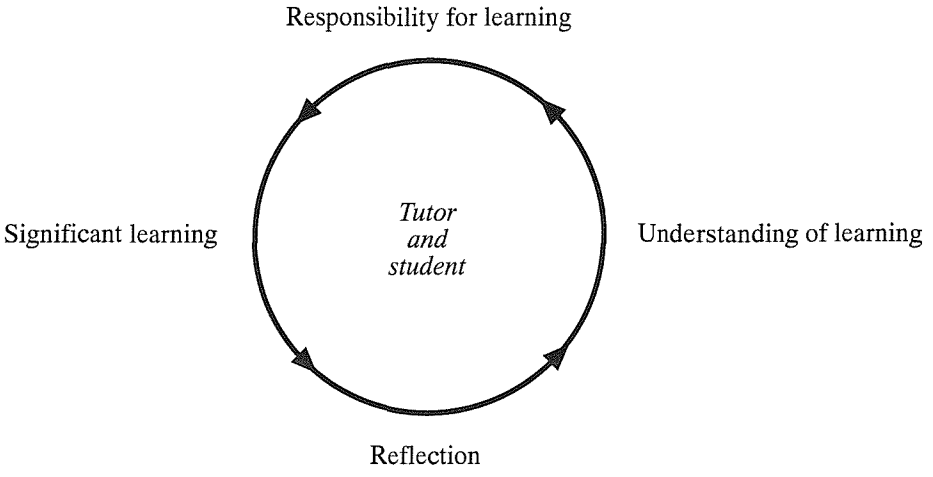
The factors underpinning this research then, are the opportunity for students to experience significant learning, and reflection upon that learning developing understanding of own learning, leading ultimately to responsibility for learning as represented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Aim-Input-Outcome (iii)

Aim	Input	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	Through teaching: significant learning and reflection upon learning	To lead to responsibility for learning

The research has explored how the application of a student focused perspective enables these factors to emerge within the experience of teaching and learning in higher education. An initial representation of the process of learning enabled by this approach can be seen in figure 5.1. The student and tutor are at the centre of the cycle, working with the aim, input and outcome together.

Figure 5.1 – Cycle of responsibility for learning (i)



5.2 Introduction to the teaching methods

Cycle one involved the first cohort in the study and explored the development of students' understanding of learning and subsequent increased responsibility for learning. Four teaching methods were explored in the first cycle. These are outlined below (table 5.2) to include a working definition of the process as applied within the research.

Table 5.2 – Teaching methods: cycle one

Groupwork: emphasis on discussion work in small groups, with feedback given to members as regards the impact of their behaviour on the group's learning;
Seminar presentation: group presentations, with whole class discussion;
Peer tutoring; group presentations with opportunity for presenting group to act as peer-tutors for small groups in class;
Syndicate group'; group studies both in and out of class; method requires a combination of student led work and tutor led classes.

These processes were chosen not least for their adaptability to unknown class size and the implications this would have upon the teaching process, additionally the approaches were deemed to be flexible enough to adapt within the proposed weekly structure and continually evaluative nature of the course.

Groupwork method

This is a process that I felt would be more suited to a small group (I was expecting 17) due to the potential intimacy of the learning relationship that is implicit in this work. Groupwork is more than 'work in groups', it is about the development of the individual in the group situation. Therefore groupwork is less of a teaching process and more of an approach to teaching. According to Button (1974) groupwork is concerned with helping people in their growth and development regarding social skills and personal relationships. The purpose of groupwork is to provide opportunities for the individual to relate to others in a supportive atmosphere, and to try new approaches and roles.

My interest in groupwork comes from having experienced this as a personal and developmental process on a counselling skills course in 1997. I experienced an approach to thinking about learning that caused me to re-evaluate my own approaches to learning:

> 'Training for groupwork...must involve first-hand experience...no one is likely to grasp the subtle and intricate interplay of...roles without belonging to a training group in which these are explicitly explored. It is therefore crucial

that teachers avoid putting students in situations which they themselves have not experienced...' (Campbell and Ryder, 1989: 24).

A key element of my approach to teaching has involved building upon this experiential value base – I could not expect students to accept situations that I could not identify and empathise with myself. In addition, I became a member of the group contributing my learning, with the intention of working with the group experience to develop my understanding of the students' experience. Groupwork deliberately uses the group experience as a source of learning resulting in a unique experience of learning.

Campbell and Ryder (1989), however, remind the practitioner that most teachers do not possess the knowledge, skills, experience or training to act as therapists, in addition to the fact that it is difficult for teachers and students to adjust to the demands of an approach that can add up to a 'therapeutic contract' whilst simultaneously acknowledging a commitment to educational goals. They conclude that the circumstances of a classroom are not conducive to therapeutic sessions. These points highlight potential difficulties in using this approach in addition to the complexities that might arise if exercises derived from non-directive and non-judgmental therapeutic approaches to learning are adopted within the often highly directive and judgmental context of the classroom (Campbell and Ryder, 1989).

In adopting this approach I was aware that the groupwork 'ground-rules' (appendix 5.1) would need careful consideration and commitment from the class:

> *'went through the booklet - also had **'groupwork' chat** - which was too long really and not entirely relevant at this stage for them as it is difficult to relate/make real' (Researcher's reflective diary);*
>
> *'Good - Time to take a breath and to take in what the course will cover' (Student reflective diary – week 1);*
>
> *'Good - The whole session was good. **I feel prepared to start the course** and I like my group;*
> *Useful - Meeting and chatting with my group. I feel more comfortable in the course now that I know these people' (Student reflective diary - week 1);*

*'Good - **gained clear understanding of outline of course - what is required, what we will be discussing, methods of teaching;***
*Useful - handy hints on how to structure work and follow course, **and ideas about working in a group**' (Student reflective diary – week 1).*

After the initial contracting session there was a definite sense of anticipation and commitment (as demonstrated by the excerpts above), but by the next session it became clear that various factors intervened in making the process less successful. For example, in the first session (contracting) there had been only 10 students – an ideal group size for developing relationships and working with the process. By the second week there were 15 students – 5 new students requiring initiation into the process and development of a new class learning contract – working as three small groups of five students each. This interrupted the initial development of the group. The group suddenly seemed too big, disabling the opportunity for intimate relationships to develop and subsequently developing in a direction inappropriate to that required for successful groupworking. An additional factor would be that my focusing on the process threw the students immediately into a situation where they had to prepare work for the class, it became clear that the level of student work was inadequate to enable me to focus on facilitation and my role risked shifting back into that of 'teacher'.

A further disabling factor emerging by week 3 was that of the potential fluidity of the process. Groupwork has its emphasis on the group experience requiring that students both prepare for the class, and are prepared to disclose information and give feedback to their group members. Whilst I had gone some way in ensuring that the climate was conducive to this disclosure, the lack of individual preparation resulted in a highly subjective experiential discussion, lacking academic rigour and verging on a 'psychotherapeutic experience'. This result frustrated me. I was disappointed with the lack of preparation and not prepared to let the course continue as either a 'pop-psychology' discussion or with over-reliance on my input, or that of individual students. The excerpts below detail my frustration, and a related example from one student's journal over 3 weeks:

'Group discussion ... ***revealed blatantly the lack of prep. done by class...*** *Asked groups to research for next week... Maybe some more direction needed - thinking of moving towards syndicate working dynamic' (Researchers' reflective diary – week 3);*

Week 2
'Useful - ***All the information and theories from other people, especially Caroline'***
Week 3
'Good - ***Discussion****! learned lots'*
Week 4
'Good - ***Caroline's notes and mini-lecture, very helpful;***
Useful - ***Group discussion - these girls are good!'***
(student's reflective diary – weeks 2 -4).

The result was that in week four I re-contracted with the students, moving the process towards that of the 'syndicate method':

'Being specific about research for this group has been very useful *– lots of discussion'*
(researcher's reflective journal week 5).

This had important implications for the development of my role within the process, a theme that I worked with but was not aware of the full extent of at this point in the research.

Seminar presentation method

This process was used with a class of 30 students working as 6 small groups (class 1.2). The process employed was one that many of the members of the class were familiar with as seminar presentation is a popular method employed on many other courses. The initial session focused on contracting the learning with the emphasis on group working. Students again reported positively on the interactive approach and the explanation of the course structure:

'Good - ***meeting new people, gaining new enthusiasm for the course*** *and to stay at university at all (exam grades helped); structure for next 12 weeks, made arrangements for group work easily despite large group*
Tricky - meeting new people

Useful - new people, easily organised' (student reflective diary – week 1);

*'Good - **the whole course was outlined**, so we know exactly what is expected over the nest 12 weeks; Seminars were organised straight away*
Tricky - choosing a seminar
*Useful - **got to know my group for the semester and organise** work and who was responsible for what' (student reflective diary – week 1).*

Jaques (1991) discusses the classic description of 'seminar' is often taken to mean a group discussion led formally or informally by the tutor, focused on issues arising from the subject matter. The number of students is usually more than 8 and less than 20. Whilst this approach was adopted in part, there were factors to be attended to that resulted in a different approach being taken. Due to the combined factors of increased numbers of students in higher education generally, and the programme requirement of class size between 15 and 30 students, classes are rarely smaller than 20. In this case the class totalled 30 students resulting in a less intimate climate than might be the case with 8–20 students.

In this study 'seminar' was defined as a small group presentation to the class of an issue arising from the subject matter, followed by discussion work both in the class group and in smaller groups with the emphasis being on the contribution of students to the learning of the group. Therefore the seminar becomes less of a process in itself and becomes part of a structure of processes (see table 4.7).

Whilst the approach was successful in terms of motivating students to present issues for discussion and student satisfaction with the discussion and small group work, there were many elements with which were not entirely appropriate. Examples of this are the lack of a critical analysis resulting in descriptive presentations, and the variable quality of approach resulting in a reliance on tutor input:

*'Tricky - **I am still finding it very difficult to really learn to take notes from the seminars**. People are rushing through too quickly to get the ordeal over and done with, but that way they are not effectively communicating. People who stay sitting down cannot project their voices - it is just so frustrating, I really want to learn something but feel I would do better in the library studying on my own*
Useful - some of the handout sheets' (student reflective diary – week 3).

A lack of desire to lead discussion often resulted in my stepping in and supporting the students rather more than originally intended:

> *'Good - **getting seminar out of the** way*
> *Tricky - Mike not turning up*
> *Useful - **Caroline filling in gaps'** (student reflective diary – week 8).*

The risk here is that students would lose any sense of their input to the development of the process. Bligh (1981) remarks that the success of the seminar is dependent on too many chance factors: students may not do a competent job in preparing or presenting; there may be collusion among the students not to criticise a colleague infront of a tutor; the balance in dynamics of a group with a lead student and a tutor may be a precarious one.

Treadway (1975) discusses the ambiguity of leadership as a potential factor of conflict within the process – who leads the seminar: tutor or students? I contracted the process with the students to include their participation in class discussions, but what was perhaps not clear was the detail surrounding students asking questions of the presenting group. Students would attempt to answer questions, and would draw on all members of the small group in dealing with the subsequent discussion, mostly with relative success. On occasion the presenting students would withdraw from class questions or be unable to deal with enquiries. Whilst the contracting had included a legitimation of 'not knowing' all the answers (that I employed fairly regularly!), this maintained a ring of student failure about it and had the effect of resulting in awkward silences rather than admissions of a limitation to knowledge. All the while the students remained as leaders of the process, but their lack of ability to facilitate discussion resulted in my intervention

In an NUS study (1969) students regarded the seminar as being particularly valuable when learning and the interchange of ideas are encouraged, in addition to the opportunity to study a subject in depth. Criticisms however are that seminars can be dominated by individuals, or that students avoid doing sufficient preparation for the discussion. It is often the experience that whilst seminars are potentially able to

provide an intellectual stimulus that is difficult to match, in practice the dynamics of group working and the ways tutors handle it make this technique an unsatisfactory experience for many students (Jaques, 1991).

Whilst these positive factors were evident in the study, these and other negative factors were highly influential on the process and required that the fundamental contract, roles and desire to encourage responsibility for learning were compromised. The structure of the sessions provided enough scope for the seminar presentation to remain the students' responsibility but as the course progressed the class discussion and small group discussion with the tutor moving from group to group guiding rather than leading discussion, followed by a short summary at the end by the tutor increased in importance. The students' inability to fully utilise the seminar as an opportunity to develop their learning and subsequently increase responsibility for learning was not as clear cut as I had hoped resulting in increased tutor input. As with the groupwork method, this had important implications for the development of my role within the process.

Peer tutoring method

This process was experienced by a class of 18 students working as 3 small groups. As with the seminar presentation process, the process was modified for use to enable small group discussion work. Goldschmid and Goldschmid (1976) suggest that peer tutoring involves self-instructional material, involving questioning and answering between pairs of students. Topping (1997) describes the development of the term resulting in the widely accepted definition with Vygotskian overtones of more advanced learners helping less advanced learners to learn in co-operative working pairs or small groups carefully organised by a teacher. The process as applied in the study has adopted this definition with the presenting group becoming peer tutors for the other members of the class. More specifically, the peer tutors would present a brief seminar and then divide amongst the two other groups acting as facilitators for discussion work.

This process was employed with the understanding that 'to teach something is to learn it twice' implying that the tutor must know the subject well enough to be able

to aid another's learning. Implicit within this is the suggestion that the tutor must have a deep understanding of the material being taught (Fisher, 1995). Fisher discusses the benefits for the student tutor because although they are teaching material they have mastered, the tutor can gain intellectual benefits in different ways; putting their skills and knowledge to some purpose will help to consolidate knowledge, fill in gaps, find new meanings and extend conceptual frameworks. It also helps the individual to understand about the learning process, the possible blocks to learning and how to overcome them. With these benefits in mind it did not seem unreasonable to hope that the process would encourage students to engage meaningfully with the issues they had chosen to study, and in doing so experience significant learning.

The seminar process was familiar to the students, but peer-tutoring required careful explanation. The initial session focused on contracting the learning with the emphasis on group work and discussion, and the process of peer-tutoring. Students again reported positively on the interactive nature of the course and the explanation of the course structure:

> *'Good - **being placed into groups because it enabled you to meet other members of your class***
> *Tricky - this new way of working, I enjoyed it but it will take some getting used to*
> *Useful - being able to bounce ideas and thoughts off other people'*
> *(student reflective diary – week 1);*

> *'Good - **meeting other people from the group; understanding how the course works and what we will be doing'***
> *(student reflective diary – week 1).*

Whilst the contracting had gone well and students were motivated by the new approach, the problems with this process became obvious very early on. Due to the size of the class (3 small groups) it was not fair to expect a group to present every week (over 11 weeks), so each group chose two subjects for presentation (over 6 weeks). Additionally, upon choosing their subjects for presentation and discussion, no group chose subjects to be dealt with in the first few weeks of the course. The

result of this was that I had to include a lecture for the first weeks, causing students to expect input from me every week. Whilst I was prepared to facilitate and contribute, I had not been prepared to lecture and was not prepared for the lack of student contribution during those initial weeks:

> *'peer tutoring - **this process hasn't really taken off yet**, as the 1st seminars with peer tutoring are not until week 4 (due to only 3 groups). This session is hard work because of this, as I am left (or have been so far) to do all the work. **No research by students is apparent** - I may get them all to present on those weeks where no-one is seminar presenting, as the learning responsibility has not been taken up yet. One group seems to work particularly well together - I think they are a friendship group though. But I'm still concerned that they're not doing any/much reading.' (researcher's reflective journal – week 2).*

When the method was introduced (week 4) I became very aware of the students' expectation of my input. The presenting group/peer-tutors seemed almost surprised at the contribution they were expected to make (seminar presentation and hosting small group discussion). I was also aware how difficult it was for me to contribute whilst 2 groups were running simultaneously. The peer-tutors in my opinion were not the strongest group (lacking confidence and maturity) and required a high level of support for the process to work. An additional factor was the development of the small groups who were just beginning to bond, this process had the result of splitting up the newly formed support relationships:

> *'**The peer tutoring is not working**, all it has done is split one group up and put them into the other two. Better to avoid 'seminar' as such or get group to present questions and create discussion as they go. Getting group to split and present 2 seminars would result in some information not being passed on and also presenting group would research twice over within the group... not sure how effective the 'peer-tutoring' was – next week also involves deaf student. Maybe should be more confident about process? Seminars were good – well researched lots of overheads. Not good room set up though. Group work went as well as possible – peer tutoring not clear though. Plenary good.' (researcher's reflective journal – week 4).*

I was left feeling that the process, whilst potentially successful, was too difficult to support and had too many variables to be considered to be a regular feature – for example the group requires all members to be present:

> *'**Seminars good – although 3 [presenters] were away**. Covered main issues – presented well with overheads. Lecture OK (felt it needed to follow – although they looked so bored!)... Discussion went OK – peer tutoring – seminar group went with smaller group and I with the big group to make 2 peer tutoring groups... Disappointed that the seminar group had people missing – don't think the presenters minded though (both mature students). Energy seemed quite low today. Discussion was interesting.' (researcher's reflective journal – week 5).*

Due to my concerns and lack of confidence with the process, and the apparent lack of contribution by the non-presenting students, I adapted the format for the following sessions to run as the seminar process, with presentations and class discussion. I feel that an underlying issue here may be the lack of control that I had whilst the peer-tutors were working within the small groups. I don't think that I necessarily needed to be in control, but perhaps felt that the students might think I was not in control due to the relatively passive position I was adopting in enabling the students to lead which added to my lack of confidence in the process. Peer-tutoring in pairs may well work, but with small groups requiring varying levels of tutor support, and the desired outcome of responsibility for learning, it is a complicated process requiring a level of student commitment that I did not feel could be guaranteed.

It was only upon receiving the student journals at the end of the course that I was able to gain an insight to the students' perceptions of the process:

> *'Good - getting the seminar completed*
> *Tricky - giving a seminar*
> *Useful - knowing what the seminar involves for next time, knowing what to expect; **talking with the other groups - hearing their views**'*
> *(student reflective journal – presenting student week 4);*

> *'Good - seminar presentation*
> *Tricky - **group discussion - not very inspiring**'*
> *(student reflective journal - week 4);*

Week 4
*'Good - **an excellent seminar was given**, which gave our group the chance for a good and worthwhile discussion*
*Tricky - **eventually we did discuss some important points, although getting the discussion kicked off was very difficult**...this was because the seminar contained a lot of factual information and seemed to cover a lot... '*
Week 5
*'Good - **another excellent seminar, with lots of interesting information***
Tricky - only 2 members of the seminar group turned up, which gave them a tough job; however they gave as good a seminar as any other complete group' (student reflective journal - weeks 4 & 5).

On reflection I think I made the right decision, the process (seminar) was familiar to the students with clear expectations of the work requirements. My role was made easier as a result of this, enabling my focus to remain on facilitating student learning, and directing support appropriately.

Syndicate method

Students experiencing this method were in a class of 31 students. They divided into 5 groups of between 4 and 8 members. I felt that the syndicate method would be the most appropriate (of the four being employed) for the development of responsibility for learning within a large class. Collier (1983) has written at length about the method, and I based the process on his work. Students are divided into groups of between 4 – 8 with work consisting of assignments carried out by teams, working without the tutor. Distinctive features of a syndicate group are that the group exists for the purpose of studying, assignments are designed to draw on a variety of sources and student experience, and there is alternation between student led work and tutor led classes. The indication here is that the process relies heavily upon the commitment of the students to both their own learning and that of the group. The implication of this is that the contracting needs to involve consideration of how the groups will work together (as with the other processes).

There is much evidence pointing to the heightened motivation of the students and increased involvement in the academic work from the syndicate method. Collier (1983) and Ruddock (1978) note a willingness to put more time and energy into the

work, Collier (1983) and Goldschmid and Goldschmid (1976) establish greater satisfaction with the work and the unusual sheer enjoyment of a compulsory course. Collier (1983) finds a wider range of reading, stronger commitment among individual students to the homework and the tasks of the course, and a stronger sense of mutual obligation among the members (Collier, 1966, Ruddock, 1978).

Research into the process has also found the development of higher order intellectual skills. Studies by Collier (1983), Ruddock (1978), Entwistle *et al*, (1979), Marton and Saljo (1976) have all noted an increase in the 'deep processing' of the material studied. A further point is the identification of an enhanced sense of the personal meaningfulness of the material (Collier, 1983).

The contracting involved discussion of the process with its focus on group working both in and out of class, discussion of findings with the class group and facilitation style of the tutor. The students were motivated by the process and the emphasis on group working:

> *'Good - **this introductory session allowed me to experience working with a different group of students and talk closely with a smaller number about themselves and our mutual interest in our studies**' (student reflective journal – week 1);*

> *'Good - **I was able to meet new people and interact in a small group which is sometimes better than being in a larger group as it allows everyone to put forward their views**'*
> *(student reflective journal – week 1).*

Classic use of the method requires that instead of weekly class attendance, students seek tutor support as necessary during the course. This was felt to be inappropriate on a course previously validated, and with anticipated student-tutor contact on a weekly basis. However, the focus on studying within a group with little tutor intervention, and use of discussion was felt to be highly appropriate in developing responsibility for learning. Each week the syndicate groups would be given a question that they were required to prepare for the purpose of discussion work in the next class. The process involved them meeting up as a group out of session time and dividing the work and sharing knowledge, experiences and resources in

order to be able to discuss further in class and contribute to class discussion. This was conducted with various levels of success:

> *'Good - **the idea of researching ... before the seminar really helped me** as I had a few ideas with which I could discuss with the rest of the group and built on these during the discussion. Some of us had explored different theories and so, through sharing our knowledge, we gained an understanding of other theories...therefore broadening our minds.*
> *Useful - having discussed our conclusions... we all gained a better insight... and by looking at newer ideas ..we developed an understanding... In addition, the group work ... was useful in that other students expressed ideas from their own experiences...helping me to understand more about this...' (student reflective journal – week 2);*
>
> *'Tricky - **the research done before the group meet each week is tricky because we all go away and work on our own - it is hard to know if the work I am doing is what is being looked for, although when we put our ideas together, I feel well prepared to speak in front of the whole group**' (student reflective journal – week7);*
>
> ***Week** 2*
> *'Good - **some of the group work and ideas from reading etc. very interesting***
> *Tricky - group input - 'blood from a stone' from some of the group members'*
> ***Week 3***
> *'Good - fun, interesting discussing the charts*
> *Tricky - **still no input from the same members of the group**/frustrating no focus'*
> *(student reflective journal – weeks 2 & 3);*
>
> *'Good - **working in group was a good thing, it helped to know others and a good atmosphere in the class***
> *Tricky - **trying to arrange meetings with other members of the group**'*
> *(student reflective journal - summary of journal);*
>
> *'Good - **group work and communication**; being able to share my ideas with them*
> *Tricky - not really knowing about theorists ... wasn't confident at first with sharing my ideas **(nervous because didn't really know group members)**'*
> *(student reflective journal – week 3);*
>
> *'Tricky - **didn't research much... and therefore didn't understand it fully**'*
> *(student reflective journal - week 9).*

The process clearly requires a high level of individual commitment for the small group discussion to be productive. It became clear that whilst research was taking place, the same members of the small groups were often doing all the work:

> *'Good session! started with groups talking about questions 2 and 3,* ***some had done mounds of research, others; little****'*
> *(researcher's reflective journal – week 3);*

> ***'Even though they were doing group 'presentations' the same people spoke and for a similar length of time as previously****'*
> *(researcher's reflective journal – week 6).*

With the pattern of individual contribution emerging it became clear that students were often passive, relying on others to research and contribute to the discussions whilst they took notes:

> *'Good – discussing...*
> *Tricky -* ***writing down all of the notes****'*
> *(student reflective learning journal - week 9).*

> ***Week** 1*
> *'Good -* ***discussing ideas in groups and getting other people's views***
> ***Week** 5*
> *Useful -* ***questions others asked, I took notes to help me****'*
> *(student reflective learning journal - weeks 1 & 5)*

An additional feature of the class appeared to be a reliance on tutor input with many students referring to the lecture as a 'good' or 'useful' part of the session:

> *'Useful -* ***the lecture notes we had were helpful in adding to our own notes*** *and as a base for further research' (student reflective journal – week 8);*

> ***Week** 3*
> *'Useful -* ***taking notes from Caroline****'*
> ***Week** 7*
> *'Useful - listening to Caroline quoting notes on stress'*
> *(student reflective journal - weeks 3 & 7);*

> *'Useful -* ***Caroline's notes*** *- useful. Perhaps occasionally need more lecture - personally learn more' (student reflective journal - week 7);*

Week 5
*'Useful - **lecture part of the lesson. Enables to gain some useful information**'*

Week 8
'Useful - lecture part and group discussion' (student reflective journal – weeks 5 & 8);

*'additional comments - **In all lectures... the end lecture bit from you really helps as we're given proper factual knowledge**' (student reflective journal – week 12).*

Upon receiving the reflective journals I was able to see just how the students had experienced the process, apart from the previously noted difficulties of group working, students wrote overwhelmingly in it's favour:

*'Good - **enjoyable working in the groups; group discussion and part lecture provides an effective way of learning**' (student reflective journal - week 7);*

Week 4
*'Good - **the discussion; learning to agree and disagree'***
Week 8
'Good - realising how much you learn from other people'
(student reflective journal - weeks 4 & 8);

Week 3
*'Good - **the mixture of group discussion, seminars and lectures gave a variety to this session**. It was good that we were able to discuss the ideas we had researched in small groups before sharing them with the rest of the class'*
Week 4
*'Useful - it was useful in that I am becoming used to working as part of a very large group and I have the courage to speak out in the lesson and not just within my small group of 4 people. **This is partly due to the deeper learning I am experiencing from the pre-session research as I have a good idea about the discussion before the session starts'***
Week 5
*'Good - **today's session was good in that we all became very intensely involved in discussion within our small groups...also I was quite confident in sharing these ideas with the group as a whole**' (student reflective journal - weeks 3 – 5);*

*'Good - **today's session was particularly good because we worked a great deal as a combined group...all contributing to ideas**...Certain groups weren't concentrated upon to speak in front of the whole class which was good, but we could give our opinions if we felt confident enough to. **In general all the sessions we have done so far have been effective in that there is a variety of seminar groups, discussion, and a small lecture** as opposed to an hour and a half of lecture that we did last semester (student reflective journal - week 7).*

There was clear evidence of qualitative changes in student's understanding of their learning, and the indication was that this was not always a simple or easily accepted process:

*Tricky - **understanding the theories and also agreeing with the ages of changes in a person's life because it's different for everyone***
Useful - to understand that the life span theories are general guidelines not specific stages (student reflective journal - week 2);

'Good - discussing in groups was good
*Useful - **discussion - always useful - makes you think about other points of view**' (student reflective journal - week 4);*

*'Good - **the discussion; learning to agree and disagree***
*Tricky - **conflicts in opinions** (student reflective journal - week 4);*

*'Useful - it was useful in that I am becoming used to working as part of a very large group and I have the courage to speak out in the lesson and not just within my small group of 4 people. This is partly due to the **deeper learning** I am experiencing from the pre-session research as I have a good idea about the discussion before the session starts (student reflective journal - week 4);*

***Week** 1*
*'Good - discussing the life-span theories, because hearing different perspective/opinions on the theories **helped me to understand them, and to understand what each theorist meant'***
Week 6
*'Tricky - **after discussion in the group, I came to question my own opinion'** (student reflective journal - week 1 & 6);*

***Week** 2*
*'Useful - **discussion encourages further understanding and insight into other peoples interpretations'***
Week 3
*'Useful - **discussion helps aid understanding'***
Week 5

*'Useful - **listening to others opinions creates insight'***
Week 8
*'Useful - **to find that I enjoyed something that I wasn't initially interested in'***
(student reflective journal - weeks 2, 3, 5 & 11);

*'Useful - **accepting opposing views that I completely disagreed with taught me patience and tolerance'** (student reflective journal - week 5).*

Taking responsibility for learning was not always easy:

'Good - lots of work done
*Tricky - big groups, people don't listen; unfamiliar learning methods; **taking responsibility for our own learning** (student reflective journal - week 4).*

5.3 Summary of themes

The syndicate method was certainly the most successful in terms of providing students with opportunities to work in small groups and engage in discussion work without too much emphasis on the tutor. The process encouraged and enabled students to rely on each other as learning resources both in and out of class and required a high level of responsibility for learning for both the learning of the individual and the learning of the group. The participatory nature of the method resulted in all individuals being aware of the need to prepare for each session. The discussion work was therefore well informed and of high quality, contributing to the learning of the group, and adding to the motivation and development of the group.

The groupwork approach was not set up as rigorously as was necessary due to many factors, not least the transient nature of the group membership. The focus on groupwork was not substantial enough, even with the session structure to work within. Students required further purpose (i.e. seminar presentation) to be outlined in order for them to commit to the course with its emphasis on student contribution – the development of and learning from relationships was not enough. The syndicate method created a need for communication between individuals, and preparation for each week was clearly outlined encouraging commitment to the process.

Contracting with the students in outlining the process and maintaining the process from the start was also an important element – the lack of momentum gained

with the peer-tutoring added to the failure of the process. The result was that the peer-tutoring morphed into a seminar process similar to the experienced by class 1.2 in the study. This familiar process enabled students to grasp the expectations of the course, but even with familiarity gained, the pace of participation remained the same with heavy reliance on the contribution of the tutor to the total learning process.

The facilitation approach that I employed also impacted on the success of the processes. Setting the expectations of the students in terms of my role and maintaining that role were vital to the momentum of the process, there was no ambiguity to the role. Whilst I was facilitating a process unfamiliar to them, the students gained familiarity with the process, tutor role and expectations, and their role and responsibilities very quickly. This lack of ambiguity of the roles and responsibilities implicit to the teaching and learning context has become an important element in the development of this study. Through analysis of data elements taking a supporting role in the teaching approach have emerged these are outlined in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 - Aim-Input/Elements-Outcome (iv)

Aim	Input /elements	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	Through student focused teaching: significant learning and reflection upon learning	To lead to responsibility for learning
	• Re-contracting roles • Group work • Discussion and weekly preparation	

Increased student responsibility for learning has implications for support structures. The teaching approaches adopted have required students to find their way through their own learning to a greater extent than experienced previously. Students require clarity of approach, and support in learning due the ambiguity initially felt in both learning context and learning relationship. Stephenson (1998) suggests that support mechanisms can be devised to cope with changes, and that it is also possible to raise the quality of student learning experience through application of these mechanisms.

It is the responsibility of the tutor to clarify the new teaching and learning context, and as the study has so far found, these issues will need to be discussed with students as the process continues in order to clarify any ambiguity. As Stephenson (1998) notes:

> 'Uncertainty about the student's own programme should not be exacerbated by any lack of clarity in the 'rules of the game' (1998: 135).

The teaching method employed required a fundamental change in the role of the tutor. Tutor input became facilitative, encouraging student contribution, and promoting a student-focused approach to teaching and learning. The 'authority' intrinsic to the teaching and learning relationship became fundamentally 'adjusted' enabling the definition of a 'student-focused' perspective to be developed:

> *'student focused; where the authority of the learning situation is adjusted to enable the development of responsibility for learning'.*

Student-focused teaching requires the process of teaching and learning to focus on the world of the learner to enable students to understanding their learning and take responsibility for learning, and take control of their learning environment resulting in an 'adjustment of authority'.

5.4 The adjustment of authority

The concept of the 'adjustment of authority' has developed through reflection on practice. As the study progressed, it became clear that a fundamental shift in the power-relationship implicit to teaching and learning was occurring.

Rogers describes the traditional teaching and learning relationship as: 'the teacher as possessor of knowledge, the student as recipient' 'the teacher is possessor of power', resulting in there being 'great difference in status between instructor and student' (Rogers, 1978:69). The adjustment of authority is concerned with addressing this issue of status, or authority, by making it explicit in the teaching and learning

context and fundamentally adjusting the authority in order for students to experience significant learning, understand their own learning, and increase responsibility for learning; and subsequently experience a level of authority for themselves.

The adjustment of authority should not imply that the teacher has no status or specialist knowledge, rather, the suggestion is that as the teacher enables students to take increased responsibility for their learning, the teaching and learning relationship becomes redefined. The student-staff relationship will take on a level of ambiguity uncommon to the conventional practice of teaching and learning; where the staff-student distinction becomes secondary to the fundamental parity between individuals (Heron, 1992).

Through analysis and development of the *'aim-input-outcome'* model I have identified that the issues can be rooted in issues of the power or authority in the teaching and learning relationship. The teacher assumes a position of 'power' or authority through the possession of knowledge, expertise and experience that students lack (Brookfield and Preskill, 1999). Peters (1973) discusses how the teacher is both 'in authority' and 'an authority'. The teacher is in authority by their being a representative of the institution. The teacher is 'an authority' through their knowledge and expertise in the discipline, reinforced further through research and publication. Therefore the teacher is likely to be seen as an insider to the world of academia.

This authority, or 'power' is not coercive, or abusive (hooks, 1994), but may have the effect of distancing the teacher from the students and reinforcing teacher superiority. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) posit that if managed, it may be used to enlighten students and arouse interest in the subject matter, or be a catalyst for student-focused learning methods. In this context, the teacher's authority must be viewed as an opportunity to promote student growth, to constructively inspire, to help students find their voice, to model commitment to critical conversation, and to honour individual and collective knowledge. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) dismiss the idea that teacher authority can be negated suggesting that to deny their authority is seen by students as false humility or an abdication of one's responsibilities This research has not attempted to explore authority in the sense of an abdication of ones'

responsibilities, but rather in the context of student-focused teaching, the 'adjustment of authority' which attempts to reframe the teaching and learning relationship. . In addition, the adoption of facilitative charismatic authority (Heron, 1999) can offer some confidence in the facilitative approach. Charismatic facilitative authority has contributed to enabling the emergence of learner responsibility as a result of working with the adjustment of authority. As Shor (1992) notes:

> 'I want to democratise learning, but I do not want to stop being an authority in the classroom. My authority changes. ...I try to unify process and content, to have the methods invite students to take responsibility for their own education while the subject matter orients their intelligence to critical thought on knowledge and society' (1992: 165).

The implication is that the authority of the teacher is determined by how they perceive their own authority, with the adjustment of authority related to the extent to which the teacher is prepared to adjust their authority. If the teaching and learning context is managed appropriately, students can be enabled to take increased levels of responsibility for their own learning. They can be empowered within the adjustment of authority to experience significant learning, to explore their understanding of their own learning, and to increase responsibility for learning both in and beyond their education career.

5.5 Learning from the themes - emergence of processes to practice

The initial research set out to explore whether student-focused teaching incorporating reflection upon significant learning would ultimately result in an understanding of learning, and subsequent increase in responsibility for learning. The research findings appear to show that this is possible, but that for this to occur students require both clarity and significant learning support. The clarity and support required has involved redefining the tutor role and incorporating the use of group work and informed discussion in order to facilitate the aim-input-outcome model. Clarity of role and support required have emerged as important to the development of the study,

and in developing a theory of approach key processes in the research have now been identified.

In order to provide opportunities for students to increase responsibility for their learning it seems necessary to approach teaching from a student focused perspective, requiring a fundamental shift in the teaching role.

Student focused perspective

The teaching approach applied within this study has taken a student-focused perspective, or more specifically a student-focused perspective with the intention of increasing responsibility for learning. Rogers suggests that the basic principle within a student-'centred' approach is that the knowledge of the individual student becomes a primary resource for learning rather than the expertise of the teacher (Rogers, 1969, 1978). This approach underlines the learner's responsibility for learning; it matters more what the student is doing and learning than what the teacher is doing. A student-focused perspective has accordance with self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1975), androgogic learning (Knowles,1984), and autonomous learning (Boud, 1981, 1988):

> 'the main characteristic of autonomy as an approach to learning is that students take some significant responsibility for their learning over and above responding to instruction' (Boud, 1988: 23).

Brookfield (1986) discusses that the curriculum should be student-focused in order to capitalise on student's experience, that learners are self-directed, and that the learner should participate in the determination of goals and learning outcomes. Self directed learning is a matter of changing perspectives and shifting paradigms .

In order that students are exposed to this type of learning the teacher has an important role; student-centred learning cannot achieve the aim of responsibility for learning if the context is not managed, or facilitated, in order that influences of authority are addressed.

Re-contract roles: the facilitator of learning

The study has approached teaching and learning in ways unfamiliar to that previously experienced by the majority, if not all of the students. In order that this new approach had a chance of success it was important that prior experiences and current expectations of the tutor-student relationship, and tutor role be redefined, or 're-contracted' toward that of the facilitator. The more unfamiliar the objectives of teaching and learning and required methods of conduct, the more difficulty students will have in understanding them (Abercrombie, 1979). Hence the importance of re-contracting roles and relationships regarding purpose and interaction.

The role of the 'facilitator of learning' is one of guiding and advising learning rather than providing information and instructing. Rogers (1983) discusses that the:

> 'facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between facilitator and learner (ibid: 121).

Rogers continues by suggesting that the attitudes of teacher and facilitator are at opposite poles; traditional teaching being based essentially on the delivery of content, while the facilitator has a concern to create a climate where the learner is free to explore and interact (ibid). Abercrombie (1979) discusses this role as a process of emancipation from students' dependence on her as the source of knowledge and competence.

In Stephenson and Weils' (1992) study of autonomous learning, tutors reported concerns such as wariness of unfamiliar techniques, possible loss of status, and feeling unease at losing their role as the 'authority'. Rowland (2000) adds to this suggesting that teaching which encourages students participation is less predictable than traditional teaching methods, demanding that teachers accept that their knowledge is open to question. Entwistle develops this point:

'... it is not difficult to imagine why some teachers become uneasy about these [student-centred] methods when they are so explicitly linked by some commentators to radical change in power relationships with education' (Entwistle, 1992:10).

But as Stephenson (1998) discusses, tutors find the new approach to be more rewarding and intellectually challenging than the role required of the traditional teacher. A facilitation approach to teaching will require the tutor to develop their role and relationships beyond those of the traditional teacher, while acknowledging the adjustment of authority in the teaching and learning relationship.

Group work

The nature of a student-focused strategy relevant to this study requires opportunities for significant learning to occur. Therefore student interaction and discussion are essential elements to the process. The research has applied group work to each of the case studies in order for these activities to be possible, and to enable students to develop their learning without dependence on the tutor, thus enabling the adjustment of authority. Stenhouse writes:

'There are occasions – even in small groups – when instruction is appropriate. But there are also many occasions when students have to accept responsibility for their own learning, to develop autonomy as scholars, and hence learn to use the tutor as a consultant and guide rather than as an instructor' (Stenhouse, 1972:20).

Hopper (1995) discusses how individual knowledge is enhanced through interaction, sharing knowledge and ideas, discussing and exploring personal beliefs, and developing communication and group skills. Disadvantages of group working might include pressure to conform or restrictive relationships, however the perceived benefits of group working outweigh the disadvantages particularly when the group operates in a supportive context (Rogerson, 1996). Whilst the onus of responsibility

for individual learning lies with each individual the development of the group becomes a shared responsibility. Rogers (1969) suggests that learning within small groups aids movement away from student passivity to actively structuring their own learning. This is supported by Abercrombie (1979) who notes that groups may offer emancipation from an authority-dependency relationship between tutor and student.

Informed discussion

Discussion was used from the outset as an opportunity for students to actively engage in the process of learning. The culture in the class developed towards one of enquiry and risk taking in learning. This enabled open discussion of issues without fear of being 'wrong', whilst working with the fundamental belief that students learn about their subject at greater depth and with greater richness through interaction with their peers (Abercrombie, 1978, 1979; Ruddock, 1978).

Purposeful discussion requires that students take part in reading and preparatory work, this private study enabling individuals to develop their own perspectives before opening them to group critique. Abercrombie (1979) notes that group learning has the potential to enable the individual to share both ignorance and knowledge with peers.

Within the study student interaction has been facilitated in order that students might engage in discussion for the purpose of developing learning collaboratively. Discussion also provides the opportunity for students and facilitator to develop reciprocal learning relationships where all are engaged in critical discussion, resulting in an adjustment of authority. Discussion gives participants the opportunity to work collaboratively, formulate ideas, express disagreement, and solve problems collectively. As Brookfield and Preskill (1999) note, this is both a foundation for democracy and an indication that democracy is taking hold, suggesting that discussion should be an integral element to the adjustment of authority.

5.6 Summary of cycle one

The fundamental difference in teaching approach within this study was the focus on the students' experience of the process of learning. In contrast to a subject oriented

focus as found in many classrooms, the study was interested to explore the extent of student responsibility for learning (*outcome*) enabled through student reflection upon, and understanding of learning (*aim*).

The interaction of both process and content enabling students to gain insight to the control they have of their learning, results in learning becoming personally significant. In order that students might explore their process of learning a high level of reflective writing was encouraged. These *elements* are key to the teaching approach (*input*). A student focused approach to teaching and learning with the intrinsic elements of significant learning and reflection upon learning has been the base line from which the processes of contracting the learning and relationships, group work and informed discussion work have emerged. These themes make up the core structure of support which the students in cycle one have worked within.

Increased student responsibility has implications for support structures. The adjustment of authority requires students to find their way through their own learning to a greater extent than will have been experienced previously. Students will require support due the ambiguity initially felt in both learning context and learning relationship. Stephenson (1998) suggests that support mechanisms can be devised to cope with changes, and that it is also possible to raise the quality of student learning experience through application of these mechanisms.

The student-focused perspective adopted requires that students play an active role in the course; in planning and contributing to their learning. The contracting enabled that students were aware of the process to be experienced, the extent of their role, and the boundaries of my role as facilitator.

Group work enabled students to develop peer relationships and provided support. The frequent and open discussion work enabled individual and collective contribution to the process, encouraging them to commit to the exploration of their learning and the learning of the group through the need to prepare for each session. The supporting role of the tutor focused on providing opportunities for students to experience significant learning through exploration of content and reflection upon process, whilst maintaining the momentum of the research and overall responsibility

for the course. Rogers, who offers 'fundamental conditions' for person-centred learning, posits:

> 'The political implications of person-centred education are clear: the student retains his own power and the control over himself; he shares in the responsible choices and decisions; the facilitator provides the climate for these aims' (Rogers, 1978: 74).

A key theme emerging from this stage of the study is the assertion that it is the responsibility of the tutor to 'provide the climate' and to clarify the new teaching and learning context.

In order that my learning as a practitioner researcher and emerging understanding of the issues explored in cycle one are fully harnessed the following chapter examines the adjustment of authority and relevant processes through the exploration of cycle two.

Chapter Six

Exploration of Cycle Two: Development of Adjustment of Authority

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the second cycle of the research, with a brief discussion of the contextual details and their influence. Themes emerging from the previous cycle of research are developed upon in the context of the adjustment of authority which has emerged as a fundamental theme within the findings. Experiences of both students and researcher are drawn upon in developing the discussion and in identifying principles for practice.

The factors underpinning this research are the opportunity for students to experience significant learning, and reflection upon that learning developing understanding of own learning, leading ultimately to responsibility for learning. The intention of the research is that students should be enabled to perceive learning as their responsibility both in and beyond their education career.

Table 6.1 – Aim-Input/Elements-Outcome (iv)

Aim	**Input**	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	Through student focused teaching: significant learning and reflection upon learning	To lead to responsibility for learning
	• Re-contracting roles • Group work • Discussion and weekly preparation	

Through exploration of these themes in chapter five, the research has identified processes experienced by tutor and students enabling responsibility for learning (table 6.1). An additional element has been the increased significance of the tutor role, with the approach requiring the tutor to address and work with the balance of power in the classroom resulting in an 'adjustment of authority'.

In order that these processes might be developed to their potential the second cycle of research has aimed to explore them through practitioner action research, with added focus on the roles of and relationship between teacher and learner.

6.2 Contextual details

The second cycle of research has been carried out in an institute of higher education where the researcher is a part-time teaching practitioner on an Education Studies BA/BSc programme. This cycle of research was undertaken as a development upon cycle one that had identified processes to practice. The cohort of students differed from the first involving a cross section of foundation and honours students (cycle 2 = 87 students) as discussed in chapter three. As with the previous cycle the research took a continuous evaluation approach with teacher as researcher. The weekly teaching timetable (table 6.2) becomes relevant in considering the development of the research and overlap in my learning due to the 'micro-evaluation' that was taking place throughout the day.

Table 6.2 - Cycle two teaching timetable and teaching method

Spring 1998	Monday
9 – 10.45	**[2.1] Syndicate method**
11 – 12.45	**[2.2] Syndicate method**
2 – 3.45	**[2.3] Syndicate method**
4 – 5.45	**[2.4] Syndicate method**

Table 6.3 outlines the simultaneous processes of research and teaching with the research element italicised. Differentiation between activities becomes difficult when the research is informing the teaching. As with the previous cycle, rather than considering each stage of the fieldwork or weekly teaching session within cycle two, the discussion draws upon those points relevant to the research in an attempt to remain focused.

Table 6.3 – Cycle two: Overview of teaching and *fieldwork*

Week one	***Stage one - Introduction to the research***
	• Introductory week: getting to know each other; establishing small groups and discussion work; contracting role of students and tutor
	• Course handbook/learning contract
	• *Presentation and discussion of research aims*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Students discuss their conceptions of learning*
	• *Observations and field notes and learning journal*
Week two & three	
	• Teaching method active
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week four	***Stage two – feedback and clarification***
	• Tutor feedback to students; clarification of method
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week five & six	
	• Teaching method active; student presentations
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week seven	***Stage three – evaluation***
	• Final session before Easter vacation; student presentations
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Mid-term course evaluation*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Easter vacation	
Week eight	***Stage four - reorientation***
	• Reorientation to the course
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Discussion of course evaluations/developed method*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week nine & ten	
	• Teaching method active
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week eleven	***Stage five - evaluation***
	• Penultimate teaching session
	• One:one tutorials
	• *Final course evaluation*
	• *Student learning journals*
	• *Observations and field notes*
Week twelve	***Stage six – close***
	• Final teaching session
	• Hand in of course work and *student learning journals*

Of the four classes 2.1 had 22 students; 2.2 had 32 students; 2.3 had 25 students and 2.4 had 8 students. Each of these classes provided a unique context for exploring the adjustment of authority method with a different cohort of students and different class sizes.

With the introduction of an unfamiliar teaching approach comes a need for structure. Students' familiarity with the approach would be encouraged through the adoption of a weekly structure (as outlined in table 6.4). The processes of the adjustment of authority as identified in table 6.1 would make up the structure of the session.

Table 6.4 – Session structure

1. Small group workshops and discussion to enrich and expand identified areas of interest and concern.
2. Presentation of small group findings to the larger group, and discussion.
3. Follow up lecture.
4. Further investigation into areas of interest.
5. Identification of areas of interest to be investigated for the next session.
6. *Reflective practice/evaluation*

The first cycle of the research was set up in order to explore student understanding of learning leading to the development of responsibility for learning. This was carried out with four classes over one semester using four different student-focused teaching methods. The teaching method proving most effective in promoting responsibility for learning was found to be an adaptation of the syndicate method. The syndicate method requires students to work together in small groups with discussion at the core of the learning experience, with tutor contact sought as required and little class attendance. This was considered inappropriate and so the method was changed to require pre-session preparation and weekly attendance.

A result of this increased student participation was a shift in the tutor-student relationship, with students assuming a level of control for their learning manifesting itself as an 'adjustment of authority'. For the second cycle of research the overall teaching approach has developed from the 'syndicate method' into an approach

requiring both teaching *processes* and *roles* to be considered resulting in an 'adjustment of authority' (cycle two).

In cycle two each class was set up to experience the processes and roles of the adjustment of authority to enable students to develop understanding of their learning, and so experience responsibility for learning. Table 6.5 outlines the cycle as a development upon the aim-input-outcome model of cycle one.

Table 6.5 – Cycle two - Aim-Input-Outcome Model (v)

Aim	**Input**	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	**Student-focused teaching incorporating significant learning and reflection upon learning**	To lead to responsibility for learning
	'Adjustment of authority' ***Roles*:** • **Re-contracting roles** ***Processes*:** • **Group work** • **Informed discussion work** • **Reflection/evaluation**	

6.3 Cycle two - Adjustment of authority: Processes

The students involved in the study were self-selecting requiring that the research be outlined at the point of entry to the course to ensure that prior expectations were investigated. The process of contracting was vital to ensure that the processes and roles of the adjustment of authority were explicit. Any change in the teaching approach requires students to be informed, as if left un-clear student expectations of a 'traditional' tutor-student relationship might result in significant obstruction to the development of this shift in control of learning, resulting in resistance to the emergent roles and relationships.

Re-contracting roles

Each class experienced a similar first week with contracting key to setting up the process. Students again were motivated by the introduction to the approach:

'Good - the way of introducing each other; ***I feel that the structure of the lesson was very good. It enabled us to speak in large groups and in small group****' (student reflective journal – week one; 2.2);*

'Good - session organisation; Groups; Sharing information' (student reflective journal – week one; 2.3);

'Good - ***Teaching methods – group discussions; Group roles outlined****; Small groups – more personal; allows you to say things you normally wouldn't in a large group' (student reflective journal – week one; 2.4);*

'Good - ***introduction was relaxed and there was good communication within the group***
Tricky - speaking out in front of the class; Getting to know people
Useful - ***there was a good set up of communication on the group; Going through the structure of the course****' (student reflective journal – week 1; 2.3).*

As identified in the first cycle the inclusion of discussion and definition of learning benefited the students/process through developing a mutual 'language of learning'. This enabled the exploration of themes and a shift away from preconceived conceptions of learning towards a redefinition learning to that involving commitment, risk and responsibility. Rather than explore this as a separate feature, this was explored within the contracting process with subsequent discussion of learning becoming a more natural part of the process as a result of this.

Group work

This attention to contracting has resulted from exploration of cycle one, and within cycle two contracting and re-contracting became a regular feature. Cycle one highlighted issues for development within the second cycle, not least the management of small group working within the context of the adjustment of authority. A problem emerged of the same students doing the work each week, whilst others took advantage of this contributing little or nothing. I would have preferred to leave the negotiation of small group working up to the students, but cycle one showed that students were reluctant to take on this management role with their peers unless a structure for discussion was active (see appendix 6.1 for group ground rules). Student

experiences of the process of small group work were again varied, but due to my heightened awareness this became an open issue for discussion and re-contracting and students appreciated my recognition and action regarding this:

> *'The timing of the session was perfect in that I left enough time to re-contract ...* ***The re-contracting went OK, I used the 'group ground rules' hand out, and went over the structure of the course.*** *' (Researcher reflective journal – week 3; 2.1);*
>
> *'Useful -* ***clarification of the responsibilities of group members and what facilitator expects from students*** *(student reflective journal – week 3; 2.1);*
>
> *'Useful -* ***a useful part of the course has been hearing the group's performance from tutor*** *' (student reflective journal – week 11; 2.1).*

The students' experience of group work was overwhelmingly positive. The development of peer relationships enabled support and the development of confidence in addition to commitment to the course. The development of small groups was also a visible feature in the reflective journals:

> ***Week 1***
> *'Good - Group work.* ***Group was great and we all seemed to get on well together.*** *It's good to know some new faces.*
> *Tricky - difficult to speak aloud'*
> ***Week 2***
> *'Good -* ***group work was brilliant*** *as every one had read up on teen magazines*
> *Tricky - It wasn't very easy to meet up during the week*
> *Useful -* ***Useful to meet up last Friday with the whole group.***
> ***Week 4***
> *'Good - group work. Had a chance to chat about our own experiences*
> *Tricky - tricky when someone in the group is away, it makes it quite difficult for continuity. Tricky trying to meet up before the next lecture'*
> ***Week 6***
> *'Good -* ***group discussion***
> *Tricky - difficult again when some of the group don't bother to turn up'*
> ***Week 8***
> *'Good - great to be able to come to a 'good' lecture after the Easter break rather than being stuck in a lecture that's boring and of no interest*
> *Useful -* ***better to choose to stay together and not join up with another group, so that we know each other and have built up good relationships'***
> *(Student reflective journal weeks 1, 2, 4, 6 & 8; 2.2).*

Discussion

As indicated, the contracting and small group work played an important role in the success of discussion work. Students were required to prepare for the session in order to be able to develop informed discussions both in small groups and with the wider class. It was clear that both students and I found the lack of preparation by some individuals frustrating:

> *'I reminded them of the importance of reading/prep. before coming to the class. Said I was conscious that some people are doing more work than others, and that those not doing much need to improve for both their sake and for the group they are in' (Researcher reflective journal – week 4; 2.2).*

However, the discussion work was an almost entirely positive experience due to the high level of student involvement and the encouragement for individuals to develop their thinking in a safe context:

> *'Good - **large group discussion – enables everyone to share what they have researched and also how they feel about the topic**' (student reflective journal - week 3 – 2.1);*
>
> *'Good -**small group discussion and tutor input***
> *Tricky - giving enough input*
> *Useful - bringing research into **lesson' (student reflective journal - week 9 – 2.1);***
>
> *'Good - **all of it. The whole lecture – the discussion and more formal lecture, but our group discussion was very useful***
> *Tricky -I hadn't done the reading...felt a bit behind'*
> *(student reflective journal – week 4 – 2.2);*
>
> *'Good - **my opinion differed to my partner's, this was good because it offered different perspectives on the subject**' (student reflective journal – week 2 – 2.2);*
>
> *'Good - **The fact that we were all asked to do research***
> *Useful - **each other's information – it made things more clear'***
> *(student reflective journal – week 2 – 2.3);*
>
> *'Good - **contributed to discussion and this made me realise why views were valued**' (student reflective journal – week 4 – 2.3);*

*'Good - **sharing info with own groups and then with whole group because we could check our ideas were right before sharing with the whole class' (student reflective journal – week 4 – 2.3).***

Reflection

Students were required to write a reflective learning journal in order to explore their learning and any development in their thinking. 'Reflective practice' was built into the weekly structure (table 6.4) to enable students to give time to the process:

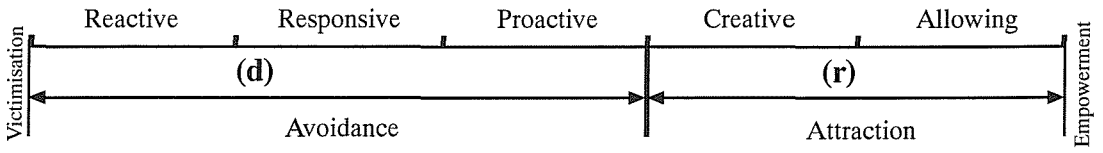
'Good - evaluation
*Useful - **the GTU over the weeks**' (student reflective journal - week 11 – 2.1).*

Responses to the exercise were mixed, and whilst some students did not progress beyond listing the 'good', 'tricky' or 'useful' aspects to the week, other students explored their experience regarding the subject, the group and discussion work, the tutor input, and their own input and beyond to a highly critically reflective degree. Other students found the evaluative process more useful and less demanding, and this process again drew some insightful feedback regarding the process they were experiencing.

6.4 Evaluation

Through the application of the student-focused teaching approach and the processes of the adjustment of authority it was hoped that the data would indicate a significant move away from dependence on the tutor demonstrated in much didactic **(d)** teaching towards responsibility **(r)** for learning (figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 – Levels of responsibility (iii) (adapted from Benson, 1991)



This was explored explicitly in the mid and end of term evaluation questionnaires which gave students the opportunity to consider particular aspects of the course more closely. I designed the mid term evaluation to explore the development of students' understanding of learning, and was looking in particular for reference to the adjustment of authority as regards the tutor role (refer to appendix 3.5a). I was disappointed however, to find that my questionnaire was not specific enough, with students interpreting the questions very literally and failing to see the direct links with the teaching process. Analysis of this was difficult due to the scope for individual interpretation of the question. In some cases students indicated that the tutor featured very little in their learning and I was not sure how to take this. (Whilst I had hoped that this would be the case, actually having the students suggest that they learnt more from other sources with no context given is hard to accept!).

The example below shows how one student interpreted the evaluation questionnaire; (a - c) it would seem that the student is taking an active approach to her learning both individually, in the group and the community (how is this defined by the student?):

a) individual learning
bringing my own ideas and experiences in the classroom and researching theories and ideas *from books and journals*

b) group learning
working together in a group, listening to others knowledge and experiences, gaining information of theories from others

c) community learning
class discussions and presenting relevant research from others in the class

The percentages (d) suggest experiencing little direct learning from the tutor, with more coming from the institute and still more from the students:

d) percentages:
students 50
institute - 30
tutor - 20

The reflective journal (e) describes experiencing the course very positively after initial apprehension:

> e) *Good - **I was apprehensive at first about working in a group but have found it beneficial** in gaining ideas and information from other group members*
> *Tricky - I have enjoyed being in a seminar group but I also feel that lectures on certain issues would be beneficial*
> *Useful - I have found the class presentation and presenting other groups research useful (Student evaluation - week 7; 2.1).*

The initial aim of the study was to enable understanding of learning, therefore a very encouraging finding from the evaluation was that of students developing their awareness of their learning:

> *'Good - Finding out different people's ideas*
> *Useful - **discovery of what I actually felt**'*
> *(student reflective journal - week 1 – 2.3);*

> *'Good - various opinions... which we discussed in groups*
> *Tricky - **deciding for myself – self reflection**'*
> *(student reflective journal - week 3 – 2.3).*

The evaluation also gained useful feedback regarding the students' overall experience of the course. I was reassured to read that student experiences were highly positive for the majority of cases in terms of group and discussion work. Additionally there were responses indicating that students were thinking about and taking responsibility for their learning, these responses often indicating a motivational element to this responsibility, (i.e., not wanting to let the group down).

> *'Useful - open discussion and presentation. Lecture helps to promote students learning by students being able to participate' (student evaluation - week 7; 2.1);*

> *'Good - researching the topics given; being able to discuss what we have researched in our group, my peers have contributed to my learning and fill the gaps. **[Course] has enhanced my learning from last semester and enabled me to understand the topics and how to research and present my findings to the class**' (student evaluation - week 7; 2.1);*

'Good - group discussions; ***preparation - because it forces me to read about the subject'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.2);*

'Good - ***reflecting on own development'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.2);*

'Good - doing own preparation before session; discussing personal research in small groups; and then learning more from tutor
Tricky - ***small group - people you don't feel comfortable with - I think, however, it was a positive thing'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.3);*

'Good - size of group being small, ***ability to discuss thoughts freely, relaxed environment with a feeling of equality between students and tutor. I have been more willing to do individual learning due to the environment and want not to let anyone down by not pulling weight'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.4);*

Some students indicated their experience of the tutor role/ tutor-student relationship in line with the adjustment of authority:

'Good - ***openness of tutor and students'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.4);*

'community learning - ***sharing thoughts and ideas among the group to include the tutor'*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.1);*

'Good - The relaxed approach to learning and the emphasis on group discussion/sharing of ideas
Tricky - 9am start; lack of information being 'fed' by tutor given that this is the usual form of learning encountered in other modules
Useful - ***getting into the pattern of doing one's own research on the topic to be covered and not assuming all information will be fed by tutor'***
(student evaluation - week 7; 2.1);

'community learning - ***discussing within the class, everybody contributing to the learning process; everybody's' opinion*** *(student evaluation - week 7; 2.3);*

Good - ***openness of tutor and students, talking and discussing in detail;*** *topics have been interesting (student evaluation - week 7; 2.4);*

'community learning - ***discussing work with other groups and tutor'***
(student evaluation - week 7; 2.4)

'Good - size of group being small, ability to discuss thoughts freely, relaxed environment with a feeling of ***equality between students and tutor.*** *I have*

been more willing to do individual learning due to the environment and want not to let anyone down by not pulling weight' (student evaluation - week 7; 2.4).

These references to the tutor-student relationship were unexpected but pleasing due to the positive nature of the responses. As a main focus of the mid-term evaluation this was insufficient however, and was therefore required to be explored more fully in the end of course evaluation.

6.5 Cycle two - Adjustment of authority: Relationships

The week 11 evaluation (refer to appendix 3.5b) was concerned with the overall experience of the adjustment of authority, but asked for specific responses regarding the students' experience of the tutor role and tutor-student relationship. The roles and relationship between tutor and student was contracted in the first week and was implicitly re-contracted within the feedback give to the students (i.e. stage 2 & 4), and through the consistent behaviour of the tutor in line with the approach. Therefore the tutor role was intended to be experienced as a gradual shift away from the potential dependency of a didactic approach, the emphasis here on experiencing implicitly rather than discussing explicitly. This was an important part of the process – to give enough information but not to saturate – due to the need for impartiality in the journals and evaluations (the importance of not skewing the data or 'teacher pleasing' with the responses).

A brief retrospective discussion of the adjustment of authority processes, tutor role and tutor-student relationship prepared students for the final evaluation. Responses are varied, and the language used somewhat clumsy and indirect, but the majority of responses indicated a positive experience of the adjustment of authority. (Included below are examples of responses; further student responses can be found in appendix 6.2):

*'**I liked the way the course was taught as I did not feel in some way 'inferior' to the tutor**' (student evaluation - week 11; 2.1);*

*'The adjustment of authority has enabled me to be much more involved in my learning. **I feel I have done more learning in this group than in any other***

and enjoyed it more too. The balance of authority was good as group work left us unable to 'cop out' as there was a responsibility to the whole group... I feel that each individual is responsible for their own learning and tutor should act as a facilitator who encourages us interactively and motivates students through interest in the topic to conduct their own research. I feel this was successful in this group' *(student evaluation - week 11; 2.2);*

'I think the course is unique in a sense that the structure of teaching is different. There was more variation in that it wasn't just the tutor standing in front of the class lecturing away which in my experience can be a bit boring at times. ***What I found interesting was that the style of teaching was a collaboration of both the teacher and the students****'(student evaluation - week 11; 2.2);*

'The module has been more centred around the students taking control of their learning *and education and which direction they are heading in. This is much more directed by the student. I believe that it is the student's choice to be here... therefore it is up to them to find out as much as* ***they can. The lecturer is there to guide and advise and open up new thought to the individual student not to dictate what is right/wrong. Therefore through this process of teaching we have all been able to take the initiative and take control of our learning'*** *(student evaluation - week 11; 2.2);*

'The teaching has been open and friendly and honest and I would enjoy this type of learning more if I did it again. It has taken a little time to get used to this adjustment. ***Learning is everyone's responsibility; the groups, the class, the individual and the tutor's.*** *Altogether they comprise a powerful learning experience. The individual has the responsibility to store and use the information but the actual learning as a group thing is the best way forward' (student evaluation - week 11; 2.3);*

'I need the tutor to direct me - I might not be self-directed enough to produce findings each week without her. I need this direction, but once directed am perfectly happy and prepared to contribute' *(student evaluation - week 11; 2.4);*

'As regards to 'adjustment of authority' ***I feel that everyone would take shared responsibility for learning, you have to be big enough to take responsibility for yourself yet also have the tutor on hand to start you off in the right direction*** *and then help at the end or when stuck. Easier to talk and ask for help when tutor is more approachable and not 'authoritarian'' (student evaluation - week 11; 2.4).*

With this feedback regarding the students' experience of the adjustment of authority it is possible to conclude that the approach has been well received by the

students, enabling exploration of learning through reflection and therefore a consistent emphasis on the process of learning. Whilst students indicate learning about their learning, the level or extent of this is not clear. However, it is clear that students have at least begun to understand their learning and this development in their thinking causes them to think about responsibility for learning, and the different role that the 'student' and the 'tutor' play in enabling this.

6.6 Summary

The adjustment of authority approach is based upon the premise that providing students with opportunities for significant learning, incorporating reflection, can lead to understanding of learning and responsibility for learning. Student experiences of the adjustment of authority have supported and validated the approach's ability to enable the development of understanding of learning and responsibility for learning through application of *processes* and re-contracting the tutor *role* and tutor-student relationship. These two elements (process and role) combine within the approach – the processes would not be experienced in the same way without the shift in role/relationship, and the role would not be able to change without the application of student focused processes.

Through the exploration of two cycles of research chapters five and six have illuminated fundamental elements and processes resulting in an adjustment of authority in the higher education classroom towards enabling student responsibility for learning. The following chapter draws upon the data in developing a set of principles to practice in line with the experience of the research.

Chapter Seven

Development of Adjustment of Authority: From Processes to Principles

7.1 Introduction

The adjustment of authority method is based upon the premise that providing students with opportunities to reflect upon significant learning can lead to understanding of learning and responsibility for learning (table 7.1). Student experiences of the adjustment of authority have supported and validated the method's potential to enable the development of understanding of learning resulting in responsibility for learning through application of student-focused processes, redefining tutor role, and re-contracting the tutor-student relationship.

Table 7.1 - Aim-Input-Outcome Model (vi)

Incorporating adjustment of authority *role* and *process* elements

Aim	Input	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	**Student-focused teaching incorporating significant learning and reflection upon learning** ↓ **'Adjustment of authority' method** ***Roles*:** • **Redefining roles** • **Re-contracting relationship** ***Processes*:** • **Group work** • **Informed discussion work** • **Reflection/evaluation** ↓ **Results in shift in power/ adjustment of authority**	To lead to responsibility for learning

These two elements (*role* and *process*) combine within the method – the *processes* would not be experienced in the same way without the shift in *role*, and the *role* would not be able to change without the application of student focused *processes*. This chapter considers the method in terms of the development of a set of principles to practice. That is not to say that these principles constitute a 'how to do it' guide, but that these have worked within practice and have served to illuminate the potential of the adjustment of authority method to enable learner responsibility. This chapter will draw upon the data and discussion, and the experience of the researcher in proposing the principles which have been indicated to implicitly throughout the discussion so far. The principles will be drawn out and examined in the light of both experience and the literature.

7.2 Principles of adjustment of authority

The adjustment of authority is not a linear teaching method to be mapped on to the teaching situation, but an approach requiring a fundamental shift in the roles of teacher and learner and a re-establishment of the teaching and learning outcome. In line with a critical action research approach, it is expected that any application of the adjustment of authority method would require adapting to the unique requirements of the individual practitioner's approach and to the unique teaching and learning context, ultimately requiring that the practitioner applies the method in a spirit of inquiry. In an attempt to describe the essential elements to the method I have developed an initial set of principles that incorporate the approach as I have experienced it. The principles of the adjustment of authority have been developed from the *role* and *process* elements outlined in table 7.1 and developed in table 7.2. Upon reflection I was able to see that cycle one and cycle two contained essential elements previously discussed in terms of the 'aim-input-outcome' model leading to the identification of five principles that are the essence of the adjustment of authority approach. Within each of these principles are elements from the initial analysis of what began as 'input' to the approach (for example principle 1; *Redefining the nature and role of 'tutor'* has been enabled through the initial re-contracting enabling a shift in role. Table 7.3 indicates the background to each principle).

Table 7.2 - Aim-Input-Outcome Model (vii)

Incorporating adjustment of authority *role* and *process* elements

leading to the development of principles

Aim	Input	**Principles**	Outcome
To develop understanding of learning	Student-focused teaching incorporating significant learning and reflection upon learning ↓ 'Adjustment of authority' method *Roles*: • Redefining roles • Re-contracting relationship *Processes*: • Group work • Informed discussion work • Reflection/evaluation ↓ Results in shift in power/ adjustment of authority	**1. Redefining the nature and role of 'tutor'** **2. Re-contracting the new learning relationship** **3. Enabling reciprocal learning relationships** **4. Providing opportunities for students to experience authority in teaching and learning relationship** **5. Reflecting, evaluating and learning from the experience**	Students take responsibility for their own learning

In discussing the principles it is difficult to suggest a hierarchy of importance to *process* or *role* as they are all essential elements within the method. The adjustment of authority *role* principles shift the teaching and learning context, therefore providing the appropriate environment for the application of the *processes*. Therefore I have at this point represented them within table 7.3 as though on a continuum, which although appearing rather linear, indicates overlap in the application and development of the principles and emphasising their relational nature. Table 7.3 presents each principle with reference to the appropriate *role* and *process* element, these indicate the background to each principle which will be explored in the

following section. (Please note that 'Adj2' is the abbreviation of adjustment of authority).

Table 7.3 – Principles of adjustment of authority – Incorporating *role* and *process* elements on a continuum

Adjustment of authority role = Adj2 r Adjustment of authority process = Adj2 p **Adj2r** **Adj2r** **Adj2 r&p** **Adj2 p** **Adj2 p** **[----1----------2----------3----------4----------5----]**				
1. Redefining the nature and role of 'tutor'; (Within this the role of the students) *i.e.: Re-contracting roles; enabling shift in expectation and indicating student responsibility*	2. Contracting the new learning relationship *i.e.: Re-contracting roles; contracting tutor student responsibilities within student focused teaching method*	3. Enabling reciprocal learning relationships *i.e.: Student-focused teaching incorporating significant learning / tutor role and student responsibilities / group and discussion work*	4. Providing opportunities for students to take responsibility and experience authority in teaching and learning relationship *i.e.: Student-focused teaching/ tutor role & student responsibilities/ group and discussion work*	5. Reflecting, evaluating and learning from experience *i.e.: reflection/ evaluation*

The following discussion presents and explores the five principles to the adjustment of authority approach, discussing the nature of each principle to include its roots and application within the research, drawing on relevant literature, and reflecting upon my experience as a practitioner researcher. A relevant point here is that the principles do not explicitly consider the student role, rather a change in role is implied. This mirrors the traditional teaching and learning relationship which does not explicitly discuss either the tutor or student role, they are implied within the context. Therefore in proposing these principles the role of the tutor as the individual responsible for establishing the teaching and learning context becomes highlighted. And as the context is redefined the students' role will emerge, in this case as that of

the individual (supported by the facilitator through the method towards) taking responsibility for their learning. However, it is possible to suggest the role a student might take in response to the new context, although as I have not experienced the method as a student it is impossible to write from a personal perspective as I might in a student participant observer role. Therefore the discussion of each principle is limited to offering the student role as an empathic interpretation of what might be expected to happen as a result of the role, relationship and context changes.

Redefining the nature and role of tutor

This has to be the starting point for the method as it is the grounding principle describing the fundamental shift in power relationship between tutor and student. The tutor role needs redefining in order to move away from traditional images of the 'teacher' role and with this, expectations of a traditional tutor-student relationship. From the tutor's perspective these expectations might include such things as the need to provide information and to organize student learning. Knowles describes his experience of the traditional expectation of a tutor's role:

> 'I was brought up to think of a teacher as one who is responsible for what students should learn, how, when, and if they have learned. Teachers are supposed to transmit prescribed content, control the way students receive it and use it and then test if they have received it' (Knowles, 2000: 198).

This is how I might have described a tutor's role up until I had the opportunity to teach at which time, having experienced teaching only in the student role (i.e., as a learner), I was in no position prior to this opportunity to take a different position. Reflection upon the traditional experience of teaching and learning however, added to my own development as a learner (see chapter one) causing me to feel that there must be a way of engaging students towards responsibility for learning and so it was initially in the work of Rogers (1969, 1978 & 1983) that I identified an avenue for my inquiry. The tutor role required for the method is one that places the student at the center of the learning experience – a student focused perspective. Rogers (1978)

discusses this in the context of person-centred learning, suggesting that fundamental preconditions for enabling person-centred learning to occur are that the 'leader' needs to:

> 'be secure ... in his relationship with others, and experience trust in ... others to think and learn for themselves' (Rogers, 1978: 72).

This research views the role of the tutor in adopting the adjustment of authority method as of principle importance requiring preconditions in line with the person-centred learning 'leader'. Certainly a '*student-focused approach; where the authority of the learning situation is adjusted to enable the development of responsibility for learning'* will require the tutor to 'be secure ... in his relationship with others, and experience trust in ... others to think and learn for themselves' (ibid).

The tutor role becomes redefined as a 'facilitator of learning', adding further emphasis to the need for redefining the teaching and learning relationship. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) define the facilitator as someone who is there to constructively inspire, encourage participative critical discussion, and harness individual and collective knowledge. The facilitator is a participant in this process, enabling further acknowledgement of the adjustment of authority. Whilst having specialist knowledge, the facilitator is able to acknowledge that for significant learning to take place students need to be the focus of learning activities, and provide students with opportunities to explore both the content and the process of learning together.

An important factor within the adjustment of authority, is the need for the facilitator to be 'real'. Carl Rogers has made the link between counselling and education (1969, 1983) using a non-directive counselling style involving 'carefully chosen constructive questions and comments' (Cowan, 1998) which, as Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck point out, is the

> 'safest for non-experts, as it allows the student to explore issues as their own pace and at the depth where they are able to cope' (1994: 125).

Rogers also discusses 'congruence' in teaching meaning that the teacher can show themselves to be a real person, entering into the relationship without presenting a façade, acting as a congruent person (Cowan, 1998). Congruence also suggests that the individual must not only profess genuineness, care, respect and empathy, but must live and be those variables (Rogers, 1983). The suggestion here is that the tutor must also work with humility (Brookfield and Preskill, 1999), 'to work with humility enables working with authenticity'. The emphasis on 'realness' has been of fundamental importance in the adoption of a student-focused teaching perspective. Redefining the teacher role as one of facilitation and orchestrating a genuine 'adjustment of authority' in the teaching and learning relationship require the facilitator to be 'real'. By taking a risk in their learning and developing a consistent and authentic approach the implication is that the facilitator will enable students to experience an 'adjustment of authority' and develop their role within this method.

The principle of redefining the tutor role has gone beyond that of merely describing the role, and has actually been a lived and experienced principle. My experience of this principle has been that whilst it was important to redefine the role, it was more important to live it, and through this enable students to experience congruence in what I was espousing and what I did. This congruence added to consistency in my approach enabled students to gain an understanding of what their role should be within the new context. The response to the facilitation style adopted was overwhelmingly positive with students very quickly recognizing that I was a real person. I found it necessary however, to continue to verbally redefine my role in order that students did not fall back into old patterns of expectation and behaviour, this was necessary at particular points during the course (i.e. at stage 2 of the study: see tables 4.3 and 6.3), but also informally during my interactions with individuals and small groups of students. I found it quite easy to take on a facilitation role as it is a style congruent with my approach to interaction both in and out of the classroom. Due to this I am aware that facilitation will be practiced differently by different individuals, and of course this idiosyncratic inevitability adds further to the need to view this research as an interpretive study, with the relevant awareness of the benefits

and limitations of this method. I see this as by no means unduly problematic or undermining of facilitation or indeed of the first principle, rather it adds to the richness of lived experience, and adds only to the need for critical reflexivity and acceptance of difference.

Contracting the new learning relationship

This principle is closely linked with the principle of redefining the tutor's role as any change in role will inevitably have an impact on the relationship with students, and effort was made that this should also be explicit in order to avoid the risk of falling back into previous expectations of role and relationships. The research has employed both a written and verbal 'contract' in order to enable and facilitate a new learning relationship as a result of the shift in tutor role in addition to a written learning 'compact' which included the requirement for students to take responsibility for their learning (see appendix 3.1). Whilst the two terms are distinct, openly discussing both contract and compact has had the effect of raising awareness of roles and relationships, in addition to enabling students to have some contribution to a continuing discussion about the developing process of teaching and learning whilst emphasising responsibility for learning.

Rowland (1993) writes that any course involving a tutor and participants will have an implicit contract. Enabling adults to learn in an adult way suggests that if a contract is established this will give a much greater degree of freedom to all participants than is possible in groups in which contracts are not established. The contracting process has been used to ensure that there is no ambiguity about the shift in role and subsequent change in relationship between tutor and students. This has certainly had an effect on the level of 'freedom' experienced in that as a facilitator I have been able to openly develop my role as appropriate to the needs of the group with the group aware of and even party to this development (i.e. through use of evaluation forms). The contract has enabled students to experience clarity with regard to their role, this clarity providing freedom, where there might have been confusion about that expected of the students within this change in role and student-focused teaching method.

In a classic definition, the learning contract is used to assist in the planning of a learning project, in some cases being a written agreement negotiated between learner and tutor that a particular activity will be undertaken in order to achieve a specific goal or learning outcome (Anderson et al, 1996). The research has used the idea of a 'contract' through application of a 'learning compact' (a requirement of the course) to emphasise the desired learning outcome of learner responsibility. The compact has also enabled the negotiation and 're-contracting' of the student-tutor relationship required as a result of a redefined tutor role with the implication of a shift in power between teacher and learner. The compact and re-contracting have enabled students to have some clarity of expectation and awareness of a development in their role within their experience of a shift in relationship.

The learning contract has been used to:

> 'balance the formal course requirements with individual learning needs' (Anderson et al, 1996: 137).

The notion of responsibility for learning was an explicit learning outcome of the course in addition to formal course requirements. This was discussed within the course compact, yet Boud (1998), in referring to critiques of self-directed learning suggests that attention is drawn to misleading language which implies that students have far grater scope for directing their own learning than is possible. The implication of this might be that responsibility for learning in this context is not really responsibility at all, rather:

> 'Students... are being fooled into thinking that they are taking responsibility for their learning while being severely constrained... by the conceptual frameworks which they have access to...' (ibid).

However, it would seem that in whatever we do, whether it is working towards a qualification or crossing the street, we have to work within structures or boundaries of acceptable or expected conduct. Therefore rather than the suggestion

that individuals are unable to work towards responsibility due to the constraints of frameworks that they exist within perhaps it is more productive to acknowledge these frameworks and accept that whilst they are there, they can be worked with rather than against. And within this, limits should be open to questioning and challenge as to their relevance and appropriateness. In developing this research contextual frameworks and boundaries have been imposed on practice, but rather than resisting these they have been acknowledged and worked with in order that the research is continually working with, and developing, reality. So whilst the students have worked within a context with boundaries I have attempted to facilitate it towards one of high flexibility and acceptance of development, and one that is wholly supportive of the development of responsibility for learning – suggesting a need for students to develop awareness of their learning in order that they can harness and develop the context to their benefit. Responsibility for learning is therefore an outcome within the reach of students of a wide spectrum of abilities and needs, and has been encouraged and supported through the teaching method and new tutor role. As noted by Knowles (1990), adult learners should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to use their existing skills and experiences as the basis for new learning. This has been interpreted and applied in two ways: firstly, that individuals should be able to work within a structure that enables them to take responsibility for their learning; and secondly that this structure and need for learner support will result in a different relationship between tutor and learner.

In terms of balancing the formal course requirements with individual needs:

> 'The extent to which it does this will depend on the negotiating skills of both parties, including, at times, a willingness to compromise and express expectations clearly' (Anderson et al, 1996: 137).

The research has used the contract as a means of redefining teaching and learning roles and relationships, with both tutor and students involved in this process. Throughout the research there has been a concern with language, and particularly a need to develop students' 'learning vocabulary' through identification of their

sometimes rather limited ways of expressing themselves in discussions about learning. With this recognition is an awareness that students might not be in a position to negotiate. This is not to underestimate their ability, but acknowledgement of a potential inequality of language and expectation. Therefore negotiating a learning contract towards responsibility for learning, and contracting a new learning relationship are unfamiliar and potentially difficult undertakings requiring support and clarity throughout the process instead of assumptions regarding understanding and ability. Therefore the learning compact contained an overview of what was to be expected in terms of a redefined tutor role and subsequent contracting of a new learning relationship, with flexibility built in to enable each class and the facilitator to work with the compact in ways appropriate to them and the unique context towards learner responsibility.

Throughout the research the students have been supported during the development of a new tutor-student learning relationship, which has also enabled development of a learning vocabulary and subsequent dialogue with them expressing their needs as the roles and relationship have developed. This has impacted on the learning compact, that of requiring students to work towards responsibility for their learning, with students able to see a difference in both the relationship with the tutor and the impact this has on their work and developing awareness of responsibility for their learning. Anderson et al (1996) suggest that negotiating a contract can be difficult because it calls for a different level of communication to that normally encountered in tutor-student interactions, with those familiar with traditional ways of operating being challenged by new notions of control and cooperation.

Redefining the tutor role will have implications for the tutor-student relationship, and the student role. The shift in power implicit to the adjustment of authority approach will require explicit acknowledgement. It becomes necessary to re-contract the relationship between teacher and learner through open discussion. Rowland (1993) points out that a contract can hide and reinforce the power of the tutor's role, however, in exploring this, the study has found that issues of authority can be discussed and contribute to the process of re-contracting. Ruddock (1978) suggests that the notion of 'contract' reinforces the formality of the kind of teaching

emphasising responsibility for learning, arguing that effective learning is facilitated by formal structures and procedures, with informality likely to increase dependence on the teacher due to the socially ambiguous nature of this learning environment, thus contributing to the notion of 'freedom' (Egan, 1974). Stenhouse (1972) supports this, offering the point that if conventions for this type of learning are not made explicit the student has no option but to observe the teacher and build theories of what is expected from what they see. Through this the teacher's role is reinforced and students become teacher-oriented rather than student-oriented. The role of the contract is to define and limit the authority of the teacher, and with this to help students fully utilise the teacher (Ruddock, 1978), enabling students to assume a level of authority resulting in a shift in power, or 'adjustment of authority'.

The role of the contract in this study has been to emphasise the student-focused approach to teaching, to recontract the relationship between teacher and learner with specific reference to the nature of authority and responsibility, and to make explicit the redefined roles of facilitator and learner. The course compact outlined broadly the role of the student within the method as that requiring active student participation including small group work, preparation and discussion towards responsibility for learning. The adjustment of authority in teacher role was re-contracted, but more importantly, experienced, resulting in an understanding of the notion of responsibility for learning, and an explicit awareness and appreciation of the need to take responsibility for learning. The adjustment of authority method has power sharing at its core therefore the principle of re-contracting the new learning relationship is used to make the relationship explicit and to enable students to negotiate this shift in role expectation and learning relationship.

Enabling reciprocal learning relationships

The adjustment of authority method with its roots in student-focused teaching requires *redefinition* of the tutor role to that of facilitator, and *re-contracting* the facilitator-student relationship towards that of a learning relationship with authority and responsibility as explicit issues, in line with this, the new role and relationship will enable a reciprocal learning relationship between facilitator and students. That is

to say that whilst the facilitator's role is to support learning, the facilitator will enter into a reciprocal learning relationship with the students - learning also from them.

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) note that student-focused teaching will require the facilitator to encourage self-directed learning, to make time for the students to interact and discuss problems, to provoke debate, to question students' ideas, and to develop conversations with them in lectures suggesting a reciprocal learning relationship through the facilitator's contribution to discussion and openness to the students' contributions. The suggestion is of course that the facilitator should not dominate discussion however instead the facilitator should model the approach they wish students to develop (Brookfield, 1987). Brookfield and Preskill (1999) note that students have the same right to be heard as teachers, and that responsibility is shared between students and teachers for the evolution of the group's knowledge, suggesting a shift in authority.

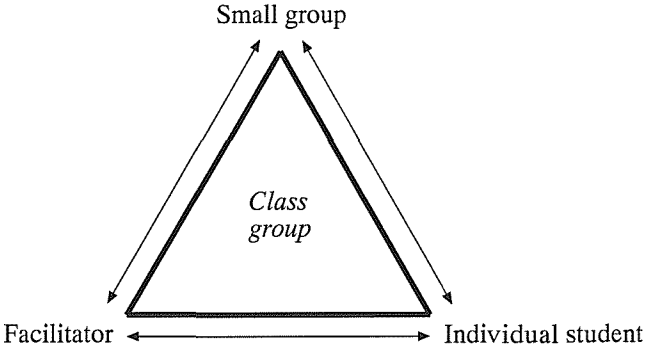
In addition, the student-student relationship takes on a new level of interaction and importance. The adjustment of authority method requires active student participation and decreased dependence on the facilitator, both of which might be aided by peer support. This study has adopted the use of small group work with students working within an established and maintained small group over the duration of the course in order to build up relationships and provide peer support as students explore and develop responsibility for learning and gain familiarity with the facilitator role. A further dimension to the use of small group and discussion work is that students are able to combine their efforts to help each other learn and create knowledge collaboratively about both the process and subject content. This suggests that both facilitator and students have a role in discussion and the creation of knowledge. This approach requires the facilitator to have an acceptance of inevitable student knowledge and experience, and be prepared to enter into a reciprocal learning relationship with students. That is to say that the facilitator and students will be learning from each other, entering into reciprocal learning relationships (figure 7.1). This study has adopted the use of class discussion in order for the facilitator to become a group member and to contribute to and develop the group's learning.

Brookfield and Preskill (1999) discuss this in terms of:

'humility; the willingness to admit that one's knowledge and experience are limited and incomplete and to act accordingly' (1999: 10).

The implication is then of reciprocal learning, enabling the students and facilitator to experience an adjustment of authority. To work with humility, and admit the limits of knowledge and opinions enables working with authenticity and will add to the learning of the group enabling the facilitator to model behaviour appropriate to, and students to experience, an adjustment of authority. The facilitator will be as much a member of the group as the students enabling the development towards becoming a learning community, a concept further implying reciprocal learning relationships. Within a learning community the roles of expert and learner become unnecessary labels emphasising the development in tutor role and further reminding of the interaction between principles. Everyone ventures into curiosity together, along with the challenge to suspend the need for 'right' answers.

Figure 7.1 – reciprocal learning relationships



The discussion of the learning community takes on further significance when related to the peer learning community, which is a concept that has been developed with specific reference to the classroom. Heron (1974) outlines key principles and implications of the peer learning community to include two fundamental principles of parity; equality of consideration (each person's contribution is equally worthy of

consideration) and equality of opportunity (anyone can contribute or intervene in the course process at any time), relating directly to the notion of reciprocal learning relationships and congruent with the adjustment of authority method emphasising a shift in the roles of teacher and student and suggesting responsibility for learning. The suggestion is that the learning community requires the enabling of reciprocal learning relationships by and with tutor and students, and between students.

Providing opportunities for students to take responsibility and experience authority in the teaching and learning relationship

Redefining roles and re-contracting relationships towards those of reciprocal learning relationships will result in a need for student-focused teaching processes, with these processes aiming to provide students with the opportunity to take responsibility and experience authority. This further emphasises the relational nature of the principles to the adjustment of authority; that a shift in role and relationship will require a shift in teaching practices, and vice versa. For the facilitator to provide opportunities for responsibility and authority students will need to be supported through the initial changes in role and relationship to the point where the facilitator feels that students are sufficiently prepared to accept responsibility for their learning, and with this some authority in the teaching and learning relationship. More specifically, as the shifted roles and relationship are experienced it is likely that students will feel confident to work towards responsibility for learning and begin to feel authority in the relationship.

The facilitator can provide opportunities for students to take responsibility through encouraging discussion work. Giroux (1987) discusses the tutor's responsibility in terms of allowing:

> 'different student voices to be heard and legitimated' (1987: 119).

Giroux continues by suggesting that the tutor can be a transformative intellectual who engages and empowers students. A further point is that of the enduring nature of this principle. Providing opportunities for students to take

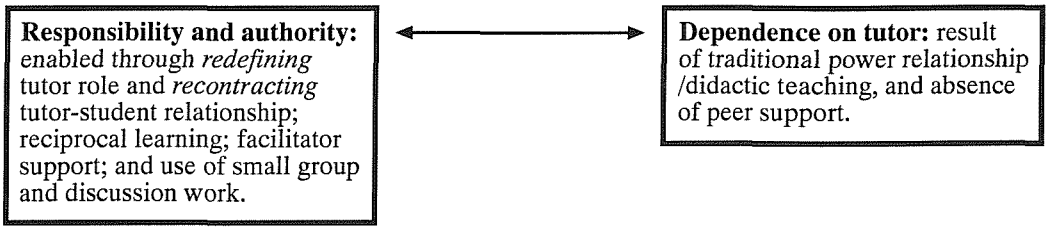
responsibility and experience authority in the teaching and learning relationship is going to offer insight to a significantly different way of working, one which potentially empowers students towards a new way of thinking about their learning.

The implication is that students will accept responsibility to work both individually and collaboratively, with and without the tutor. This is potentially problematic as a teaching assumption, and I would go some way in supporting the notion that:

> 'there should also be provision for those who do not want this freedom and prefer to be instructed' (Rogers, 1983: 154).

The research has been carried out with a cohort of higher education students and therefore an element of responsibility for learning was assumed (although not taken for granted). As the research has found, when the context consistently reinforces responsibility for learning as a specific learning outcome and support is given students are able to work towards the outcome (figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 – continuum of responsibility/dependence



A key element here in avoiding the assumption of responsibility for learning and the potential of the tutor to be unaware of those students unable or unwilling to take responsibility or authority is the use of small group and discussion work as a tool for providing a secure context for this to occur, with the facilitator supporting the small groups and students additionally supporting each other. The research found that the small groups were able to provide a supportive yet critical context for this shift towards responsibility and authority in learning, in addition enabling the facilitator to identify small groups or individuals requiring greater support.

A result of these supportive measures will be the shared learning that takes place regarding both the content and process of learning, furthering the principle of enabling reciprocal learning relationships and re-emphasising the need for the facilitator to work with humility. With this acceptance of humility, the facilitator role is more clearly defined as that enabling an adjustment of authority. Within this students potentially assume a level of authority. This adjustment of authority enables students to feel empowered in the teaching and learning relationship, increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Reflecting, evaluating and learning from experience

Reflective practice becomes the final and most pervasive principle for enabling an adjustment of authority. In fact, I would go as far as to suggest that this is the principle holding the five principles together. Reflection is 'a form of response of the learner to experience', involving the exploration of experience in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations (Boud et al, 1985), this links the experience of both facilitator and students within the research through the exploration of the experience of learning.

This study has provided opportunities for structured feedback through the mid and end of term evaluations, in addition to a learning journal which has encouraged students to reflect upon their subjective experience of the adjustment of authority method over the 12 weeks of the course. Both of these forms of reflection were treated objectively as data for the improvement of practice and to inform the research by the tutor, but students were encouraged in addition to use the process as an opportunity to reflect upon their own experience of learning. This was employed under the premise that the student, if encouraged to reflect on significant learning, is in a position to evaluate and develop their practice, enabling understanding of their own learning, which in turn will lead to increased responsibility for learning.

An additional reflective tool was that of the researcher's own reflective learning journal which was used in combination with the students' feedback in order to facilitate change and learning. Through reflection on my experience I was able to identify issues as they arose in real-time and work with them immediately (i.e.

importance of small group work; issues arising within small groups), in doing this I was able to work with 'reflection in action' (Schon, 1987) where I was called upon to change my thinking when appropriate. Other issues arose as emergent themes that I worked with as they developed and formed into new thinking and practice (i.e. the need for students to experience authority in the teaching and learning relationship), resulting in the development of new thinking and a fundamentally shifted view of teaching and learning.

The adjustment of authority method requires reflection on its practice in order that it is constantly evaluated and developed. The facilitator role will develop in line with the needs of each unique student group, ultimately driven by the facilitator's individual interpretation and reflection upon the role requirements. The facilitator-student relationship will develop both individually and collaboratively through reflection upon the subjective experience of the relationship, and also in line with the reciprocal learning relationships that emerge from application of the method. Student responsibility for learning and authority within the learning relationship will develop only as far as the facilitator enables student-focused processes and the adjustment of authority to be experienced (and some contexts may be further enabling than others), and through student reflection upon their experience of the adjustment of authority.

7.3 The adjustment of authority principles: reflection and beyond

The adjustment of authority principles have developed out of reflection upon the experience of using student-focused teaching methods and changing my practice as a response to both specific contingencies and also over time with the exploration and development of emergent themes. Ultimately it has been the entire experience that has enabled the principles to develop. That is to say that the real-time or 'reflection in action' changes have been as important as the broader emerging themes, and that whilst these individual reflections have had immediate effect in the teaching and learning situation, the emerging themes have had a less explicit but deeply pervasive effect throughout the research. It could be said that the accumulative experience of teaching and researching, and specifically reflection upon action has enabled my ideas to develop towards a fundamentally changed perspective of teaching and

learning – that of the adjustment of authority - grounded in both research, theory and practice, with research here suggesting that both theory and practice are open to continual development in line with a critical action research approach.

The principles are offered as an interpretation of my experience as a practitioner researcher and it is intended that any further application be within a critical action research context in order that they remain open to exploration and development. The suggestion is that the principles represent what could be considered to be an ideal, and it should be stated that as such they will never be fully representative of what might happen in an alternative context with a different practitioner, students and institution given the variety of contextual situations with the magnitude of aims, needs and structures that exist. It is possible in drawing on the experience of the research to map out the ideal application of the method (table 7.4). The grid represents the method as applied over twelve teaching sessions with inclusion of the process and role elements (see table 7.2) at their approximate points of relevance. Whilst the grid implies that it is possible to give an indication of where they might peak in importance (see table 7.4; middle section) the method requires that all elements are consciously present throughout the course.

The grid offers an interpretation of the experience of both facilitator and students. My experience of the method is drawn upon in developing the facilitator's role, and whilst it is not possible for me to write from a personal position regarding the students' experience I can draw on my observations, and make some empathic assumptions in addition to drawing on the student's reflective work, gaining insight of their experience in order to develop the role of the students, the facilitator and in developing the method.

The grid should be read both across and down to gain a full picture of the method. Reading across (and down) from the top left cell it is possible to get an indication of the experience of the method over twelve weeks of teaching in terms of input, process and outcome. The 'adjustment of authority method' sits in the centre of the table between the experience of the facilitator and the student.

Table 7.4 – Adjustment of authority grid

	Initial input (week 1)	*Input (weeks 1 - 3)*	*Process (weeks 2 – 5)*	*Process (weeks 4 –12)*	*Outcomes*
Input	Teacher acknowledges students' prior experiences and expectations, works towards development of these;	Teacher redefines teaching and learning situation with regard to responsibility for learning, and provides initial structures for students to work within;	Teacher and students' roles are developed within structures, facilitation of adjustment of authority possible;	Teacher takes on facilitator role providing support when required;	Facilitator experiences the adjustment of authority as enabling students to 'find their own authority' and take responsibility.
Process	Task is to develop safe climate in which these can be challenged and developed;	Structures provide security and enable risk taking in learning (and facilitation); group or individually oriented;	Structures become familiar – student is beginning to understand and harness process;	Facilitator and students develop reciprocal learning relationships as students work individually and in small groups;	To make explicit this process of adjustment of authority: to enable student reflection and learning.
Adjustment of authority method ***1 – 5/Adj2 indicates where element becomes appropriate***	***Initial teaching and learning situation -*** **1/Adj2r** **5/Adj2p**	***Adjustment of authority (introduction) -*** **1/Adj2r** **2/Adj2r** **3/Adj2r&p** **5/Adj2p**	***Adjustment of authority (mid)*** **3/Adj2r&p** **4/Adj2p** **5/Adj2p** **[Students and tutor experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (proper)*** **3/Adj2r&p** **4/Adj2p** **5/Adj2p** **[Students and tutor experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (outcome)*** **3/Adj2r&p** **4/Adj2p** **5/Adj2p** **[Students and tutor experience an adjustment of authority]**
Process	Students come to situation with expectations and experiences of teacher as authority;	Students' first experiences of 'power sharing'; individual may find support from small group working;	Students developing understanding of, and confidence in the process;	Students work comfortably within the process; individual or group working;	Students have developed understanding of own learning; responsibility for learning.
Outcomes	Responsibility lies with the teacher;	Authority/ responsibility redefined to include student. Reactions may include: resistance, insecurity, or teacher as 'not knowing';	Responsibility being accepted/ authority shifting. Value of responsibility for learning emerging. Group is becoming valuable source of support;	Responsibility accepted;	Learning is the individual's responsibility, and can be developed individually, in small groups or within a larger supportive class context (with tutor in facilitation role).

Input (weeks 1 - 3) should be interpreted as working with the initial situation; that of student's prior experience and expectations with the facilitator's task being to set the context for the shift in role and relationship enabling students to gain confidence in the new context. The adjustment of authority is not fully experienced here as there is insufficient concrete experience of the new context for the students to draw upon, although the reflective process may be enabling glimpses to this. It is likely that at this stage students will experience insecurity and it is important that the facilitator is consistent with the new role and approach they are espousing.

Consistency in both the facilitator's role and the new learning relationship will enable *Process* (weeks 2 – 5) to indicate the beginning of an adjustment in authority with students gaining familiarity and understanding of the process. The context remains unfamiliar with some students resisting the change, but confidence is being gained and the group is beginning to work together and draw upon each individual in developing the groups' knowledge. Students can see the benefit of the small group working, not least for support within the new method. Gradually (weeks 4 – 12) the method begins to make sense with students experiencing responsibility for their learning and an appreciation of the true nature of facilitation in enabling this. The facilitator is able to nurture true reciprocal learning relationships, experiencing a shift in the authority of the group, both facilitator and students now experience the adjustment of authority. However, students may not appreciate or have the language to describe what they are experiencing, although the reflective process and evaluative feedback opportunities can encourage development of a 'learning vocabulary'.

The final task of the facilitator is to make students aware that their development towards responsibility for learning and this shift in authority is more than an aspirational *Outcome*, rather it is being experienced (this may come at any point during the course depending on the development of the group). Students' feedback and reflective work might indicate an appreciation of the shift in roles and relationships with facilitator and other students, within this there may be insight to student's developing processes of learning how to learn and responsibility for learning. Making this shift in roles and relationship explicit is important if students are to realise that responsibility for learning is within their capacity, and that in this

case it is a result of a teaching method and facilitation approach. Other teaching methods, approaches and contexts might be equally capable of enabling or removing student responsibility, but if students are aware of the influence of the context they are in a position to seek or recreate the context in the future and ensure that responsibility for their learning continues beyond the classroom.

7.4 Summary

It is important to reiterate that the adjustment of authority principles are not offered as a 'how to do it guide', or as a definitive approach to teaching. Rather they are offered as an interpretation of my experience over two cycles of action research. Action research can be criticised for lack of generalisability since every project is different and the product of such research speaks only for that situation and no other (Usher and Bryant, 1989). However, in:

> 'offering ways of getting at the truth, no methodologies are innocent' (Usher et al, 1997: 214).

It is possible to argue that an enhanced understanding of my own practice has much to offer and that this, and the study's authenticity and accountability, are more important than generalisability (Kelly, 1985).

Due to the practitioner action research approach, this study has not explored the potential development of responsibility in other contexts or that the individual student can re-create the context for themselves. However the following chapter opens up this discussion by further grounding the notion of learner responsibility and offering a possible future scenario of sustained learner responsibility. The chapter will also explore the potential for learner responsibility in the wider organisational context.

Chapter Eight

Responsibility: Reflections and Discussion

8.1 Development of the study

This research has explored the development of responsibility for learning through two cycles of action research. Case study data was gathered from evaluative questionnaires, student learning journals and practitioner observations, field notes and reflective journals in an attempt to document the experience of both facilitator and students throughout the research process. The data has been explored in line with a critical action research approach in order to gain insight to the student experience of teaching and learning leading to the development of responsibility for learning. Examination of the data has resulted in the development of a teaching method enabling responsibility for learning through fundamentally adjusting the balance of power between teacher and learner resulting in an adjustment of authority. The adjustment of authority method employed student focused processes and re-contracted roles to enable students to experience authority in the teaching and learning context.

I entered the research as a practitioner with questions about my practice, the experience of the students, and the context in which I practice to the extent that it enables the development of responsibility for learning. The intention was for the research to take a critically reflective practitioner action research approach aimed at intervention and the improvement of the situation, which I felt to be the need for students to explore the process of learning in order that they develop an understanding of their learning and learner responsibility. It was also hoped that the study would lead to advances in theory or understanding through such real world intervention. This approach is in line with a strategic view of research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986), which suggests that all aspects of an educational act are potentially problematic:

> 'its purpose, the social situation it models or suggests, the way it creates or constrains relationships between participants, the kind of medium in which it

works (question and answer...), and the kind of knowledge to which it gives form (knowledge of content...constructive or reconstructive power, tacit understanding)' (ibid: 39).

Each educational act can be reflected upon and re-problematised to inform future practical judgments and these can be seen within the context of the research as having facilitated the development of both practice and theory. Husserl (1973) notes that when you think you know you should look again, Brew (2001) develops this:

'Looking again is a way of minimising self-deception. It means we are always in a process of coming to know. There is always the journey, never the destination. In looking again, we do not take our impressions as 'true'... progressively deepening our understanding' (ibid: 58).

Brew continues:

'Content, issues and processes are viewed as all contributing to the process of critical reflection... there is frequently the idea of a personal journey and an emphasis on the assimilation of research into the researcher's life and understanding' (ibid: 132).

Carr and Kemmis discuss action research as a critical social science:

'In the action research process, reflection and action and held in dialectical tension, each informing the other through a process of planned change, monitoring reflection and modification' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 206).

Each educational act can also be seen in the broader social context as facilitating or limiting progress towards change in society:

'Through a strict adherence to critical reflexivity... researchers need to avoid the condition of dominance by adopting criteria that appreciate and respect different, diversity and empathy...' (Usher, P., 1997: 139).

The action research approach I took became 'critical' action research in the sense of:

'gathering intellectual and strategic capacities, focusing on an issue and engaging in critical examination of practice' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 39).

While the adjustment of authority method is made available by the researcher it is not offered as an 'externally given' and 'scientifically verified' proposition:

'rather [it is] offered as interpretations which can only be validated in and by the *self understandings* of [the] practitioner... under conditions of *free and open dialogue'* (ibid.: 31).

Whilst practitioner observation is often regarded as value laden (Bohm, 1974), the illuminative approach of the study:

'attempts to represent as faithfully as possible the perspectives of those already in a situation' (ibid.: 28),

with the aim of the research being understanding of practice rather than change, although change might result. Critical research approaches do not guarantee the finding of 'facts' that match what the researcher may want to find, but the methods adopted might enable the researcher to avoid researcher subjectivity or bias, and enable research to be carried out in the sprit of 'criticism' in order to support efforts for change (Carspecken, 1996).

8.2 Principal findings and the significance of the study

The research set out to explore whether student-focused teaching incorporating reflection upon significant learning would ultimately result in an understanding of learning, and subsequently increase responsibility for learning. The research findings appear to show that this is possible, but that for this to occur students require significant learning support in this unfamiliar context. Through exploration of this support the role of the facilitator (as opposed to the role of 'tutor') has been found to be a key element in enabling responsibility for learning. The facilitator role requires that the practitioner anticipates students' prior experience of traditional tutor-student roles and relationship and employs student-focused teaching processes in order to enable a shift away from tutor dependence.

More specifically, the facilitator is responsible for creating a context conducive to learner responsibility. Through reflection upon and exploration of the research context and the different processes employed it was clear that it was the facilitation role that was enabling a fundamental shift in the implicit power between tutor and student. This shift in power was explored and through the identification of the role and process elements the principles of the adjustment of authority method were developed (see chapter seven).

The adjustment of authority suggests that the authority between teacher and learner is secondary to their parity as individuals. The facilitator remains responsible for creating the context and for supporting student's learning, but students begin to take increased responsibility for their learning through reflection upon their experience and developing an understanding of how they can increase their potential for learning. The significance of the study lies in the development of the adjustment of authority method that requires all those in positions of authority to explore the impact this power has on those over which the authority stands. To have power is not necessarily negative or problematic provided that this power is 'conscious' and acknowledged. To have power and to not know what effect this has on others is perhaps irresponsible, even dangerous, and potentially disempowering not only to those under authority, but also to those in authority. Through exploring the authority of the teaching and learning situation I have become aware not only of the impact that

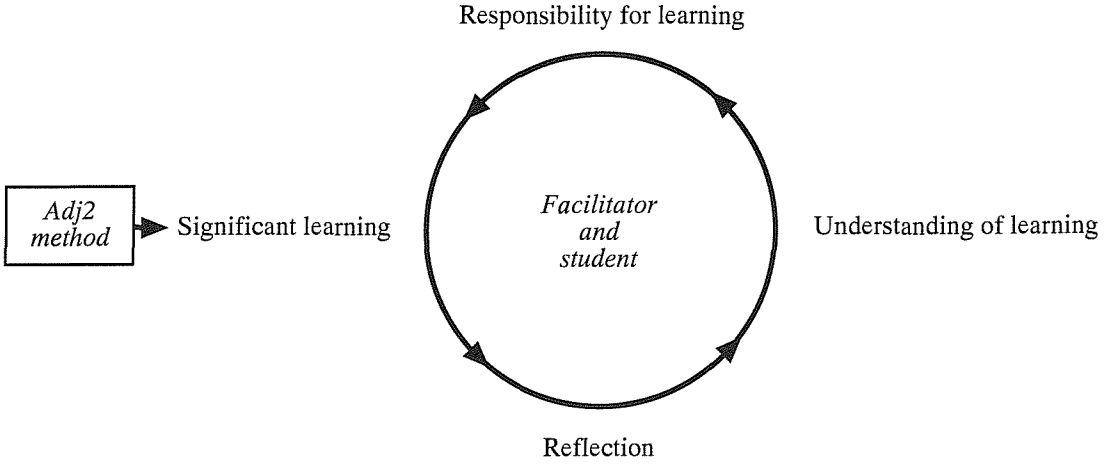
this potentially has over students' ability to take responsibility for their learning, but also the effect that this authority has on my own practice.

The notion that students require significant support in the new context in order to achieve learner responsibility suggests that students have not achieved learner responsibility at all. Continued responsibility for learning would require continued support, which is not possible beyond the end of the course. This seems to suggest that the learner moves from one sort of authority dependence to another - based on the context created by the facilitator through application of the adjustment of authority method. An alternative perspective would suggest however, that if the context is redefined and consistently maintained students can develop familiarity with the new context. When familiarity is gained it is necessary for the facilitator to enable students' to critically reflect upon and develop awareness of their role and learning responsibility in order that the student can become aware of what they are doing that enables them to achieve this and identify strategies for its continuation. It is this awareness that is crucial to the sustainability of learner responsibility. It will be inevitable that some students will be unable to immediately identify their development towards responsibility for learning (it is entirely possible that some students will not experience any awareness of their development until some time after the course has ended). This is where there is an element of difficulty in proving the value of the method. I feel however, that as an exploration into the potential of a student focused teaching method to enable students to develop responsibility for learning there has been some success as there is evidence to suggest a shift in the students' awareness and understanding of learning and teaching. The study has not explored whether students are able to sustain responsibility for learning resulting in some uncertainty as to the extent of this success. Perhaps all we can do as teaching and learning practitioners is illuminate the potential of the learner towards responsibility for learning, and once awareness has been raised continued responsibility is up to them. That students have shown an awareness of their developing responsibility for learning fits in with the initial premise of this research and the nature of learner responsibility; that it is engagement with the process that is significant. If students have been made aware of their learning responsibility, perhaps

that is all I can realistically expect to do. My task after all has not been to lead them to the answers, but to join with them in their exploration of learning. And that I have developed my awareness of the potential for their developing learner responsibility through redefining my role and adjusting the authority in the relationship is perhaps at this stage all I need to do. I have enhanced my understanding of what it is to be a facilitator of learning through exploring my responsibilities as a practitioner, and through this I have developed my own theory of practice enabling me to ground my understanding and use this learning as a basis for further exploration.

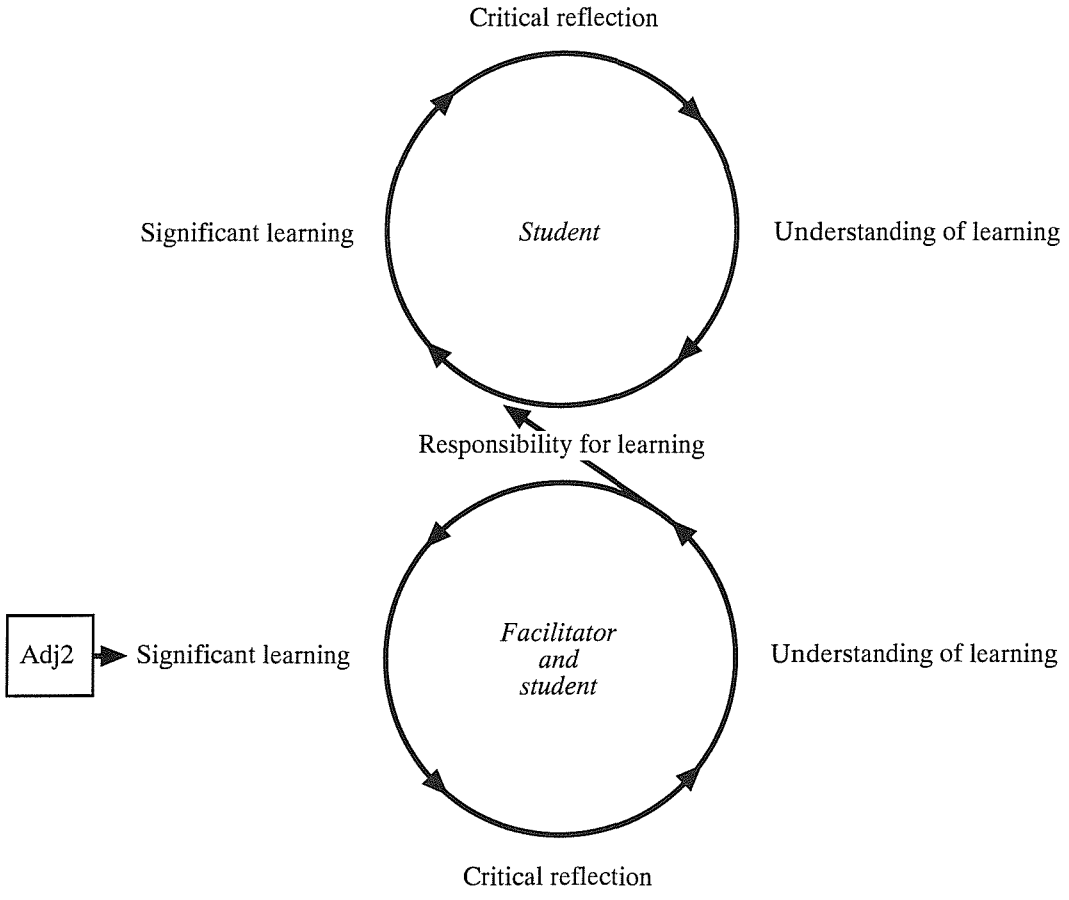
Figure 8.1 offers a diagrammatical representation of the 'cycle of responsibility for learning' as experienced within the classroom with both facilitator and student part of the process of working towards responsibility for learning. The model suggests that the facilitator, working with the adjustment of authority method, provides the student with the opportunity to achieve responsibility for learning through the provision of *significant learning* experiences, then encouraging *reflection* upon that learning, resulting in *understanding* of that learning, leading to *responsibility for learning*. As discussed, the facilitator's role is vital through the provision of a context for enabling the student to work towards responsibility for learning.

Figure 8.1 – Cycle of responsibility for learning (ii)



A development of the cycle of responsibility for learning can be seen in figure 8.2 with the student working within the upper cycle alone suggesting that the cycle can be lived beyond the classroom. The implication is that the individual can take the experience of working with the adjustment of authority method, having developed an awareness of responsibility for learning through significant learning experiences, critical reflection and understanding their own learning in the classroom, and continue to take responsibility for learning beyond the classroom.

Figure 8.2 – Cycle of responsibility for learning (iii)
Beyond the classroom



It is necessary to ensure that students work responsibly with this responsibility for learning – that is to suggest that learner responsibility requires that learners understand what it is to be responsible, accepting that responsibility for their role

within the teaching and learning context lies with them. Through reflection upon their experience of the method students should be enabled to identify points in their learning where they were not able or willing to take responsibility for their learning, just as they should be aware of those points where their responsibility for learning was increased or high. In order to work with reality it is necessary to appreciate that it is not always possible to take a high level of responsibility for learning (i.e., in situations where the context is dominated by an authority: didactic teaching), and it is at these times that the context should be explored and worked with (to ensure continued responsibility) rather than against.

In the facilitation role I have been aware of the contextual framework in which I practice, that is to suggest that I have been aware of some of the potential influences on my work. But in order to work with responsibility I have chosen to work with the opportunities offered by the context, whilst acknowledging the broader situation. I am aware that my role as a part time member of staff may have afforded me a different set of contextual influences than perhaps a full time member of staff. Also the research approach taken has required that I am aware of the situation in which I practice to perhaps a greater extent, or at least differently, than other practitioners in the same environment. Ultimately it is difficult to make any assumptions as to how my experience of the situation has been different to another practitioners experience, not least due to my status or the research approach, but also due to the illuminative approach as an exploration of my experience and an attempt to represent the perspectives of those in the situation (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

The discussion has thus far not explored the wider political or institutional contexts. Whilst the study has enabled some exploration of these contextual issues, these have not been fully incorporated into the discussion, instead the discussion has focused on the immediate context, that of the classroom and the influence that I have in my role as a facilitator. The research advocates that students should learn not only the subject, but also explore its application through an exploration of the process of their learning. This requires that the teacher themselves understand the context within which they teach, and secondly to understand what this means in terms of their responsibilities as a teacher. The implication of this is twofold: firstly that teachers

will have to shift their perspective of what it is to teach in line with their exploration of learning, and develop a comprehensive theory of practice; and secondly that the context (each with its implicit values, expectations and assumptions) will have to adjust to enable the development of responsibility for learning for both students and practitioners.

An important implication of this thesis is that the adjustment of authority offers the prospect of a fundamentally shifted teaching and learning relationship towards parity of individuals - away from the all encompassing control of the teacher and the disempowerment of the learner. The point here is that it is the teacher who creates the teaching and learning environment - it is the teacher who perpetuates or challenges expectations of a teaching situation, and it is the teacher who is able to establish and maintain different standards and expectations for both the teacher's and students' roles. However, the discussion must be positioned with the broader context in order to acknowledge that whilst the tutor has a great deal of authority and responsibility, this is determined within the boundaries offered by each unique context. The literature of teaching and learning does not offer a comprehensive approach to pedagogy that addresses the linkages between teaching and learning in its 'situation' (Hannan and Silver, 2000). However, it is possible to glimpse important aspects of how universities and their sub-units approach questions to teaching and learning broadly at two levels of the institutional environment. Firstly at the level of the institution or the sub-unit, which may (or may not) be interested in exploring teaching and learning to serve a number of purposes ranging from improved student learning to a response to national development initiatives or a response to budget difficulties (Hannan and Silver, 2000). At the second level is the individual practitioner exploring new ways of working with a class of students. These two levels are sometimes interrelated – an institutional context may be heavily influenced by the work of individuals; an individual's approach may be influenced by the institutional context. In order to develop this part of the discussion the influence of the institutional context will be discussed but only as far as it enables or disables the responsibilities of the individual. In order to explore this it is necessary to outline the responsibilities of the individual practitioner in context.

The interpersonal context

Osborne (2000) discusses the perception of lecturers today as being aware that the responsibility of their role requires them to teach students, but that the lecture remains the most widespread method of teaching in higher education in conflict with research exploring the effectiveness of teaching methods (Bligh, 1971). If it is to be taken that the aim of teaching is to enable student learning (Ramsden, 1992) the suggestion is that:

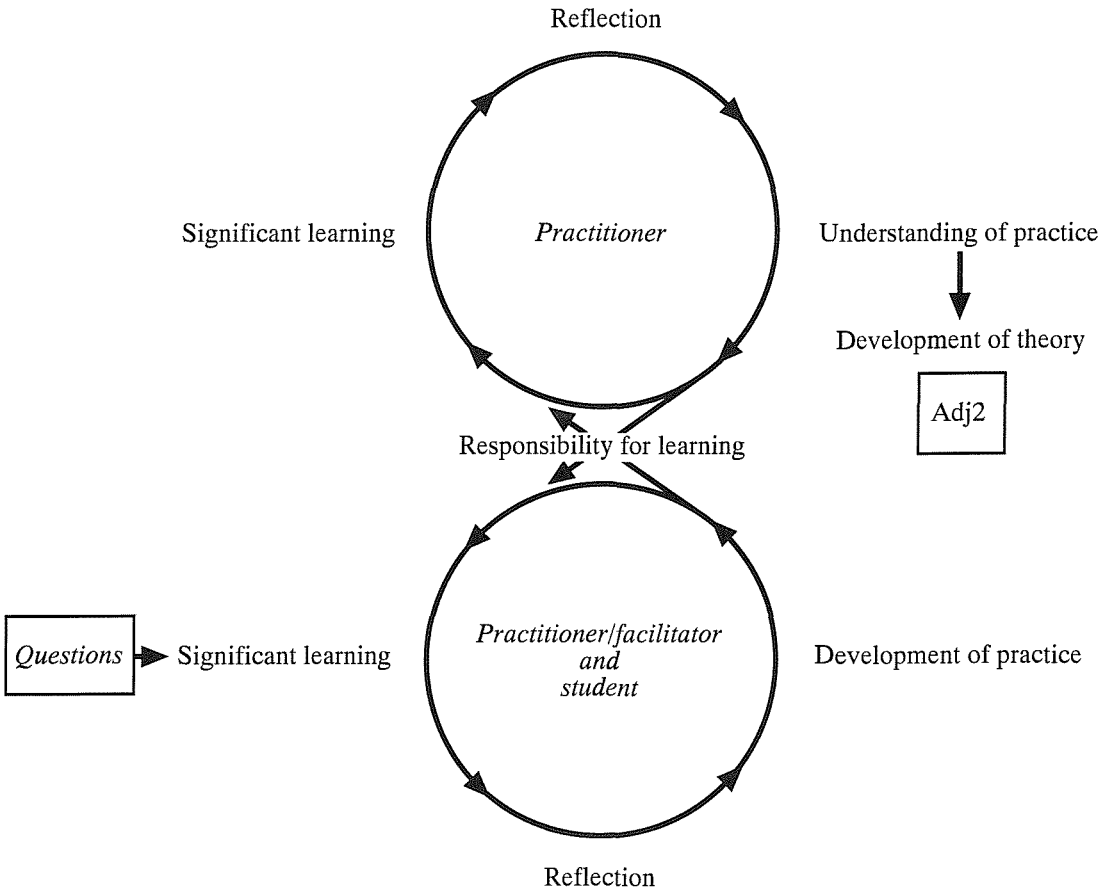
> 'making student learning possible places much more responsibility with the teacher. It implies that the teacher must know something about student learning and about what makes it possible' (Laurillard, 1993:4).

This adds to the problematic nature of defining teaching and learning as separate entities as to place responsibility entirely on the teacher suggests that the student has no contribution to make to teaching and learning. Whilst I would suggest that the teacher has an important role in setting the context, it is the development of relationships between teacher and learners that enables the context to develop towards the adjustment of authority and responsibility for learning. The context once set reflects the teacher's approach to teaching and learning so influencing how the student experiences teaching and learning and how much responsibility they take for their learning. In this way it is the interaction between tutor and students that has enabled a theory of teaching to develop. In figure 8.1 the facilitator works with the students in enabling the development of responsibility for learning, Figure 8.3 adopts this reciprocal learning strategy in offering a representation of my experience of working with the students in order to develop a theory of practice – in this case the development of the adjustment of authority method.

The lower cycle suggests that beginning with questions about practice, and creating opportunities for significant learning with those questions in mind, I have been able to reflect upon that learning and draw on the experience of the students in order to develop my understanding of particular elements of practice in real time.

The upper cycle suggests a movement away from working with the students, remaining in the world of the reflective practitioner in order to understand my practice and develop my theory of teaching, leading over time to the development of the adjustment of authority. The suggestion here is that whilst the practitioner and students can work towards the development of practice in real time – reflection in action, the practitioner is also able to reflect on practice outside of the classroom context – reflection on action, with the model offering the practitioner movement between the cycles developing practice in real time and out of context.

Figure 8.3 - Cycle of responsibility for learning (iv)
The Practitioner



The teacher who problematises educational acts is conscious of the further problematisation of educational acts (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). A constant debate is

necessary in education to continue the process of examining its frameworks of expectations, values and assumptions, and to understand the consequences of different kinds of intervention. It is this debate and exploration that lies at the root of practitioner responsibility. If practice is not explored and expectations not challenged we are unable to justify our actions and decisions, therefore remaining under the influence of the context and unable to develop our practice as informed professionals. In addition we remain blind to the influence or limitations that the context potentially affords, and ultimately our responsibility as practitioners and for practice is compromised. If real teaching is the creation by the teacher of a context which opens up and maximises learning potential (Osborne, 2000), the suggestion is that the practitioner has awareness of contexts which enable student learning and within this, that they have a theory of teaching. Ramsden (1992) posits that teaching cannot be value free. Marland (1997) pursues this suggesting the 'every teacher has some kind of implicit theory of teaching'. However, a problem for practitioners lies in a lack of explicit theories.

Ramsden (1992) describes these theories as sets of knowledge and their application, they are not coherent conceptual structures, but are expressed as experiences of teaching. Schon discusses this lack of theorised practice (in the professions generally) as a source of disturbance:

> 'Professionals have been disturbed to find that they cannot account to processes they have come to see as central to professional competence... We are bound to an epistemology of practice which leaves us at a loss to explain, or even to describe, the competences to which we now give overriding importance' (Schon, 1983: 19-20).

Schon writes of the confusion of leading professionals at encountering conflicting views and lack of explicit theory:

> 'It seems, rather, that they are disturbed because they have no satisfactory way of describing or accounting for the artful competence which practitioners

sometimes reveal in what they do. They find it unsettling to be unable to make sense of these processes in terms of the model of professional knowledge which they have largely taken for granted' (Schon, 1983: 19).

Biggs (1999) suggests that many teachers lack well structured theories relating to their discipline as their priority is to keep up with content developments. It is this lack of priority given to the development of teaching that results in the practitioner's responsibility for their own learning and professional development being compromised. The problem here lies in the notion of responsibility; if the practitioner is not responsible for their learning (evidenced through their words and their activity) how can the student be expected to develop learner responsibility? This raises three issues: the need for the development of responsibility as an explicit student learning outcome; the need for responsible practitioners to actively explore their practice; and the need for congruence between that said and that done by the practitioner.

Thorley and Brand (1999) argue that it is not possible to define the 'capable lecturer' without at least some reference to core professional values and shared beliefs - the *why* of teaching. A set of shared values is one thing that can define a profession. Yet there is evidence to suggest:

> 'an inability in many academics to state clearly or show any significant awareness of underlying core values for teachers in higher education... presumably it indicates that we have not yet truly and self-consciously developed into a profession...' (1999:24).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) note that discussions about teaching as a profession focus on the extent to which teaching conforms to the criteria used to distinguish professional from non-professional occupations – that the methods and procedures employed by members of a profession are based on a body of theoretical knowledge and research. Glazer takes the discussion concerning the lack of professional theories of practice one step further by distinguishing between the 'major' (medicine and law

with business and engineering as 'near major') and 'minor' (social work and education) professions, and arguing that the schools of the minor professions are:

> 'hopelessly non-rigorous, dependent on representatives of academic disciplines, such as economics or political science, who are superior in status to the professions themselves' (in Schon, 1983: 23).

Schon, referring to Glazer (1974), constructs his discussion using the model of 'Technical Rationality' suggesting that:

> 'the major professions are 'disciplined by an unambiguous end – health, success in litigation, profit – which settles men's minds' (Glazer, 1974: 363), and they operate in stable institutional contexts... grounded in systematic, fundamental knowledge, of which scientific knowledge is the prototype' (ibid: 348) '... a high component of strictly technological knowledge based on science...' (ibid: 349). In contrast the minor professions suffer from shifting, ambiguous ends and from unstable institutional contexts of practice, and are *therefore* unable to develop a base of systematic professional knowledge' (Schon, 1983: 23).

It is the establishment of unambiguous ends that Glazer bases his requirement for the development of a scientific knowledge base. This study however, has attempted to develop through reflection on experience and practice an explicit theory of practice that:

> 'is susceptible to a kind of rigour that is both like and unlike the rigour of scholarly research and controlled experiment' (ibid: ix),

enabling a development away from:

'shifting, ambiguous ends, ... and are therefore unable to develop a base of systematic professional knowledge' (ibid),

towards an *unambiguous end*, in the case of this study, that of responsibility for learning.

Glazer's argument however, discusses the process of teaching and learning without a strong scientific base - until theories are made explicit, and to develop Schon's point - Professionals ... find that they *can* account for processes they have come to see as central to professional competence... to be *able* make sense of these processes in terms of the model of professional knowledge.

But teaching and learning professionals are some way from achieving such theoretical confidence until they ensure that their implicit values and theories are explored, and made explicit and open to scrutiny.

Ramsden discusses the responsibility for the development of knowledge underwriting good teaching:

'The professional authority of the academic as scholar rests on a body of knowledge; the professional authority of the academic as teacher should rest on a body of didactic knowledge. This comprises knowledge of how the subjects he or she professes is best learned and taught' (1992: 9).

This didactic knowledge has two aspects, the first arising from formally conducted research on teaching and learning forming accepted theories of teaching, the second arises from personal experience as a teacher out of which implicit theories of teaching are formed. By combining both the public and private domains of knowledge, the practitioner is able to derive ways of improving teaching by using the thinking and concepts of accepted theories. Biggs suggests that the untapped potential for the development of teaching lies within this combining of implicit and explicit knowledge, also indicating further development of understanding through applying reflective practice to the process of teaching:

'Reflecting on your teaching requires you to have an explicit theory of teaching' (Biggs, 1999: 6).

Schon (1983) discusses reflective practice as a basis of effective professionalism in any field, other writers focus specifically on higher education (Cowan, 1998). Reflective practice in the classroom can be formalised through action research (Elliott, 1991; Atweh et al, 1998). Biggs (1999) suggests that action research is about being systematic in developing teaching towards enabling students to learn better, or in the case of this study, more specifically to enable responsibility for learning. Reflection on practice suggests not what is but what might be. To transform what is to what might be is the role of theory (Biggs, 1999). Ramsden (1992) argues that through reflective teaching, every teaching action and every operation to evaluate teaching should be judged against criterion of whether it can be expected to lead to the kind of learning as desired by lecturers. This requires the lecturer to have defined what it is they are expecting of the learner. In other words, to have reflected on their implicit values in order to make their theories of teaching explicit. Schon offers some light to the problem by analysing and discussing the:

'assumption that competent practitioners usually know more than they can say. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit' (1983: viii).

He continues:

'...it is possible to construct and test models of knowing. Indeed, practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the midst of action...' (1983: viii).

Schon's point is useful here in establishing the need for reflection upon and development of practice:

'Complexity, instability, and uncertainty are not removed or resolved by applying specialised knowledge to well-defined tasks. If anything, the effective use of specialised knowledge depends on a prior restructuring of situations that are complex and uncertain. An artful practice of the unique case appears anomalous when professional competence is modelled in terms of application of established techniques to recurrent events' (Schon, 1983: 19).

Schon's approach reflects the approach of this study:

'... [Schon's] study is an analysis of the distinctive structure of reflection-in-action... it is susceptible to a kind of rigor that is both like and unlike the rigor of scholarly research and controlled experiment' (1983: ix).

Schon's approach involves developing an interaction of research and practice which the systematic exploration of teaching and learning is wholly suited to; one that cannot be grounded only in the realm of scientific knowledge, but one that considers the limitations deriving from myths about both the relation of thought to action, and those grounded in the features of interpersonal and institutional contexts. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to move beyond these limitations through exploration of personal practice:

'If teaching is treated simply as a set of competencies to be acquired and put into practice, without any understanding of why the technique produces effective learning the approaches may well lack the flexibility required to cope with change. An understanding of the underlying theory of teaching allows the lecturer to adapt to differences between the groups being taught, and to changing circumstances and concepts' (Entwistle, 1998).

And this of course must be considered within the broader organisational context. If the practitioner fails to explore and understand their own theory of

teaching then they are subject to the limitations of their understanding and can only rely on the context to inform their practice. If the contextual influence remains unacknowledged with practice then the practitioner is not operating as an autonomous professional but perhaps more as an automaton, recreating conditions merely on the pretext that they have worked before without really understanding how or why or indeed whether and for whom they are truly working.

A commitment to self-critical reflection on education values and aims includes consideration of the factor that the formulation of aims may be distorted by ideological forces and constraints and their realisation may be impeded by institutional structures (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Given that teaching should include responsibility for evaluating and changing practice, an important skill is the development of self-evaluation against a broad flexible framework of expectation.

Contextual considerations

Such an approach places responsibility for professional development with the practitioner while maintaining professional standards, and implies that the individual is aware of the system of expectations, values and assumptions that they are working within.

Contextual considerations and influences are broad and many. That is to suggest that this discussion could not attempt to cover all contextual aspects, but that it should be positioned within a broad consideration of factors from the macro and micro frameworks and structures, to climates and cultures, assumptions, values and expectations within a higher education context. It goes without saying that higher education itself exists within a far broader context, but that this will be implicitly referred to here due to the scope of the discussion. It becomes necessary when exploring the action of the individual practitioner to consider the basic system of values and assumptions, explicit or implicit, which influence people and are changed or maintained by those within the context of the organisation. The context can be defined as:

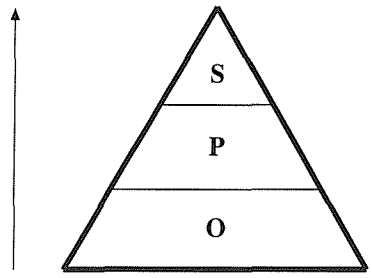
> 'the set of values (what is good and bad) and assumptions (beliefs about human nature) that distinguishes a particular organisation from others...norms (ground-rules for behaviour) and artifacts (such as who gets the corner office) that guide actions in the organisation' (Beckhard and Pritchard, 1992: 46).

All practitioners work within a wider context, though not necessarily with the same level of consciousness or ease. Understanding the context is necessary in order to have insight to these values, assumptions and expectations. The individual practitioner has to interpret these messages that are themselves often unstable and uncertain:

> 'At whatever level... approaches to teaching and learning... are developed, debated negotiated and resisted within a complex interplay...' (Hannan and Silver, 2000: 75) of contextual considerations.

For the purpose of this discussion it is relevant to think of these contextual considerations in terms of those factors within the situation that might have an impact on enabling an individual to work with responsibility. In exploring the contextual issues that the research has been situated within it is necessary to include a discussion of responsibility that should include the responsibility of the organization to create a context which enables practitioner responsibility for learning, and for the practitioner to create a context for students to develop responsibility for learning (figure 8.4). The image represents a 'hierarchy of responsibility' for creating a context: if the organisation (O) can take responsibility for creating a context for practitioner (P) development, then the practitioner is enabled to create a context for learner (S) responsibility.

Figure 8.4 – Responsibility for context



This research has discovered that in order to create a context appropriate for the development of responsibility for learning an adjustment of authority is required by those in positions of authority whose practices impact on the teaching-learning relationship. This is not to suggest that those individuals in authority lose any status, but that they work towards parity of relationship for the purpose of enabling responsibility for learning in those they are in authority over.

The study has discussed how it is the creation by the facilitator of a context enabling responsibility for learning that has enabled students to develop their responsibility for learning. This context has issues of roles and process working within it in order for this to happen. (See appendix 8.1 which offers a representation of the ideal 'contextual adjustment of authority' in order that the practitioner can develop responsibility for their learning and work towards the creation of a context enabling student responsibility. The grid should be read in the same way as that presented in chapter seven, except that this grid outlines the ideal changes in context in order that an adjustment of authority is experienced between practitioner and context, with the practitioner working towards responsibility for their practice in a supportive context. It becomes the responsibility of those in authority within the context to enable practitioners to learn about and develop their practice. This will require acknowledgement of the practitioner's prior experience and expectations of contexts and the development of a safe climate in which these can be challenged. This in turn will require responsibility for learning and development of practice to be explicit outcomes for the individual's professional development, and the development

of supportive structures encouraging critical reflection upon practice. Reciprocal learning relationships will be necessary between the practitioner and those in authority and between peers, whilst the practitioner develops confidence in the process and begins to experience authority in their developing practice and theory through their research). The context enables an adjustment of authority through creating an environment in which the practitioner can explore their practice and develop responsibility for their learning:

> 'It would be good to think that the individual innovator and the individual initiative will be able to survive and to influence how teachers teach, how students learn, and how institutions and the system enable them to do so' (Hannan and Silver, 2000:150).

At the heart of change in teaching and learning is the experience of teacher-student interaction. Individual teachers need to be able to problematise their practice, to explore why an approach isn't working, to ask what are the reasons relating to the teacher, the student and the context, and to decide on action. The suggestion is that for the practitioner to be able to problematise their practice and therefore take responsibility for their development and learning the context needs to be supportive of this exploration. As Biggs notes:

> 'Developing teaching expertise usually takes second place; a set of priorities dictated as much by institutional structures and reward systems as by individual choice' (1999: 5),

giving an insight to the influence of the context, immediate or otherwise, in enabling the practitioner to take responsibility for their development. The suggestion is of a context exercising its authority through structures and rewards systems capable of disempowering the practitioner towards dependence on structures and away from professional autonomy. That is not to say that a context is automatically exerting authority toward the disempowerment of the practitioner, but that if the practitioner

does not take responsibility for their own learning and development they risk becoming dependent on the context and will fail to develop towards a theory of their own practice. Practitioners make judgments about their everyday practice within the broader context of which these practices occur and over which they have little control. This emphasises the need for practitioners to take responsibility for their own learning and development in order that they are not seduced by contextual influences and controls, but rather they are able to work with their experience whilst mindful of the broader context within which they exist in order to develop their practice responsibly.

Curriculum research will fail to move beyond the uncertainties implicit to this form of inquiry unless the specific nature of curriculum research, the role of the teacher in research, and the situated-ness of the practitioner are considered. Exploration of all these areas will make it possible to examine how different conceptions of curriculum research convey different images of teaching as a distinctly professional activity. It will enable a discussion of curriculum research that perceives methodological considerations and questions about teachers' professionalism as intrinsically related (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). These two issues are closely related; developments in professional autonomy will have implications for the kind of knowledge required from research and the research relationship teachers develop with their own practice. Research would also extend towards greater awareness of the broad social, political and cultural context within which it operates. 'Research' will then develop in both its meaning and its practice away from acceptance of findings towards informed judgments about professional activities and the fulfillment of its responsibility to defend these judgments to other interested parties.

8.4 Summary

Investment in practitioner development will be influenced by a commitment to the value of learning. Fundamental to the notion of development is the fact that the experience and its outcome are not just concerned with what practitioners do and the procedures they adopt and make available to students. It is a process influenced by perceptions of policy related, cultural and structural change, as well as the immediate

operational sense of the need for change. Drummond *et al* conclude that very little attention has been paid to:

> 'how changes in teaching and learning practices in HE can be effectively managed' (1997: 13).

In discussing the implications of the study it is appropriate to suggest some pointers towards the implementation of responsibility for the development of practice through the contextual changes discussed, but firstly to outline those limiting factors:

- Low value placed on development in teaching and learning, compared with research;
- Over-emphasis on the development of the academic discipline to the exclusion of the development of teaching and learning processes;
- Lack of a safe context or support from those in authority;
- Policies or plans which preclude individual initiative;
- Lack of recognition and support for practitioners working on short term contracts
- Procedures that avoid any risk taking or a reluctance to adopt innovative approaches to teaching;
- Failure to motivate students;
- Resistant or traditional systems of management;
- Institutional inertia.

In order that changes in practice can be enabled I would suggest the creation of contexts supportive of and encouraging responsibility for learning. This empowerment of the individual has the potential to move beyond inertia and lack of confidence provided that the support is consistently there in the wider context. Development of practice is likely to take place when:

- The practitioner feels secure within the context and is supported by those in authority;
- The institution has a policy of encouraging responsibility for development and learning and that development is recognised through promotion;
- Colleagues and those in authority are also engaged in developing practice, and reciprocal learning relationships are encouraged;
- High value is placed on development in teaching and learning, in line with research;
- The development of the academic discipline in line with the development of teaching and learning processes;
- Policies or plans which invite individual initiatives;
- Recognition and support for practitioners working on short term contracts;
- Procedures that encourage risk taking and innovative approaches to teaching;
- Ability to motivate students;
- Innovative systems of management;
- Institutional interest.

The points listed above as inhibiting the development of practice or encouraging the development of practice may fall broadly into a single category of 'value' such as that informing the practice of any context – that relating to trust. If you are trusted, it is easier to work with responsibility. It could be that if the fundamental value system within any context could be brought to the level of *trusting* each person within that culture, development of practice might become an intrinsic part of any role, and responsibility for learning would become natural to any role. Of course trust relates to issues of authority and relationships, which might then bring the discussion back to the creation of a context for this to occur!

Having considered appropriate aspects of the links between teaching and learning in its 'situation' and how these might inhibit or encourage the development of practice and practitioner responsibility, the final chapter will discuss the development of the adjustment of authority and consider the implications for the practitioner and the context.

Chapter Nine

The Adjustment of Authority: Implications and Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

The discussion now requires final reflection upon the outcomes of the study and suggestion of possibilities, implications and recommendations for the future. This will be achieved by reviewing the research process leading to a discussion of the potential relevance of the study to the stakeholders of teaching and learning in higher education. The thesis will then lead to the conclusions of the study via a brief coda concerning my own learning.

9.2 Evaluating the research process

The study began as practitioner research into teaching and learning leading to students' development of responsibility for learning, and has evolved through a process of critically reflective action research resulting in a paradigm shift regarding assumptions relating to teaching and learning and the intrinsic authority relationship between teacher and student.

This relational link between authority and responsibility has been explored and resulted in the emergence of principles to practice relating to the 'adjustment of authority' in the higher education classroom. These principles have highlighted the importance of the facilitation role in creating a context appropriate for the development of responsibility, whilst the later discussion explicitly acknowledges the situatedness of the facilitator in the wider organisational context and the impact this has on the facilitator's role, responsibilities and authority.

In acknowledging that this text is a product of the interaction between self and others, its value is similarly judged by self, others and readers. As the author I have confidence in the findings, albeit from a comparatively small and subjective sample. I have enhanced my understanding of my practice and have found new ways in which to explore practice.

Whilst it is acknowledged in chapter **3** that the method adopted may result in conclusions that are essentially parochial, I maintain that the intention of the study

has been to explore and question current practice rather than offering answers. The dilemmas of practitioner action research and the impact of my role are also noted. Whilst I am satisfied that the theoretical constructions of the thesis emerged from the fieldwork, I maintain that these are *my* constructions.

It could be argued that I did not 'discover' student responsibility for learning because responsibility is related to the need to create the appropriate context with recognition of the authority relationship intrinsic to teaching and learning. Similarly one can question whether the students' developmental progression through the method is an entirely accurate portrayal. These points can be disputed however by the evidence of others, and further, that in developing the method and proposing principles to practice incorporating progression through the application of the method, I am suggesting an 'ideal'. There is evidence to suggest there has been development of learning, and it is reasonable to argue that what is reported is a) the participants' reported experience of development in learning, and b) interpretation of the adjustment of authority method incorporating their experience of responsibility for learning.

This critically reflective research process, in moving through two cycles of action research, has caused many themes to emerge throughout the study and I am aware that I have not been able to consider them all due to the constraints that focusing my study has imposed. In turn there may also be themes that have arisen that I have only given limited attention to that might equally have deserved more emphasis in someone else's interpretation of the collected experience. I have however, dealt with the issues relevant to *my* interpretation of the experience, and of course my developing awareness and understanding may be reflected in my initial interpretation of these events therefore taking the discussion in a path unintended or unanticipated, but certainly rich – part of the hazard, and equally part of the delight, of interpreting experience!

A future study might acknowledge the possible benefits to be gained from:

- Application of the method within different teaching and learning contexts (to include different sectors of education); and by different practitioners in order to establish further any situatedness of findings;
- Extending the research to include other subject disciplines;
- An interdisciplinary approach;
- New technologies in recording data in practice;
- Exploring the wider organisational context and its impact on practice and development of practice.

My intention has been to 'read' the experiences I have collected (chapter **3**) and in doing so gain insight to the process of learning and development of practice of both the self and others. I hope that the reader is able to align their experience to some extent with those researched here.

From this evaluation of the research process it is timely to consider the potential relevance of the study to stakeholders in educational practice.

9.3 The potential relevance of the study to the development of stakeholders in higher education

The study has demonstrated that exploration of learning leading to the development of responsibility will require critical reflection upon significant learning experiences. Chapter **8** has acknowledged that this can be extended beyond the classroom to the wider organisational context, suggesting that teacher, learner and organisation are all capable of learning and development of practice, further reducing any authority in role and relationships, whilst increasing levels of responsibility. Additionally the relational roles of learner and teacher and development of learning and teaching become unified resulting in the discussion referring to the learning of the *practitioner* and development *practice*.

Significant factors which impact upon development of practice are:

- Critical reflective practice upon significant learning experiences;
- Reciprocal reflective dialogue;
- Creation of an appropriate context for development;
- Challenging assumptions regarding traditional roles and authority relationships;
- Increasing levels of responsibility; and enabling
- Exploration of practice leading to (professional) development and autonomy.

There is a lack of emphasis regarding these factors in traditional processes of teaching and learning, and roles and relationships inherent to teaching and learning potentially resulting in limited awareness of learning processes. Development of teaching and learning practice within higher education requires an epistemology of possibilities which includes the acknowledgement of developmental need, a language of action, and the creation of an organisational context that embraces development of practice and openly acknowledges and 'adjusts the authority' while encouraging responsibility for learning and development.

Recognition of this view raises challenging questions about the most appropriate location for the inclusion of these dimensions of development of practice, e.g., at the level of student, teacher, faculty, department, institution, or a combination? How might development at each of these levels be enhanced through increased attention to responsibility and authority in practice?

To enable development of practice requires a shift in assumptions regarding teaching and learning towards that of the responsible practitioner engaged in development incorporating critical reflection and reflective dialogue leading to further learning and challenging assumptions of practice. The practitioner is then able to learn about the processes of their practice, whilst remaining open to further learning and whilst mindful of their situatedness.

A curriculum constructed from this stance would enable exploration of the process of learning as a valid aim, and would encourage the continued development

of practice. Practitioners would acknowledge that whilst learning and development may be enabled, possibilities will remain for unknown, further invisibles, unable to be communicated, requiring exploration in a supportive context.

The nature of the practitioner is challenged and reconstructed, open to the development of knowledge and understanding through the continual exploration of practice. Practice is informed by theory, and practitioner theories will develop explicitly as exploration of practice continues.

The practitioner should be guided to development, whilst changing stance and developing explicit theories of practice. Development of practice requires space for learning, analysis and interpretation within the context of expanding and emerging aims and values of practice.

The development of practice requires the creation of an appropriate context, and acknowledgement of the impact of development at different levels within the organisation.

9.4 Challenges to key stakeholders

If development of practice is to be recognised as a fundamental aim within practice, certain developments will be necessary. Firstly in the attitudes and practice of practitioners which must become more firmly rooted in theory and research; and secondly in the professional autonomy of practitioners which must be extended to include the opportunity to contribute in decision making influencing the broader context in which they operate, and with awareness of the responsibility and professional obligation they have towards interested parties in the wider community (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). This study has focused on the experience of working with the adjustment of authority method in the higher education classroom. However, the classroom exists within the wider context of the organisation, and is important to consider this context to include key stakeholders of educational practice in order to understand the potential influences on development of responsibility for learning. *Responsibility* is of course related to development of learning, development of practice, and autonomy with recognition of the inherent authority relationships within any organisation resulting in a need for the 'adjustment of authority' at each level.

The following discussion refers to four basic levels of the organisation in order to keep the discussion focused, and requires the identification of *practitioner* and related *practice* as relevant within each of the levels of: students; teachers; course design; and institutional managers.

Students

Previous educational experiences may have reinforced a dependent teaching and learning relationship requiring that assumptions of role, relationships and responsibility are challenged. Students are beginning to work with responsibility when they:

- Seek opportunities for significant learning;
- Reflect on that learning;
- Develop understanding of their learning processes through reflection and exploration of significant learning;
- Move from dependence on the tutor;
- Expect to contribute to their own development;
- Appreciate that learner responsibility is more important than high grades which may not reflect understanding or development in learning;
- Are prepared to take risks in their learning and not fear failure;
- Are prepared to live with uncertainty in not needing to seek the right answer;
- See their peers as learning resources and support rather than as competition;
- See the tutor as a learning resource and support rather than the 'expert'.

Teachers

Teachers have a critical role to play not least as the immediate providers of higher education but also as the individual responsible for creating the context for enabling responsibility for learning. Also through their participation in course design, membership of professional bodies and contributions to the culture of higher education. In order that learner responsibility is enabled it will be necessary for the teacher to explore their own practice, developing understanding of and exploring the

assumptions that underlie their practice. Teachers are beginning to work with responsibility when they:

- Realise that the authority of the learning situation also lies with the students;
- Encourage the development of learning relationships with students and between students;
- Apply student-focused processes in order to enable students to experience learner responsibility and authority;
- Encourage reflection on learning in order that students become aware of their learning potential, and support students in their development;
- Share their own experiences of learning and development with students;
- Practice consistency and congruence;
- Actively explore their practice;
- Recognise that their professional autonomy is related to the development of practice.

Course design

Course or curriculum design is an important element in enabling change in teaching practice on a wide scale, particularly within institutions where the administrative, managerial, financial and quality assurance infrastructures are geared to more traditional designs (Stephenson and Yorke, 1998). The implication is of a choice between introducing change slowly to different levels of the organisation; i.e., individual teachers working within existing programmes, or supporting a new course design. Course/curriculum designers are beginning to work with responsibility when they:

- Develop learning outcomes appropriate to the development of learner responsibility;
- Incorporate the study of both the content and process of learning;

- Recognise the importance of reflection on learning and give credit for the learning that comes from reflection and development in understanding of learning;
- Develop assessment and credit structures that recognise development in learning;
- Build in opportunities for practitioner development and learning, encouraging learning through experimentation and risk taking; resulting in
- Challenge to practitioner assumptions thus enabling development of course design through practitioner research.

Institutional managers

Institutional managers can have an influence upon course design, development of practice, and the culture of teaching and learning experienced at all levels of the organisation. Development of the appropriate organisational culture is important because the development of responsibility for learning needs an environment in which learning from experience is rewarded and valued at all levels. The creation of an organisational culture that works creatively with responsibility and authority encourages people to take the risk of developing practice, and gives staff some awareness of the rewards and challenges of learner responsibility. Institutional managers are beginning to work with responsibility when they:

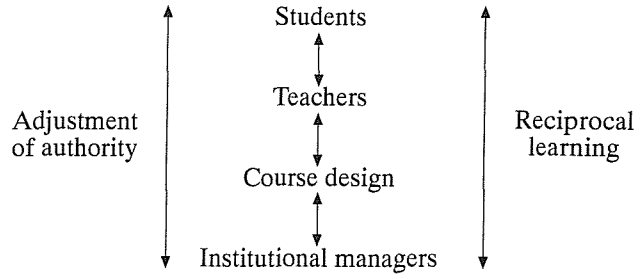
- Use student appraisal systems which recognise the extent to which students are able to develop responsibility and not only the formal learning of material;
- Encourage development of practice and practitioner autonomy;
- Recognise practitioner and programme development in promotion systems;
- Enable the creation of contexts appropriate for development at all levels;
- Reflect upon and develop their practice as managers.

The assumptions of each stakeholder regarding teaching and learning, development of practice, and their responsibilities require fundamental adjustment of authority in order that each can work with responsibility. Instead of relying on the

'expert', or 'an-other' to provide answers, or create and maintain contexts, it is the responsibility of each individual at each level of the organisation to develop their practice whilst taking responsibility for that development. The 'higher' levels of the hierarchy have an added responsibility to the other levels of enabling the development of contexts appropriate for development of practice. Figure 9.1 offers a representation of the flow of responsibility for creating a context for development. A further element is also the reciprocal learning that takes place between the levels as a result of the adjusted authority (as indicated by the longer two-way arrows).

This positions the teacher's responsibilities within the broader context of the organisation, and recapitulates the point that in order for each level of the organisation to take responsibility, an adjustment of authority has to occur.

Figure 9.1 – Responsibility for context (ii)



The development of teaching involves the continual exploration of practice and theory through research, extending professional autonomy, and developing awareness of the stakeholders to which teachers have an obligation. Implicit within the discussion of professional autonomy is the implication of control or 'authority' – control over practice and participation in decision making, and authority within the practice of teaching as an actively critical reflective practitioner; leaving scope for teachers to be critical figures in research, able to create opportunities to learn from their experience and to plan their own learning.

9.5 Theory, practice and research

Undoubtedly the development of this study has been directly influenced by my own relationships with authority. The two directly relating to this study will be that between myself and the convener of the programme that I have been teaching on, and that between myself and my research supervisor – both 'guardians' of the educational experience: one of the students', and one of my own.

It is perhaps evident in the reporting of the research that I have experienced relationships somewhat aligned with the theory I have developed and reported in this thesis. The relationship that I have experienced with the programme convener has been one of support and curiosity for what I have been doing, and with whom I have always felt able to discuss and share my experiences of teaching. I have actively maintained communication partly to ensure that my approaches were welcome within the programme. In turn I feel that I have had access to a context for practice that has encouraged my exploration and valued my learning and development to the point where at times this has become a reciprocal learning experience. From this perspective I feel that I have been fortunate enough not only to be able to develop and maintain a context for students to experience responsibility and develop understanding of their learning, but also to have this context recreated for myself by those in authority to me in this situation.

With regard to my doctoral supervisor, I would suggest that this relationship has been fundamental to the development of my theory of practice. Again I have been able not only to work with responsibility and the development of understanding of practice in the classroom, but I feel that I have been able to experience the creation of a context by my supervisor enabling me to experience the research themes for myself in the role of research student.

The critical reflective dialogue intrinsic to the doctoral process that has gone on between my research supervisor and myself has enabled illumination of issues relevant to both our individual teaching and research practices, and collaborative experience as student and supervisor.

My interpretation of the experience is that the relationship between my supervisor and myself has developed along the lines of the adjustment of authority

(see appendix 9.1); with my developing knowledge of the subject and understanding of the formal process of the PhD, and my supervisor's reciprocally developing awareness of the research and my way of working. However, at the same time there remains the undeniable fact that I am the student, not the tutor in this instance with all of the expectations, values and assumptions that the role suggests.

Lack of awareness of or reflection upon this relationship would be to overlook an important, implicit influence on the development of the work, and would indicate a lack of reflexivity on the part of the critically reflective action researcher. Whilst having not formally researched the phenomena, I have been aware of the development of this relationship during the doctoral process:

> 'Instead of a teacher, the supervisor becomes a colleague and the relationship becomes less asymmetrical than it was. In fact, this is the central aim towards which your relationship with your supervisor should be working' (Phillips and Pugh, 1987: 90).

A further emergent intention of this research has been to argue for a theoretical framework related to the professional development of teachers. Critical reflection upon practical knowledge enables the development of educational theory resulting in more extensive professional autonomy, responsibility and development of practice. Through my own processes of critical reflection on my practice I have developed an enhanced awareness of my 'situatedness' in both my practice and my research and the different opportunities and constraints that each has offered, which have in turn enabled me to develop theory.

Through critical reflexivity this thesis has attempted to move beyond limitations of practice and focus on the personal research journey in order to provide a dynamic structure for understanding the experience of my research. It is at this point that I become aware that this is where the journey begins.

9.6 Conclusion

Meeting the personal, organisational and societal challenges that face individuals today requires us to go beyond traditional, hierarchical and linear ways of learning, beyond the model of 'expert' or 'authority'. A one way flow of information is implied, which results in the expert being unable to learn from the learner, and more significantly, the learner being unable to learn how to learn. This model will thrive as long as the learner assumes that what they need to know exists outside of themselves in the form of the 'expert'.

The 'adjustment of authority' attempts to explode this myth by removing the 'expert' and replacing this instead with the facilitator who is able to harness a student-focused perspective and value the learner's own knowledge and capacity for development, whilst acknowledging their own learning and development needs. The approach enables a reciprocal learning relationship encouraging feedback and individuality, and above all a free flow of learning. This has the effect of enabling both learner and facilitator to be active in generating new learning and redefining the roles of and relationship between teacher and learner.

A context enabling this development is fundamental; in order for this to occur I would suggest the following questions be asked of any organisational context that promotes the exploration and development of practice:

- Are the organisational values and assumptions of teaching and learning explicit?
- Can teaching and learning be explored within a context that is flexible and open to development?
- Can the practitioner be supported in their critical reflective practice?

In order to change higher education must challenge the assumptions and practice of all stakeholders and enable all levels of the organisation to learn and develop reciprocally. This study suggests that this will involve acknowledgement of relationships of authority. In doing this all members of the institute can become

active participants in critical reflective practice, committed to the exploration of their own practice, actively engaged in adjusting the authority.

The principles of the adjustment of authority may have a role to play here through the exploration of practice within a context that supports critical *reflection and evaluation* of practice and through this the exploration and development of the values, assumptions and theories of teaching and learning; *provides opportunities for individuals to take responsibility and experience authority* in teaching and learning practice, research and theory development; *enabling reciprocal learning relationships* between practitioners, between practitioners and students, and between practitioners and the organisation; works towards *contracting new learning relationships* between practitioners, students and the organisation; and *redefines the roles of teacher and learner* suggesting a fundamental adjustment of authority between practitioners and the organisation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1 - Course booklet and learning compact

The structure of the course

This course aims to inspire you intellectually and experientially, to draw on external resources such as research, current debate, theories, and schools of thought, as well as internal resources such as your experiential history, and skills of reflection and understanding.

Over 12 weeks we will cover key issues... Although this booklet outlines the weekly themes and topics we also have the flexibility to balance the breadth and depth of our enquiry. Therefore, it is important to realise that these plans are open to change.

Session structure

1. Small group workshops and discussion to enrich and expand identified areas of interest and concern.
2. Presentation of small group findings to the larger group, and discussion.
3. Follow up lecture.
4. Further investigation into areas of interest.
5. Identification of areas of interest to be investigated for the next session.
6. Reflective practice

Groups

During week one each of you will be allocated a group with whom you will be working for the duration of the course. It is expected that you will work together both in and out of class for the purpose of investigating identified areas of interest. It is your responsibility to get to know your peers, and to utilise and value each other as potential learning resources.

My role, and the learning of the group

As a facilitator I will be asking you to take responsibility for your own learning, your group's learning, and for the learning of the group as a collective. That is to say that in addition to my lecture, we will also be working in participative groups to maximise learning and expand the knowledge base of the group as a whole. I will therefore employ various facilitation processes depending upon the specific needs and requirements of the group as the sessions unfold. It is my role to harness the uniqueness of this group.

Group work

Each week you will have the opportunity to investigate a previously identified area of interest along with the other members of your group. It is anticipated that groups will meet out of session time in order to discuss the work and should divide the work load evenly. This will involve commitment from each individual to both the work and the group. Issues are expected to be well researched. Content should be precise and informative and class discussion will be encouraged.

'Good, Tricky and Useful' : reflective practice
At the end of each session there will be time allocated for each individual to reflect on their learning by addressing three questions;

- What was good?
- What was tricky?
- What was useful?

Reflective practice maximises learning, increases productivity, and encourages you to take responsibility for your learning. You will be asked to hand in copies of your reflective practice with your assignment (it will not be assessed).

Assessment - Assessment hand in date: 24th May between 10 -1pm
Assessment will take the form of either 1 or 2 written pieces of work on a subject previously discussed with the tutor. It is possible that your weekly investigations can make up the core of your work. If one assignment is written it should be 2,500 words in length, if two are opted for then one should be 1,500 and the other 1,000. Everyone is expected to arrange a tutorial time and attend. Tutorials will be available during week 10, and at other times by arrangement. *All assessments must be discussed with the tutor to ensure academic viability.*

Attendance
Due to the 'group work' focus of the course it is essential that you attend each week. Group work will feature in every session therefore it is your responsibility to attend and contribute to your group. If you are unable to attend a class it is essential that you contact a member of your group in order for your group to be notified.

Absence
It is also a requirement of the course that you attend each week. It is important if you are absent that you give a brief written explanation (contact details are below). Absences will be noted and 2 or more unexplained absences will result in a cause for concern procedure being followed.

Welcome to our course...!

Appendix 3.2 – Pre-course booklist and outline of course

This course aims to inspire you intellectually and experientially, to draw on external research, theories, and schools of thought, as well as your internal experiential history, and skills of reflection and understanding.

As a facilitator I will be asking you to take responsibility for your own learning and for the learning of the group as a collective. That is to say that we will be working in active and progressive groups which will contribute to the knowledge base of the group as a whole.

In an attempt to document the student experience of teaching and learning this course will involve reflective writing and evaluative questionnaires (similar to a course evaluation) concerning such things as group working and teaching methods. It is hoped that this will be a valuable learning experience for you as learners, but you are free to withdraw from the process at any time. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Participation (or non-participation) in this process will not affect your assessment.

You will find yourself at an advantage if you do some preliminary reading. Use this list as a starting point for further references.

Indicative bibliography…

Appendix 3.3a – Practitioner reflections (selective sample): Cycle one

[1.1] – 'groupwork' method
[1.2] - 'seminar' method
[1.3] – 'peer tutoring' method
[1.4] – 'syndicate' method

WEEK 1

- The classes this morning went well - the 2nd was more fun than the first though(!). HD2 had only 10 people - 2 groups, and was quite quiet and subdued - but PBA was 30 people and 6 groups so there was a lot of chat and noise. I recognised a few faces and only 1 came to both morning sessions. The room is good - large enough to have a big group or lots of small ones, although it is too bright for oh's. I got them talking in pairs, then 4's, and then went through the booklet - HD2 also had 'groupwork' chat - which was too long really and not entirely relevant at this stage or them as it is difficult to relate/make real. Then HD2 did brainstorming for 10 mins, then GTU - which seemed to go OK. PBA brainstormed for 30 mins, then chose seminar topics - name labels really helped at this point! I feel like I know a few names now (but will use labels again). GTU also worked (2-3 mins!) then I chatted with the seminar groups for next week - they seem like a nice bunch. I think the HD2 will work with discussion, but I must make sure I prepare!

[1.1]

G - 10 people
good room
T - 10 not 17 people
non responsive
U - got to know them/their names

- quite weird though, such a small group - felt the **'groupwork'** bit went on too long

[1.2]

G - good groups/group
fun
lively
T - initially
U - learning names

- bigger groups are more fun!

[1.3]

- Arranged the room into circle with 30 chairs (help from students) - for only 16 to turn up (?). I find this very frustrating - as it is bad/pointless admin. I prefer larger groups. They seemed a little bemused, but we started anyway (at 11.05 to see if any more would come) with pair work "why did you choose this course?", then 5's, actually 2 x 5 and 1 x 6 (now 1 x 4, 1 x 5 and 1 x 6), could be an interesting exercise - I don't think many of them know others in the room, so hopefully they do now. We went through the course booklet (by

11.30) and then back into small groups to brainstorm PBA, this went on for a good 30 mins. I initially left the room to get them talking, but cam back and found not much of an increase in volume! I started to go around to each group to discuss their thinking - they were generally coming up with the same sort of thing, but I generated some further discussion and hopefully built up a rapport. I can remember a few names! (always helpful) and was able to see the potential of each group a bit more easily. The group of 6 were the hardest to get working together as one sat slightly out of the group. The group of 5 are a mix of ages and are more diverse 3 mature (white), 1 Asian (young) and 1 young deaf girl. The 4/5 (all young) seem quite friendly (one is moving to Mondays) and were discussing easily together. Choosing the seminars proved really easy, with only one minor disagreement (and then agreement) within the 5 (diverse) group. 3 groups = 6 seminars so we're 'groupworking' till week 4. GTU was OK - had 5 minutes - but I interrupted without thinking. Hopefully they'll read for next week.

G - actually, 16 was a good size
good discussion
some group cohesion
T - only 16, not 30!
classroom not ideal - lots of tables, odd shape
ear not helping
U - learned names
easy to allocate seminars

[1.4]

- Big group again - 31 I think - same procedure as before: 2's - groups; brief outline of course/booklet discussion; brainstorming; preparation for next week. This group are the syndicates. It was a difficult concept to explain and I'm not convinced that they will meet out of class - we'll find out next week. I like the big group - only 1 bloke - mostly young, 2 French girls, mostly white.
- I feel that it went OK. Brainstorming brought up some key issues - such as stereotyping - which are worth referring back to. The only doubt I have is that it may have seemed disorganised - no paper - lots of talking (from me); but then again I keep them on task and they seem fairly responsive - blank faces worry me! Next week, they will be discussing life span theories. Need to prepare the week ahead before class to ensure no overlap of student discussion - hopefully they'll do more rather than less.

G - large group
nice room
good discussion: small and large group
T - no paper!
seemed disorganised
syndicate work is hard to explain
U - learnt names
good small group discussion
recognise some faces from Monday/this am

WEEK 2

[1.1]

G - larger group
good presentations

T - not everyone had researched or wanted to speak - need to have a structure for next week

U - discussion
new group integrated OK - afterwards got together and prepared for next week

- Had 15 today! - not 10. All were ready by about 9.05 am and so I asked who had researched for the week/session - some offered their work and proceeded to discuss for 40 minutes or so, then I outlined Bronfenbrenner 'til 10am. The discussion was OK; I managed to keep it going, some opinion was voiced but not a lot. Groupwork at 10 - 10.20. Got the new people into a group and went through booklet and requirements. Seemed OK about things. The other groups discussed 'main life span theorists' and seemed to get on OK - wasn't able to get round to them. Some contributions for their scrapbooks from today. New group stayed on to discuss next week. They are to work on qus 1 and 2 and be prepared to discuss 3 and 4 in groups. [Suggestion of tables for next week].

[1.2]

G - 5 new people = 1 new group of 4 (and 1 integrated)

T - lots of info: did they learn anything?
huge group

U - presentations - good - lots of info.
oh's and handouts

- 2 groups to present; '4' went first, then a '6' group. Both did well - 1st group more soc. and 2nd group more (well researched) psych. 1 new group needed to be integrated - went through course booklet/requirements, while other groups discussed theories (and/or next seminar in some cases). In the last `0 minutes was able to create wider group feedback on their discussion - quite brief but OK [Seminar for next week sorted; Behavioural theories]. Didn't get the chance to present my work as time constraints, also wanted them to think and discuss theories.

[1.3]

G - no large group discussion - all peer interaction - good work done

T - classroom clash - double booked
not my favourite subject
felt I rambled

U - good small group work

- Cognitive and moral development are not my favourite topics. I don't get the impression that any reading had been done by class prior to session. Difficult subject. Good groups though. 2 new French girls; 2 x 6 and 1 x 5. (Carrie observed - 'not the best performance ever'!). Difficult beginning due to

classroom being double booked - left me a bit 'thrown'. Wasn't in the right frame of mind really.

[1.4]

G - great group discussion!
really working well in syndicates - lots of research

T - lots of info.
wasn't sure how they' cope with the syndicates

U - ...to know that the syndicates work
discussion
learnt a lot about their understanding

- Groups sat together at tables. Lots of discussion (and some scrapbook talk) about developmental theories - mainly Erikson, some Levinson and others. Good syndicate discussion - 30 mins on qu. 1 - dev. theories. I went round and encouraged discussion further, got some useful insight into their research, ideas, misconceptions - really useful. Qu. 3 - ID dev vs. confusion - some confusion over 'confusion', so clarified in my 20 min chat. Time went really quickly - only 2 mins for GTU. Feels like this group have been together for ages!

REVIEW

- At the end of week 2, I can conclude that I feel like it should be Easter by now! There is a lot of prep. that needs doing (due to new course element). My knowledge base needs increasing - sometimes I feel only 1/2 a step ahead of rather than a whole one! But then (some) first years always seem to know more or have researched more than expected. Also, as I don't know them all yet, I get intimidated by the blank or questioning faces - it worries me that I may lose focus or answer inappropriately and leave them privately thinking that I am not prepared or knowledgeable enough. Most of the time though it feels OK, though I want them to make notes more often when each other (or I) speak - the idea that they are potential learning resources has not got through to them all.

- Monday – **[1.1]**: is 'groupwork' session. The group is small, and has not bonded quite yet. New people turning up shifts the balance. I need to spend more time on elements of groupwork to enforce the emphasis otherwise the session will just be group-work/work in groups - although that may not be so bad. They are researching individually though. Need to affirm process.

- Monday – **[1.2]**: is seminar work - the 2 groups from wk 2 presented well. It must be nerve racking speaking in front of 30+ of their peers. I want to make sure the experience isn't too awful for them and also that everyone is doing some reading prior to the session. Also need to have alternate discussion qus or process for after seminars, as presenters were left with little (in their opinion) to discuss. Need to acknowledge that not everyone has to present - just as long as they contribute to research.

- Thursday – **[1.3]**: peer tutoring - this process hasn't really taken off yet, as the 1st seminars with peer tutoring are not until week 4 (due to only 3 groups).

This session is hard work because of this, as I am left (or have been so far) to do all the work. No research by students is apparent - I may get them all to present on those weeks where no-one is seminar presenting, as the learning responsibility has not been taken up yet. One groups seems to work particularly well together - I think they are a friendship group though. But I'm still concerned that they're not doing any/much reading.

- Thursday – **[1.4]**: syndicate groups - now this one I'm enjoying! Even though the content (dev. theories) is relatively dull so far, they have really put some effort into it. Each group seems to have formed (initially), though some are friendship groups (2?). The amount of research and preparation was outstanding - I hope they don't slack, as they were under the impression that they were presenting, and they didn't this week. I'll have to keep the possibility open so that they continue to work! Group discussion was animated and on task due to emphasis on sharing knowledge (I think my description of syndicate work was unclear in wk 1 - but they seemed OK to discuss).

- Must remind of scrapbook, and emphasis on research towards assessment work to all groups. Also emphasis on each other as potential learning resources. Need to prepare some av stuff, and consideration of evaluation questionnaires.

- My feelings at this point are that the syndicate group may well produce the best pieces of work due to the sharing of knowledge and peer discussion/work. The 'groupwork' group is proving to be very ungroup-like - but may develop with time.

- Also in terms of group cohesion, the syndicate groups appear to be working out well. The different processes are proving quite hard to manipulate as I haven't managed to make them distinct in my mind yet. It will get easier as the pressure eases due to my knowing certain subjects better and having some time to prepare.

G - great to be able to combine my research and teaching
T - to remember which class is which (!)
to manipulate the methods successfully
groupwork and peer tutoring - as they haven't 'taken off' yet
not enough time in the week!
content of some sessions
need to sort AV's
U - learning lots
huge learning curve both in terms of teaching and content
some sessions will be easier than others

WEEK 3

[1.1]

- Queries about unstructured course from 1 mature student: "I need more structure... don't have time to research" (?!)

- Maybe some more direction needed - thinking of moving towards syndicate working dynamic
- Asked groups to research for next week

G - good topic/easy to discuss
small groups at tables
T - 2 new people
1 group with 2 people only
no research done by class
U - discussion work - clarified issues and confusion

- Session went well. Group discussion of intimacy vs. isolation revealed blatantly the lack of prep. done by class. - maybe need to include presentation aspect - ? Some confusion of theory - only 3 groups, so I managed to get some issues clarified. Discussion of handout ('Delayed Adulthood') went well. New 'terms' looked at and discussed.

- After session international student said he wouldn't be doing assessment or research or contributing as class was just for him to 'practice English' (exchange student). I felt that he needed to do his 'homework' and explained that he would lose out, as would group - no result. I said it was up to him; but feel really cross that someone is 'using' my course to practice their English - no reciprocal contribution.

[1.2]

G - seminars
lecture
video
T - time went quickly
U - learnt something - Humanistic theory

- today's seminars were good; well researched with A/Vs, and well presented. I didn't feel as though I was floundering even though behaviour theories are not my 'area'. One seminar was Humanistic psychology though which I was able to discuss - interesting. My lecture was OK - better to have too much information than not enough! Video was a bit 'unprepared' for - re: violence on TV insighting violent behaviour - 'Natural Born Killers'. Discussion after many have been more beneficial (to me) than group discussion - as I didn't get round everyone. Wanted to make sure it hadn't adversely 'affected' anyone...feel OK, but a bit deflated for some reason.

[1.3]

G - session was good
kept time
had loads of info/material - was clear and focused
T - 1 new person
wasn't sure what things to include in session
U - new person vocal!
let them get on with discussion
clear questions to address

- No research again. Few people missing. 2 new people (didn't notice one). Started with lecture (theories), small group discussion of no. 2 and 'what is bad behaviour?', good work done. Group read article, then class discussion was OK. Next weeks seminar group had a few qus. about process and content.

[1.4]

G - great session
good discussion
plenty of research
T - some confusion over intimacy vs. isolation
U - time management

- Good session! started with groups talking about questions 2 and 3, some had done mounds of research, others; little. But all managed to offer the main points for a 'presentation'. So I filled in, then gave 5 mins on the theory to clarify points. Next was discussion of 1 and 4, followed by the article 'delayed adulthood' which may or may not have helped. Got some feedback from groups and then went on to highlight points with my research. Went well qus. 1, 2 and 3 for next week.

WEEK 4

[1.1]

G - really good discussion
Much freer/ more cohesion
Some research
T - late arrivals
Giving feedback
U - to give feedback

- Started late – late comers – gave others 1st 3 questions to discuss. When all were here gave feedback in terms of GTU – spoke honestly and frankly and reinforced scrapbook and research out of class. Felt it was listened to – class went on to discuss 1 and 2 and give feedback, then moved onto social age clock/SRRS/life events, got them to discuss – good discussion and informality – enjoyed it! Brief feedback. GTU.

- After session: mature student – getting used to 'unstructured' course – **lack of authority** – wants tutorial re: essay – managed to allay fears re: title/ authority/ security!

[1.2]

G - good discussions and good feedback
Reasonable presentations
T - only 3/5 seminar members
Some dodgy research
U - too much research
Feedback to group – laying it on the line

- Gave feedback – went OK. Emphasised lateness (as some came in late!) and quietness, and research necessary for the course. Seminars OK, lecture – far too many notes but OK. Still handing out course booklets to people. Good discussion.

REVIEW
3.3.98

- I find that when I have a small group I can sit 'with' them. When the group is large I sit physically 'above' them or stand. Found that arranging larger and smaller class in a large circle at tables enabled me to move around more freely and 'exposed' each group to the wider group.

- Ethnography class – although [tutor] comes across as a very knowledgeable lecturer, some members of the class also seem to be very on the ball and so take over. She recovers - asks for comments, offers further interpretation – always knows where she's at, **does risk losing some control though – maybe wants or is consciously passing authority to students**. As a receiver of info. rather than a contributor in this class **I hear her keeping ultimate control and being prepared to accept other people's input – retaining authoritative but informal atmosphere.**

[1.3]

- The peer tutoring is not working, all it has done is split one group up and put them into the other two. Better to avoid 'seminar' as such or get group to present qu.s and create discussion as they go. Getting group to split and present 2 seminars would result in some info. Not being passed on and also presenting group would research twice over within the group.

    - Need to have supplemental questions ready and waiting
    - Pens and paper gets groups working together
    - Next time have presenting group present to class and then generate discussion from further questions
    - Large circle of chairs?

G - good plenary
Coped well/OK with mixed groups
seminars
T - peer tutoring
Room too cramped
Needed questions sorted beforehand
disorganised
U - learned about process

- Felt that today could have been a lot 'better' if only the questions had been written up beforehand. Also not sure how effective the 'peer-tutoring' was – next week also involves deaf student (she has a perhaps understandable lack of confidence with regard to presenting). Maybe should read further on technique so as to be more confident about process. Seminars were good – well researched lots of OH's. Not good room set up though. Group work went as well as possible – peer tutoring not clear though. Plenary good.

[1.4]

- Don't seem to have done as much research as previously.

G - good discussion
Some research
Fun!
T - no-one wants to respond/ present initially
People absent
U - feedback
Able to get round to all groups

- Went well, especially the life events ranking activity. I enjoy this course.
- Just had a really nice shat with 2 mature students (30's?), Andrew and Becky, talking about workload and expectations of HE. Seems they are really enjoying being students again, with different backgrounds and status (both working): "you put a lot into it", "not like traditional lecturers". Seems they enjoy the course and can relate to issues.

WEEK 5

[1.1]

G - good discussion
T - talkative
Late people
Students talking over discussions
U - discussion points
Their research generated good work
Activity worked well – fun!

- Being specific about research for this group has been very useful – lots of discussion.

[1.2]

G - seminars
discussion
T - some issues not clear on
Talkative class members – can't shut them up!
U - discussion point

- Seminars OK. Activity re: curriculum was not organised (to me) or thought through enough, although it created a good discussion. Have let groups (large) continue with discussions to encourage participation but they don't seem able to keep entirely to the point

- 11.3.98 -**tutorials** in LRC – had good chats with 3 mature students: gave me an interesting insight to group working. One is with 2 people he knows, 1 girl who is very opinionated, and 2 French girls who don't contribute at all. He suggested that he might get more from a different or bigger group; is aware that he speaks a lot and the 2 French girls might be intimidated. He also

talked of student life, he seems disappointed – no peer group, working p/t, living between Wandsworth and Camberley. I don't think he could identify what is missing however. He was fairly complimentary about my classes, suggesting stimulating and interesting methods. I think he just wanted someone to talk to.

[1.3]

- Seminars good – although 3 were away. Covered main issues – presented well with OH's lecture OK (felt it needed to follow – although they looked so bored!)

G - seminars
discussion
T - 3 seminar people missing
U - discussion

- Discussion went OK – peer tutoring – seminar group went with smaller group and I with the big group to make 2 peer tutoring groups. Managed to include the 2 French girls a bit. Disappointed that the seminar group had people missing – don't think the presenter minded though (both mature students). Energy seemed quite low today. Discussion was interesting.

[1.4]

G - discussions
lecture
T – new person!
U - discussion
New person fitted in well/ small group helped

- Good session – it's easy to time manage when they have done some work. (Asked if French girls have managed to contribute, said they usually write stuff for session). Next week 5 minute presentations!

WEEK 6

[1.1]

G - discussion
T - no LP video machine
U - topic- emotive and interesting

- Discussion was good – those that 'ended up' with qu.3 interestingly had done little work. Discussion mainly on parenting/ new baby on couple.

[1.2]

G - loads of info.
T - personal/emotive
U - managed to 'control' emotional student

- Went OK, lots of info. Was worried that J (mum of bullied teenager) would go OTT, but she did OK. Lots of info., no time for groups.

- 18.3.98 – **tutorials** – Spoke with V (taught her in autumn 97) who experienced my teaching last semester. She commented on how she had enjoyed the course because of the structure (seminar/lecture/discussion), and the reflective journal too.

- Also Co ([1.1] and [1.2] current) She mentioned that "its funny how I can stay fully awake on a Monday from 9am – 12.30 (in my sessions), but not on a Thursday!" She put it down to being able to discuss various issues with her group.

[1.3]

G - lots of info.
video

T - no time for discussion
GTU rushed

U - information
Video
Experiences

- Seminars were good – followed by points of further discussion (me) and then lecture (prefer to get them talking). Few OH's – think I may have lost them for a bit! Video was good – helped to make research/ reading visual and real for them. GTU rushed as ever.

[1.4]

- Even though they were doing group 'presentations' the same people spoke and for a similar length of time as previously.

G - information
research

T - no VCR/ presentations took 30 minutes so no time for lecture

U - discussion

- Group work takes the risk of not covering all information (info/overload – surface learning) by looking at fewer issues (relevant to students) in detail – deep processing (would have liked to have used some lecture notes though!).

WEEK 7

[1.1]

G - Yoga!
Information/ research – very good

T - late people
(Yoga!)

U - research – lots of info.

- Class started late – OH 'stress' – got them thinking – then yoga! Fun! Presentations were very good – lots of information.

[1.2]

G - good seminars
Good brainstorming
Lecture – lots of information

T - huge subject
Not my area – although interesting
Not much contribution/feedback
Always feel that one mature student has got all the answers
On task discussion?

U - managed to handle info and group

- Started with OH – useful – brainstorming. Good seminars.

[1.3]

G - seminars
Discussion – good contributions
More confident about subject!

T - late seminar people

U - discussion
OH – brainstorm

- Seminar – good, lots of issues/ discussion. Article – bit of fun. Not time for group work. Lecture, brief and OH brainstorm – good, interesting topic.
- [Evaluation – emphasised reflection and outcomes today – maybe 'better' answers].

[1.4]

G - yoga
Good topic – experiential
OH's

T - late people
Less research done today
Certainly less enthusiasm- end of term?

U - group work

- Discussion work – not motivated at all – subject? Lack of research? End of term? Lecture/ activity OHs good – yoga! Group discussion – OK – got going a bit more + paper and pens.
- [Evaluation – emphasised reflection and outcomes today – maybe 'better' answers].

- Andrew – I make learning interesting above all his other tutors because of varied structure – keeps him interested and awake.

WEEK 8

[1.1]

G -

T - 9am Monday – don't want to be here
1st week back
no/little research
unsure of topic – not brilliant at it
only 8 people
no video
can't shut M up

U - discussion work
Group work at beginning

[1.2]

G - good discussion /issue

T - issue
Video – totally inappropriate
Questions?
Not enough material/discussion
[Bloody hard work]

U - discussion
Video
Group work

- More thought of assessments today – building up!

[1.3]

G - better today – smaller group
Know subject more
Relaxed
Group work

T - people missing
Too much information!

U - video
Group work

- Enjoyed today more. Thursday seems to be easier somehow… Group started off lethargic, but group work got them going - they seemed to enjoy it.

[1.4]

G - better 2nd time around

T - not much discussion/ research

U - to go over other issues (i.e. Options/ assessment)

REVIEW

- 24.4.98 - After Monday's session I felt that I has 'winged it' a lot of the time – although I'd done lots of prep. it's hard to get back into it – felt as though I could jack it all in over Easter (teaching). But after the Thursday sessions I feel more energised. (Maybe it was the break. Maybe it's the room (panelled, dark, oppressive…?). I just have so much to include – teaching/ research/

method/ notices/ tutorials/ essay help… it gets hard to remember to include it all and follow up with admin.

- 26.4.98 – I wish there wasn't so much planning and reading to do! Hopefully I will be prepared enough for Monday (of course I will) but it feels so last minute…

- 27.4.98 – teaching was really good today – at least it left me in a top mood and looking forward to future weeks rather than the negative feelings I've had 'til recently.

- 28.4.98 – need to legitimise ways of learning within the groups – roles should be explicit/ books allowed into lectures/ shared emphasis of work and research/ structure of work delegation needed.

WEEK 9

[1.1]

G - discussion
Issues
More people
research

T - discussion points
Little time to read before session

U - group work

[1.2]

G - issue/ topic

T - (potentially) subject matter
Lots of it

U - group work

[1.3]

- small group – 'flatter'/ less energy or buzz than Monday group

G - plenary (group discussion cam back together well)

T - group work started well, felt it lost it's energy again. Concluded well though, potentially too long (15 mins to read 5 pages!)

U - article

- (couldn't get out of the room quickly enough! – tutorials next week)

[1.4]

G - issue
Confident
lecture

T - no/little research
Group work
People missing

U - discussion
Good ideas/input

- Quite enjoyed it today. Felt group work was not as successful because of lack of research.

WEEK 10 – tutorials – lots of positive feedback

WEEK 11

[1.1]

G - issue – lots of notes
T - no research
Lots of distraction – off task?
U - essay tips
Lecture
handouts/OH

[1.2]

G - video
T - subject
People missing
U - essay tips

- Had lots of energy today! (although spent all Sunday planning for hd2) planning paid off though – it went really well. PBA though, lecture dull. Too much jargon – lost interest…

- Jane sat in on last 20 minutes of hd2 – feedback at lunch was that I have a good relationship with class – "dynamic lecturer"!!

[1.3]

brilliant – fun – humorous!!
G - seminar
Discussion
video
T - topic
People away from seminar group
U - preparation this am – more confident

Really enjoyed this morning! Monday: wasn't so sure of topic – large group – no discussion/ too much lecture. Today: brilliant discussion – enthusiastic – good (though not entirely academic) seminar, lecture – brief and appropriate – video generated even more discussion. 1st time this group have really had a laugh!

[1.4]

G - issue - stereotyping
T - not much research
Little discussion
U - OH's/ handouts
Topic/issues

WEEK 12

[1.1]

G - great session
Lots of people
Interesting
Handled as sensitively as possible

T - tricky subject – death
(No video)

U - discussion
OH's

- No research today – just wanted group discussion. Went well, enjoyed group. [Evaluation qu. to be handed in with assignment]

[1.2]

G - end of course!
scrapbooks

T - issue dull
Seminar weak

U - OH's
Clear detail of evaluation

- Lots of welfare issue today. Extensions being asked for.

[1.3]

G - seminar/ lecture

T - issue – did OK though to remember everything

U - seminar/ video

- Went OK – finished at 12. Forgot to do GTU today. Hopefully will get good results with evaluation and GTU when collected. Not 100% turn out.

[1.4]

G - subject well handled and well received

T - subject
Lots to remember to give out and collect

U - forms/ handouts/ OH/ video

- After the initial relief, I am quite sad that it is all over. Bit of an anti-climax. Nice group – hope they do well.

END OF SEMESTER REVIEW NOTES

Monday

[1.1] – 'groupwork' method
Method needed to be incorporated fully from the beginning – new members from week 2 undermined previous group development making it hard to use process – group too big. Lost confidence in process/ method – not substantial enough.

[1.2] - 'seminar' method
Seminars were of average quality mostly.
Method got boring; only one/two groups producing work weekly, others may not be working between sessions.
2 group presenting meant overlap in content – presentation skills - dry

Thursday
[1.3] – 'peer tutoring' method
Method not used until week 4 – class unprepared/ seemed surprised. Process broke
up groups that were beginning to develop and build confidence/ relationships. Adapted method for week 5. Quite a lot of preparation needed for process to work – also careful observation from tutor – support needed. Lost confidence in process. Students fairly inactive – as 'seminar' method – not all working on a weekly basis.

[1.4] – 'syndicate' method
Fantastically brilliant learning experience! – by far the most successful method, needed adapting to my/class's needs, but proved to be a largely successful process. Group was cohesive, work was being done (but by the same people each week), contributions were made to class discussions; interested, enthusiastic students.

Appendix 3.3b – Practitioner reflections (selective sample): Cycle two

WEEK 1

[2.1]

- nice class of 16 - 4 groups of 4
- more boys this year
- enthusiastic about group discussion - 'getting to know you' and brainstorming
- think this group could be quite a nice start to the day!

[2.2]

G - high energy
'getting to know you' went well (and was appreciated)
went through booklet - seem enthusiastic

T - very large group - 30 odd, more to come?

U - know some of the students from before - names easier
name badges and 'getting to know you' helped me with names

[2.3]

- nice group - lots of energy
- enjoyed the group discussion work
- got through everything and enjoyed myself!

[2.4]

- only 2 students this week so went through the course booklet with them and had a brief discussion on adolescence.
- left 30 mins early
- don't want to lose this class - need the money

WEEK 2

[2.1]

- felt disorganised because of new students 'throwing' my session plan - let them feel this disorganisation too - should be more restrained
- 4 away and 10 new people - fed up with lack of coordination between office and student activity
- session on developmental life span theories - seem a bit clueless and lack initiative- but I suppose that is because they are new to it all and I have done this before
- reluctant to feedback to class - some cajoling required, think that some want to but I need to set the pace
- some really good feedback - can see who might be the 'good' students now

[2.2]

G - difficult to find good - perhaps that I managed to keep it all together
gave a good lecture
video - perfect

T - Very large class - 8 new people and 10 away (no male input) resulting in a class that will be 38 strong; felt disorganised again - but was more 'restrained' than 9am class - didn't pass on the vibe too much; resistance to

change to the afternoon - would make my life easier; feel this class are working OK - must ensure that they are all working out of class - need to refer to old notes to see how I did that last time; had to sort out new people and sort out those that had been there in week one at the same time - feel that I am juggling two roles at once here; hope that because the new ones haven't been through the course booklet in as much detail that they haven't missed out on the 'initiation' and are therefore confused about the methods; feel frustrated that the preparation for the course was missed by the new students; frustrated that no-one is prepared to come in the afternoon; didn't have time to go through group ground rules - but will do it - feel more comfortable with the rules I have developed (a bit less intense than the book ones); need to prepare for TJ (deaf student

U - to show examples of scrapbooks
video always useful

[2.3]

- 2 new students - fitted into groups OK but no 4's in this class (my preferred no. I think)
- some good research done and good feedback - again can see the 'good students'
- lecture OK
- 6 people away

[2.4]

- Again only 2 students - one new one
- went through the lecture on physical and psych dev. from this morning using the oh's and the video - went OK - subdued students (pressure!?)
- need to get more numbers

WEEK 3

[2.1]

- Went in with the plan to re-contract first off. But only about 10 people were in the room at 9am, a few more by 9.05, and dribs and drabs until 9.30. This really frustrates me, not only because it messes up my plans, but I make the students that are there have to wait for more to arrive before beginning anything and it is not fair on them - or me.
- The session was a slow starter, I went around seeing what they had found out and was quite surprised that the topic had been followed up enthusiastically by most groups. Their knowledge of ID dev. was patchy, so followed that up too in the discussion - really useful discussion point.
- The proceeding discussion was a good one - I brought in my 'lecture points' instead of separating the 2 aspects of the session. The timing of the session was perfect in that I left enough time to re-contract and only went slightly over with the GTU - but I got it in this time at least!
- The re-contracting went OK, I used the 'group ground rules' hand out, and went over the structure of the course. I don't think I was too hard line, but I did emphasise lateness and attendance (!).
- Student came up at the end and said that he didn't feel comfortable working in small groups. I asked him what he wanted to do about it. He had no suggestions (in the time I gave him to reply!), so I suggested that he had 2

options; to tell the group that he felt uncomfortable, and that they would appreciate his honesty and allow him to perhaps listen in; or to deal with it and get over it (!). I'm not sure how helpful either of these suggestions are, but I don't feel that I can make special provision for him within this structure of working (a flaw?), and am perhaps so sure of it's potential benefits for the indi./class that I really do think that he should deal with it (with any support necessary of course). Perhaps I need to speak with him and his group?

G - got better
more energy after beginning
T - late people!
had to re-contract at end
not much knowledge of ID dev.
U - discussion - really good
discussion more than lecture - but got all points across (and more!).

[2.2]

- Seemed to have psyched myself up before going back in to the classroom today, and so when re-contracting may have seemed quite harsh (!). I got quite animated about lateness, non-attendance, lack of preparation work, etc. and the audience appeared to get the message.
- This class is so big. It is hard to know whether everyone is getting on OK, I hope that the group ground rules have helped some.
- The groups seemed to have researched well - although no groups seem to be meeting up outside of the session. The sharing of info. at the beginning appears to be fruitful, although there are some groups that are not as 'gelled' as others.
- The discussion went well. On going round I realised that this topic would have been well presented in the form of a brainstorm - so as I had not suggested this to the groups, I did the brainstorming on the board - which I enjoy using now. It took shape quickly and was a good visual display of the issues raised.
- Would like some of this class to come in the afternoon, but even after suggesting it I don't think that anyone wants to move - not sure how to deal with this.

G - timing of session
lecture/discussion - v.g!
research done by students
T - late people
stinky mood at beginning - ground rules/recontracting
U - discussion - lots of issues
interesting topic

[2.3]

- A much slower session than this morning. The groups had not really researched the issues and so were at a loss for much of the session. Don't feel that a lot of this group have 'gelled', they're not particularly any younger or older than most other groups, but they seem a bit slower somehow - a bit hesitant.

- Hadn't asked this group to look at ID dev, and so the discussion was lacking as they were unable to contribute at that point. Went over the theory and moved onto Intimacy Vs. Isolation, asked them to look at that for next week - perhaps this group need a bit more structure for now?
- Got them to read an article and realised that we had covered everything - so quickly thought of a direction for 15 mins more discussion, which I managed and went OK. Need to plan that bit extra to do in the future - I don't like working off the cuff like that so much.

G - got everything done inc. re-contracting
T - slow
finished qus by 3pm
bit dull
lack of energy in class
U - knew topic

[2.4]
2 students again. They had done some researching and had found some interesting stuff - more focused than previous groups. I really enjoyed the session today. It seems so relaxed and we chat really easily about the issues and have a laugh. I would love to be able to keep up this small group, but don't think that I can somehow. I would love to see the marks that these 2 are capable of if we were able to continue - tutorial sessions?

G - research
T - class will have to either get bigger or close I feel
U - the experience of working with such a small number

WEEK 4
[2.1]
G - went OK - some initial worries
video
activities
T - feel awful
late people
lots to cover - but can I make it last though?
talking - feeling shite
hot room
U - fitted everything in
coped OK

- Felt really awful but continued through the whole day. The subject - delayed adulthood - is a potentially interesting one, but didn't get the feeling that much work had been done. Students were confused by not *having* to find all info. in books - question required them to use their experience and common sense I thought.
- Donna asked about essays - to the effect of "does it have to be traditional/ academic or can it be opinion..." I said both, but she left me feeling that they may be getting the impression that academic rigour is either in, or out when

opinion is required. **Are the first year ready for responsibility for learning?**

[2.2]

G - felt better - more motivated
talked well

T - poorly girl
weak points - cognition/theories

U - subject - good
video

- This class is still too big, left time at the end to ask people to move or I would move them, but still no luck. I enjoy this subject, got talking about more than just cognition, emotional aspect of learning, the activity they did was a reflective one asking them to think about when they learned best and implied affective learning so I talked about that which made a nice change from pure cognitive psychology. I'm not sure how it went down though - they'd never heard of it.
- I think this class would be much easier to teach and more fun if it were smaller. 32 this week, which used to be OK in a bigger room (last year), I don't feel that I am getting to know this group as well as the smaller ones.
- I reminded them of the importance of reading/prep. before coming to the class. Said I was conscious that some people are doing more work than others, and that those not doing much need to improve for both their sake and for the group they are in. I would love to encourage groupwork skills at this point, but the class is far too big, and I would prefer to keep an eye on how the processes are used than let people get upset/forgotten about in the process.

[2.3]

G - feeling a bit better
know topic
white board

T - bored of topic now
points didn't link so well as group had not looked at theory
class didn't have as much enthusiasm as this morning

U - video - but not as much as this morning

- This class are quieter and don't seem to have bonded as well as the morning class. Again the topic could have been dealt with much more thoroughly, but the class didn't seem to have found that much information. I am enjoying using the whiteboard to brainstorm issues - but due to their not looking at the theory (intimacy vs. isolation) as homework, there was part of the discussion missing.

[2.4]

- Only 1 student this week. This is ridiculous. We got through the info. in 35 minutes, and I took the opportunity to go home early. She had done some work and was able to discuss the theory with me. At least I can see whether she has understood what we are covering (Japanese student) in these small sessions. But I need to get 8 more people at least.

WEEK 5

[2.1]

G - topic
activity - much fun!
group had energy
enjoyed session

T - so much information
losing my voice
video would have been good - illustrated points maybe
can be a difficult subject to understand if no experience

U - discussion points
activity

- Started to feel that the notes I have may need to be updated even if it means more work for me...found some of the findings a bit dated and not as interesting as previous times. Even the activity seemed to be a bit out of date.

[2.2]

G - I survived!
feel good - managed the topic well
4/5 coming at 4pm next week(!)

T - topic - nervous (esp. about the psych. students)
video - graphic

U - video
OH's
my reading/preparation - more confident

- I actually found the topic (moral dev.) interesting this time. I have taught it before but have found it difficult and unstimulating and it is hard to teach it in an interesting way to the students. But I found myself getting really interested as the discussion developed and only felt once or twice that the questions asked were more than I could really cope with - e.g. is 'underage' smoking a moral choice? The students seemed on the whole to engage with the subject too. This class is still too big and I feel that I would be better able to develop relationships with them and support them better if the group were half the size - 4 are coming next week at 4pm though (!) - still not enough but better at least! - infact an opportunity to work with a group 1:1 - could be really interesting...

[2.3]

G - know topic - but used new ideas/student ideas to develop discussion - added notes as and when

T - same old topic
discussion dominated by mature students - some younger students looking bored(?)

U - overheads - able to dip in and out of notes/OH's

- felt as this morning that this lecture could do with some updating - esp. the activity, but maybe I am being harsh as it seemed to go really well anyway.

Possible difficult discussions developing with mature students over issues and some personal comments coming out about how tedious it must be to teach the same topic in the morning and in the afternoon - dealt with it OK. Was quite good fun as ever.

- Was reminded on looking through *last years* notes that the groups thought that they were meant to present their findings in a more formal style and so the level of research was very high. Have asked the group to present next week and was aware that at the end they were arranging to meet and making plans - this is how it should be I think, and hope that it goes well and moves them on towards greater reading and preparation - and 'group-ness' - same applies for this morning's group.

[2.4]

G - knew topic
T - 2 students - limited session - looking forward to having 6/7 next week
U - got through topic OK again
discussion - able to see their understanding

- Am looking forward to next week when there should be 6/7 members of this class - had a struggle to get people to come but is a relief to have had some 'volunteers'. I hope to be able to use this small class as an intensive case study for the weeks that we have left (7). It could give some interesting results/findings about groups and group size particularly - it is much easier to be informal with a class of 2 - it had been nice/fun, but I think a few more will make it more interesting for us all.

WEEK 6

[2.1]

G - seminars
research
output
T - timing - too much information!
no. of groups
2 groups: half missing
not enough emphasis on gen vs. stag - hope they've read about it
U - information
video - not used but useful anyway

- The presentations went really well. After some time to put the finishing touches to their presentations, they started. Each group managed to put a new side to the question, very little was repeated. I told them that I was impressed by the amount of work and effort and hoped that they would keep it up. I think they were pleased with themselves too!
- This is a good way of getting them to work a bit harder - although I think if it is used too often they will lose some of the enthusiasm. It made my job easier too, I didn't use my notes, overheads or video at all.

[2.2]

G - topic
discussion points
lecture and discussion

small group! - (24?)
T - same notes as PBA and some of the same students
U - video - a bit of an eye opener!

- I had not asked them to do anything specific for this week and so they had not done anything...but the discussion work was OK as it required them to be reflective and use their experience to work out the issue. It is not an easy one to work out - Youth Culture - as they say that they do not feel part of any culture. We generated an interesting discussion about it though and I feel that it went pretty well. The fact that I had the same notes as last year's PBA was not a problem as the discussion of course went its own way.
- It is surprising how they take the opportunity to not do any preparation work up so quickly...although some of them may have done something, but it didn't appear that way.

[2.3]
G - seminars were OK
T - same old topic
less energy in this group
people away - letting their groups down
U - interesting conversation after session

- The session was OK, but this group really do seem that they are not getting along as well as other groups - even [2.2] seems more cohesive than this group. Not all the groups are difficult, 2 of them perhaps - through non-attendance, and non-contribution I would suggest.
- The presentations were OK, not as good as this morning's, not as much energy. Also some really way out research, that I think may have confused the issue rather than adding to it. One presentation was poor in that the research was old, regurgitated and not thought through at all. It created a difficult moment as I interjected with this point (subtly) so as to stop the class hammering the speaker, but the points were already made and the discussion became defensive with another 2 groups taking on the issue and differing in their opinions - I have told them that this is OK, but 1 group (including 'C' and 'I') were much 'stronger' than the younger ones and so it got defensive - I moved it on as quickly as was appropriate.
- After the class, I and C stayed to watch the video, I said how she hated GTU - found it really difficult. I gave a few prompts and suggested that the discussion being defensive may have been a tricky point for some people (myself!), and we got talking about it. They seemed surprised that it had turned that way, and said how they enjoyed a good discussion - I suggested that yes, it was useful but that some people find it intimidating and although some of the ideas suggested are rather weak and unconsidered - or outlandish (theirs being one of them) - it is not for me to criticise the content, just to pose other sides to the issue and provoke further thought. C's response was that she enjoyed being challenged, but again I suggested that a forceful interrogation of ideas can result in intimidation - I agreed. I am aware that some of the students may consider parts of the discussion to be weak - in terms of other students' input, but I am more interested in developing their ideas than in criticising their attempts to be involved.

[2.4]

G - 7!
K's notes
discussion

T - room - crappy
light - on/off - flickering

U - video
discussion
7!

- 7! - brilliant! - and possibly one more to come! Can see the potential of this group to observe as a more intimate case study. They were enthusiastic and we had a good discussion. However, I realise that even a group of 7 becomes less easy to manage possibly due to the fact that some know each other and are quick to pack up and leave for example.
- Realised that I could have done more with them in terms of integrating the 2 from previous sessions onto the new 5 that turned up this week that seem to know each other already. Will do that next session and again after Easter.
- Feel that these sessions could cause me to give away more than I would normally about myself as they are so 'intimate'. Discussion can quickly move away from issue and onto my experiences - am I too eager to contribute? Or am I wanting to?

WEEK 7

[2.1]

G - energy of the group
groups - worked well together
subject
discussions
yoga!
flowed well!

T - people missing
groups having to merge
evaluation - time ran out
no time for essays

U - discussion
notes
white board

- Really enjoyed this class - they make the most of discussion time and appear to work well together, I don't feel that there is any group that is not doing anything when they are meant to be on task. The yoga wasn't as good as last year - perhaps because I am out of touch and also because one student had done it before and put me off...!? The session was good, felt able to work without notes on an issue that I am not expert on - good discussion!

[2.2]

G - energy
presentations

topic - opinions
T - timing - finished at 12.55
people missing
U - student's video
my standby video

- This session went really well too. I enjoy the topic and so did the students by all accounts - lots of research, opinion and discussion, so much so that we ran close to time and still had more to discuss - but everyone had their 'go' at least. Timing is a real difficulty, especially when the topic is as interesting as this one!
- The presentations were not bad at all. I felt that the students had really taken it seriously and hope that I facilitated interesting discussion for them. I was especially careful to emphasise that teen pregnancy need not be a problem in every case - there are two girls with kids in the class, but only one person came across with the idea that it is really a problem - and the discussion took its own course then.

[2.3]

G - got better - more energy from point of whiteboard plenary
T - this group always seem slower to get started
U - discussion
essay discussion

- This group are always so slow to get going. Maybe its because there are always people missing and so their coming back causes disruption - especially one of the boys who is a bit noisy on his alternate weeks of attendance. At least by 2pm I know the topic and the running order. I was able to get around to everyone and check on their preparation, the discussion was good - not as energetic as this morning though - they don't loosen up as much - may be because of people missing, and because of some fairly intimidating mature students.
- Had time to discuss essays, some felt that tutorials would have been better before Easter, but I feel that I am available if they need me and that tutorials are appropriate at week 10 for the masses.

[2.4]

G - 7 Students!
discussion
preparation/presentations
nice group
T - less personal than with K and M - not really a problem as such, but they don't know the others
relationships developing/group forming
U - having done it this morning
video as back up
refs. to TV viewing(!)

- this group were great today. I really enjoyed it, it was nice to have such a small group, I think it has great potential for both my research and for their

essays. I mentioned that they should take the opportunity to get good grades from working so closely with each other and with me, I think they are excited by this and by the prospect of working in such a small group - perhaps they feel 'special'(?), such close attention, very personal.

- Mature student asked me if last week I had found it difficult because the video I showed the group was a bit risqué' - she asked if her age had made the situation more difficult - the video in question was a bit of an embarrassing situation to have been in and I certainly was aware that she was in the room, but the video was shocking to me, so I know that it wasn't her being there that made me talk over it and apologise for it's nature(!!).
- I hope to use this group to its full (research) potential!

WEEK 8

[2.1]

g - awake group
straight back into it

T - late people
giggling
1st lesson of term
bit dull - but not bad
students lack of vacation work
no time for essay discussion

U - notes
work done by me - elaborating on students notes

- was with everyone else in the feeling of "oh well, back to it then...". 1st session on a Monday morning, 1st day of term - quite hard getting wound up for it, but now its over am glad to be back in the flow. Similar problems to last term - late people, some even coming in at 10.20...(G - who is quite a disruption anyway). Had not asked them to do any specific work and so they seemed not to have done much. The theories needed more going over than I managed though I think, spent more time on stereotyping...

[2.2]

G - energy - me and students
lecture was good
topic
discussion
developed lecture as I went - very successful!

T - no student prep.
1st session back

U - video - perfect!

- Bigger class than 9am session, so more energy. Was a good topic to start with as they may not have done any work but they were able to reflect on their experience of social development. Was quite good fun. Although I had put some effort into this session, was still aware that there was stuff I could have included but hadn't read through, but in the end I had enough anyway. The structure I intended to use changed as I went along - I made full use of the questions in the course booklet and restructured as I went including a bit of

really perfect video (Bloomin'Youth) and good discussion work. Quite enjoyed this session, really responsive group discussion.

[2.3]

G - discussions were better - but so slow
T - dull group
brainstorm
no preparation from some
U - video - saved last 10 minutes from disaster...!

- This class are more cautious with each other and took time to become reacquainted. It was quite clear that 2 of the groups had done no work - both groups have no mature students in them...except that LC turned up and went into one of these young group having done loads of work and so the discussion for her was limited.
- I spent time with one group (J, V...) and it was like getting blood from a stone. I quite enjoyed watching them squirm, but I was hoping to make them come out of themselves, which they didn't - in the end V surprised everyone (I think) by answering my question. I think I should have made, and will make a comment to them about their lack of effort as it benefits no-one and it annoys me.
- The discussion was too much on stereotyping, but when I know that some have done the work I am aware that they are being left behind - in hindsight I should have pushed it harder and fulfilled those that had done the work instead.
- 2 lessons learned today.
- I think I was also aware of C and her strong opinions, don't think the session challenged her much - but I may be surprised.
- Also no time for essay work - will have to prioritise as they are getting close now and the amount of support they are getting is zero at the moment.

[2.4]

G - knew topic
video
T - only 5
U - discussion time - in 2/3's

- such a small group is not such fun, less opportunity for good discussion. The topic went down well again as did the video. I think though that such a small group encourages me to give away more than I am used to, and I leave feeling that I have talked about my experiences too much and that they know too much about me...
- no preparation done, even though the group is so small. I guess the holidays really do cause them to sit back. They are still sitting as 2 (M and K) and then the others, but there were only 5 today so it is hard to say how it is going. They were quite hard to get talking today, discussion work was right next to me so I left the room on both occasions. Used the same session structure as this morning so know my stuff, but didn't feel that the point was made so well this afternoon.
- Don't feel that I am using this group to their full potential as a small group...

WEEK 9

[2.1]

G - preparation done
discussion - confident

T - G
topic (retirement) dreary

U - OHs
discussion
essay chat

- Had lots to fit in today - inc. essays, but over ran for 10 minutes or so. Quite enjoyed the session, this is the better of the two HD2 groups anyway. The essay chat was useful and they seemed to listen. More preparation done today so the discussions were better and I was happier.
- Redefined GTU to motivate their writing.

[2.2]

G - small class - 18/20
discussion

T - topics - bit dull - absenteeism may confirm this

U - handouts
essay chat

- very small group today - but I enjoyed it anyway, it was easier to get discussion going. The topic was work and education and I don't think many found it relevant to what they are doing so that may explain absences added to the fact that they are writing essays now. The discussion went OK, the notes I had formed a reasonable discussion and the handouts were highly relevant.
- The essay chat was good, again ran late with it though, lots of queries about essays at end
- GTU - gave more information this time - What was G/T/U? were you late? is your group away today? relevant topic? etc...

[2.3]

G - knew info.
more preparation this week - students
discussions in small groups - spent more time with small groups

T - being challenged - slip of the tongue - feel deflated because of the amount of effort I put in only to be 'caught out' so stupidly
hard work
this class are hard to motivate (except one group)

U - chat at end (essays, and after class) - restored confidence

- this group are so hard to motivate, I ended up spending more time in the small group discussion stage focusing on the questions partly because they had done the work and wanted to tell me about it and partly because I feel that when I am not in/with the group some of the groups are not working together.
- got caught out over saying that retired people are not contributing to society - but I meant *economically* and was really mad at (myself and) certain students

for being so tetchy over it all. Restored my confidence fairly quickly however - sometimes have to remind myself that I know more than they do - even if it not very much more!?!
- Again redefined GTU for them - to motivate their writing for the last few weeks.

[2.4]
G - topic/preparation
T - 5 students
U - small group and discussions

- didn't do group work as such today, went straight into class discussion, but with only 5 they are still a small group but with me as more of a member(?). I'm sure that my input is still that of a teacher however, but they are all willing to speak and contribute their experiences.
- Quite a nice group however, and quite an interesting discussion today. I sometimes feel that the information/topic may not be challenging enough, but they aren't always capable of coming up with the right answer and I still find that I am OK at getting people to speak up and guiding the discussion appropriately (in all the classes).
- Left today with lots of energy and went to the pub!

WEEK 10
tutorials

WEEK 11
[2.1]
So much to fit in!! So much to remember!!
- lecture/discussion/evaluation.../collect GTU/look at scrapbooks.../GTU feedback to them (well received - they seemed intrigued)...
- It went by so quickly!
- Subject not covered as fully as I would have liked, but the session went well. GTU appreciated I think. Evaluation done enthusiastically.

[2.2]
- Guest lecturer's bit = brilliant!! She came to talk for 30 minutes or so on her experiences and research around teenage drug use and ended up speaking for nearer 50 minutes - she was great and the students I think found her good to ask questions of and listen to. Plenty of interest in her job! Very informative too.
- Students discussed in group prior to her bit, got them going - good
- not time for my notes - evaluation = good; GTU feedback OK; lots of essay questions/advice needed and drafts to check (1 student disappointed -forgot to read hers...but then is was the 2nd draft...). Didn't leave the room 'til 1.30pm

[2.3]
- this class seemed to be more motivated this week. The session was on 'old age and care for the elderly' and the discussion although somewhat un-researched was discussed quite well. The group seemed more relaxed/confident - I am not sure. The 2 mature students who can sometimes be overbearing were

fairly quiet today. I quite enjoyed the session and with the GTU feedback for them was not quite as harsh as I had planned to be!?...
- (didn't feel I could cancel next week's lesson, giving them a second chance? need to close properly)

[2.4]
- 7 today.
- Quite enjoyed the session, felt quite final even though we have one more to go.
- Got through a lot, worked on the information that Jane had given this morning, but would have been great if she had been there. Discussion was OK though, perhaps her being there would have changed the group dynamic - talked about this in GTU feedback, this were the only group to contribute as I gave my feedback, agreeing or disagreeing with comments of mine - quite interesting/amusing.
- Didn't feel that I could tell of my plans not to have a session next week, think I should finish it properly

WEEK 12

[2.1]
- Difficult subject; group had a relaxed and informal atmosphere – dealt with subject sensitively.
- Good session after all
- Video was appropriate – enabled me to work with subject as necessary and not put too much of myself into issue
- Good feedback from students – they have enjoyed the course and want more teaching like this! Very positive.

[2.2]
- session went well
- more people than I expected
- glad it's the last week!

[2.3]
- this group is never as energetic, but had good attendance
- subject dealt with OK, not so much input, but surprised by those who did – very sensitive
- few concerns regarding essays – some essays handed in!

[2.4]
- nearly all the group here today – seems a shame it is ending
- have developed some good relationships with this group – hope they do well

Review

- Have really enjoyed this semester. The feedback I have received has been really positive – of course a few are not so keen, but with the evaluation they were able to write their feelings about the whole experience (which they do so enthusiastically – talk about an 'adjustment of authority' - this is their turn to be in control!). I feel that the process has had a real impact on some students, and really look forward to reading through the evaluations – had to remind them to hand in the GTU – got a few in today, hope to get as good a return rate as last year. Some students have even talked about carrying on with the journal writing, so I guess it must have had some effect!

Appendix 3.4a – Mid term evaluation: Cycle one

Evaluation Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to invite you to give me some feedback of your experience of the course so far. Please answer carefully and genuinely, and note that there are no 'wrong' answers.

1. How old are you?
a) 18 - 21
b) 22 - 25
c) 26 +

2. Are you
a) male or
b) female?

3. Are you a
a) full time or
b) part time student?

Groups

4. How many people are there in your group?

5. Did you know any of the other members of your group
before working with them for this course?

Learning

6. Which of the following methods has most helped to develop your learning
(Rank top 3)
a) lecture
b) seminar
c) tutorial
d) group discussion during session
e) group discussion out of session
f) preparation/reading for session
g) other (please specify)

7. Which do you prefer?
a) attending lectures or
b) participating in group work

8. Which do you feel that you learn more from?
a) attending lectures or
b) participating in group work

Reflective practice

9. Has reflecting on each session enabled you to understand your learning processes (learn how you learn best, or what helps or hinders your learning)?

Outcome

10. What do you want to learn from this module? Why?

11. How will you know when you have learnt it?

Appendix 3.4b – End of term evaluation: Cycle one

Evaluation Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to invite you to give me some feedback of your learning experience from this course. Please answer carefully and genuinely, and note that there are no 'wrong' answers.

1. How old are you? Please tick
   a) 18 - 21
   b) 22 - 25
   c) 26 +

2. Are you Please tick
   a) male or
   b) female?

3. Are you a Please tick
   a) full time or
   b) part time student?

Groups

4. How many people are there in your group?

5. Did you know any of the other members of your group before working with them for this course?

Learning

6. Which of the following methods has most helped to develop your learning (Rank top 3)
   a) lecture
   b) seminar (presenting)
   c) seminar (listening)
   d) tutorial
   e) group discussion during session
   f) group discussion out of session
   g) preparation/reading for session
   h) other (please specify)

7. Which do you prefer? Please tick one
   a) attending lectures or
   b) participating in group work

8. Which do you feel that you learn more from? Please tick one
   a) attending lectures or
   b) participating in group work

Reflective practice

9. Has reflecting on each session enabled you to understand your learning processes (learn how you learn best, or what helps or hinders your learning)?

Learning experience

10. Circle 3 words which best describe aspects of your learning.

problem-solving	questioning	authority
progress	enthusiasm	experience
memorising	structure	risk
achievement	control	motivation
facilitation	logic	answers
intuition	challenge	meaning
understanding	applying	interaction
information	responsibility	interest
sharing-knowledge	anxiety	confidence
other (please specify)		

11. Identify one preferred aspect from Q10 and indicate why this is most important to you... (please continue overleaf if necessary)

Appendix 3.5a – Mid term evaluation: Cycle two

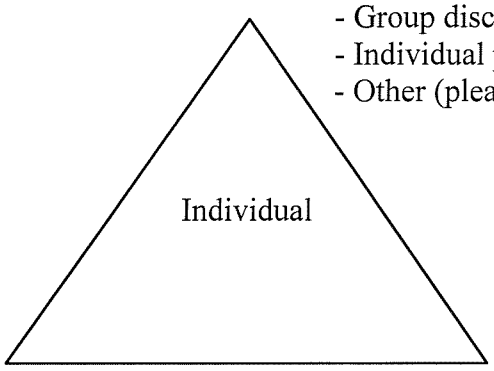
1. How old are you?
a) 18 – 21
b) 22 – 25
c) 26 +

2. Are you
a) male or
b) female?

3. How many members are there in your group?

4. What is your definition of …
   i) individual learning…
   ii) group learning…
   iii) community learning…

5. Please distribute %'s for students, tutor and institute to your learning…
   (e.g. 30% of my learning is from working and exchanging ideas with other students, 40% from tutor imparting knowledge, and 30% from institute related resources and support) Please circle preferences from each list:



Students
- Presenting to other students
- Listening to other presentations
- Group discussion during session
- Group discussion out of session
- Individual preparation/reading
- Other (please specify)

Institute
- Support for assignments
- LRC
- Computing facilities
- Other (please specify)

Tutor
- Lecture
- Tutorial
- Other (please specify)

6. What has been good about the course so far?

7. What has been tricky about the course so far?

8. What has been useful about the course so far?

Appendix 3.5b - End of term evaluation: Cycle two

1. How old are you?
a) 18 – 21
b) 22 – 25
c) 26 +

2. Are you
a) male or
b) female?

3. How many members are there in your group?

4. Describe your experience of the 'adjustment of authority'…

5. What has been good about the course?

6. What has been tricky about the course?

7. What has been useful about the course?

Appendix 5.1 – Groupwork ground rules

Work in groups encourages students to work together and provides opportunities to utilise (and improve) different sources of knowledge and skill enabling them to undertake certain tasks.

"(**Groupwork** is about)... helping people in their growth and development, in their social skills, in their personal resource and in the kind of relationships they establish with other people… it is the purpose of groupwork to provide the individual with opportunities to relate to others in a supportive atmosphere, try new approaches and to experiment in new roles". (Button, 1974)

Purposes of groupwork

- To recognise and develop the group not merely as a collection of individuals
- To increase awareness of behaviour (of self and others) in groups.
- To foster skills associated with communication, decision making, problem solving, and reflection.
- To validate personal knowledge, experience and concerns.
- To develop student's potential for social understanding through the creation of a climate conducive to learning.

Tasks of groupwork

- To consider through reflection and discussion individual's behaviour in the group.
- To address features of the group as it develops (e.g. leadership, power, developing roles, pace).
- To connect this learning experience with other experiences.

Advantages of groupwork

- Its methods foster student interaction and communication skills.
- There are more sources of knowledge available because student's contributions are encouraged.
- Progress can be monitored through self-evaluation.
- Teacher and student are free to explore different roles and take different responsibilities, enabling learning about oneself.
- Groupwork enables people to join together and work towards some achievement or shared goal.
- Groupwork is fun. It utilises sociability - a basic human attribute.

(Campbell and Ryder)

Ground Rules for Groups

- Make "I" statements instead of neutral of general statements. Instead of "We ought to move on" say "I'd like to move on ".
- Own feelings. Instead of just being angry and covering this up, own the feeling and say "I feel angry".
- Avoid blaming others for your feelings. Instead of saying "You make me angry, doing that" say "When you do that I feel angry".
- Don't speak for others, especially not for their feelings. Instead of saying "We are all bored with this" say "I feel bored with this. How do you feel?".

- Avoid judgements for situations or of others. Instead of saying "This is boring" say "I feel bored with this"

Successful groups need to:

- decide on a group leader, chair person and note taker for meetings/groupwork.
- decide how to sit so that everyone is comfortable and feels an equal part of the group.
- decide on a time keeper, who will keep careful watch of time.
- always select the majority choice.
- decide on who is going to check the progress of the group during activity
- use feedback and evaluate each session to discuss what was successful and what could be improved for next time.

Each individual needs to:

- show interest and concern about other group members and about the functions of the group.
- listen to others, understand and appreciate what others have to say.
- say what they think in an assertive way.
- think through and describe potential positive and negative outcomes of their own suggestions and those of others.
- think and describe alternative ideas and actions.
- make personal decisions based on appreciation of the implications for self and the group.
- decide whether to agree with majority decision or to oppose the group if the proposed actions are not congruent with own goals.

Personal actions necessary for group success

- attendance and punctuality.
- a cooperative attitude, showing that they want the group to be successful.
- completing tasks agreed in time.
- saving everyone's time and patience in sessions by:

a) listening and watching carefully.

b) thinking before speaking or doing something - ask yourself/"am I interrupting anyone?" if yes, wait./"do I have something to say which has something to contribute to the discussion?" - if no, don't say it.

c) co-operating in decision making without wasting time by making minds up quickly, and volunteering quickly to undertake tasks.

(Button, 1974)

Appendix 6.1- Group Ground rules

- Once formed, groups should continue to work together each week;
- There is no one leader in your group, so organisation of and responsibility for the group should be shared;
- All decision making should be through consensus;
- All contributions to discussion work are equally valid and valuable;
- Every group member is entitled to time;
- Work together and learn together;
- Criticise the *idea*, not the person;
- Support each other and take risks in your thinking;
- Keep to time;
- Use the facilitator as a learning resource;
- Some suggestions of group roles – responsibility for these might move between members of the group:
    - Time keeper;
    - Note taker;
    - Summariser;
    - Presenter/spokesperson.
- If your group is having problems the facilitator may be able to offer some guidance.

Appendix 6.2 - Student responses to the final evaluative questionnaire concerning their experience of responsibility for learning and the adjustment of authority method

[2.1] - Student responses to the final evaluative questionnaire

[2.1]a

- I think that being allowed to take charge of my learning is a wonderful idea. **This allows me to think for myself and not just depend upon the tutors' ideas**. It also helps me to explore and look at the type of learner I am.
- I believe that his method should be used throughout the university programme as it is less intimidating. It also motivates the class and we can bring our life experiences to many of the discussion.
- **My understanding of authority in learning is that as an individual I should be allowed to have responsibility for my learning and not just leave it upon the tutor**.

[2.1]b

- **Responsibility lies with individuals** to do reading and make notes as to participate in discussion.

[2.1]c

- My experiences of learning on this course have been positive. The relaxed discussion made each session interesting, and gave each member of the group a chance to put forward their own ideas and feelings. Having **a tutor who wasn't just teaching but learning and listening** to new ideas and theories was what made her approachable. For someone such as myself who is looking to go into teaching this is a positive side to my learning experience. I would certainly look to take part in courses which follow this style in the future.
- I have enjoyed the 'freedom of speech' side to the course. We haven't been told what the right theory or what the wrong theory is. We have been given the opportunity to experiment and look at different ideas.

[2.1]d

- **I enjoy the 'adjustment of authority'** (the only problem that I have had is finding the time outside of lectures to do that much research on the topics of discussion for the next week)
- I find learning from each other is a valid and worthwhile practice
- **Adjustment of authority is the end of spoon-fed education** all through school and college you are given information by teachers or lecturers that you are then supposed to regurgitate in essays or exams.
- **This system gives us the autonomy for learning** that education brings
- relaxed atmosphere, conducive to a feeling of safety in the seminar group

[2.1]e

- It has been an experience for me to adjust the way in which this course has been taught and **I feel that it gave me a sense of responsibility** of going away and doing research.

[2.1]f

- **It is more enjoyable learning in this way and it has made me work more not only for me but for the group as well.** (Although it has made me a little lazy aswell. As the weeks went on, it became easier for me not to do the preparation for the weekly group work).

[2.1]g

- **The adjustment of authority means that I find the tutor accessible because she is interacting with the research and debates.**
- I've enjoyed working in groups and fortunately my group members are reliable however if they were not I think this could hinder my learning

[2.1]h

- I liked the way the course was taught as **I did not feel in some way 'inferior' to the tutor.** The way the course was taught made some sometime complex issues more accessible.

[2.2] - Student responses to the final evaluative questionnaire

[2.2]a

- **The adjustment of authority has enabled me to be much more involved in my learning. I feel I have done more learning in this group than in any other and enjoyed it more too. The balance of authority was good as group work left us unable to 'cop out' as there was a responsibility to the whole group.**
- **I feel that each individual is responsible for their own learning and tutor should act as a facilitator who encourages us interactively and motivates students through interest in the topic to conduct their own research. I feel this was successful in this group.**

[2.2]b

- **What I found interesting was that the style of teaching was a collaboration of both the teacher and the students.**
- Structuring the class in groups was a great strategy for learning. Being a part of a group I found I can express my ideas, listen to other people's ideas, this however had positive effects on what I gained once the lecture was over.

[2.2]c

- **The module has been more centred around the students taking control of their learning** and education and which direction they are heading in. This is much more directed by the student. I believe that it is the students choice to be here and in further education therefore it is up to them to find out as much as they can. **The lecturer is there to guide and advise** and open up new thought to the individual student not to dictate what is right/wrong. **Therefore through this process of teaching we have all been able to take the initiative and take control of our learning.**
- **We were given the control** to take charge of where we were heading which motivated me.

[2.2]d

- I personally have a preference for a lecturer to give information and students take it in and that's it but I've realised that when dealing with issues contained within this course its not always possible to just give a lecture.

[2.2]e

- I feel that the way we have conducted this lesson has been extremely helpful.
- Interacting with lecturer and other members of the class has made understanding the module a lot more interesting and easier along with exciting because you listen to everyone's opinion and values
- **I feel that I always leave this classroom with a discussion that I want to pursue further with my friends**

[2.2]f

- **I do more work this way** as I feel I need to put effort into the group as well as the lecture
- **I like to be a part of my own learning** and this definitely allows for it

[2.2]g

- **It is good to share the authority because when it comes down to it the individual can only be given so much from the lecturer; they are at the end of the day responsible for how much they learn and how hard they want to work**

[2.2]h

- **group work has meant that there is a stronger sense of responsibility** to do some pre-reading and actually to come up with a view on topics so that discussion can be adequate in class; & while in other classes pre-reading is done, the interaction of group discussion has meant that ideas are tested out and questioned
- I also found that **I was able to form judgements** on the various topics - although these sometimes changed - and this has helped in the essay formulation
- **when this adjustment of authority is taken on board and pre-work done it has worked very well.** On days when no pre-work was done - the group discussion was valuable in helping to form ideas - especially prior to the theory bit!
- Overall - excellent method - made me work and enjoyed developing relationships with group members

[2.2]i

- my experience has being that of openness and the equal level that all the students work and **able to take responsibility for doing my own research** every week before lectures
- interactive teaching is very effective

[2.2]j

- I have found the course as a whole very interesting and fun
- the way the lectures have been arranged have meant that **we learnt more because of the individual research and group work** which was done
- because each lecture is different and varied with different formats and materials being used. It has meant that they have been interesting to come to and participate in
- some lectures which just have the lecturer talking for 1.5 hours are very boring and tedious and I actually find it almost impossible to learn anything from them
- Group work was good as I got to know the people in my group and it became quite a supportive group to work with - especially now coming to exams and essays. **It also meant that I had a responsibility to do work for the next session not just to me, but to my whole group, who I really don't want to let down**

[2.2]k

- I enjoyed the format of each session. It was more educational to have a consistent interaction. I really prefer having the opportunity to speak out and voice an opinion, This really helps my learning as I get the chance to hear the views of my peers on some very debatable issues
- **Working in a group** allowed me to get to know them and **gave us an element of responsibility** to get our work completed and to make sure we did our fair share
- compared to other lectures it is a 'breath of fresh air' as so often a lecturer does not give you a chance to speak or take any further interest in an opinion. More most definitely (but I am a 3rd year!)

[2.3] - Student responses to the final evaluative questionnaire

[2.3]a

- There is no 'scapegoat' meaning that **I had to take my learning into my own hands**. It forced me to prepare for class and in doing so made me more aware of the subject
- I enjoy being with people and working in a group is an ideal opportunity to see what others think and feel
- Having other opinions opened up my eyes to new ways of looking at things
- **ultimately my learning comes down to one thing: For me to learn anything I have to want to learn it.** I do think that tutors and groups play a big role from the point of view that without them I don't think I would know where to start
- I am able to look at life completely differently. I can see certain things in the people around me and it helps me to communicate and interact with them

[2.3]b

- **I have had to put in more work** to contribute to my group; prepare for each session. **It was useful to both me and the others I guess**; sharing information etc.
- **Learning is my own responsibility and the tutor should contribute to it as well.**

[2.3]c

- At first the method of learning seemed to put me off. My only previous experiences were of traditional lectures (i.e. tutor is the only one speaking). Once we had begun the course, **shared responsibility worked well for me.**
- **I have learnt more in these lectures** than in courses I take which are traditional lectures.
- Talking things through (especially group discussions) help me to understand the topics we study.
- **I am happy to share the responsibility, the discussions inspired me to do my own research (there's a first time for everything!).**
- **Tutor input is still vital, the right balance worked well**
- **shared responsibility of learning; changed my ideas of learning for the better**

[2.3]d

- **Tutors should take responsibility for TEACHING** (except in seminars?)
- **Students should take responsibility for learning**

[2.3]e

- **I am happy to take responsibility for my own learning but with guidance from my tutor and support from my group if possible.**

[2.3]f

- **Learning is the individual's thing as well as the tutor's guidance throughout the learners progress**

[2.3]g

Learning is my responsibility but when I had decided which essay to write I tended to focus on that and leave the rest of the learning on the back-boiler. Therefore I may have got more information from a lecture

[2.3]h

- I do think that both have to share the academic responsibility of the 'dialogue of learning'...
- the sense of freedom! That we have to be responsible for our own agenda to get along with the course

[2.3]i

- For me **I have experienced being the 'authority' for my work** in terms of finding research.
- At this stage of education **the responsibility lies with the student.** I feel the lecturer has the knowledge or knows where it is. They are there to have such knowledge tapped into when needed.

[2.3]j

- When starting the course I found it quite hard to adjust to a more 'relaxed' way of teaching. Learning about new subjects was so much easier in this format as I got to talk to others in the group and discuss their opinions.
- I much prefer coming to sessions like this as it is more involving and everyone can have a say.
- Also **it is easier to approach the tutor** on a one to one basis as there has been more discussion in each session.
- **I feel it is my responsibility to do my own learning and research at this stage in my education. If it was the tutor's responsibility it would become more of a hassle and even boring to research theories and topics.**

[2.3]k

- **I believe that it is my responsibility to do the learning and having had the classes in this set up has given me more confidence - I know that I am on the right tracks.**

[2.3]l

- **It is nice to have the responsibility of work shifted onto individuals, especially at this stage of education!!** However, guidance and 'pointers' should be given by the lecturer as well

[2.3]m

- **I have enjoyed this adjustment of authority;** it has placed a lot more emphasis on group learning - which is very beneficial. I believe I have taken in a lot more information than if this would have been a straightforward lecture. The teaching has been open and friendly and honest and I would enjoy this type of learning more if I did it again. It has taken a little time to get used to.
- **Learning is everyone's responsibility; the group, the class, the individual and the tutor's. Altogether they comprise a powerful learning experience.**

[2.3]n

- **I feel that it is mainly up to the individual to do the research and learning** but with the help of the tutor in order to guide them.

[2.3]o

- I thought this was a very beneficial way to work. Sometimes my opinions would change from the start to the end of the session because of other people's input. I don't think I would have got as much from the course had it not been structured this way
- **I think the responsibility for learning lies with everybody, myself, the group and the class and tutor. However, the main part of it should be down to the individual.**

[2.3]p

- I do not like contributing to discussion but prefer to listen and the fact that I wasn't forced to contribute was good as it didn't put too much pressure on me and stop me from turning up. The discussion in small groups was good as it was more personal. **I think that learning should be the students and tutors responsibility**.

[2.3]q

- allowed for more personal research in particular areas of interest. **However it made me more responsible in obtaining relevant information as I knew no-one else would feed it to me. I believe learning to be an individuals responsibility with some tutor guidance.**

[2.3]r

- Having large group discussion each week on each topic has helped me to understand much more - as opposed to listening to a lecturer for 1.3/4 hours! **Having tutor and group discussion together was great. Rather than being dominated by the tutor!**

[2.3]s

- I have found that the way in which this subject was taught very interesting and enjoyable. I would say that I have certainly come away having learnt and remembered a great deal more than I probably have from other lecture based subjects. **Doing my own research before coming along to the sessions enabled me to learn and understand more from everyone else because I already had a basis of the subject. I believe that learning is my own responsibility - guided and helped by the tutor and the other students, but without my own interest and motivation I don't think learning can take place**.

[2.4] - Student responses to the final evaluative questionnaire

[2.4]a

- To be asked to prepare a topic for discussion means that **I have/feel a responsibility to the group** and I know my results/opinions will be called upon.
- **I need the tutor to direct me** - I might not be self-directed enough to produce findings each week without her. I need this direction, but once directed am perfectly happy and prepared to contribute.

[2.4]b

- I feel that I have learnt so much more through discussing topics through instead of having a lecturer lecture at you. Have covered topics at different angle & deeper levels
- Through interacting with the tutor I feel that the group is more at ease so therefore willing to share personal experiences.
- **The class has a responsibility to the class's learning.**

[2.4]c

- the quality of the learning experience has been greatly increased due to the less formal atmosphere within the class and **the ability to discuss views without being overwhelmed by the tutor.**
- **I have been more inclined to do personal research** for each lecture due to the questions allocated for each week and also knowing that I would feel able to make a contribution to a class discussion (not being as shy as I am in other lectures).
- **Giving the student some responsibility for their learning is a good idea as the students can have an input on their learning** and also the tutor will become aware of those who need more encouragement.

[2.4]d

- I have enjoyed the course more because of the group work and ability to interact and share views with the group. This helps to enjoy the subject and subject matter more and **I have found myself more willing to do more of my own research**
- As regards to 'adjustment of authority' **I feel that everyone would take shared responsibility for learning, you have to be big enough to take responsibility for yourself yet also have the tutor on hand to start you off in the right direction and then help at the end or when stuck.** Easier to talk and ask for help when tutor is more approachable and not 'authoritarian'.

[2.4]e

- The fact that we were in a small group helped me because that way **I would make the effort to do the reading or research for the following week -** something that for the majority of all my other lectures I do not do, unless it is obligatory.
- 'Adjustment of authority' is a good method for teaching/learning as **it is up to us individually to take responsibility for our learning**.

Appendix 8.1 - Contextual adjustment of authority grid

Contextual adjustment of authority *role* = con2r
Contextual adjustment of authority *process* = con2 p

1/con2 r	**2/con2 r**	**3/con2 r&p**	**4/con2 p**	**5/con2 p**
Re-defining the nature and role practitioner and context	Contracting the new learning relationship	Enabling reciprocal learning relationships	Practitioner takes responsibility and experiences authority in practitioner-context relationship	Reflecting, evaluating and learning from experience

	Initial input	***Input***	***Process***	***Process***	***Outcomes***
Input	Context acknowledges practitioner's prior experiences and expectations, and encourages the development of these;	Context redefines teaching and learning situation with regard to responsibility for learning, and provides initial structures for practitioners to work within;	Context and practitioner's roles are developed within structures: adjustment of authority possible;	Context provides a facilitation role providing support when required;	Context experiences the adjustment of authority as enabling practitioners to 'find their own authority', and take responsibility for their learning and development of a theory of practice; also enables sharing of practice and reciprocal learning.
Process	Task is to develop safe climate in which these can be challenged and developed;	Structures provide security and enable risk taking in learning and development of practice;	Structures become familiar – practitioner is beginning to understand and harness process;	Context and practitioner develop reciprocal learning relationships;	To make explicit this process of adjustment of authority; to enable practitioner reflection, development and learning.
Dominant Role/ Process element *1 – 5con2 indicates where element becomes appropriate*	***Initial teaching and learning situation -*** **1/con2r** **5/con2p**	***Adjustment of authority (introduction) -*** **1/con2r** **2/con2r** **3/con2r&p** **5/con2p**	***Adjustment of authority (mid)*** **3/con2r&p** **4/con2p** **5/con2p** **[Practitioner and context experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (proper)*** **3/con2r&p** **4/con2p** **5/con2p** **[Practitioner and context experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (outcome)*** **3/con2r&p** **4/con2p** **5/con2p** **[Practitioner and context experience an adjustment of authority]**
Process	Practitioners come to situation with expectations and experiences of contextual authority;	Practitioner's first experiences of 'power sharing'; individual may find support from other practitioners;	Practitioner develops understanding of, and confidence in taking responsibility and experiencing authority;	Practitioner works comfortably within the process; individual or group working;	Practitioner has developed understanding of and responsibility for learning and experiences development of a theory of practice.
Outcomes	Responsibility lies with the context;	Authority/ responsibility redefined to include practitioner. Reactions may include: resistance, insecurity, or context as 'not knowing';	Responsibility being accepted/ authority shifting. Value of responsibility for learning emerging. Critical reflection enables development of a theory of practice;	Responsibility accepted; exploring theory of practice;	Development and learning are the individual's responsibility, and can continue to be developed individually or collaboratively within supportive context.

Appendix 9.1: Doctoral adjustment of authority grid

Doctoral adjustment of authority *role* = PhD2r
Doctoral adjustment of authority *process* = PhD2 p

1/PhD2 r	**2/PhD2 r**	**3/PhDr r&p**	**4/PhD2 p**	**5/PhD2 p**
Defining the nature and role of doctoral student and doctoral supervisor	Contracting the new learning relationship	Enabling reciprocal learning relationship	Student takes responsibility and experiences authority in supervisory relationship	Reflecting, evaluating and learning from experience

	Initial input	*Input*	*Process*	*Process*	*Outcomes*
Supervisor role	Supervisor acknowledges students' prior experiences and expectations, works towards development of these towards responsibility;	Supervisor redefines teaching and learning situation with regard to responsibility for learning, and provides initial structures for student to work within;	Supervisor and student's roles are developed within structures: adjustment of authority possible;	Supervisor increases facilitator role providing support when required;	Supervisor experiences adjustment of authority as enabling students to 'find their own authority' and take responsibility for learning'; also enables reciprocal learning
Supervisor process	Task is to develop safe climate in which these can be challenged and developed;	Structures provide security and enable risk taking in learning;	Structures become familiar – student is beginning to understand and harness process;	Facilitator and student develop reciprocal learning relationship as student's work develops;	To make explicit this process of adjustment of authority; to enable student reflection and learning.
Dominant Role/ Process Element *PhD2 1 – 5 indicates where element becomes appropriate*	***Initial teaching and learning situation -*** **1/PhD2r** **2/PhD2r** **5/PhD2p**	***Adjustment of authority (introduction) -*** 1/PhD2r 2/PhD2r 3/PhD2r&p **5/PhD2p**	***Adjustment of authority (mid)*** 3/PhD2r&p **4/PhD2p** **5/PhD2p** **[Student and supervisor experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (proper)*** 3/PhD2r&p **4/PhD2p** **5/PhD2p** **[Student and supervisor experience an adjustment of authority]**	***Adjustment of authority (outcome)*** 3/PhD2r&p **4/PhD2p** **5/PhD2p** **[Student and supervisor experience an adjustment of authority]**
Doctoral student role	Student comes to situation with expectations and experiences of teacher as authority; (high awareness of need to develop learner responsibility)	Student's first experiences of 'power sharing'; student may find support from other doctoral students/ peer group;	Students developing understanding of their learning process, and confidence in responsibility for their learning;	Students work comfortably within the process; and continue to develop their learning;	Student has developed understanding of and responsibility for learning, whilst continuing to develop doctoral work.
Doctoral student process	Authority lies with Supervisor; responsibility lies with the supervisor and student;	Authority/ responsibility implicitly redefined to actively include student. Reactions may include: resistance, insecurity, or supervisor as 'not knowing'; with support student will develop towards responsibility;	Responsibility being accepted/ authority shifting. Value of responsibility for learning emerging. PhD peer group is becoming valuable source of support;	Responsibility accepted/ authority experienced;	Learning is the individual's responsibility, and can be developed individually, with supervisor, or collaboratively, within supportive context

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