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Engaging with students and tutors:

understanding perceptions of practice-based

coursework within an MA Art Education programme

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I, James Hamilton Benson Hall, hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this EdD Thesis is entirely my own.

Signed: *JHBWM.*

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Abstract

The research aimed to develop deeper understandings of students' and tutors' perceptions of practical work in the MA Art, Craft and Design Education at Roehampton University, the main and traditional form of assessment being written work. I sought to capture something of the meanings and value that students and tutors attach to their experiences of doing and supervising practical work. The term 'Practice-based coursework' refers to the students' own practical work in art, craft or design, which, in this degree, is undertaken in an educational context indicating the visual work must relate to theories and practices of teaching and learning.

Heuristic research emphasizes autobiography and internal searching as one seeks to understand phenomena in increasing depth, an approach that enabled me to connect the disciplines of educational research with the living of my professional life. My experience as an MA tutor was studied alongside the experiences of six students and another tutor, as co-participants in the research, through deep reflection upon my thinking and actions. My strategy was to narrate layers of lived experience through open-ended, unstructured interviews and my keeping a reflective diary. I aimed to connect the student and tutor accounts, narrating my own presence as an involved and implicated researcher who is part of the community of practice being studied. Reflexivity proved to be a key resource and dimension of the research, requiring the critical engagement of self by all participants.

Students and tutors value practical enquiry for the opportunity to engage personally and reflexively with the complexities, ambiguities and emergent meanings of art. However, practical work sits somewhat uneasily with an outcome-oriented ethos prevalent in education, impatient for demonstrable and transferable results. The findings have implications for expanding provision for practice-based coursework in art education programmes in higher education and for enhancing students' artist-teacher identities.

Contents

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'Bound in with the thesis'

> At the time of entry for examination of the EdD thesis you are required to submit, *bound in with the thesis*, after the contents page, a statement of no more than 2,000 words which shows how the various elements of the programme have linked together and contributed to your professional understanding and knowledge (EdD Student Handbook, 2007-8, Institute of Education University of London, p.88) [My italics for emphasis].

Introduction

Binding in a reflective statement with the thesis presented something of a challenge as my reflections on the research and its relevance for my professional practice are integrated with the text, woven into the fabric of the thesis. My presence and voice is *bound-in* to every page of text, not pretending to stand apart in a fiction of objectivity, but acknowledging the story of my developing researcher identity and self. I consciously chose not to include a 'reflective chapter' as such discussion seemed to permeate the writing and should not be seen separately. This mirrors the aim of a professional doctorate for the researcher self – a critically reflexive identity – to be *bound-in* to the professional self.

Nevertheless, the required statement goes beyond the thesis and connects with the other elements of the EdD programme, the four written assignments that make up the Portfolio and the Institution-focused Study (IFS). The purpose of this statement is twofold: first, to demonstrate how the various elements of the EdD programme have linked together into a coherent doctoral research experience; and second, to show how the EdD experience as a whole has contributed to my professional understanding, knowledge and practice.

I have used italics to highlight strands that appear significant to me now as I reflect back upon each piece of EdD writing.

How do the EdD programme elements link together: articulation and coherence?

With all the elements completed, the notion that I brought a research agenda with me to the EdD programme - personal interests, issues and questions from my professional practice, is strengthened. I see the professional doctorate providing an opportunity to investigate long-held, enduring concerns and pre-occupations that get passed over given the pace and complexity of everyday professional life. I used the opening module to reflect upon related strands in my past and current practice - professionalism in initial and continuing teacher education and professionalism in an academic community looking to retain or regain autonomy in a climate of increasing accountability. In the first assignment, titled: *The struggle for professionalism: competing voices,* I explored three related areas of discourse around the concept of professionalism.

First, I discussed the related notions of contestation, struggle and temporary settlement to explore the idea that professionals develop *working understandings* or *interpretations* (e.g. of policies, concepts or codes). These understandings are continuously re-conceptualised as they are applied to practice, an interest that resurfaces in the fourth assignment. The first assignment also gave voice to my own experience of *living and working with the ambiguities, competing demands and uncertainties* of contemporary professional practice in Education.

The second theme in this first assignment concerned the notion of *multiple professional identities*, perhaps challenging the idea of the professional as an expert in one highly specialized area. This related to my current roles and responsibilities in quality and standards and MA teaching, and to my former roles as teacher educator and secondary teacher.

The third theme concerned the related concepts of quality assurance, accountability, performance and inspection. The discourses on quality and accountability issues suggested polarised positions of either compliance or resistance, whereas my professional experience suggested to me that there are academics who manage to work within quality frameworks and requirements whilst

remaining sceptical and critical. These questions were taken up again in the fourth assignment and informed both the IFS and the thesis.

The second and third assignments explored the idea of: *Identifying the Continuing Professional Development needs of teachers of art and design in secondary schools.* The paper argued that the initial training of teachers had been emphasised in recent government policy to the neglect of the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of teachers. What debate there had been tended to emanate from government, agencies or teacher educators; there was evidence that teachers were excluded from discourses on CPD. Literature on the emancipation and empowerment of the teaching profession argued teachers should be allowed the right to speak, to be represented and to be heard.

For the third assignment I analysed and reported four interviews conducted with teachers. The results reflected both a trend away from teachers attending courses towards continuous development models and a broader shift from the concerns of the providers to the users of CPD. The literature notes how these shifts have been accompanied by a trend towards competence development, performance standards and the accreditation of evidence of outcomes. This long term and continuous view of CPD also promotes the concept of individual responsibility, away from simple course attendance towards individuals investing in career development and individual learning plans, accounts or portfolios. Participants also promoted the value of making art as a powerful form of CPD, the key theme to be explored in the IFS and the thesis.

The title of the fourth assignment was *Quality, Representation and Accountability in Higher Education: enabling or restraining processes?* Quality assurance as a convergent process, closing down possibilities in a well-rehearsed, controlled and stage-managed representation of practice was contrasted with practice itself as a divergent process - opening up possibilities, increasing risk, presenting authenticity. The idea of ownership and interpretation of the 'quality agenda' was explored and continued as an undercurrent in both the IFS and the thesis.

Reflexivity became increasingly prominent as a theme running through the four assignments, perhaps not surprisingly, given the nature of the EdD as a professional doctorate. Reading for and writing an assignment represented a certain form of reflection-on-action with further reflection taking place as the assignment is read, re-read, assessed by tutors and reflected upon again in the light of tutor feedback. As the individual assignments were brought together, new connections were made or constructed, pointing to new directions and possibilities. For example, in the realisation that the concepts of *professional autonomy and professional accountability* ran through all four assignments and extended into the IFS and thesis.

My Institution-focused study (IFS) was titled **Contemporary Art Practice and Pedagogy: an Investigation of the Artist-Teacher Scheme.** Having found that teachers' CPD needs had been driven by central and institutional rather than individual and professional needs, I was interested to learn how the popular and rapidly-expanding Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) met teachers' expressed needs. At the heart of the ATS is the notion that teachers can increase both their effectiveness and their job satisfaction by maintaining and refreshing their own creative activity as artists. This concept related closely to a module that I had been teaching at Roehampton for several years that challenged students to produce their own creative work linked to concepts of teaching and learning. Expanding take-up by students and increasing interest in carrying a practical approach forward to the dissertation encouraged me to continue researching the broad themes of art practice, artist-teacher identities, reflexivity and pedagogy into the thesis.

The impact of the EdD experience on my professional practice

The EdD has influenced and enriched my professional thinking and practice from the outset, as I found that my increasing knowledge and understanding of Education through research informs all aspects of my work. The relationship is reciprocal, in that my research is continuously enhanced by my practice. Such reciprocity cannot be planned for but can only be revealed and articulated through

the deep reflection on practice that the EdD experience affords. Such an interchange may or may not take place for a student following the PhD route, but for an EdD student, it seems to me that, whatever one's research topic, every facet of one's professional practice in Education is capable of analysis for what it might yield to enhanced understanding. The broad nature of my responsibilities and practice can make such interdependence difficult to handle at best and turbulent at times.

Practitioner research involves a dialogic oscillation between theory and practice, working within the movement and tension between the work settings and research spaces. EdD students mediate between their professional identities, often in senior education posts, and researcher identities, constructing and negotiating new hybrid identities as researcher-educators, or simply, reflective practitioners. The self-inquiring conversations we have with ourselves as we negotiate between sites of knowledge and practice can be very difficult and frustrating. The gains for practice from an EdD are 'hard won', in the face of competing time and resource constraints and are not gained simply or easily. Some four to five months into the IFS research, I was promoted to the post of Assistant Dean (Quality) and the increased duties and demands of this role, particularly as an OFSTED Inspection and a QAA review of a Foundation degree conspired to demand inordinate amounts of my time, meant that the research had to be fitted into spaces that were forever squeezed. This led to periods, sometimes quite lengthy, when I did not work on the IFS, interrupting the flow and continuity of the research. When the interruptions or discontinuities become frequent or prolonged, it breaks the continuity that is so valuable for a qualitative study where the researcher needs to be immersed in the research, living with the data and its analysis. Although the causes of time constraints were beyond my control, I learnt valuable lessons in strategically managing my time and drawing upon extra reserves of determination and self-discipline in protecting EdD space.

The implications of my thesis findings for my professional practice are discussed in the final chapter, but reflecting now on the impact of the whole EdD experience on my practice, three important and related benefits stand out. First, the

knowledge, deeper understanding and insights into my discipline of art and design education that have already benefited every aspect of my work as a tutor and Assistant Dean. Second, developing a critical understanding of research methodologies and skills in research design and writing. Third, and perhaps the most vital, I hinted at in my introduction to this statement. Critical identity is bound-in to the professional identity, internalized as a critically reflexive space in my practice that is literally vital, as it is life-giving, essential to the life of the academic. This is empowering as the resource is my own and is not dependent on external resources such as time and physical space. The conceptual and intellectual space is there and is permanent. Perhaps the next challenges and questions for me include how to develop and maintain a critical stance and develop a deeper criticality.

Chapter One

Perspectives and Preoccupations: an introduction

> The core skills [of research] are watching people and talking to them. These are based upon very common human activities and any reader will have had extensive experience of them. The trick is to avoid 'de-skilling' yourself by devaluing this experience, while appreciating the need to do these things with an uncommon degree of both system and sensitivity (Robson, 2002, xiv).

> All good art is an inquiry and an experiment. It is by virtue of being an artist that the teacher is a researcher. The point appears to be difficult to grasp because education faculties have been invaded by the idea that research is scientific and concerned with general laws. This notion persists even though our universities teach music and literature and history and art and lay an obligation on their staff in these fields to conduct research. Why then should research in education look only to science?....the way ahead is to disseminate the idea of teacher as artist with the implication that artists exercise autonomy of judgement founded upon research directed towards improvement in their art (Stenhouse, 1984, p.71-72).

The research focus

The aim of my research is to develop a deeper understanding of students' and tutors' perceptions and experiences of practice-based coursework undertaken as part of the master's degree in art, craft and design education at Roehampton University, London. Following Ellis and Bochner (2000), I hope to capture something of the *meanings and value* that students and tutors attach to their experiences of doing and supervising practical work. The term 'Practice-based coursework' refers to the students' own practical work in art, craft or design, which is also referred to as 'visual practice' or 'practice-based study'. The students' practical work in this MA degree, is undertaken in an educational context, indicating the visual work must relate to theories and/or practices of teaching and/or learning.

I am interested in the meanings that practice-based work holds for *students*, for example, the nature of their experience of the practical work; what they see as the most significant challenges and benefits of the practice-based module and its extension into the dissertation; and understanding how their experience may affect them, personally and professionally. Reciprocally, I seek to capture the meanings

of practical work constructed by *tutors*, for example, our aims and intentions in designing the modules and our experiences of teaching and supervising students undertaking practice-based work.

The research problem and questions

The main and traditional form of assessment on this and other Masters' degrees in Education in England is written work, in the form of essays, reports and dissertations. Increasingly, diverse modes of learning and assessment are being developed by MA Art Education[1] course leaders and welcomed by students that recognise visual art practice as a form of research and enquiry in its own right that does not need to be legitimized by text (Candlin, 2001; Macleod and Holdridge, 2004). Work in this area (Gray and Malins, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Macleod and Holdridge, 2006) has focused upon the practice of artists and students of fine art in Masters and Doctoral programmes, where outcomes are predominantly visual and criteria for practice-based research are well-established in AHRC and RAE frameworks. However, visual work undertaken by students taking Masters or research degrees in University Schools or Faculties of Education, study in a context where assessment and research outcomes are strongly language-based, Education being more closely aligned to social sciences than the arts in academic infrastructures. As Eisner reminds us, 'We are, of course, habituated to text and number' (1998:128).

However, the value and significance of practice-based research in the experience of the MA students and their tutors at Roehampton is not sufficiently understood or even described, nor is it underpinned by theoretical frameworks. As module tutor for the 'practical project' and supervisor for students undertaking practice-based dissertations, my own understanding and enthusiasm for this practical work is based upon personal conviction, experience and an instinctive or tacit belief that students make important gains through this mode of study. 'It seems to be a right or appropriate thing to be doing', I hear myself saying. I suspect this situation may be similar at other Universities pioneering and expanding practice-based work in

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[1] Art Education is used as shorthand for Art, Craft & Design Education in relation to the full title of the Roehampton University degree

MA Art Education programmes. The assumed benefits for teaching and learning of MA students' visual art practice can remain implicit, often hidden, unexplained or uncertain, which makes the phenomenon worthy of exploration.

The practical project module has been successful in terms of student recruitment and achievement, being selected by all students registering for the MA Art Education programme and often cited as a key reason prospective students apply to Roehampton. Pass rates and grades are high, in comparison with other modules. Such popularity and success has not been the focus of reflection and analysis; whilst the module handbook includes the required rationale, learning outcomes and assessment criteria, these have not been modified to a great extent over a ten year period. A deeper understanding of what students and tutors experience in following and guiding this mode of study seems an essential starting point for reviewing and evaluating what this mode of study is about. Furthermore, empowered and enthused by their experiences in the practical project, students are increasingly expressing interest in pursuing visual modes of enquiry for their dissertation, traditionally a 20,000 word research report.

Therefore, my research seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What value and significance do students attach to the MA practical project?
2. What do students see as the most significant challenges and benefits of the practical modules?
3. How has students' experience of the practical modules affected them personally and professionally?
4. What is the perceived value and special significance of the MA practical project for tutors?
5. What are tutors' aims and intentions in designing the modules?
6. What strengths and weaknesses of the modules do tutors identify?

Rationale for the research

Why have I chosen this focus for the research? Why is this topic important for me, personally and professionally, and more widely, for the academic community in art and design education? Why is it important to investigate now? What might the benefits of this enquiry be? In investigating my reasons for focusing upon this topic,

and discussing it in greater depth, I hope to shed some light upon these questions. Influenced by Stewart's (1998) research coping strategies, I write myself into the research text from the outset; that is, I adopt a reflexive writing style through which I hope to leave a trail of the ethnographer's path throughout and not postpone and restrict this reflexive account to a later methodology chapter.

The personal perspective

I decided to embark upon a Doctor in Education (EdD) research degree programme in 2002 for a variety of reasons; to help carve out some space for thinking and professional learning in what felt to me like a relentlessly expanding work agenda that squeezes out time for reflection; to explore long-standing ideas and interests in the hope of critically articulating acquired common-sense knowledge, or what Eraut (2005) might call 'tacit knowledge' that can easily remain embedded and locked in practice; to gain academic credit and recognition for my professional knowledge and expertise through the award of a doctoral degree.

I shall explore these motives in rather more detail in order to understand my personal position in relation to the research. The first motive was concerned with my practice being un-reflective, in that the burgeoning, ever-expanding demands of being an academic in higher education (Barnett, 2000; Tight, 2003), can easily militate against the deep reflection that I see at the core of professional development and job-satisfaction. The challenges of day-to-day practice can easily overwhelm, sapping energy and will in the uncertain and contested space that is higher education today. Every aspect of professional life is contestable and open to challenge; there is no chance of settlement or consensus, creating tension, uncertain direction and disjunction. This situation was exacerbated by my taking on additional roles beyond my core identity in art and design education. Developing my role in academic management, as Assistant Dean, has increased the challenge, as Barnett suggests, 'Generating a collective clarity about uncertainty: this is the challenge for today's academic manager' (Barnett, 1997:18). Almost paradoxically, the more extended, demanding and 'supercomplex' (Barnett, 2000) the world of higher education seems to become, the more I have felt the need to

protect professional learning spaces so as to reaffirm my identity as an academic and to engage more deeply in scholarship and research (Scott et al, 2004).

The second motive concerns exploring and articulating enduring ideas and preoccupations that have been deeply embedded in my career and in art and design education. My interest lies with art educators who continue to practice in art through making their own work, often founded implicitly or explicitly upon the notion that their own practice informs and enriches their teaching and enhances pupils' learning. Much of my previous work for the EdD programme has engaged with this specific notion (Hall, 2003a; Hall, 2003b; Hall, 2006) and I made the point in my research report on the Artist Teacher Scheme (Hall, 2006) that my absorption in this topic began not with the EdD but at the start of my career, based upon my self-identification as an Artist-Teacher. I began my IFS (Hall, 2006) with a summarised autobiographical account of my career in art education, taking my cue from Gray and Malins (2004) who suggest practitioners can describe how they come to do research by presenting their personal stories or travellers' tales as an illuminating rationale for the research. My thesis research into students' and tutors' perceptions of practice-based coursework in an MA programme, whilst distinct from the Artist-Teacher scheme in terms of programme design and purpose, is related to the concept of the artist-teacher. However, whilst I have decided not to recount my autobiographical experiences here, it seems important to position myself as central to the research from the outset, as not only the researcher but as the researched, as one of the tutors over whose shoulder I am looking, engaged, involved and deeply implicated in the practical project and the related research. Through the research I reflect upon and interpret the data from the perspectives of my multiple identities as tutor, researcher and artist-teacher, following Wetherell (2003), who suggests that identities are important because we all come from somewhere and speak from somewhere, implying we all have stories to tell. I need to state 'where I am coming from', which is not the position of a dispassionate, objective researcher looking into a phenomenon from 'outside', but as an insider, with multiple roles as tutor, researcher, researched and manager. Such roles are mutually enriching, the context providing rich connections between sources, but equally, have the potential to reveal competing and conflicting interests, tensions and biases. I reflect upon

the layering of multiple professional identities in my career, assimilating new roles or identities into my current professional identity.

Over time, rather than shedding or growing out of any one identity, I have retained the artist self and teacher self that are also present in my lecturer, researcher and manager identities. This may help explain why my research seeks to combine participatory research with deep reflection upon my own practices and identities. I feel at home in a variety of cultures and contexts, and have concentrated my research on boundary-crossing concepts, investigating teacher- tutors for my MA dissertation, artist teachers for my EdD IFS and now MA students and tutors for my EdD thesis.

My third motive for undertaking the EdD arose out of a desire to not only claim academic credit and recognition for developing my professional knowledge through the award of a doctoral degree but for the enjoyment of learning. I see practitioner doctoral research as CPD 'par excellence' as it involves professional learning that contributes to our knowledge-base, benefiting both the individual and the academic community. I had not anticipated that the process of undertaking the research degree would be so rewarding, the benefits being immediate and continuous rather than postponed to the awarding of the degree. Such engagement has been professionally renewing and fulfilling for me and has enriched and informed my teaching not only of the art education MA but of the generic research methodologies module to which I contribute, a module taken by all MA students in the School of Education at Roehampton.

The Professional Perspective
My research relates to both my main professional roles in the School of Education at Roehampton University and represents a conjunction of responsibilities: teaching and the management of quality assurance and enhancement. In my role as module tutor for the MA Art, Craft & Design Education Practical Project and dissertation supervisor, and previously as programme convener for the MA, I have been instrumental in developing students' visual work as part of the programme of study. In my role as Assistant Dean (Quality) I am responsible for overseeing the

assurance and enhancement of academic quality and standards, including programme and module validation in the School. It is my responsibility to help formulate and oversee the application of academic regulations in the School, which includes general requirements on what counts as student coursework. Hence the research involves both the subject-based and managerial aspects of my role.

When I came to Roehampton University in 1997, I found myself teaching and soon leading an MA programme and in particular one module that has remained consistent and barely altered throughout the ten years – the practical project. Reflecting now upon the module's lack of change, the very title, 'practical project' could be seen to imply doing, making, practising skills with materials and processes - one could even say, an unproblematic approach.

Seeking to respond to teachers' expressed needs for continuing professional development (CPD) (Hall, 2003a), a decline in recruitment to 'traditional' MA programmes in Art & Design Education, the rapid growth in popularity of the Artist Teacher Scheme (Hall, 2006) and to student demand, visual work and practical approaches to MA coursework both at Roehampton and other Universities have expanded. A further motivation for my research is to respond to a certain scepticism within my own and other universities that visual work can be a legitimate form of research in a taught postgraduate programme. Schneider and Wright (2006) highlight similar contestation in debates about interdisciplinarity in contemporary art and anthropology:

> Other arguments have revolved around a division, either complementary or antagonistic, between visual works and texts, with the latter retaining a privileged authority….anthropologists are increasingly wary of the assumption that text and language are the only paradigms for understanding and explanation, and that meaning can only be discovered by translating or decoding 'texts' (Schneider and Wright, 2006:8).

Building upon my previous research

My thesis research relates closely to and builds upon my IFS research into the Artist-Teacher Scheme (Hall, 2006). Whereas my IFS research found that some Artist-Teacher MA programmes, in highlighting teachers' artist identities, sought to distance or even exclude their identities and roles as teachers, MA Art Education

programmes are keen to place the dual or hybrid identities of artist teachers at the core of modules that employ art practice. For the student on an MA Art Education programme, their teacher identity may be to the fore and remain so, or they may embark upon the MA led by their identity as an artist. Identity is a key issue in relation to my question about the effect the practical mode of study has upon students personally and professionally (Robins, 2003).

My IFS research (Hall, 2006) concluded that connections between art practice, teaching and learning, for some artist-teachers are complex, diverse, difficult to articulate and challenging to implement. The benefits of teachers' making practices for their teaching may be realized immediately, concurrently with the learning experiences, or in the medium to longer-term, as the advantages do not easily lend themselves to 'impact measurement'. Benefits can be postponed or filter through into pedagogical constructions in subtly meaningful ways. Such indeterminacy of benefits is significant as it sits uncomfortably in our current educational climate of the 'quick-fix' that claims to provide immediate, demonstrable results through impact upon practice. We appear to live now with an 'input-output' model of education that measures input, output and the difference or gain, valuing the short-term and the instrumental over the long-term benefits, not to speak of the educational experience itself (Eisner, 2005). My IFS research indicated the possibility of a 'slow-burn' as the benefits of taking part in the artist-teacher scheme may not 'deliver' an immediate impact on practice but take time to filter through. The gains of an educational experience cannot necessarily be paraded easily or simply, frustrating the obsession, prevalent in all sectors of education, with accountability and measurement. What Strathern (1997, 2000) terms a bloated audit culture threatens to jeopardise the life it audits with a potentially negative and damaging influence on the very professional practice that inspection and audit claim to enhance.

I also concluded in my IFS that artist-teachers need to develop skills of negotiation through which they can continuously re-appraise their art practice and, at an appropriate point in time, use that practice to inform their teaching.

Such latent or implied benefits appeared to flow as undercurrents to the artist-teachers' practices and were not always brought to the surface and to critical understanding. Artist-teachers were also warned by their tutors to avoid attempts to construe pedagogical links in an over-simplified, obvious or otherwise facile way but strive to develop innovative and intellectually rigorous pedagogical practices (Hall, 2006).

What do these findings from my artist teacher scheme research mean for the thesis? The implicit and intuitive understandings about the value of art practice to education that emerged from my IFS have also informed my thesis research into students' and tutors' perceptions and experiences of practice-based coursework in an MA programme. It is interesting to consider here the three guiding principles of the Practical Project module at Roehampton, as stated in the module handbook:

> That engagement with art practice can provide a valuable means of professional learning and development for teachers of art and design

> The recognition that art practice is itself a form of research or enquiry

> That useful connections can be made between art practice and teaching and learning in art and design (Roehampton University, 2007:2)

Students have often found the third of these principles difficult to articulate in either their oral presentation or their written report, the practical project having three assessed elements:

1)   An exhibition of practical creative work.   45%

The exhibition will be mounted in an appropriate space in the art and design education studios. The artwork should be exhibited to high professional standards. Slides, videos, data projection or other AVA equipment may be used as part of and/or to supplement the exhibited work.

2)   A written research report of 2,500 to 3,500 words   30%

which should:
i)   demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively in writing

ii)   clarify the main ideas, background thinking and reading which guided the practical work and related research

iii)   make clear a rationale, the intentions and outcomes of the project

3)   **A presentation of your coursework to an invited audience 25%**

which should:

i)   present your project orally through a talk of about 30 minutes, including an opportunity for questions and discussion

ii)   be coherent, well-structured and summarise your intentions and findings

The marking criteria published in the programme handbook will be used by first and second markers to grade your work (Roehampton University, 2007, p.7).

My feeling before undertaking this research was that students' reticence in articulating potential links between their art practice and their teaching may arise, in part, from their approach to the practical project, which is distinct from other modules which are assessed through written assignments. Whilst an assignment may be planned in particular rational and linear ways, students' approaches to the practical project are more creative, open-ended and unpredictable. Students' ideas and making may be associated with curriculum or lesson planning and a different, more rational and logical mode of thinking. My feeling is that such intuitions and notions may be experienced as visceral and in the bloodstreams of artist teachers, and some students may not want to examine them too closely for fear they will lose some of their potency. Furthermore, the pedagogical potential of students' art practice can be constructed at the stage of reading and interpreting the work, rather than at the intentional, making stage. Seen in this way, the pedagogical potential can become a social and dialogic process rather than the sole responsibility of one individual.

Why is it argued that the practical project needs the 'legitimization' of a written report and oral presentation? Stenhouse's (1984) claim is that research and improvement is implicit in an artist's practice. Sullivan's (2005) thesis is that visual research methods can be grounded in the practices of the studio and that these are robust enough to satisfy rigorous institutional demands; furthermore, Sullivan argues that, whilst the sciences have their research paradigms, and educational research has identified itself with social science approaches, the arts

lack such paradigms and might be strengthened if theorized as research and '…built upon sound theoretical principles' (Sullivan, 2005:xiii).

Art and design education is a discipline that draws upon and synthesizes the contributory fields of both art and education in its epistemologies and research methodologies, so 'sound theoretical principles' to support practice-based coursework in the Roehampton MA programme are likely to be drawn from a broad theoretical background. Furthermore, the MA degree at Roehampton is titled Art, Craft & Design Education and the extract from the module booklet above refers to 'art and design' and 'artworks'. Such variation and inconsistency in the use of terminology reflects the National Curriculum for Art & Design in England which states:

> The study of art, craft and design should include:
> a). Work in, and across, the areas of fine art, craft and design, including both applied and fine art practices (QCA, 2008)

I acknowledge that the practical project currently reflects the bias in the English National Curriculum towards fine art (Downing and Watson, 2004), though the project is capable of including work in craft and design. Indeed, one of the research participants worked in dyed and printed textiles, though questions around the scope of the art and design curriculum, its inter-disciplinarity and its nomenclature remain contentious.

Theoretical and methodological perspectives

> As humans studying humans communicating, we are inside what we are studying. The reflexive qualities of human communication should be accommodated and integrated into research and its products (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 743).

Necessarily as an EdD student, the chosen field of research is an area of my professional practice and, as Holliday (2002) suggests, this places me in a self-reflexive, self-observant position. The area of enquiry represents a long-standing preoccupation in my academic and professional working life; I see reflexive and narrative methodologies enabling me to connect the disciplines of educational research with the living of my professional life. Following Ellis and Bochner's

assertion that 'In reflexive ethnographies, the researcher's personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study' (2000: 740), my experience as tutor is studied alongside the experiences of the students, as a co-participant in the research. Another tutor is involved and participated in the research, though I am the named module tutor for the practical project and have led practice-based approaches to the dissertation.

Tedlock (1991) distinguishes between ethnographic memoir as a backstage story of the research and narrative ethnography,

> Where the ethnographer's experiences are incorporated into the ethnographic description and analysis of others and the emphasis is on the ethnographic dialogue or encounter between the narrator and members of the group being studied (Tedlock, 1991: 78).

Opportunism is of the essence of qualitative research (Holliday, 2002) and I am responding to a problematic social reality which is paradoxically both successful and valued but at the same time is unexplored, instinctive and lacks an explicit theoretical framework. Practice-based study in the Roehampton MA appears to be based upon what Winter (1993) refers to as an implicit, taken for granted theory that can include personal assumptions and beliefs and deeply internalized professional beliefs, lacking a theory of visual arts practice as research (Sullivan, 2005).

My strategy is to narrate the layers of lived experience of the students and tutors in undertaking and supervising the practical project. Connecting the student and tutor accounts, I narrate my own presence as the researcher, using these individual understandings and reflections to develop new understandings of the possible meanings of practice-based work. I am mindful of Holliday's (2002) view that the research focus, themes and appropriate research tools emerge and evolve as the research progresses, though this is not to say that there are no pre-determined decisions. My experience of planning and doing the research has been characterised by an intuitive and subjective meandering through the labyrinthine alternative paradigms and methodologies in order to gradually evolve an amalgam of approaches and methods. My approach contrasts with the rational, linear,

decision-making approach proposed in handbooks and guides (Burgess et al, 2006).

My methodology can best be described as heuristic research, which has its foundations in phenomenology but, unlike phenomenological research, requires the researcher to undergo the experience of the phenomenon and engage in an autobiographical process of self-discovery (Moustakas, 1990). Reflexivity is clearly key to this research process and, as Gray and Malins relate when discussing research positions in art and design,

> ...it is clear that researchers have been characteristically eclectic, diverse and creative in the methodologies they have adopted. When necessary, they have drawn on positivist experimental methodologies, constructivist interpretation and reflection, and invented hybrid methodologies involving a synthesis of many diverse research methods and techniques. So a characteristic of 'artistic' methodology is a pluralist approach using a multi-method technique tailored to the individual project (Gray and Malins, 2004: 21).

New meanings and scope for professional learning and development are inherent in our experience of practice itself; a challenge lies in developing sufficient reflexivity to reveal and articulate what is hidden. Reflexivity is central to the model of student learning in these visual modes whereby the student is engaged and implicated as a researcher, part of the research and the artwork, findings or outcome, just as an artist is inextricably part of their artwork. However, the reflexivity is amplified as the MA student is challenged to reflect upon their role as artist teacher, as both an artist and an educator. My thesis research intervenes in this reflexive ethos as a form of meta-reflection - a further layer of description and interpretation that seeks to enhance and enrich the work that is done and our understandings of it. Through reflexivity, 'the researcher becomes part of the emerging text' (Sullivan, 2005: xv) and thus writes themselves into the research.

Design of the research, including methods of data collection and analysis
The research strategy is to use a heuristic process to study students' and tutors' perceptions and understandings of practical coursework in an MA programme. A sample of students and one other tutor was interviewed through open-ended,

unstructured interviews. There are small numbers of students involved overall, so the sample was self-selecting and opportunistically selected; in fact, all 5 students taking the practical project in 2007 at Roehampton (the programme is also offered in Cyprus) plus a sixth student who has completed the practical project and gone on to complete her dissertation in visual mode, were interviewed. I kept a diary of reflections and field notes, not only to augment the research but as a key research tool, given my centrality to the research. The field notes were often made following group tutorials from my perspective as a participant observer, attempting to capture the significance of the group tutorial as a particular social and educational situation (Holliday, 2002). I was interested in what I brought to the research and have brought intuitively to the practical project over the last ten years but have not necessarily reflected upon or articulated. Material from the research setting – student coursework and dissertations, reports and other material written by students, my tutorial notes and feedback to students – was also reflected upon through my diary. Analysis of the qualitative data identified emergent themes and concepts which were interpreted and related back to theories emerging from the literature and to my research questions.

The value of the study and its potential contribution to professional and academic knowledge

From the outset, I anticipated how the research might prove beneficial to students' learning; to my professional thinking and practice; to knowledge in the field; and to the design of practical modules in the MA. Through the research process and at its conclusion, I found the benefits to myself and my practice were greater than anticipated, as recounted in the final chapter. In shedding light on this area of the MA Art Education programme at Roehampton, I hoped the new-found knowledge and deeper understanding would support the development and extension of practical work as a representation of knowledge and as a mode of study. Whilst my research is not action research whereby change is built into the methodology, it seemed inevitable that engagement in the research, for all participants, might influence and alter students and tutors' experiences of the project. At the beginning, I expected the research process might influence the way that I taught the project, my growing understanding inevitably colouring interactions with

students. At the conclusion of the research I expected that the research findings would inform a reappraisal of the practical project, suggesting new directions and possibilities. I also speculated that the research results might inform the development of the practical mode of masters' dissertation, guidance in methodologies and methods currently being concentrated almost exclusively upon written modes of enquiry. As students pursue this form of enquiry for their masters' degrees, I hoped that some students might be interested in pursuing practice-based research for their EdD or PhD, and my findings could support such development, opening research degrees up to visual methodologies and outputs in the field of art and design education. These and other benefits and implications are discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter Two

Intertextuality and Reflexivity: a universe of discourse

> We will maintain that art is always in translation, because it is matter: it is materially realised ideas. It is these ideas, which in their specificity claim an interesting space for research: it could be argued that art's methods make transparent those obdurate binaries between word and deed; contemplation and action; theory and practice; feeling and cognition; intuition and reason; imagination and logic (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006: 8).

> Intertextuality describes and categorizes patterns we construct between texts of different kinds (Lemke,1992: 257).

A literature review should provide a theoretical framework or 'universe of discourse' which generates an agenda for research and an analytical framework within which results can be discussed (Mercer, 1980). In reviewing literature related to my research focus and research questions, I have drawn upon authors referenced for my IFS research into the Artist Teacher Scheme and, in foregrounding reflexivity in both the production (writing) and consumption (reading) of this research text, have employed Usher and Edwards' (1994) framework for understanding texts, derived from Derrida:

> *Con-text* (or that which is 'with' the text); the situatedness of the researcher/reader – embodiedness, embeddedness, e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, biography;

> *Pre-text* (or that which is 'before' the text); language and signification, binary oppositions, writing and textual strategies, culture and interpretive traditions;

> *Sub-text* (or that which is 'beneath' the text); professional paradigms and discourses, power-knowledge formations (Usher and Edwards, 1994:153).

These three elements – context, pretext and subtext - provide structure for this review of literature, which opens with a discussion of the concept of intertextuality as an overarching construct, and closes with a discussion of reflexivity as the critical action that connects the threads between texts and adds my own voice; a different way of being in the world?

Intertextuality: tracing texts

Elsewhere, Usher (1996) develops a fourth construct of *inter-text*, or that which is between texts. Intertextuality refers to the permeation of any particular text by 'the structure of the trace...the interlacings and resonances with other texts' (Wood, 1990: 47). For my review of literature, a critical synthesis of work that has been done in the field, this means writing and reading between and through particular texts, drawing traces and threads relating the various sources and resources, or *re-sources* in the sense that I am revisiting authors and sources that have already proved useful for my artist teacher research (Hall, 2006).

I speculate, like Lemke (1992), whether the principles of intertextuality can be applied across semiotic texts of different kinds. Following Derrida, Usher and Edwards define text as 'any organized network of meaning; its characteristic is that it is always interpretable' (1994:144).

> As people act and react to each other they use language and other semiotic systems to make meaning, to constitute social relationships, and to take social action. The social construction of intertextuality both influences and occurs within a cultural ideology that constrains what texts may be juxtaposed and how these texts might be juxtaposed (Bloome and Egan-Robson, 1993: 305).

For me, the concept of intertextuality has a resonance, not just for identifying patterns between texts of different kinds but supporting correspondences, or a lack of them, between the artist self and teacher self; between art practice and pedagogy; between written and other texts, such as art objects; between contexts, such as the multiple sites of enquiry and practice; between literatures on research methodologies, art education and other disciplines. Thus, I am arguing that all the sources of interpretation and theory in this thesis are 'texts' – data collected through interviews and my reflective diary, data existing in the form of written work by students, literature related to the area of enquiry.

My strategy to employ intertextuality as a construct for this chapter should not imply that the correspondence is necessarily a positive or consistent relationship. Equally, the relationship between texts could represent a discongruence, a tension, disjunction or disturbance. Nor should using an intertextuality construct imply that

all the texts are equally accessible: I am interested in locating and articulating what is said and unsaid; what is explicit and what is implied or hidden; in short, in questioning and understanding assumptions, in order to produce new knowledge.

> It is like reading a passage from a book and knowing that what you're reading fits with other readings from other books; that is, one text relates in some way to another text, thus giving a feeling of being grounded in what is known, or typical. The process of texts referring to other texts, or a sign in one sign system being imported into another sign system, may be called more generally, 'intertextuality' (Schostak and Schostak, 2008: 42).

For Usher, intertextuality means that texts have an endless referability. This puts me in mind of the late Professor Leslie Perry (tutor on the MA Art & Design in Education programme at the Institute of Education during my studies, 1987-89) who spoke of referencing as 'a link in a chain of scholarship'. Perry was referring to acknowledging authors and other sources of ideas though I now think the description applies to research writing itself or any writing in which we become part of the discourse we reference. Barthes (1977:146) suggests a text is '…a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'.

Intertextuality is like a crossroads, or rather, a complex intersection of texts; 'It is that place which opens up to a range of possible directions or communications with other (con)textual sites' (Schostak and Schostak, 2008: 76). For example, is there a point of tension at which quality and standards texts interact with art education texts, the normative, controlling tendencies of the former, clashing or conflicting with the open-ended, critical tendencies of the latter?

Pre-text: practice-based work as a situated phenomenon
In this section I shall explore the language of the module – how it is written and communicated to students through the module booklet and through exemplars of previous texts or projects. I shall examine how such exemplars may have presented students with models for practice and how these models may unwittingly constrain possibilities by presenting clear indicators of expectations.
By contrast, only one student, to date, has submitted an MA Dissertation in 'a practical or exhibition mode', thus there is an exemplar of one. The little written guidance that exists for the practice-based dissertation will also be investigated.

In this module, you will develop your creative work as an artist, craftworker or designer as a form of research that is integral to your role and professional knowledge as an educator (Roehampton University, 2006: 3).

Practical work in this MA Art Education programme is a situated phenomenon, culturally bounded by the higher education academy; specifically located in a Masters' programme in the School of Education at Roehampton University in London; developed for a particular audience of MA students, mostly teachers undertaking the MA as a form of continuing professional development; developed by tutors with a highly specialized interest and background in this area. I have identified only three MA Art Education programmes in England, in addition to Roehampton, that currently offer practice-based work as part of the programme of study, which is otherwise language-based: the Institute of Education (University of London), Norwich School of Art & Design and the University of Exeter. Birmingham City University (formerly University of Central England [UCE]) offers a taught MA programme in Art, Design and Education that does not include a practice-based element, although the university also offers a parallel Artist-Teacher MA. Interestingly, Norwich's and Birmingham's MA programmes originate in schools or departments of art, although the Birmingham programmes straddle the education faculty. There are also five Masters Degree awards that relate to the Artist Teacher Scheme: Goldsmiths University of London; Birmingham City University; Bath Spa University; Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Liverpool John Moores University.

Reflections upon the language used in writing the module includes not only how the module booklet used by students is written, but the language used in writing the validated module description and the spoken language used in seminars and tutorials. The term 'practical project' is used as shorthand for its full title of Art, Craft and Design Education Practical Project. The term 'practical' has connotations with doing and making: "available or useful in practice; engaged in practice, practising, inclined or suited to action rather than speculation" (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1987). These definitions imply something that works, that is effective and a review of dictionary definitions of 'practice' reveals:

1. Habitual action or carrying on;
2. Repeated exercise in an art, handicraft;
3. Professional work;
4. Scheming, contrivance, artifice;
5. Mode of finding value of given number;
6. Good practice i) satisfactory procedure; ii) means of improving one's skill;

These definitions imply continuity not innovation and lack a sense of criticality, a questioning of what works. The emphasis is on objects or artifacts rather than ideas; 'making' rather than 'meaning', thus limiting rather than opening up the multiple ways that art can be produced, viewed and interpreted. These reflections have been prompted by my research as, although university monitoring processes require academics to annually, if not continuously, review and critically reflect upon their taught programmes, I realize that this process can be somewhat cursory and selective. The process of conducting research positions academics differently from more routine teaching review and evaluation processes. Research, whilst meaning, literally, re-searching or looking again, is conducted with understanding as the goal or aim. The evaluation or periodic review of a taught programme, on the other hand, often has a more limited purpose. Monitoring the quality of provision and the standards attained by students, does not require, or normally involve, as deep or rigorous an analysis as that required by research. Through re-reading the text of the module booklet I have been made aware that the language and terminology used in the practice-based modes has become invisible to me and represent tacit, taken-for-granted assumptions. I do recognize, however, that module booklets are written for a student readership, are what one might refer to as information-driven and aim to make the expectations and procedures clear to students.

> When teachers are involved in the process of daily planning, adapting materials, developing courses, arranging subject matter content, teaching, evaluating and so forth, they do so largely uncritically and unreflectively. This is the attitude of everyday work. The practical in this sense is a concern of ordinary life; it expresses itself in the routines or taken for granted grounds of everyday activities (van Manen, 1977:206).

The term 'project' is also laden with assumptions and pre-conceptions, given its dictionary definition to 'plan, contrive, scheme, course of action'. However, whilst the module invites students to engage in 'art, craft or design', definitions to which I

shall turn shortly, the term project is frequently not a term employed by artists who do not plan a 'course of action', still less a scheme of work, but rather, construct an 'object of thinking' to employ Macleod and Holdridge's (2006) term. The term 'project' tends to align the module with particular conceptions of teaching and learning with an emphasis on planning and schemes of work which predict outcomes, whereas:

> ...the findings presented through art are always a posteriori and thus, ill suited to the institution's pursuit of prescribed outcomes. Meanings are made after the event, through the act of viewing or contemplation and by the artist initially (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006: 7).

Therefore, the title of the module appears to me now, to constrain rather than promote the more creative, open-ended, personal approach that is intended. Rather than challenging the status quo in terms of the art curriculum in schools, the apparently simple terminology of the title could be reinforcing it.

On turning to the module objectives for the practical project:

> The objectives of this practical project are for you to:

- reflect upon the nature, meaning and educational implications of your practical work as an artist, designer or craftsperson

- develop a substantial body of practical work that functions as a basis for research into art, craft and design education

- develop your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in art, craft and design education

- gain critical insights into your own practice and creative processes in relation to philosophical, psychological, historical and cultural issues in art, craft and design education

- support the development of a coherent rationale for curriculum planning in art, craft and design education through the critical analysis of your own art practice

- gain confidence in the validity of personal creative work as a means of developing your teaching in art, craft and design
  (Roehampton University, 2006: 3).

The reference in these objectives is to 'art, craft and design' yet the great majority of MA students choose to focus upon art practice with only a few selecting craft or design practices. The module does not include the Artist Teacher Scheme's specific reference to 'contemporary art practice' (Galloway et al, 2006), however, Adams and Herne (2007) suggest that having debates around definitions of contemporary art practice was beneficial to their research with teachers, pupils and curators, even if no consensus was reached.

A further example of the language of module objectives or learning confirming rather than challenging existing pedagogical practices, occurs when the module is introduced in the first seminar, when I show examples of previous projects. Students are likely to read these exemplars as 'texts' that are successful, have passed the module and have been selected by the module tutor to exemplify good practice. Therefore, students may be less likely to critique or challenge the ideas and approaches such examples illustrate. A diversity of work is shown in terms of subjects, media, backgrounds and locations of students – for example, drawn from the off-site collaborative provision in Portugal and Cyprus as well as the London-based programme – but nevertheless, the samples shown must act, for some students, as powerful models of practice which, unintentionally on my part, could reinforce the expectations that I have. Such revelatory reflections lead me to question whether I have unconsciously been trying to maintain a control and dominance over the practical project module, anxious to maintain standards, reinforcing the landscape of power between tutor and students? Reflecting on this statement helps me pay attention to how my own methodologies and epistemologies are helping create the realities I am studying and reminds me that we are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end (Polkinghorne, 1988).

My IFS acknowledged tensions between art practice as a contested concept about which there can be no settlement or consensus (Furlong et al, 2000) and the prevailing ethos in school education which is governed by standards, clearly defined objectives and their assessment. In schools, government intervention in the school curriculum from the introduction of the GCSE examination in 1986

through the National Curriculum for Art, introduced in 1992, to the present, the emphasis has been on practice and the pragmatic, 'what works best' in attaining government-defined standards of attainment. The model for teacher development through this period has focused upon sharing and learning from best or good practice, there being no place for theory and the critique of practice (Steers, 2003). I now see an alignment between the language of the practical project at Roehampton and the prevailing ethos in school art education.

The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS), by contrast, is as theoretical as it is practical, concerned with looking at and interpreting art and engaging with theories of contemporary art practice as much as with making art, per se. Burgess and Addison see the ATS as

> ...enabling teachers to re-engage with their practice in such a way that they work in dialogue with contemporary practice and critical theory. This militates against the modernist procedures that may have previously limited their practice in schools (Burgess and Addison, 2004: 34).

Addison and Burgess's concerns about the narrowness and stagnation of the art curriculum and its frequent failure to engage with contemporary art have been expressed by them elsewhere (Addison and Burgess, 2003) and by many others over a ten year period (Dawtrey et al, 1996; Swift and Steers,1999; Hughes,1998; Atkinson, 2006). The critical studies movement through the 1980s and 1990s, supported a re-engagement with meaning and interpretation in the art and design curriculum, long seen as dominated by making and process (Taylor, 1986). However, despite the concept of critical and contextual studies being signalled in curriculum reforms during this same period of the1980s and 1990s, it is argued that curriculum practices in schools continue to be dominated by making (Tallack, 2004).

A further criticism of the art and design curriculum has been its narrow focus on modernism, European art and male artists, leading to the referencing of a small number of artists to the exclusion of contemporary art or even recent modern art (QCA, 1998; Swift and Steers, 1999; Downing and Watson, 2004). Dawtrey et al (1996) and Addison (2005) question the modernist rhetoric of expressivism and

selfhood that pervades art education and call for a more socially engaged perspective. These critics suggest that the National Curriculum for Art & Design, along with GCSE and GCE examination syllabuses and pressure on teachers to improve examination results, far from progressing the art curriculum, have contributed to this conservatism. For them, contemporary art practice is being ignored or avoided by art and design teachers and critics suggest strategies for renewing and re-invigorating the curriculum. Somewhat paradoxically, this situation has developed during a period of burgeoning public and media interest in contemporary art, fuelled, for example, by the opening of Tate Modern in London and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art on Tyneside. Such growing interest has also been aided by the growth and development of gallery education programmes, supported by the internet as a key communication tool (NSEAD, 2004).

Research by Downing and Watson (2004) commissioned by the Arts Council of England (ACE) in association with Tate, explored the content of the art curriculum in secondary school, investigated the approaches teachers have developed and considered whether there is a place for contemporary art in schools. The key findings were that the art curriculum continues to be dominated by references to the same narrow range of male, European artists and focuses on drawing and painting processes to the exclusion of other media, often ignoring the time-based media used by many contemporary artists.

Contemporary art is a highly contested and diverse range of practices, charactersised variously as socially engaged art or issues-based art that deals with, for example, identity, culture, politics, race, sexuality and gender (Herne, 2005). It can also be identified through its plurality, creativity and diversity (Swift and Steers, 1999); its derivation of content from unlimited fields of knowledge and disciplines; and its appropriation of traditional art practices, genres and media.

> Above all, contemporary art raises questions and is concerned with the conceptual and the production of meaning as much as the aesthetic (Herne, 2005: 6).

Does the language of this practical project influence the texts of other modules, for example, the introductory module in which key concepts, trends and issues in art education are debated? Could the familiar language of 'making' and 'good practice'

be undermining the criticality we, as tutors, are trying to encourage in other modules? What I have tried to do in this first section is to bring to critical awareness the 'languaging' of the practical approaches promoted by the practical project.

> Here language needs to be seen not simply as a neutral vehicle for conveying representations but as an activity of 'languaging' , the means through which the representational work of research is carried out (Usher, 1996: 46).

Con-text: languages and practices

> Here, what is being highlighted is the socio-cultural subjective, the contextual self or, to put it another way, the embodied and embedded self. By asking reflexive questions about con-text we can scrutinize the 'knowledging' effects of the self that researches (writes) and the self that 'reads' research, a self with an autobiography marked by the significations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, etc. (Usher, 1996: 45).

Usher goes on to argue that the significations that mark our autobiographies are socio-cultural products that affect the ways that research is produced and read. They are not simply biases that can be acknowledged and controlled but are inextricably part of us. 'They are the marks of our trajectory of our desires and emotional investments in the research act' (Usher, 1996: 45).

For Usher (1996) then, the con-text of the research is that which is 'with' the text, in the sense of the situated autobiography of the researcher/reader. The importance of my autobiography in relation to my research focus and my professional life has been acknowledged in the first chapter. However, I take the notion of con-text further, to include not only the situatedness of the producer and reader of the research, but also the situated nature of practice-based coursework within the MA programme. Practice-based coursework is culturally specific and context-bound as a site of enquiry within this particular Masters' programme. The students undertaking practice-based coursework, both for the practical project module and for the dissertation, are working within and between a number of related contexts. I have identified at least four areas for discussing the situatedness or contextualization of the MA students' learning, headed:

- a universe of discourses

- made and written texts
- multiple sites of practice
- communities of practice

A universe of discourses

Students' learning in the 'practical' modes relates to other modules in the MA programme and, more specifically, to concepts, debates, issues and theories within the field of art education. Both the practical project and the dissertation require students to engage with theory, for example exploring the inter-play between making and teaching art. Thus, the MA programme aims to construct theoretical frameworks for students, similar to what Mercer (1980) refers to as a 'universe of discourse', within which students' learning should be contextualised or situated. An MA student studies in a theoretical context in their chosen field of enquiry. Rather than working in relative isolation, on highly localized or parochial concerns, the personal and specific is contextualized in the abstractions and generalizations of theory, or as Goodson puts it, there should be a dialogue of 'a story of action within a theory of context' (2005:198).

My sense now, is that students should be interacting with and inter-relating all their sources of ideas – all their texts – to generate new meanings and possibilities. Examples of the texts and theories MA students study in other modules are given in the preceding section, where the content of the school art curriculum and its failure to engage with contemporary art practices is discussed. My earlier reflections upon the language and presentation of the practical modes and a possible tendency to direct or even control student responses, suggests that scope for students' development may be unintentionally narrowed rather than broadened. Is such an unconscious move in response to the perceived interests or demands of my 'alter ego' as an Assistant Dean with quality and standards responsibilities? Has a quality assurance 'mentality' unconsciously and, until now imperceptibly, crept in to my professional consciousness and applied a brake to developments? Can we 'assure' quality in an area of creative arts – i.e. safely and securely predict high quality and standards and square this with the risk-taking and uncertainty that characterizes creative practice? Such tensions were explored in an earlier piece of

my EdD research, entitled *Quality, Representation and Accountability in Higher Education: enabling or constraining processes?* (Hall, 2004).

Made and written texts

Students are working within the context of the MA programme as a whole, which, being located in a university School of Education, is concerned with the study of art and design in education. The main and traditional form of assessment in the MA Art Education and in all MA programmes in the School, is written work, in the form of essays, reports and dissertations. Such affiliation to text and number (Eisner, 1998), reflects the alignment of Education as a discipline within the social sciences rather than the arts in academic infrastructures. This leaves the position of practice-based forms of enquiry and knowledge creation in the academy at best uncertain and at worst marginalized and undervalued (Sullivan, 2005; Gray and Malins, 2004; Macleod and Holdridge, 2006). Hence, my MA students are working within the contested space occupied by made and written texts, each with epistemological claims.

Artist teachers develop critical skills in relation to their own and other artists' work and acknowledge art practice as a legitimate research practice that does not need to be framed by conventional text-based academic enquiry (Macleod and Holdridge, 2004). Art teachers have found making their own art to be the most powerful form of continuing professional development (Adams, 2003; Hall, 2005). The rationale for the inclusion of practical artwork within the MA programme at Roehampton is to provide an alternative mode of knowing and representation that, for teachers of art, complements written texts. As Eisner writes,

> The meaning that representation carries is both constrained and made possible by the form of representation we employ. Not everything can be "said" with anything. Poetic meaning requires poetic forms of thought and poetically treated form. Visual art requires forms of thought that address the import of visual imagery (Eisner, 2005:153).

Equally, Sullivan (2005) argues that knowledge in the visual arts comprises a different way of knowing within hermeneutic and artistic traditions of inquiry rather than positivist, objectivist positions. MA art education students already find

themselves drawn to qualitative, interpretivist approaches rather than quantitative, positivist approaches to written research texts (Mason, 1990; Denscombe, 1990). In practice-based approaches, students are challenged to go a step further to create what one might call 'made research texts'. Gray and Malins (2004) support this view, suggesting that students in art and design education tend to engage with visual and experiential learning styles and therefore research methodologies should be characterized by the visual. Macelod and Holdridge (2006) promote processes of research that involve the making and interpretation of artworks:

> Writings here are presented in the shadow of art and those discourses which are proposed arise out of, and return to, material practice. Perhaps it is time to negotiate with and through the discourse of art and its uneasy embrace of linguistic systems. We need to bring our writing nearer to our making (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006:12).

Such discourses relate to the concept of moving between contested sites such as the studio and the university; 'I wonder if there is a relation more vexed, less satisfactorily theorized, and more seldom solved than the relation between studio art departments and other departments in the university' (Elkins, 2006: 241). Whilst I have explained that practice-based coursework takes place in the context of a School of Education, the field of art education within the school is interdisciplinary and straddles subject boundaries erected by the academy. I suggest that the MA Art Education students face at least as difficult a challenge as fine art students in finding ways of making art, writing about making art and writing about the pedagogical potential of their making practices. Students move between and combine semiotic codes and texts in an interdisciplinary area that, as Elkins (2006) suggests, is vexed, untheorised and unresolved.

Multiple sites of practice

Third, the potential contexts for enquiry are extended by students to include a variety of sites of practice - home, studio, school, university, classroom, gallery and museum, for example - and the connections students make between them. The concept of sites of practice is referenced to Rose (2001), who suggests that there are three sites at which the meaning of visual images can be made, or, I should want to argue, negotiated:

- the site of production: technological concerns with how the image was made
- the site of image: compositional or formal concerns with the look of the image
- the site of audiencing: contextual concerns with how the image is viewed and interpreted.

Rose's purpose was to analyse the sites and modalities of visual-meaning making; the third of her three categories, the site of audiencing, could prove useful in understanding how MA students approach the particular challenges of making artwork in the educational and institutional context of the MA programme. Raney and Hollands also shed some light on contextualization:

> A work of art, as *art*, consists not just of what is presented to the eyes but the kind of space it's displayed in, what is said and written about it, what is *not* said about it – in short, what at any given time the work is understood to mean or is capable of meaning (Raney and Hollands, 2000:18) *[Authors' italics].*

The reference to what the work is 'capable' of meaning, 'at any given time' implies latent or potential readings of the work at different points in time and in different contexts, which is useful when considering students' and tutors' interpretations of artwork undertaken for the MA practical project or the dissertation. The meanings of students' practice-based work - aesthetic, personal, educational or within any other frame of reference - is potentially co-constructed or negotiated at the site of audiencing rather than being planned, predicted and intended at the site of production. Furthermore, the interpretive process does not end there as further readings or re-readings potentially uncover new meanings.

Pazienza (1997) identifies a cross-over or reciprocity between the openness and adaptability present in the art-making processes of her studio with the dialogical ethos she tried to create in her classroom. In neither situation should one attempt to predict, still less control outcomes, but rather, to trust the dialogical exchange. With reference to her own artworks, Pazienza acknowledged that 'it is only upon reflection that I began to understand what meaning the image may have for me' (1997: 43). Furthermore, it was only through the retrospective reflection that writing involves that Pazienza understood the rich meanings of the conversations between

teaching and making art or between 'theoretical and artistic work [that] was tacitly but not explicitly connected' (Pazienza,1997: 45).

MA students may not be conscious of the importance of different sites of practice and enquiry but live with tacit understandings as they migrate from classroom to studio to seminar room and gallery. Reflective practice is thus presented to students as a central and integrating process of active learning through which such assumptions are examined. However, it should not be assumed that such migrations between sites are easy or comfortable. Burgess and Addison (2006) draw our attention to Foucault's (1977) definition of school as a pre-eminent site for discipline, a vision which, rather than being eroded by art education's rhetoric of creativity and self-expression, is being reinforced in the closely regulated, monitored and standardized regimes of schools.

> Border pedagogy asks that learners move into unfamiliar territory, whether
> of practice, place or time; it de-centres as it re-maps. Like contemporary art,
> it encourages risky practice (Burgess and Addison, 2004: 33).

Border pedagogy seeks to reconcile the critical reason and individuality of modernism with a postmodern world 'constituted in differences' (Giroux, 1992: 29). Burgess and Addison argue for incremental transformation (as opposed to Taylor's [1986] concept of conversive transformation) which develops the dialogic and discursive; invites interventions; and broadens knowledge in partnership with external agencies, particularly contemporary galleries and artists, challenging students to go beyond what is already known. Artist teachers reported experiencing difficulties and tensions as they navigated between their various sites of practice (Hall, 2006) and it may be that MA students engaging in practice-based coursework experience similar tensions. Hollands (2004) identifies an 'unthought space' where art and teaching potentially reside, where artist and teacher roles are interchangeable and where nothing is defined or decided.

> Yet, what the artist/teacher and student have in common is the necessity to
> enter an empty space; not one filled with targets, visual aids and materials,
> but the void where ideas are not yet formed (Hollands, 2004:71).

Communities of practice

> ...knowledge that is produced by artists enters into communities of users whose interests apply new understandings from different personal, educational, social and cultural perspectives (Sullivan, 2005:100).

The concept of communities of practice recognises the situated nature of learning in social situations and remembering through activity (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In the context of my research, communities of practice are represented by the group of MA students and tutors; the students' colleagues in school or in galleries and museum, artist colleagues, the students' pupils in school and other individuals or groups. The MA students are increasingly keen to network and develop mutual support systems that stretch beyond the traditional tutor-student relationship, that are not bounded but fluid, with new members joining and leaving flexibly. It is significant that the students have requested more group tutorials and meetings of the group to counter feelings of isolation and separation, recognizing that 'Educational practices are conducted or engaged in within societies of shared values and understandings' (Pring, 2000:138).

In their evaluation of the artist teacher scheme (ATS), Galloway et al (2006) found the related concepts of situated learning and communities of practice to be amongst the most interesting aspects, noting that the participants in the ATS tended to recognize each other as artists rather than as teachers. 'They exchange ideas, attitudes, techniques and experiences in a way which contributes to their developing artistic identity' (Galloway et al, 2006: 63).

Wenger (1998) focuses upon learning as social participation and learners as 'active participants in the practices of social communities...constructing identities in relation to these communities' (Wenger, 1998: 4). Participation does not only refer to particular activities or particular groups of people but to participation as a wider, more encompassing activity. Thus Wenger uses the concept of communities of practice as a point of entry into a broader conceptual framework of which it is a constituent element. 'Such participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do' (Wenger, 1998:4). I am also drawn to Wenger's notion that we shape or create practices in our work and, in so doing,

connect the familiar with the novel, linking '... the eye-opening character of novelty and the forgotten familiarity of obviousness....perhaps that is the mark of our most useful insights' (Wenger, 1998: 7).

Sub-text: identities and power relations

The sub-text to the research literature refers to that which lies beneath the text, including professional paradigms and discourses, and power-knowledge formations (Usher and Edwards, 1994). Claims to knowledge are implicated with the operation of power which is expressed through the production and consumption of texts. Usher (1996) argues researchers need to interrogate the implications of their practices within discourses of power, in order to avoid either a complacent acceptance of research as neutral or innocent, or a broad assumption that it is useful or emancipatory. The sub-text includes consideration of two specific areas of discourse: the professional identities of MA students and the gendered power-relations in the MA programme.

<u>Professional identities</u>

The identity transformations or rites of passage from artist to teacher that student teachers of art and design undergo has been widely discussed (Dalton, 2001; Robins, 2003; Atkinson, 2003; Addison and Burgess, 2004; Adams, 2007). Adams suggests the transition from artist to teacher is profound and highlights problems of expression as 'visually and spatially adept artist-learners [are] constrained within a largely textual environment' (Adams, 2007:264).

It has also been widely noted (Adams, 2003; Stanley, 2004; Hyde, 2004; Hall, 2006) that artist teachers, rather than reverting to an artist identity, seek to establish a new hybrid, dual identity that synthesizes the artist self and the teacher self. It could be argued that the artist teacher scheme represents a process of professional renewal rather than reversion, though such a process of construction is neither simple nor easy. Both the terms 'teacher' and 'artist' are culturally-loaded and contested concepts and tensions between them can exist. Positions can be polarized with a didactic, transmission model of a teacher who is institutionally socialized in opposition to the artist as a '..critically creative individual...who

critiques the normative codes, rituals and conventions of the social milieu they inhabit' (Adams, 2007: 267). Galloway et al (2006) found that artist teachers tend to foreground their artist identities, backgrounding or sidelining their teacher identities, even if temporarily.

I am interested to discover what such identity-construction and negotiation holds for MA art education students, most of whom are practising teachers returning to or re-engaging with art practice through this module, as opposed to the ATS. One might assume these practitioners have established their teacher identities and are not required to shed or dismantle them for the sake of this project or the dissertation. However, there are also MA students who have not identified themselves as having an artist self before, if, for example, they hold a BA in Education rather than an art or design degree.

Who do MA students see their artwork being produced for? Exploring teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) (Hall, 2003), I found that CPD is seen by government, its agencies and teachers as primarily addressing government and institutional agendas before teachers' concerns or interests. Students see a Masters' degree in Education as award-bearing CPD that provides some space or scope for defining their own areas of enquiry, making choices and decisions of their own. There is also evidence (Adams, 2003; Hall, 2005) that teachers have continued to value direct engagement with art (through making and interpreting) as the most useful form of CPD and many students say they select Roehampton because of the emphasis given to the practical project.

The notion of MA students donning various personas or identities in sophisticated ways chimes with the hybrid identity of the artist teacher. I have argued (Hall, 2006) that educationists live with multiple professional identities that are continuously evolving and transforming , being constructed and re-constructed to suit shifting cultural and professional contexts. Equally,

> The identity of the artist is ambiguous and shifting so that individuals who construct themselves as artists do so in a climate of change and continuous challenge (Thornton, 2005:167).

Adams (2007) suggests identity is a contentious concept that can only approximately represent the complexities of subjectivity in our social engagement and practices. 'In the same way that meaning exists in its negotiation, identity exists – not as an object in and of itself – but in the constant work of negotiating the self' (Wenger, 1998:151). Through the practical project and practice-based approaches to the dissertation, an MA student is given additional space for the constant work of negotiating and re-negotiating their teacher self and their artist self. However, this subtext of professional identity can be seen as problematic for MA students who have not identified themselves as having an artist self before. Finally, and crucially, MA students can regain their identities as self-directed learners. In the research literature on ATS (Hyde, 2004; Stanley, 2003; Adams, 2003), artist teachers report that, in developing and renewing their knowledge and skills, they gain a sense of freedom from responsibility for others, as they shift their attention from pupils' learning to their own learning; furthermore, they experienced increased freedom in risk-taking in art practice and teaching.

Gender and power relations

Dalton (2001) argues that art education is gendered, denoting hierarchy not equality, the masculine art educator assuming greater power, significance and authority, despite being far outnumbered by female educators in every phase of education. The MA in Art, Craft and Design Education can be seen as being strongly gendered as both myself and the other tutor concerned with practice-based approaches, who is also the programme convener or leader, are male and all the students in the London-based cohort are female (In Cyprus, where the MA is delivered off-site, all but one of the student cohort is female and the link tutor in our partner university is female). Whilst my male colleague and I are responsible for managing, teaching and assessing the MA programme, casting us into positions of power and authority, I shall argue that our responsibilities go wider and deeper than operationalizing the programme on behalf of the university, and cover ethical, academic and pastoral concerns. Four factors are nominated, in addition to the fact of the female tutor in Cyprus, which arguably go at least some way to moderating the effects of the male dominance in tutor roles:

i)   My predecessor, Professor Rachel Mason, initiated the current MA degree at Roehampton in the early 1990s, led the programme until I took over in 1998 and continues to exert significant influence. For example, Professor Mason organizes an annual series of art education research seminars that MA students attend; one of the seminars involves MA students, former and current, leading discussion. Professor Mason also attends exhibitions presented by MA students and has a keen interest in the educational value of making in art, craft and design education (Mason and Houghton, 2003);

ii)   Our external examiner is female, a course leader for MA Art Education and for an MA Artist Teacher programme at a UK university;

iii)   Female art education tutors teaching other programmes at Roehampton attend research seminars and MA exhibitions;

iv)   The stance adopted in teaching the MA and in conducting this research aspires to be open, accountable and ethical. Quality assurance processes require student representation and attendance on programme board, with written and oral feedback invited from all students.

It is interesting to note, in relation to the fourth factor, an unforeseen benefit emanating from my Assistant Dean role in ensuring the responsible, accountable and ethical management of the programme, in accordance with university policies on equality. However, it is primarily in the ethos of the MA programme that we seek to promote and practice the human qualities of listening and care that Dalton identifies as feminine.

> Teaching, with its emphasis on feminine qualities of care and its socially unglamorous image, has traditionally been one of the areas where women have been allowed to carve out a space for themselves, and the teaching of art has always had its significant female and feminist art educators (Dalton, 2001:151).

Dalton cites Giroux as arguing that the power of real women can be undermined by the 'new patriarchy of the sensitive man' (Dalton, 2001: 33), a male deployment of femininity that surreptitiously seeks to maintain the status quo. I would argue that my male colleague and I take seriously the collective spirit of co-enquiry that informs our practice-based approaches in the MA. Furthermore, we have consciously sought to use the practice-based modules as mechanisms for carving

out spaces within the programme within which our students have genuine freedom and ownership of their work. This aim or intention is itself, of course, a subtext to the approaches studied in this research; there are further subtexts in relation to power that will be returned to in the following chapter when research processes are discussed.

Reflexivity and reflective practice

> We might want to argue that by foregrounding how we construct what we research, reflexivity is no longer a problem but a resource. It helps us to recognize that we are part of rather than apart from the world constructed through research. More than this, however, by becoming aware of the operation of reflexivity in the practice of research, the place of power, discourse and text, that which goes beyond the purely personal, is revealed (Usher and Edwards, 1994:148).

As stated in the opening chapter, reflexivity is a key concept in my research for three reasons. First, I have long held a keen interest in reflective practice: a process through which professionals subject their practice to continuous self-critical review in order to improve it - a key concept in professional education and development (Schon, 1983). Second, reflexivity is the means of interrogating and problematising our immersion as researchers within research communities (Usher and Edwards, 1994). Third, reflective practice is a vital tool for the MA Art Education students involved in my research as practice-based work challenges them to articulate the intersections between personal and professional knowledge and learning in both art and education.

I have used both the term 'reflective practice', to describe my first and third reasons above, and the term, 'reflexivity', to describe my second reason. Reflexivity is a concept that is succinctly described by Holliday as '...the way in which researchers come to terms with and indeed capitalize on the complexities of their presence within the research setting, in a methodical way' (Holliday, 2005:146). I shall discuss reflexivity in the following chapter on research methodology.

'Reflective practice' I see as a parallel term that describes an epistemology of practice (Schon, 1983). In essence, this involves professionals not just in the

application of knowledge, learned and prepared before the event, but in the creation of knowledge, learned both in and after the event. Reflective practice can operate on many different levels from the immediate and intuitive to the sustained and systematic. At each level, professionals, including artists and educators, subject all aspects of their professional practice to self-critical analysis, in order to understand those practices more fully and develop them. It is those texts relating to reflective practice that I am considering in this chapter, although Sullivan (2005) merges both terms, identifying 'self-reflexive practice' as an inquiry process directed by personal insight and creative insight, but informed by disciplinary knowledge and research expertise.

> This requires a transparent understanding of the field, which means that an individual can "see through" existing data, texts, and contexts so as to be open to alternative conceptions and imaginative options (Sullivan, 2005:101).

Sullivan describes a highly complex inquiry process in which it is the professional's own practice, the text that is closest to them, that is embodied by them, that is paradoxically the most difficult to access, to be open to and to change. For Schon (1983) one reason for this is that professional activity has a rationality of its own and is more akin to artistry than a direct following of rules. Therefore,

> [The practitioner] responds to the complexity...in what seems like a simple, spontaneous way. His artistry is evident in his selective management of large amounts of information, his ability to spin out long lines of invention and influence and his capacity to hold several ways of looking at things at once without disrupting the flow of inquiry (Schon, 1983:130).

Schon (1983) parallels artistry and professional practice as a form of personal knowledge that professionals find very difficult to describe or articulate, being tacit, embedded in practice and often improvised. As Gray and Malins relate, 'This kind of knowing is dynamic – knowing how rather than knowing what' (2004: 22), what Schon refers to as 'knowing-in-action', likening the process to a conversation, a theme picked up by Prentice, who draws parallels between the creative process of making art, learning to teach art and a conversational exchange.

> The duration of a conversation cannot be predetermined: every conversation evolves at its own irregular pace with periods of animated exchange interspersed with periods of silence. For a conversation deemed

to be successful, it must have been allowed to develop from the inside (Prentice, 1995:12-13).

Prentice links art-making and art teaching as symbiotically-linked forms of reflective practice and reminds us how the concept of reflective practice in art education can be traced further back from Schon to Dewey's (1933) concept of 'learning through doing'. Jarvis (2004) also emphasises 'practice' as a learning process in which reflection or reflexivity plays a key part.

> Our descriptions of knowing in action are always constructions. They are always attempts to put into explicit, symbolic form a kind of intelligence that begins by being tacit and spontaneous (Schon, 1987:25).

Such attempts to articulate knowledge that derives from lived and felt experience involves an iterative process of re-reading, re-visiting and re-working.

> Well, having written this article, what have I learned about myself as an artist and a teacher? Re-reading it, I've learned that the relationship can be reciprocal. What I make in my studio can have direct consequences for what I do in my classrooms, if I choose for them to. And my theoretical beliefs certainly have implications for what I do in my studio (Pazienza, 1997: 51).

Studying the interconnectivity between 'studio' and 'classroom' practice is a central concern of practice-based forms of enquiry for MA students and also for artist-teachers following the artist-teacher scheme. Thornton (2005) highlights reflective practice's potential for professional knowledge and skill acquisition by artist teachers and draws attention to Schon's (1983) use of the term artist ' to refer to practitioners unusually adept at handling situations of uncertainty, uniqueness and conflict' (Jennings and Kennedy, 1996:15). Such tolerance of ambiguity, cultural and cognitive dissonance, whereby professionals can make sense of incongruity could be supported through the use of reflexive methodologies.

Considering that artist teachers have cited reflective practice as central to the ATS (Hall, 2006), the concept is somewhat strangely absent from the literature to date. Thornton (2005) draws attention to tensions in the dual identity of the artist teacher, suggesting reflective practice may be a means of reconciling differences. Such tensions are summarised by Thornton as the increased demands of teaching in recent years in the UK; conflicting and competing demands of the respective roles

of teacher and artist; incompatibilities in the artist's agenda and a teacher's responsibilities; a focus upon the core curriculum and generic school improvement with little encouragement or funding for specialist art and design CPD. Although Thornton promotes reflective practice as a possible means by which such issues can be tackled, he offers little of a detailed or practical nature, his analysis tending to remain at a generalised and rhetorical level.

To conclude, I concur with Thornton in arguing that reflective practice could provide a mechanism that might enable both MA art education students and artist-teachers to develop their own practices as a powerful form of CPD; helping reconcile tensions and differences; linking theory and practice, studio and classroom. Reflective practice could help establish the learning dimension for artist teachers and MA art education students as they re-discover not only their identities as artists, but their identities as learners.

The following chapter will pick up the theme of reflexivity as a key concept for hermeneutic methodologies, '...we understand and become aware of our research activities as telling ourselves a story about ourselves...' (Steier, 1992: 3).

Chapter Three

Trails through the labyrinth: formulating a research methodology and methods

> ....as humans studying humans communicating, we are inside what we are studying. The reflexive qualities of human communication should be accommodated and integrated into research and its products (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:743).

> We've opened a space to write between traditional social science prose and literature and to stimulate more discussion of working the spaces between subjectivity and objectivity, passion and intellect, and autobiography and culture....more and more academics think it's possible to write from the heart, to bring the first person voice into the work and to merge science and art (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 761).

Rather than attempting to step outside the arena of practice, to distance myself from the research setting in order to claim a more impartial objectivity, I am speaking from within it, involved in and part of the world I am researching. The rationale for the practice-based approaches that I am researching claims tutors and students are co-enquirers in a community of practice, a learning partnership in which knowledge and research are shared. My approach to this EdD thesis research is consistent with this pedagogic philosophy and chimes with Denzin's (1997) commonly-held view that we are situated in the worlds we study, we need to recognize ourselves and write ourselves into our research. For Schwandt, 'social inquiry is distinctive praxis, a kind of activity (like teaching) that in the doing transforms the very theory that aims to guide it...in sum, acting and thinking, practice and theory are linked in a continuous process of critical reflection' (Schwandt, 2000:190).

Reflexivity is central to the model of student learning in these visual modes whereby the student is engaged and implicated as a researcher and is part of the research and the artwork, findings or outcome, just as an artist is inextricably part of the artwork, only more so, as the MA student is challenged to reflect upon their role as artist teacher, as both an artist and an educator. My thesis research intervenes in this reflexive arena as a form of meta-reflection - a further layer of

description and interpretation that seeks to enhance and enrich the work that is done and our understandings of it.

I begin this chapter, therefore, by re-tracing my steps in exploring and justifying the research methodologies selected for this study. By research methodologies, I follow Burgess et al, in meaning '…the theoretical frameworks and concepts in which approaches and methods are situated; they provide the rationale and justification (intellectual, epistemological and ethical) for the methods that are selected and the ways in which they are used' (Burgess et al, 2006:53). I shall go on to discuss issues of ethics and power in the research process and conclude by outlining the overall research design: the methods of data collection and analysis. The key purpose of this chapter I see as enabling the reader to understand the processes of my research and the thinking behind decisions that were taken in relation to those processes.

Where to start? Navigating paradigm and methodological proliferation: beginnings in phenomenology

Initially, a phenomenological approach appeared to have much to offer my research in a number of ways. First, it involves issues for the researcher as a co-participant and subject of the research, not just close to, but part of the action, an interested party with vested interests. In approaching phenomenology, I have been influenced by the work of van Manen, for whom doing:

> ….. research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know the world is profoundly to be in the world in a certain way, the act of researching - questioning - theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to become the world. Phenomenology calls this inseparable connection to the world the principle of "intentionality" (van Manen, 1990:5).

Intentionality is the total meaning of the object (for example, idea, process, person) which is always more than what is given in the perception of a single perspective (Ehrich, 2003: 47, citing Chamberlin). I would question whether we can ever grasp the 'total' meaning of a phenomenon, which will always be subject to revision, but rather, see meaning as a partial and fluid construct, different from each

perspective, from each individual viewpoint, from each specific point in time. For van Manen phenomenology is the study of lived experience, not conceptualisations or abstractions of it, and 'aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences' (1990:9).

Phenomenology seemed attractive in several additional respects: for van Manen, phenomenological inquiry is similar to artistic or creative inquiry.

> ...phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavour, a creative attempt to somehow capture a phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive (van Manen,1990:39).

Phenomenology also addresses the attentive practice of *thoughtfulness* (van Manen,1990:11), a minding, heeding, caring attunement to the project of life (like an artist) - an endeavour that is ethical, tactful and pedagogic. I identified resonances between these guiding concepts and my research. I was attracted by van Manen's form of 'hermeneutic phenomenological reflection', used in educational research, that is phenomenological in its description of experience, hermeneutic in its interpretation of lived experience and reflective in van Manen's perspective on teaching as a reflective, sensitive and tactful activity.

I have also encountered this approach in the context of art education through the work of Jeffers, who constructed:

> A means by which the relationship between research, art and education might be explored. Deeply rooted in philosophy, this methodological approach combines the description of phenomenology with the interpretation of hermeneutics. This approach is well-suited to the teacher-researcher who wishes to describe and make interpretive sense of the things, or phenomena of students' experience in order to see the pedagogic significance of these phenomena. Not only does this approach encourage the teacher-researcher to express research as art and to make methodological uses of art in carrying out the research, it also invites the teacher-researcher to live the relationship between art and research (Jeffers, 1993:13).

Nevertheless, despite such resonances, I still experienced difficulty with reconciling two particular concepts key to phenomenology: reduction and everyday lifeworlds.

A simple way of viewing reduction is to think of it as a process where phenomenology requires that taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions about phenomena be temporarily suspended or bracketed. The reason for the suspension or bracketing is to ensure that theoretical prejudices do not contaminate the description of the experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and this ensures that "the things themselves can be returned to" (Ehrich, 2003:46).

The concept of reduction presents a major difficulty for my research as art relies on the experiences and knowledge we bring to artworks, laden with memories, symbolism, cultural codes and conventions. Such assumptions cannot be set aside or reduced as they potentially inform and enrich the art experience, which is commonly viewed as a co-construction of meaning between maker and audience (Rose, 2001). The concept of setting aside also implies the insider researcher stepping aside , standing apart from rather than acknowledging their assumptions.

van Manen's concept of 'everyday life-worlds' presents another area of difficulty for the use of a phenomenological approach in my research, as it is not the *everyday* life-worlds or experiences of individuals that I am researching. Rather, it is the much more *specific* lived experiences of the particular group of students and tutors bound together by their experience of the MA Art Education programme at Roehampton. Such situated knowledge is specific, embedded in the language, culture and traditions of that situation (Usher and Edwards, 1994) and is only accessible to these MA students.

The centrality of self

It is the centrality of self rather than the denial of self that is important to me as an EdD researcher. Not only is the EdD researcher part of the social world they are investigating, so also are the concepts and constructs they use to try and make sense of that world. An increasing number of researchers are developing approaches to researching the self that recognize the increasing subjectivity of the researcher and the emphasis on self-reflectivity. 'Autoethnography' is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that seeks to connect the personal to the cultural or professional, through personal narrative and reflexivity (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). The autobiographic impulse is also woven into the ethnographic

moment in the work of Spry for whom, 'Autoethnographic performance makes us acutely conscious of how we "I-witness" our own reality constructions'. (2001:706). A reflexive approach also helps us pay attention to how our methodologies and epistemologies help create the realities that are studied.

Dilemmas and issues

However, these self-critical, reflexive approaches should not be read as the indulgent or self-obsessive desire of the researcher to dominate the interpretation of the data. It requires both the recognition and acknowledgement of the self and the presence of the dialogic 'other' to validate the fractured researcher self and guard against controlling, dominating tendencies. The multiple identities of the practitioner researcher could lead me to indulge in choosing which voice to speak with, privileging my own against other voices in the research, presuming to dominate the landscape of power between myself and the research participants (Hall, 2007).

These and other dilemmas and issues begin to loom large where researchers are involved and implicated as participants in the practices being researched. The area of enquiry represents a long-standing preoccupation in my academic and professional working life. Following Ellis and Bochner's assertion that 'In reflexive ethnographies, the researcher's personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study' (2000: 740), my experience as tutor was studied alongside the experiences of students. One other tutor was involved, but I am the named module tutor for the practical project and have led practice-based approaches to the dissertation. Sullivan (2005) highlight's Pink's (2001) approach;

> Central to the author's argument is "reflexivity" whereby the researcher becomes part of the emerging text, and this has an impact on how visual information is interpreted. Pink shows how reflexivity can be a conceptual asset in revealing information, but can also be an operational liability that can raise concerns about issues such as ethics (Sullivan, 2005: xv).

However, I see this as a narrow, constraining conceptualisation of reflexivity, without which a researcher may seek to address ethical concerns simply by

reaching an agreement with participants and stakeholders in the research and then proceeding without further thought or reflection. A reflexive approach requires a continuous consideration of everyone involved in the research, of emergent issues, emerging data and its analysis. As Burgess et al argue, a consideration of ethics should neither be addressed at the outset or conclusion of the research but rather continuously.

> It is through a consideration of ethical problems and dilemmas in the process of conducting research that you will extend your professional knowledge as an educator and develop reflexive practice (2006:40).

I may *think* I know what it's like to be a tutor supervising MA students' practical work as I have done this for eleven years and taught art and design education for 25 years before that, but do I? What is that knowledge? How have I constructed that knowledge and how do I communicate it? What identity have I constructed for myself and how do my students or colleagues perceive that identity?

Bias and prejudice

Schwandt argues that, far from aiming for an unachievable purging or purification of bias or prejudice, 'understanding requires the engagement of one's biases' (2000:195). and quotes Garrison (1996) as saying prejudices are the very kind of prejudgements:

> Necessary to make our way, however tentatively, in everyday thought, conversation and action...the point is not to free ourselves of all prejudice, but to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves (Garrison,1996: 434).

For Schwandt, understanding is produced in dialogue, not reproduced by an interpreter through an analysis. For philosophical hermeneutics, meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply found - 'out there' waiting to be discovered, like a fact floating around. For Schwandt, 'understanding is itself a kind of practical experience in and of the world that, in part, constitutes the kinds of persons that we are in the world. Understanding is "lived" or existential" '(2000:196). Understanding is *ours*, personal, subjective, embodied, engaged, interested, involved, as a central element in hermeneutic philosophies.

Understanding, like action, always remains a risk and never leaves room for the simple application of a general knowledge of rules to the statements or texts to be understood. Furthermore, where it is successful, understanding means a growth in inner awareness, which as a new experience enters into the texture of our own mental experience. Understanding is an adventure and, like any other adventure is dangerous...But...[I]t is capable of contributing in a special way to the broadening of our human experiences, our self-knowledge, and our horizon, for everything understanding mediates is mediated along with ourselves (Gadamer, 1981: 109-110).

Collaboration

Erickson (1986) cites three major reasons that the specifics of action and the meaning perspectives of actors in interpretive research are frequently overlooked in other approaches to research.

One is that the people who hold and share the meaning-perspectives that are of interest are those who are themselves overlooked as relatively powerless members of society....A second reason that these meaning perspectives are not represented is that they are often held outside conscious awareness by those who hold them, and thus are not explicitly articulated. A third reason is that it is precisely the meaning-perspectives of actors in social life that are viewed theoretically in more usual approaches to educational research as either peripheral to the center of research interest, or as essentially irrelevant – part of the "subjectivity" that must be eliminated if systematic, "objective" inquiry is to be done (Erickson, 1986:124-5).

In my research the participants are co-researchers contributing to the co-construction of stories and their meanings. The research is embedded in the setting of the practical project at Roehampton University and thus the interviews are not one-off isolated events but part of a continuous collaborative engagement, enriched by the routinely-occurring tutorials and interactions between tutors and students. It is my intention to involve the participants at all stages of the research process. Gauntlett (2004) notes that feminists have been critical of the tendency for researchers to use participants simply as suppliers of data.

Traditionally, a researcher merely encounters 'subjects' and takes 'data' away, without giving anything back to the people involved. Participants are not involved in the process, and are not consulted about the style or content of the process – apart from the moment(s) in which they supply data – and do not usually get an opportunity to shape the agenda of the research. The process usually involves little real interaction, or dialogue. The creative/visual methods do not inherently or necessarily avoid this, but they provide more opportunities for participants to shape the content of the enquiry, to bring in issues and questions which the researchers may not

have considered, and to express themselves outside of boundaries set by the researcher (Gauntlett, 2004: 9).

Even where the researcher does involve participants more fully, Gauntlett maintains, power and distance can be re-gained at the stage of interpretation and analysis, when the contributions of participants can be diminished, mis-interpreted or misunderstood. Gauntlett (2004) argues that the participants should be allowed to contribute to this stage, setting the agenda and interpreting their own work, rather than having an interpretation imposed upon them.

However, I view Gauntlett's position as problematic as it implies the participant is more likely, or better positioned to provide a more accurate, truthful or honest interpretation than the researcher, suggesting there is an objective truth waiting to be discovered. Denzin reminds us meanings are constructed rather than discovered:

> There are no stories out there waiting to be told and no certain truths waiting to be recorded; there are only stories yet to be constructed (Denzin, 1997: 267).

Scott refers to Hammersley and Atkinson's concept of the monologic/dialogic divide in relation to the construction of research texts.

> The monologic form refers to the dominant voice of the ethnographer which overwhelms the voice/voices of participants in the research. The dialogic form refers to the attempt to disprivilege the authorial voice and give equal standing to a multitude of voices. Though on the surface this would seem to be more democratic, the authority of the author is still sustained through his or her selection of voices, central role in the data collection process, and choice of focus. However, the author may deliberately disprivilege his or her voice by using a number of linguistic and organizational devices. This is most evident in ethnographies in which the author minimizes the comment and analysis which connects those voices (though of course, the latter are always mediated expressions and have been chosen by the researcher). As a consequence, the account is more open and 'writerly' (Scott, 1996:154).

For example, broken, confessional, opaque, 'writerly' and dialogic research texts represent attempts to embed reflexivity and introspection into the text. However, for Holliday (2002) in the written form of research the only narrative is that of the researcher.

This means that the researcher can never claim to be speaking for anyone but herself and cannot claim to be representing the voices of others (Holliday, 2002:4).

Further dilemmas and issues

Despite my extensive reading of research methodology texts; despite presenting an earlier version of this chapter as papers at two conferences and a poster conference; despite my experience lecturing in research methodologies to MA students, I remained unconvinced, or more honestly, unsettled and unclear about the research process I should adopt. In fact, I should say, had adopted, as the thesis research had already begun. I was, of course, aware all along that selecting methodologies and methods appropriate for one's research topic and research questions is inherently problematic and complex for a practitioner researcher. An EdD student is deeply immersed in their professional practice, which itself moves at a fast pace, generating burgeoning and competing, if not impossible demands. The research 'content' texts and the research 'process' texts are engaged with simultaneously, the research themes and tools emerging and evolving as the research progresses (Holliday, 2002). A practitioner researcher has to live with this tense and iterative process. Unlike a researcher who conducts their preliminary work, such as literature review and research design, outside the field of enquiry, entering the field only when they are ready, the EdD student inhabits the research field on a daily basis. Furthermore, that habitation is deeply involved and engaged, the researcher operating from an informed and knowledgeable base. One aim of practitioner research is to capture and interpret aspects of the practitioner's lived realities.

I had focused on the area of my practice that became the focus of the research, simultaneously investigating the literature on research methodologies which is itself burgeoning, complex, inconsistent, and often contradictory (Burgess et al, 2006). There is little consistency in the theoretical frameworks for research discussed by various authors; for example, Crotty (1998) contrasts positivism with post-positivism, constructionism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism and postmodernism; Robson (2002) contrasts positivism with relativism and realism; Denzin and Lincoln (1998) bring post-structuralism into play. Whilst feeling both

stimulated and increasingly frustrated by such labyrinthine explorations through the plethora of paradigms and methodologies, I came to realize that I had been consistent in adhering to reflexive and narrative methodologies so revisited these approaches to see where they led me.

Reflexivity revisited

For Holliday (2005), reflexivity represents an attempt to respond to the realization that researchers and their methods are enmeshed and implicated within the politics of the social worlds they are studying. 'Rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, we should set about understanding them' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:17).

> To do this, the researcher employs her natural human propensity for learning culture, which, if allowed to operate, involves a natural scientific method, much like that used by children – in effect a reflexive methodology (Holliday, 2005:146).

I grew excited by this inclination back towards the 'natural methodology' of reflection, supported by Whitehead who identifies reflective practice as an educational research methodology, distinct from a social science methodology (Whitehead, 2000). Schon (1987) has described the artistry or aesthetic inherent in reflective practice, lending further weight to it as a 'natural method' for professionals' enquiries into their own practice. Mason (1991), supported by Denscombe (1991), has written about art teachers' affinity with ethnography and their aversion to positivist approaches, arguing the ethnographic approach is more akin to their natural and everyday practices as teachers of art and design. That is, ethnography is based upon the 'natural', everyday processes of observation, listening and recording that are learned second nature to art teachers and the research is conducted in the legitimate natural setting, or habitual site of practice.

However, the case for the 'naturalness' of reflexive approaches should not conceal the complexity involved, as Alvesson and Skoldberg point out:

> Reflection means thinking about the conditions for what one is doing, investigating the way in which the theoretical, cultural and political context of individual and intellectual involvement affects interaction with whatever is being researched, often in ways difficult to become conscious of. When we

reflect we try to ponder upon the premises for our thoughts, our observations and our use of language. Consequently, reflection is difficult (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:245).

Reflection refers to how we construct ourselves whilst we also construct meanings through acts of interpretation and how we reflect upon those constructions and the language that is used to communicate them. At each stage, reflection involves the professional contexts in which we operate. Therefore, reflexive methodologies require high standards of interpretation and openness about the choices and decisions we make (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998).

Narrative approaches

In our work as researchers we weigh and sift experiences, make choices regarding what is significant, what is trivial, what to include and what to exclude. We do not simply chronicle what happened next, but place the next in meaningful context. By doing so we craft narratives; we write lives (Richardson, 1990:10).

The notion of narrative is important within the reflective perspectives I have adopted for this and previous research for my IFS - narratives produced both by the participants and by me as researcher, using the personal narrative of my own experience not as an inhibitor but as a tool to make sense of the data (Richardson,1990).

Our descriptions of knowing in action are always constructions. They are always attempts to put into explicit, symbolic form a kind of intelligence that begins by being tacit and spontaneous (Schon, 1987:25).

Following Polanyi's (1967) dictum that professionals 'know but cannot tell', narrative research provides an appropriate mechanism for helping to translate tacit knowledge into knowledge that can be communicated and brought into the public domain.

Narrative might well be considered a solution to the problem of general human concern, namely, how to translate knowing into telling (White, 1987: 10).

In-depth interviews, as narrative production sites, were selected as a tool for helping to articulate knowledge that is implicit or hidden. Czarniawska likens the

interview to " ..a manipulated conversation, where the manipulation is acknowledged and accepted by both parties. Such conversations might be a rich source of knowledge about social practice insofar as they produce narratives" (Czarniawska, 2004: 50) Czarniawska also highlights the postmodern concern with how we narrate our own research, identifying both interviewee and interviewer as a narrator.

For Czarniawska, we are never the sole authors of our own narratives - in every conversation, a positioning takes place. Seen in this way, the participants in my research constructed a particular, relational narrative, formulated in response to me as researcher.

> In order to understand their own lives, people put them into narrative form and they do the same when they try to understand the lives of others. Thus actions acquire meaning by gaining a place in a narrative of life. What is more, other people or institutions concoct narratives for others without including them in a conversation - this is what power is about. Some people decide about other people's jobs, their livelihoods, their identities. But even as puppets in a power game, people are still co-authors of history - that other dramatic narrative in which they are also actors (Czarniawska, 2004: 5).

Heuristic Research

Something of a eureka moment occurred when I came across a description of heuristic research (Gray, 2004) that covered all the bases of the theoretical framework that I had been searching for and had begun to construct for myself. Heuristic research refers to a process of internal search, of self-discovery coupled with understanding a phenomenon in greater depth through immersion in a problem.

Heuristic research involves the researcher in:

- A deep personal questioning of what they wish to research
- Living, sleeping and merging with the research question
- Allowing inner workings of intuition to extend understanding of the question
- Reviewing all the data from personal experiences to identify tacit meanings
- Forming a creative synthesis, including ideas for and against a proposition (Gray, 2004:29).

Heuristic research has its foundations in the phenomenological belief that understanding grows out of direct, human experience that can only be discovered initially through deep personal reflection and self-critical enquiry.

Therefore, heuristic research is autobiographical, strongly subjective and resistant to generalization. I moved on to reading Moustakas (1990) who informs us 'The root meaning of *heuristic* comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, meaning to discover or find' (Moustakas, 1990:9). The initial research question or problem is centred upon a personal issue or interest that the researcher may typically have lived with for a long time; the initial data is thus with or within the researcher. Heuristic research involves the long and slow process of articulating this hidden and tacit knowledge, simultaneously engaging in dialogue with others to arrive at deeper understandings of important human experiences, in the case of my research, practice-based coursework.

> Unlike phenomenological studies in which the researcher need not have had the experience, the heuristic researcher has undergone the experience in a vital, intense and full way – if not the experience as such, then a comparable or equivalent experience (Moustakas, 1990:14).

According to Moustakas (1990), heuristic research is characterized by five key concepts: self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling and focusing. *Self-dialogue* is the critical beginning of heuristic enquiry, beginning with the self and articulating one's own understandings and awareness of the problem or question. In this respect, the heuristic process draws upon Rogers' (1969) work on the essential qualities of personal discovery and Maslow's (1966) emphasis on there being no substitute for experience. *Tacit knowing* concerns knowledge that cannot be put into words (Polanyi,1967) and is key to heuristic research as the researcher and participants seek to give shape and meaning to vague feelings, hunches and intuitions. According to Moustakas, *intuition* is the realm or bridge between the tacit and the explicit. 'Intuition makes immediate knowledge possible without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning' (Moustakas, 1990:23). Through intuition, the researcher begins to give shape and new meaning to the phenomena being studied, drawing on clues, detecting patterns, enhancing her/his perceptive and interpretive skills. *Indwelling* refers to the heuristic process of turning inward towards a deeper, more developed understanding of the research

topic. In order to attain this insight, the researcher dwells inside the problem, living with and working through the data and its interpretation, 'to draw from them every possible nuance, texture, fact and meaning' (Moustakas, 1990:24). Through indwelling, one remains with the problem, returning to it again and again, tapping into discoveries that can be described and reported. The fifth and final concept, *focusing,* involves a sustained and systematic process of staying with the core of the problem, as described here by Moustakas:

> The steps of focusing as used in heuristic research include the clearing of an inward space to enable one to tap into thoughts and feelings that are essential to clarifying a question; getting a handle on the question; elucidating its constituents; making contact with core themes; and explicating the themes. Focusing facilitates a relaxed and receptive state, enables perceptions and sensings to achieve more definitive clarification, taps into the essence of what matters, and sets aside peripheral qualities or features (Moustakas, 1990:25).

Design of my research, including methods of data collection and analysis

Moustakas (1990) identifies six stages of heuristic research: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. I have interpreted these phases, which bear a marked similarity to Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1987) phases of the creative process, as a structure that maps broadly onto my research design, rather than as a prescriptive route to be adhered to. The purpose of my research design was to conduct a study of students' and tutors' perceptions of practical approaches in both the 'practical project' and the dissertation in the MA Art, Craft and Design Education degree at Roehampton University. A sample of five students who undertook the practical project, one student who had completed the practical project and extended a practical approach to her dissertation, and one other tutor involved were interviewed through open-ended, unstructured interviews. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour, though the interview with the student who had undertaken the dissertation extended to over an hour. The interviews were conducted in my university office with the exception of the dissertation student as she had completed her MA so I interviewed her in her school. Pseudonyms are used in the text to provide anonymity and confidentiality. Although the research was embedded in the conduct and process of the practical project and the dissertation, I wrote to students and

Peter outlining the purpose, scope and aims of the research and seeking their agreement to participate (Appendix 2). Whilst I provided a summary of the research aims, process and questions, I have described the interviews as 'unstructured' as I allowed a conversation to develop within the general area of interest (Robson, 2002). The research questions were included with my letter as indicative of my area of interest and, in the interview itself, simply provided prompts where necessary. Therefore, I feel that the interviews are best described as 'unstructured' rather than 'semi-structured'.

I decided to use interviews as a central research method as they can open 'a virtually unique window' (Robson, 2002:272) onto what lies behind a person's thinking and actions. Unstructured interviews also provide the flexibility for the researcher to respond to the participant's answers and ideas and adjust the direction of the interview accordingly. I wanted to delve more deeply into the participant's consciousness in ways that a survey questionnaire or structured interview, for example, cannot. The case against unstructured interviews is that it is difficult to rule out bias on the part of the researcher as the standardization present in the alternative methods referred to is not present. The researcher can also be highly selective and subjective in what they choose to interpret and report, though this can be mitigated by sending initial readings of transcripts to the participants, as I did. Furthermore, unstructured interviews are extremely time-consuming, from the setting-up, through conducting the interviews themselves, to transcribing a one hour interview (even when a professional transcription service is used), to reading, interpreting and re-reading the data.

As with all human research, interviews demand high degrees of integrity and professionalism, as I believe my letters to participants and subsequent actions have demonstrated. The original transcript of Aisha's interview is provided as an example as Appendix 4, selected as she was a student participant (providing Peter's interview transcript as the other tutor would have been unbalanced); and Aisha's interview transcript is neither the longest nor the shortest.
I kept a reflective diary, not only to augment the research, but as a key research tool, given my centrality to the research. The diary notes often followed group and

individual tutorials, capitalizing upon my role as tutor and participant observer, noting my reflections and emerging understanding, attempting to capture the significance of the group tutorial as a particular social and educational situation (Holliday, 2002).

> Narratives, accounts and other collections of words are variously described as 'rich', 'full', and 'real', contrasted with the thin abstractions of numbers (Robson, 2002:455).

Thus my reflective diary and the interview transcripts were interpreted and analysed through a gradual identification of key themes, which were related back to theories and concepts identified in the literature review. I had intended to relate my findings back to the initial research questions but I found that this became less necessary and important as the research progressed. The research questions had become gradually woven into the fabric of the research and, as objectives, had subtly merged with my frame of reference. In other words, the research questions had been internalized and integrated throughout the research process. As Moustakas (1990) has indicated, through a process of indwelling, living with the data, reading and re-reading the transcripts and my reflective diary in an iterative process, I was able to tease out and release new meanings and understandings, grouped according to an evolving and flexible series of themes.

Chapter Four

Submerged in the text: reading and re-reading the data

<u>Introduction</u>

The discussion and interpretation of the data gathered through the seven interviews and my reflective diary is presented. The first section discusses selections from my reflective diary and the subsequent sections interpretations of the interviews, as follows:

- My reflective diary
- Interview 4 with Hannah (student)
- Interview 6 with Aisha (student)
- Interviews 2,3,5, 7 with Mary, Nicoletta, Lin and Sophia (students)
- Interview 1 with Peter (tutor)

The interview numbers 1-7 refer to the order in which the interviews were conducted and transcribed. The interviews with four of the students have been combined into one section as the individual interviews did not generate as much material as those with Hannah, Aisha and Peter so I felt it more appropriate to collate interpretations of these interviews into one section. Each of the 4 students concerned is a foreign national for whom English is their second language, a factor that inhibited the fluency of the interview. Nevertheless, there was enough material of relevance to include responses from these interviews.

Each of the sections is further organized around the five broad themes that emerged through the readings and re-readings of research data:

- Reflexivity
- Self, autonomy and identity
- Iterative complexity
- Flexibility and openness
- Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

In fact, I realized that the themes, which originally numbered nine before I merged several themes, did not arise solely from my interpretation of data but underlay the

whole research process from the beginning. That is, I identified underlying themes in my research proposal, the introductory chapter and the literature review. I also see the themes relating closely to the research methodology as well as the content. The research data comprised interview transcripts which will be referenced as IT 1 -7 and include page numbers where quotations from transcripts are made. My reflective diary will be referenced as RD, with extracts quoted by date.

<u>Emergent themes</u>

Before presenting the discussion in this chapter, the five emergent themes are identified through brief descriptive statements which I originally wrote as notes to distinguish each theme and justify their selection.

1   Reflexivity

The process through which meaning is constructed for ourselves. The data, ideas, interpretations are always thought about, never left unconsidered. Discourse is always open to new viewpoints and interpretations. Understanding is always the goal.

2   Self, autonomy and identity

Self: Unless we are engaged we learn nothing of lasting value. (Engagement of self is) Necessary for the depth of understanding aimed for. Piaget: learning is never less than ourselves. No meaning without a person. With self-engagement comes motivation, commitment, perseverance. Autonomy: Independent control of learning; ownership of knowledge, making our own choices and decisions. Identity: Constructing identities in relation to communities of practice.

3   Iterative complexity

Returning time and again to the data, to interpretations, never a single act but always a re-reading or re-writing. Never a single meaning but multi-layered, multi-faceted, ambiguous realities.

4   Flexibility and openness

Openness to many possible approaches and interpretations. Never complete, closed or finished, always a process, never a product. Any starting or entry point and any exit or 'finishing' point.

5   Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

An outcomes-led, predictive approach versus a reflective, interpretive evaluation approach to planning pedagogical experiences, or the possibility of merging and combining approaches? Different philosophies or dispositions (tutors and students) towards educational experiences. 'Quality and Standards-led', normative tendencies in which standards must be defined and demonstrated. A convergent approach against a divergent, critical, elusive, uncertain or unpredictable approach which may lead to a variety of possible solutions. Written texts opposed to made texts. Teaching as a dialogic exchange, rather than a didactic transmission.

The boundaries between the themes are not rigid, there being considerable overlap and migration between them. Furthermore, interpretations of my reflective diary and each of the interviews did not relate equally to each of the five themes. The interpretation of my reflective diary is structured around all five themes whereas particular themes frame and reflect discussion of the interviews.

My early interpretations of the interview transcripts, what I called my 'first readings', were sent to the participants for comment or response. Not all participants responded; for example, Peter met with me again to discuss my first reading; Hannah sent written notes; Aisha acknowledged my notes and thanked me, making no further comment. The continued dialogue with participants, particularly Hannah and Peter, contributed to this iterative process of constantly returning to the data, reflecting, writing and gradually 'working up' the analysis. My experience of this process was that it is extremely labor-intensive, involving a painstaking sifting, sorting and analysis of data, teasing out topics that merged into broader themes.

Themes emerging from my reflective diary

A reflective diary was kept throughout the research, from before the confirmation of my research proposal (by the review panel at the Institute of Education) in November 2006 to the final submission of the thesis in June 2008. I was keeping a diary guided largely by intuition and the belief that a reflective diary is a key research tool, writing being a reflexive activity supporting data collection and analysis. However, given my longstanding interest in reflective diaries, and their application by students, I was familiar with theories and principles supporting their use. For many years, I have encouraged MA students to use them, not least for the practical project and dissertation. I had written a note 'introducing' the diary:

> More reflective than descriptive or factual, the observations and notes are already being interpreted by me through the filter of my research interest and [as] a research tool. More what Cohen and Manion call " a developing, tentative, running record of ongoing analysis and interpretation" [Cohen and Manion, 2000: 313] (RD 20.10.06).

In July 2007 (RD: 30.07.07) I came across Richardson's [1998:365] description of a reflective diary as having 4 categories and wrote these notes in my diary:

> *Observation notes:*
> Concrete, detailed, direct, accurate, gathered via the senses, descriptive?
> *Methodological notes;*
> processes of conducting research, collecting and analyzing data: how it is done, technical detail.
> *Theoretical notes:*
> Hunches, hypotheses, emerging ideas, connections, clarifying my thinking, frameworks, constructions, analyzing, categorising, interpretive?
> *Personal notes:*
> What am I learning, thinking, feeling? Self-knowledge, inquiry into the self, a narrative of the self (RD:30.07.07) [Italics added for emphasis; underlining copied directly from diary].

These categories seemed to confirm what I was doing, though I did not attempt to re-orientate or re-structure my diary entries but carried on as before, entering anything and everything that involved reflection upon my research and seemed noteworthy. The diary consisted of a computer file but also a small notebook with handwritten entries, some of which were transferred to the computer file. The entry quoted immediately above was handwritten, hence the italics and underlining have been added subsequently, upon typing this chapter.

The focus of this first section of chapter four is discussion of the five broad, emergent themes interpreting the data from my diary which is referenced as RD with the entry date, e.g. RD:17.11.06. In my diary I often noted texts I had read in books, journals or the media and quoted from these sources, which I have referenced conventionally, but using square brackets as they are secondary sources in this context.

Reflexivity

I was seeking to conduct research using an engaged ethnography of the self that was "As personal, revealing, truth-seeking insight-making as art-making itself. Also uncertain, with many blind alleys. The aim is to get closer to my own world/s – the heart of my professional life, more intimate and personal" (RD:17.11.06). I was reflecting here upon my research mirroring the practical project itself which requires the MA students to bring themselves to the project, making their learning explicit and showing the workings of their thinking and the personal and professional gains.

> For me, research is an enrichment of my practice, or at least learning more about it, gaining insights and new understandings of aspects of my practice through deep reflection upon it. Casting a spotlight on aspects of practice in order to see it afresh, in a different light. We can develop blindspots through familiarity. The artist, Patrick Caulfield used a phrase
> "the shock of the familiar" or, one might say, the "strangeness of the everyday" to denote that we take so much for granted, experiences we think we know about so well, as we orientate ourselves tangentially to an experience rather than full on. We think we are repeating an experience we know so well, but acting habitually rather than reflectively can have a stagnating effect upon our work (RD:29.01.07).

In the senses I noted here, reflexivity is a process through which I seek to maintain a dynamic engagement with my research. 'Dynamic' as reflexive practice can provide an energizing and motivating force, keeping me going as an EdD student and hopefully sustaining my own MA students. 'We act as a dynamo for our practice – disciplining ourselves to read and write and because our own actions are in the mix, we are also forced to reflect in a virtuous cycle' (RD:04.12.07). I wrote 'we are forced to reflect' implying it had become involuntary, a commitment to a practice without which the research could not operate. However, whilst I view reflexivity as an essential and central component of both my research and my

students' work, I do not see reflexivity as a 'comfortable', easy or straightforward process in which to engage. Indeed, reflection can problematise a situation as well as suggest potential solutions. Reflection can cause disturbance and discomfort.

> That education professionals keep going - stick with it - is little short of remarkable given the adversity they face - the setbacks that are part of professional life, the continuous incoming tide of policy initiatives, reforms, audits, reviews, and strategic plans. I recall Ron Barnett saying this when he came to speak at Roehampton - that we continue to get up in the morning and turn up for work is professional – coming back for more. No one ever clears their desk, fulfills their tasks, perhaps a small proportion are addressed, questionable whether they are solved or settled, as further initiatives force their way in and add to the pile of work (RD:19.11.06).

I welcome Barnett's recognition of the increasing complexities and challenges of professional life in higher education, 'supercomplexity' (Barnett, 2000), as his own position is reflexively analytical, as opposed to rhetorical. I shall return to Barnett in relation to the next theme, the engagement of self.

The diary has been a repository for noting and capturing the particular realities of specific experiences (Erickson, 1986) and the kind of content Richardson (1998) identified above including sense impressions, hunches, ideas before they are forgotten and lost.

> Michael Palin said of his diary: you are reading someone's life as they are living it. This implies the writing is unformed, unedited, you write something and read it later and realise you've said something stupid. Like your life, it is changing all the time, moods change, it is fluid, imperfect, faltering. Things are said directly as they are thought. Is this reflection-in-action, the action being your life? Reflection-on-action would be another level, another time, more distant from the experience. The experience is mediated by other experience that has occurred since then and by what was written in the diary. You are reflecting upon the writing as a representation of experience as much as upon the experience itself - a meta-reflection. An analytical reflection would then come later, looking for common themes and ideas emerging and connecting this with ideas from other sources (RD:26.11.06).

I suggest the stage of analytical reflection has been reached in the writing of this chapter.

Self, autonomy and identity

The engagement of self has been a persistent theme in the research data; my own self-engagement captured in my reflective diary and the participants' engagement through the interview transcripts and student writing. My diary entries during November 2006, addressed the concept of being 'inside' a situation, which could mean not just experiencing a situation for yourself but a deeper engagement, both with your own experience and with others' experiences. Engagement with your own experience implies 'looking over your own shoulder', conscious of your own experience, listening to yourself speak, listening to your thoughts. Deep engagement with the experience of others implies the same consciousness and listening with care, empathy and sensitivity, recalling van Manen:

> van Manen's (1990:2) "...pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience..." MA is the programme I am 'inside' which provides a depth of understanding but also blind-spots through familiarity. Concept of being 'inside' as an important phenomenological concept (RD: 10.11.06).

> What does it mean to be 'inside' the situation you are researching? A key here is direct experience of the situation; you can design a course but might not teach on it. You see the phenomenon 'close up' in operation, with all its vicissitudes, its insights, disappointments, issues, problems, sensitivities (sensitivity a van Manen concept - tact). Deep reflection upon your 'insideness' is one way of getting at the heart of what you do. there are others - looking at statistics - of recruitment, progression, achievement etc. Appreciation of, empathy with your student's situation and thinking is essential. Not to go wading in blindly. Knowing the course you are teaching 'inside out' (RD:26.11.06).

The diary reference I made to statistics appears to me as an almost self-mocking dig at my quality and standards alter-ego and the impoverishment of the prevalent audit culture in higher education. More importantly, I note the qualities of sensitivity, empathy and care for students that I believe have been enhanced in my practice through my EdD research through my greater awareness of their needs, ideas and experiences. Over a year later, I made the following entry:

> I find how 'natural' and free-flowing tutorials are. Learning requires a deep engagement with your beliefs about learning and teaching; it is not enough simply to adopt the 'practices' or 'products' of research. They must be lived through. We need to self-examine reflexively to engage with your beliefs

about teaching. As Piaget said, when we understand we know what to do when you don't know what to do (RD:14.12.07).

I have felt that with self-engagement come motivation, commitment, and perseverance. Throughout my EdD experience I have consistently reflected upon living through multiple professional identities and working in contested and competing spaces. This uncertain state of being seemed to recur frequently in relation to the theme of the engagement of self. Barnett's latest book continues his own themes of motivation, commitment, and perseverance.

> Will is, to repeat, a matter of being, a matter of a person's hold on the world. Is this student engaging with her experiences? Is she putting herself into them such that she is opening up new experiences for herself? Is she energized? Is she carried forward in some way? Is she pressing on, regardless of the challenges and even disappointments that she faces? Does she really have a will to learn? (Barnett, 2007:18).

I realize now as I write these interpretations of my reflective diary, that each of the five themes relate to both myself and to the research participants. That was my intention and the themes were gradually identified as I read and re-re-read the data. However, I am confirming the realization, the certain knowledge perhaps, of reciprocity between myself as an artist- tutor-researcher and my students as artist-teacher-researchers. Such reciprocity involves a mutual respect for their views, demonstrated by detailed transcription of the interviews with participants and frequent quotation of their words.

> As I wonder if I will ever regain enough discipline to clear the decks and get on with completing the thesis, I am encouraged by Coffey and Atkinson [1996:113] who wrote of trying to 'convey the lived experience of the anthropology students, probably in rich detail. We would use their words often in order to convey their particular – even unique-perspectives on the reported events and reflections' (RD: 24.09.07).

Reciprocity involves a pedagogical interchange, a free giving and taking of knowledge and understanding and in 'looking over the shoulders of students and tutors', I have attempted to understand how they perceive and construct their understandings of practice-based coursework in the MA [Greasley and Ashworth, 2007].

Group tutorial. A student said she cannot help seeing teaching possibilities in everything she experiences. The connection is not just inevitable, the pedagogical possibilities are to the forefront before she thinks of anything else. We constantly negotiate foregrounding different identities. Thinking of Hannah's interview, she said she was surprised that such confirmation of her artist identity should have the effect of also confirming her teacher identity (RD: 27.09.07).

Iterative complexity

Hannah was the first student to submit her MA dissertation through an exhibition supported by a written report. At the exhibition opening in December 2006, Hannah welcomed guests and gave a brief introduction to her exhibition. I also spoke to guests and concluded by quoting from a review that I had read in The Observer of a book 'The End of The Poem: Oxford lectures' by Paul Muldoon, Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

> A poem, as Auden said when explaining how one was written, cannot be finished: it is simply abandoned by a poet who can add no more to it. The reader then takes over and, with luck, discovers another kind of endlessness; reading leads to re-reading, as the words are coaxed into releasing subtler, richer meanings, dilating into ever ampler contexts RD: 8.12.06).

The iterative process of aesthetic appreciation became a theme that ran through tutorials with students, the research interviews, student writing and my reflective diary. No matter how well we may think we know something, aspects of our professional life and practices, there is always more to be revealed as we look at our writing again, from a different position and at a different time, adding or connecting to additional ideas or sources of information. Those practices are embodied, are our praxis and as such meanings are kept hidden, may be taken for granted, remain silent. We must re-visit time and again.

> To find one's way is to advance along a line of growth, in a world which is never quite the same from one moment to the next, and whose future configuration can never be fully known. Ways of life are not therefore determined in advance, as routes to be followed, but have continually to be worked out anew [Ingold,1993:242].

And, as T. S. Eliot tells us:
> And so each venture is a new beginning, a raid upon the inarticulate.. (East Coker:203)

> We had the experience but missed the meaning,

And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form, beyond any meaning
We can assign to happiness (Dry Salvages: 208)

Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time (Little Gidding:222)
(Elliot, 1963)

The concept of iteration recurs frequently in my everyday experience and I was reminded of it again listening to a radio programme.

> A songwriter interviewed on the radio said he listens to one of his songs he maybe hasn't heard for 30 years and thinks, "Oh, that's what I meant". When we revisit a song we interpret it differently given the life experience we have gained since then. In my view this is not necessarily a 'better' interpretation or more meaningful but necessarily different. Our reading could not be the same because we have changed, the context in which we view the work has changed. Perhaps though the new reading can be richer as more layers of meaning are added. New connections are formed, new patterns emerge. Nothing is static (RD:17.01.08).

> Writing up my comments on Hannah's written report. Struck by her quote from Eisner; 'By productive ambiguity I mean that the material presented is more evocative than denotive....it generates insight and invites attention to complexity' [Eisner, 2005:180] (RD:14.02.07).

'Productive ambiguity' seems a useful concept, distinguishing the practical project and dissertation from student work one might contrast as embodying singular meanings that are clearly or easily read. For example, meanings that are consciously intended by the maker may lack complexity, resonance or metaphoric meaning that needs to be contemplated in order to release the ever subtler, richer meanings that Auden referred to.

I discussed, in chapter two, the contrast, for artist teachers, between the languages, contexts and practices of planning schemes of work and lessons and the contexts for making their own artwork. I found in my IFS (Hall, 2006) that the criteria, concepts and language 'of the classroom', so to speak, are markedly different from those of artist-teachers' own work, of contemporary art practice and the gallery.

> The project is about students' epistemological development, pointing to increasingly complex conceptualisations of knowledge: 'the increasingly critical investigation of ideas, concepts and phenomena is the intellectual

challenge students should be presented with in higher education' [Hall, 2003]. We are encouraging students to engage in 'research-like activity' that sees research as a process rather than product and teaching as the exploration of 'uncertain' knowledge rather than the transmission of given knowledge (RD: 23.04.07).

The synthesis and synergies can only be constructed by the artist-teacher herself, there are no prescriptions for practice. Our job, as tutors is to challenge and support students in constructing their own new synergies of art with education.

> But it is precisely because artistic value is an end in itself that it counters the instrumentalist ethos of a consumerist society. Art becomes most subversive when it detaches itself from the conventional modes of thinking where every value can be translated into something else. Paradoxically, it is by being "useless" that art can be most useful to society [Mc Donald, 2008:39] (RD:13.01.08).

The diary entry above causes me to reflect on whether, by requiring art to be linked to teaching and learning in the MA practical project, we have created an instrumental link – implying the value of the art produced is educational rather than intrinsic. Does this imply the meaning of the work is primarily its application to education? At BA level in an education degree with art components, this may be valid but at MA level, the connections are not obvious, are not immediate, are not simple and more complex. My research has implications for artwork made in education courses of different types and at different levels, e.g. BA, PGCE, MA, doctoral and non-award bearing CPD activity.

Flexibility and openness

Intentionality is a concept involving correspondence or negotiations of meanings between speaker or artist and listener or audience, author and reader; it is a transaction that is always open to possible interpretations.

> Hannah W's dissertation exhibition kept 'open' till opened to an audience. An ongoing project. Never complete. Complex process conceptually, practically, philosophically, aesthetically. How the exhibition would look unknown, lending a certain tension as outcomes had not been planned nor predicted. More of an intervention into a space than work conceived conceptually outside the space then brought into it (RD: 2.12.06).

I noted in my diary how students frequently spoke of regarding their projects as work-in-progress for which they did not envisage finishing points, even upon submission of the work for assessment. Perhaps students recognise the university's requirement to award a grade as a summative judgment though for them the feedback was formative. The MA students appear to wish to retain ownership of the work and along with that, the potential for its further development, denying its closure and completion. I noted in my diary entry above, 'a certain tension' between the artwork as experienced, with its emergent meanings variously constructed by its audience, and intended or planned outcomes as expressed in the module booklet and in the stated plans of the student. The student achievement will be assessed against given criteria, as with all coursework in higher education, yet this matching of outcome to criteria cuts across the students' perception of the work being unfinished, work-in-progress, open to new readings and meanings.

Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

Hannah's decision to exhibit her dissertation work in the senior common room seemed to me to represent her intervention into a space imbued with institutional hierarchy, tradition and authority. Such intervention also speaks of contesting accepted and traditional practices.

> Froebel College Senior Common Room (SCR) was chosen deliberately due to resonances, pedagogically, philosophically. Social space of SCR. using bookshelves and books themselves. Using texts, teasingly offering meanings and denying them, insisting the reader interprets for themselves. The 'domestic' but academic space is added to by the work but the work is also added to by the space, a college named after Friedrich Froebel, the work absorbs and is altered, added to by this association. Kindergarten movement. Froebel's gifts. Transforming the space (RD: 20.10.06).

Transformation of the space created some disturbance amongst staff that did not seem to appreciate any change to routine. I had to enter into protracted negotiation with the College Principal to secure the common room as a space for Hannah's exhibition. At the time, I was much more interested, like Hannah, in her work and the interaction between her work and the historic traditions of the space, as the following diary entries indicate:

> The maker intervenes in the space as curator, designer, maker. Some pieces were more obviously placed, presented; others one might not have realised were there. Drawing attention to that which is hidden because it is ignored (RD: 20.10.06).

> Hannah put her exhibition up yesterday. A student on seeing it asked her' did you make the work for this space?' The decision to use the SCR was taken at a relatively late stage, when the work had evolved to a certain point and the emergent themes were clear. It is a risky business starting out with a plan of sorts but being prepared to alter the plan radically......Reflecting upon her work; my role as supervisor and facilitator; helping it happen; asking questions, responding to Hannah's questions. A meta-reflection. Hannah has had a strong sense of direction through this project and I have felt the need only to confirm her ideas, make suggestions, often connections with other possible paths. Suggesting artists she might look at. Coaxing, encouraging, a little steering... (RD: 24.11.06).

These last reflections may seem rather modest on my part. Hannah consistently said how she needed a sounding-board, an 'other' against whom to test ideas. The tutor's role, with MA students, can be both to confirm directions and decisions made by students and also to question, challenge and coax ever-deeper levels of critical reflection, evaluation and self-realisation. This includes encouraging students to enter discourses where authors contest ideologies and positions and for students to begin to forge their own position and speak with their own voice.

> Challenging students to use their own resources and not to settle for simple solutions. Less necessary for students who were adept at challenging themselves. Hannah W's exhibition, undecided to the last minute, created in situ, responding to resonances of the space, nuances of conversations, thoughts (RD:20.11.06).

> Peter said it was interesting how Hannah is finding her voice indicating her artist's statement. Caused me to reflect I wonder how much my writing is influencing Hannah's and vice versa as we exchange writings and responses. The tutor uses certain phrases or highlights concepts or ideas and these influence the student; the student takes on your ideas and personalises them, links them to their reading (RD: 29.11.06).

The diary extract above refers to the concept of assimilation by students, a key concept in higher education, whereby students absorb knowledge and develop insight, in the process, transforming the knowledge, making it their own. Assimilation is a critical and creative act for students as they struggle to express

their knowledge and understanding textually and visually. In the MA practical project at Roehampton, visual work is afforded a predominant position, with assessment weighted in favour of the exhibition. Where students elect to present a practice-based dissertation, assessment is equally weighted between the exhibition and written report, though the interpretation of each component is left open to interpretation by students. An example of a student's writing supporting making is contained in the following diary extract:

> Talking to Hannah today. She said I'm so glad that I did the artist's statement. She hadn't done one before. On one side of A4 it contextualises the work; provides the themes and concepts Hannah was working with. Thus it supports and enriches the possibilities of looking at the work. Offers additional clues to how the visual texts might be read. The visual work is not an equivalent. It does not need to be equal to a written text. It is a different way of asking questions, a different way of investigating, and a different way of presenting 'findings' and ideas (RD: 24.11.06).

I end the next section with a discussion of Hannah's artist's statement.

Interview with Hannah

The interview with Hannah was conducted at her school in Oxford, around four months after she completed the MA. Hannah was the first student to have extended practice-based study to the dissertation, submitted via an exhibition and written report of 10,000 words, as opposed to the traditional 20,000 word dissertation. The option to submit the dissertation as an exhibition was not new though Hannah was the first student to have pursued it as an option. I encouraged Hannah but felt I was simply supporting a natural and logical development for her.

Through the interview with Hannah therefore, I sought to draw upon her experience of practice-based coursework through both the practical project and the dissertation. Hannah understood the importance and theory of reflective practice so always valued tutorials, oral and written feedback on her work, discussions with other students, artists, other educators, friends and colleagues.

Due to Hannah's pursuit of art practice as research, her work was centrally important to my research. Tutorials were rich and rewarding for both of us I suspect

as we pursued our joint enquiry, in a sense. I knew the interview with Hannah would be productive; as it turned out, almost 40 pages of transcript, compared to an average of 20 pages for the other interviews. Hannah had developed a good understanding of the literature on art practice as research (Gray and Malins, Sullivan, Eisner, for example) so I was not surprised at how informed and engaged she was at interview. Discussing the key question of links between teachers' art practice and pedagogy, one of Hannah's responses transcribed to over two pages of text and was rich with insight, reflection and engagement. Furthermore, on sending Hannah a copy of what I called my 'first readings' or initial interpretation of her interview transcript, she returned a copy to me annotated with her fulsome, reflective comments. I have drawn upon these comments of Hannah's, referencing them as 'Hannah's feedback'.

Reflexivity

Hannah developed her understanding and practice of self-reflexivity throughout the MA programme and by the dissertation stage she had read widely around the concept of reflective practice. References to reflexivity permeate the interview with Hannah and the themes through which I have interpreted the interview text.

> One of the things I've talked to the staff a lot about recently is about the use of sketchbooks and about allowing children to be reflective, I suppose because I've had the experience on my MA of being reflective and was really encouraged to do that (IT4:17).

Hannah sought to offer her pupils experiences that she had through the practical project. The sense of professional renewal and changed practice also runs through Hannah's narrative: 'So, I'm actually a completely different type of teacher' (IT4:15). Feelings of greater confidence, happiness in her identity and allowing her pupils the freedom she experienced on the MA came across:

> I don't worry about twists and turns if…you know, looking at a class and think this isn't really going how… I would just see that as a challenge and an opportunity …so I feel much more confident about….enabling children to let their own work evolve because I know how much that matters to me (IT4:17).

Hannah has clearly sought to provide her pupils with an experience of art-making reciprocal to her own. 'I certainly think year five and six [pupils] could take that on. The idea that it…you know, you're in a kind of reflexive process' (IT4:21).

Self, Autonomy and Identity

Since completing the MA, Hannah reported that, having 'engaged so much more with my own work and interests and explored my own thoughts and ideas much more' (IT4:17), she feels more confident and engaged in her teaching.

> I do feel when I'm teaching art now, I teach much more from my own heart really than I did before. I feel much more confident about what I'm doing (IT4:17).

In reading my initial interpretative text, Hannah underlined 'she feels more confident and engaged in her teaching' above and wrote " …but perhaps isolated from colleagues – I do need to be part of a community of enquiry. Yes, diving into intense engagement with reflective practice but there is no longer any meaningful 'resurfacing' " (Hannah's feedback). Hannah suggests that bringing into full consciousness the fruits of reflexive enquiry requires others, peers, colleagues to bounce ideas off. Hannah appeared to me as the most resourceful and capable of students and seemed highly motivated and driven; tutors might assume such committed and able students work with independence and autonomy even. However, Hannah is telling us that she needs to be part of a community of enquiry and practice; that her deep self-engagement goes beyond the individual and thrives in a social context. It seems that, for Hannah, 'diving into the deep and intense engagement with reflective practice' is complemented by the need for a 'resurfacing' when what she has found, learned or created is brought to the attention of others. The intensely personal is balanced against the need for engagement, I sense equally intense in Hannah's case, with a community of practice or enquiry.

My perception of Hannah is of a teacher of art and design who has not necessarily transformed but has altered, grown and matured, taking her understanding to a deeper and more personal level. The practitioner becomes her own theorist as they

understand the principles of their practice, not because they have learned those principles from the literature but from critical reflection upon her practice. Such a level of critical reflection requires practitioners to know the theory but to engage in dialogue with it. As Hannah said, she no longer worried about a lesson veering this way and that:

> I would just see that as a challenge and an opportunity and be much more open in talking to them about actually ..this is starting to take a different direction or…this particular technique is letting us down a bit here, what can we do to change that (IT4:17).

Hannah used the term 'bravery' to describe an orientation to the practical project; '…I think to do the practical project and really get the most from it, I think you have to be very brave…'(IT4:20) I see this as a way of describing the motivation, commitment and perseverance that self-engagement brings; what Barnett (2007) describes as a will to learn and indeed, also talks about 'courage' as a necessary quality for students to develop their independent critical voice. Just as she challenges her own pupils to reflect on their work, Hannah also encourages them to be brave. Having done this herself she knows how hard it is, '…you're not just barking out a set of skills and ideas … from the front…it is like launching off in a little craft and you're not always quite sure where it's going to end up' (IT4:21).

These observations highlight the real and lasting benefits of the practical approaches in the MA: for teachers to be provided with opportunities to work as artists, or rather as artist-teachers, as Hannah reminds us her teacher identity is never set aside but rather, automatically acts like a filter through which art experience is perceived. Artist-teachers then take back to their teaching not just simple sets of skills or ideas, or perhaps themes, issues or concepts but *themselves* and their dispositions, their newly, perhaps subtly altered teacher selves, their disposition for learning, for teaching and learning as a creative collaboration; bravery to 'let things happen' without fear of failure; confidence that you can steer your work between control and chance. It is an attitudinal shift. Hannah seems to have re-discovered her teacher identity and found that the artist is always present, just as previously she reflected that the teacher was always present in her encounters with art. Hannah said in her feedback that she agreed

with this final sentence and also liked the statement above about her teacher identity never being set-aside but acting automatically like a filter.

Hannah saw the practical project as

> ...a really important chance to ...re-engage with some...with practical work and...to be engaged with making my own work and in my case, it was particularly important because I hadn't come...I didn't come from a formal fine art background (IT4:1).

Hannah went on to explain how she saw the practical project as 'a really important chance' to 'pull together a lot of different strands of things that I'd studied quite briefly'. Hannah saw her previous engagements as working to other people's agendas and the practical project as a chance, to 'really work for the first time on something that was my own'. Although the practical project was her own, she did have some concerns about whether her project, having such personal relevance, would have sufficient educational relevance, 'but I just...I found that that sort of came very naturally..' (IT4:1).

Hannah appreciated the group context and was instrumental in requesting an increased number of group tutorials where student experiences and progress could be discussed. She saw the value of such tutorials as 'resurfacing' to compare notes, share experiences, and gain ' a different perspective or gain some perspective on what you're doing' (IT4:4) before diving back in to your own pool of enquiry. Hannah suggests that she was not conscious of what she was doing herself and the discipline of discussing work in progress with others would throw some light on it herself. This reflexive and dialogic disposition has characterised Hannah's approach throughout her studies.

> ...obviously when you're making a presentation, you have to slightly step outside of what you're doing and look at it and analyse it a little bit, so that you can present it...to other people. So it's all part of this kind of reflective process which is helpful for you and for the others (IT4:5).

Hannah's concept of 'diving into' her investigation and 'resurfacing' implies a depth of personal engagement reminiscent of artists who have seen artistic practice as tapping into their unconscious. The late Jeff Nuttall's metaphor, recalled from his lecture during my fine art degree, was of an uncharted forest into which the artist

travelled, returning periodically to a clearing to see for herself and show to others what had been discovered.

> I'm quite interested in the idea of things that are, um, beneath the surface or quite sort of buried in lots of different ways. Whether that's thoughts or ideas or memories or, um, just capabilities and confidences or competences that you might have, and I think that ... they can bubble up to the surface and basically reach fruition through making (IT4:12-13).

Hannah felt her artist teacher identity had evolved 'really naturally' and she had 'thought about this a lot since' she had completed her dissertation. She felt the balance between the artist and teacher role would continually change through her career and 'be in a state of flux throughout my adult life I would suspect' (IT4:15). The artist role had been emphasized whilst Hannah was doing the MA but on completion the teacher role had come to the fore again.

> ...certainly when I was doing the MA, there was very much a big emphasis on much more the artist role for me which was really fantastic and liberating and a very enriching and rewarding experience, but being back in school now ... I feel sort of very happy to say that it's weighted more towards the teacher end of things, but still with all of that knowledge and understanding and experience which I take from the MA is kind of...meshed on or joined on to the teacher identity......So I'm actually a completely different type of teacher. In a way maybe the two areas have come together into more of a whole, into a new form (IT4:15).

Hannah went on to explain that a teacher's perception was 'inbuilt' or automatic all the time, "... maybe partly because the teacher part of my personality was more developed" before she developed her role as an artist teacher. "Since finishing the MA ... somehow it all makes more sense" (IT4:16), confirming her reflection has extended beyond completion of the degree.

Iterative complexity

Hannah concurs with the experience of all the students studied in that they were returning to, or revisiting themes, concerns, interests that had preoccupied them, often for considerable periods of time. Students did not start with a blank page, or feel the need to come up with a topic. The topic was there but had not received the attention the student wanted to give it; perhaps the ideas were latent, hidden,

(Hannah later uses the term 'buried') investigation postponed for lack of time, opportunity or a framework. The practical project aims to provide a space and framework within which to draw together previously conceived elements – things started but not yet developed. Students do not start from scratch. Hannah said, '...if you've already done quite a lot of stuff in your head', the practical project gives the impetus to start 'thinking with your hands' as Hannah puts it. This suggests students can experience a period of incubation, when ideas are mulled over. Hannah commented at length on the section in her feedback. She was interested to learn about the experience of other students and suggested that she should have liked to have her 'MA show with other students [and experienced] more cross-fertilization of ideas' (Hannah feedback). Hannah also picked up on the term, 'framework':

> Framework – interesting notion, has become important more and more. The MA has enabled me to create frameworks for myself as with my exhibition in Oxford recently – where I realised that research is a very important element in my art-making (perhaps at the heart of it). I love the solitary element of research – chance to be in own personal world, as Dennis Severs created his own world in Folgate Street, presumably also in part through some form of research and he then inhabited it. ...So, in the resurfacing I'd like to have the chance to encounter a supportive community of enquiry (Hannah's feedback).

The references here to self and others are interesting and support my thinking about the intensely personal, solitary phase in Hannah's research, followed by the community of enquiry phase, when practices and findings and shared and discussed.

Hannah seized the practical project as a chance to bring together a number of disparate and diverse elements and interests from art, literature, educational and biographical sources. Hannah relished the chance to:

> ...do practical work and to be making and using my hands, as well as the thinking, alongside academic study, and to me, or traditional academic study, to me the two sort of married together or, you know, make a really good kind of marriage I think (IT4:1-2).

The findings have implications for art teachers' CPD and how their teaching can be enriched and developed. It is not just a matter of 'refreshing' skills or knowledge as this just touches the surface of the complexity of teaching, of teachers' knowledge and skills. Hannah spoke of this complexity.

> One of the problems with that was in terms of the risk-taking. It was really difficult to talk about; not with you because you'd gone through all these different steps of the journey, so I felt that you understood where I was coming from, but it was very complicated...there were lots of different layers and levels... all happening at the same time (IT4:24).

Flexibility and openness

Hannah says she chose to do her MA at Roehampton because of the practical project. 'I liked the way at Roehampton it seemed very, very open...' (IT4:3) in relation to topics, approaches and methods. Hannah's perceived openness of the practical project and the freedom to choose directions were clearly important to her.

In her feedback on my initial interpretive text, Hannah expressed her interest in the idea of art practice as a form of research and felt my text 'seems to be offering a bridge in that direction' (Hannah feedback). She also saw her practical work as an ongoing project; not only did she build upon the practical project to develop her themes and work for the dissertation but has continued to make artwork since completing the MA, holding a solo show in Oxford in 2007 and further shows in 2008. Commenting in her feedback on my text, Hannah suggested there was 'still plenty' of ideas started but not yet developed.

Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

> ...actually, I think that the thinking with your hands, which is what I'm trying to teach children at the moment.... I think it's almost more important in some ways because so much can come out of practical sessions (IT4:7).

Having continued her practical work from the practical project to the dissertation, Hannah gained insights into the relationship between writing and making, seeing the processes as mutually enriching and informative, but essentially as different ways of thinking. Hannah frequently referred to thinking through your hands and

clearly valued the tactile, craft experience but also the intuitive, unplanned approach to making.

> ...I think sometimes when you just pick something up, a piece of paper, or a lump of clay, or video camera, or digital camera or whatever, particularly if you commit yourself to it, if you think I'm going to, you know, really plug at this and just see..let's just see what happens over a period of time, fourteen days or, you know, whatever, fourteen hours or whatever it might be,...things will come out that will entirely surprise you...and you can reflect on what's happened whilst you're ...whilst you're engaged with that process and afterwards. But to sit down and pre-plan it is just um, is dishonest really I think...(IT4:13).

My feeling is that Hannah discovered and identified this different way of working through the practical project and dissertation. On viewing Hannah's dissertation exhibition, Peter commented that Hannah had found her voice. I think she had worked in these ways before but a number of elements came together to consolidate finding her voice and methodology. The elements were freedom, openness, ownership and deep personal engagement. Hannah realized she had the resources, literally the sources of ideas, more than enough, as she had such appetite and ambition, and ideas were stored up over years waiting for attention. I think Hannah articulated the methodology for herself. She learned the skills and discipline of reflexivity early on.

> I suppose I am biased because my work really takes off when I just start doing stuff, too much time thinking and, you know, isn't necessarily...isn't as productive as I used to imagine it would be (IT4:7).

Hannah changed her approach, realizing that planning creative work can still leave you with no idea where to start. At all levels of education an outcomes-based approach to learning is dominant – a predictive, deterministic approach impatient for demonstrable results. Hannah discovered and confirmed the importance and vitality of an engaged, process-led approach that does not seek to predict or determine results.

> Because the kind of thinking you can do when you're working with your hands I think is so much more frankly productive really (IT4:8).

In her feedback Hannah wrote " the mind can doubt and cause blocks but the hands will beaver away if given the chance. It is about overcoming self-doubt, experimenting, trying not be dominated by one's inner critic" (Hannah's feedback). Viewing her dissertation as a continuation of themes explored in the practical project, Hannah approached the investigation as a research journey or story, mining numerous sources to explore diverse processes and media. Her final exhibition had a strongly autobiographical slant, a re-examination of childhood memories, intertwined with other people's stories of lives, places or buildings, as this extract form her artist's statement indicates:

> My work evidences these encounters and in the role of researcher I have documented them, in sketchbooks, texts, bricolage and on film, harvesting questions, illuminations or conclusions along the way. An unexpected alchemy has taken place during the past year whereby the processes of research have become an artform in themselves. For this reason, I present my research in the form of an installation, offering a simultaneously private and public viewpoint (Hannah, artist's statement accompanying MA dissertation exhibition, 2006).

I see Hannah's statement as a phenomenological text- capturing and describing her experience and creating new insights such as the concept of harvesting and the 'unexpected alchemy' whereby the processes of research became an artform in their own right, echoing the ideas of Jeffers (1993) who explores what she calls:

> A living relationship of educational research to art and of art to educational research, while recognizing that such a relationship may not embrace all forms of educational research or art (Jeffers, 1993:12).

Interview with Aisha

Aisha came to us at Roehampton with an inter-disciplinary background, following her BA in Fine Art with a PGCE in English and Media Studies and concurrently completing an MA in Social Anthropology as she began the MA Art Education programme at Roehampton. Aiming to graduate with a Postgraduate Certificate rather than the full MA from Roehampton, Aisha took specific modules including the practical project, viewing the programme syllabus as a potential bridge between her various disciplines and practices. She was particularly interested in

the congruent but contested overlaps between art, anthropology, education and other fields that Aisha is engaged with, such as religion and language. Aisha intends to continue her postgraduate studies by studying for a PhD in an area of anthropology. Aisha's particular interest in interdisciplinary and intercultural interfaces led me to structure the major part of my interpretation of her interview under the theme of *contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies.* Aisha's ideas about "working through and beyond" ideas that she brought with her and intends to pursue and develop beyond the Roehampton course, are discussed through the combined themes of *iterative complexity* with *flexibility and openness* as my interpretations of Aisha's interview responses closely link these two themes.

Iterative complexity, flexibility and openness

The practical project itself was perceived by Aisha as time and space to work through ideas, what she called a conceptual space:

> Most of all, it's a time and a space in a sense, a conceptual space to work through some ideas that I've had and I've been working on practically in my own work...around issues where abstract painting and text can be incorporated to work with issues of contemporary political or community concerns, like I might have mentioned before around interface, intercultural notions, self and other, you know they sound sort of quite large issues (IT6:1).

The notion of students bringing existing themes and ideas to the practical project is also emphasised by Aisha. She appeared to pick up threads first explored in her fine art education and later followed through in her studies in social anthropology. Drawing on her varied background in anthropology, art and education, Aisha was keen to make artwork which connected these disciplines and aligned aesthetic or formalist concerns with socially engaged content.

> So it's a way of thinking that allows you to then make work in that sort of way...engaged way with the world. But equally that approach to working doesn't mean that you wouldn't work with more aestheticised, you know, formal painting techniques. ...I'm working with those kind of classic distinctions between the formal concerns or art that has that as a priority and art that's about issues of content, I want to work with both (IT6:2-3).

Aisha consciously chose Roehampton's MA programme and the practical project in particular as a means of "working through" her ideas and interests. "Working

through" was a phrase used frequently by Aisha suggesting the ideas, concerns and concepts she was exploring extended beyond disciplinary boundaries or the physical and temporal boundaries of the artwork. Her phrase "working through" also suggests the ideas that pre-occupied her had been with her for some time, "lived with" perhaps, mulled over, but not given the space or context for a fuller exploration. The practical project appears to have provided Aisha with a context and framework for giving shape to those ideas from disparate sources, revisiting or reworking ideas that could have been incubating over an extended period of time. "Working through" could also imply that the work will continue beyond the life of the project, its completion is not necessarily an end-point: "Some of the work that I'm doing is preparation towards" (IT6:24). The phrase 'working around issues' is also interesting as it suggests various issues are tackled simultaneously and perhaps tangentially; perhaps Aisha hoped the different perspectives and analytical tools of art, anthropology and education may spark off unexpected insights.

The dynamic process implied by the concept of "working through" is underlined when Aisha refers to a "constant to-ing and fro-ing", an oscillation between various themes, methods, disciplines and approaches, an iterative process involving continuous repetition and revision.

Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

> Yes but I suppose those two courses that I took [MA Art Education modules] were also useful and relevant in terms of bridging, you know, the critical theory and so on that I'd been exposed to at art school, at Goldsmiths [BA Fine Art] but bringing it into an education context...(IT6:7).

Aisha saw the MA course at Roehampton as useful in bridging and linking theories and practices from different stages and fields of her studies:

> I would see a role for art education in that sense; bringing [together] the anthropology and my interest in a wide range of ...intercultural connections and faith communities... very much interested in those aspects that I hope to connect, you know (IT6:6).

Interfaces between boundaries - national, cultural, linguistic, disciplinary - featured regularly in tutorials with Aisha and in the interview. She confirmed that the broader

context of art education, coloured by her studies in social anthropology, extended the parameters of her work, adding further layers of potential meaning. The reflexive and dialogical processes used to explore the interfaces in the production of her artwork were significant to Aisha:

> ...I just wanted to make it very clear that it was about making these constant to-ing and fro-ing , you know the engaging with these issues...but yeah, I think that's been exciting, making the work in the context of, you know, art education and then beyond this course as well I think I will take that with me (IT6:13).

"Engagement" was a term used frequently by Aisha, preferring the term to 'understanding' when referring to responding to an artwork. Aisha felt an artwork should be experienced, lived with, "being with the work" (IT6:17). For Aisha the terms 'explaining' and 'understanding' imply an attempt to attribute a single or precise meaning to an artwork, thus pinning or closing meaning down, whereas she saw the potential for multiple if not infinite interpretations. A visiting academic to a group tutorial had suggested that students tended to speak too much about their artwork and should allow the artworks to speak for themselves, a concept Aisha described as characterising 'the silent artist'.

> But if I, as the artist, am going to present a work, or present a piece of work being engaged, for example, with students, I think I'm going to have to say some of the things, but importantly say that these are just some ideas that either I've brought to it or you can take from it, but that's what's exciting about a piece of art. That is spite of some extent closing it with some readings, it's always inherently open...even if you say, you know "this work is about that"...you can always bring another perspective on the work and immediately once again you open the work out to an infinite number of other readings (IT6:9).

Aisha thought that, in the end, even the artist who makes the work doesn't control the work, cannot own or prescribe its potential meanings for others.

> You know, because I am sometimes surprised by how it looks when it's finished, when it's there, it has its own resonance and then I myself come to the work that I have made as sort of a viewer anew, you know, like to see new things. And after the work is done, I think it's almost like a clean slate and you can take a whole other set of resonance and that's just how I approach my work...that's the exciting thing about visual works that they

can be so productive in the meanings that they can inspire. Even I think written texts have a certain degree of that, but with visual works, it's almost infinite I think (IT6:10).

The absence of closure or finality seems to me to challenge an education system and ethos that measures student achievement through the attainment of defined learning outcomes, that is based on summative assessment. A system that has difficulty recognizing or valuing concepts of ambiguity, postponed meaning, conjecture, or tentative constructs.

My own comment at this point emphasizes the versatile potential of the practical project to meet students' needs and interests. It is malleable, flexible and almost completely open to students to interpret and follow as they wish. This is in relation to its purpose and position within the MA programme as well as in relation to how and when students tackle the project – what their starting or finishing points might be.

> I think, probably what I'm thinking and reflecting on with that is that the practical project can be used by different art educators in many different ways and in many different levels (JH, IT6:20).

Finally, for Aisha, there is a strong sense of her exploring cultural identities through the practical project. Explorations of self and her own cultural and religious identity complement the 'quite large issues' Aisha saw herself as dealing with.

> But I've brought it down to working with particular text and I'm interested in, for example, Hebrew and Tamil, which is my own sort of ethnic tongue. And I recently, for example, attended a Roman Catholic Tamil service and it was highly interesting to see Halllelujah or Amen written in Tamil, having seen them written in Hebrew and those were the sort of real life occurrences that I suppose inspire me and that I then think of translating into works with, you know, abstract painting, taking on form that abstract expressionism a more, you know, expressive colour field painting techniques of working and incorporating text into it (IT6:1).

Interviews with Mary, Nicoletta, Lin and Sophia

Interview 2:   Mary, a full-time scholarship student, secondary art and design teacher and teacher educator from Nigeria;

Interview 3:   Nicoletta, a part-time student and primary teacher from Cyprus

Interview 5:   Lin, a full-time student and secondary art and design teacher from Taiwan

Interview 7:   Sophia, a part-time student and primary teacher from Cyprus.

My interpretations of these 4 interviews with students have been combined, as explained in the introduction to this chapter.

Self, Autonomy and Identity

Autonomy and independence seemed to be amongst the most important aspects of the module and of the choice of programme and Roehampton as a university for many students. Mary felt that:

> The most valuable aspect of [the practical project] is the opportunity that I'm given to express my knowledge, to set my own initiatives, to develop it now for myself. I'm not being forced to do something I don't want to do. I've been asked to choose what I would love to do (IT2:1).

Mary says she was awarded her scholarship by the Nigeria government to come and study in the UK because the Roehampton MA 'was built on practical experiences' (IT2:2)

> I'm so much interested in the practical aspect of art more than the theory-based on the thought that the employment situation in Nigeria is alarming....too many young people don't have jobs (IT2:1).

Seeing the practical project as relevant to this problem, Mary felt able to develop skills and knowledge that she could use to support youth employment in Nigeria.

> But my experience in the past I've discovered that with the skills...if you have a skill about crafts, art in general, you can make ends meet. You don't need to be looking for a job. You can, between practice another profession, but you still have something going at home (IT2:1).

Focusing upon batik and other fabric-dyeing and printing techniques to design and make home-furnishing and dress textiles, Mary aimed to prepare herself to teach

older, secondary-age students in Nigeria self-sufficiency skills, enabling them to create and sell fabrics and prints. Mary saw the relevance and usefulness of the practical project and the space to determine her own focus as being of particular importance.

> By the time I get back to Nigeria I have a plan, have a goal and these things I'll be teaching there. I'll be teaching them tie dye, batik, printing, crafts in general. ...trying to change the perspective of art and crafts education in Nigeria. (IT2:11).

Mary's goals extended beyond employability skills to community involvement:

> ..in this practical project whereby you can promote community and, you know, projects like inviting parents to share this with the children (IT2:3).

Reflecting on these goals for both vocational and community education, Mary saw herself as both artist and teacher;

> I think it's both. I see myself as an artist. I also see myself as an art educator because I can't leave one for the other. I have to do the two. I have to be an artist to give...to know what to teach in class...the other point I would like to make is some people in Nigeria feel that an art educator cannot be a good artist, and that is the orientation I would like to change (IT2:18).

Nicoletta also saw art-making and therefore the practical project as social activities:

> I think one reason it's important is because art is social. It's a social activity. The assessment is you put up an exhibition, you present your work to other people. You discuss it with other people, and therefore, during the life of the project, during its development, it's important that you...you meet other people and discuss it with them, because that's...that's the form of assessment. It's like artists exhibit their work in a gallery or in a space and expect a reaction from...from the public, um, from our critics. So it's a social activity isn't it? (IT3:7-8).

Given Nicoletta's perception of art as a social activity, she viewed the coming-together of art and education in the practical project as a particular challenge:

> ..it's very challenging because...it joins⁺education, the area I studied, I worked and something in environment and art, that are my interests (IT3:1).

> You develop the project through yourself and also through the project and that's very important I think. I had chances to create when I was in Cyprus...but not chances to interact with other people in the same area of

study, and to be guided by someone and try not to be evaluated about this (IT3:2).

Nicoletta comments here upon the freedom to investigate, to interact with and learn from others without continuous assessment, which is postponed to the end of the project and does not risk inhibiting the progress of the project.

Lin also appreciated the autonomy and freedom afforded by the practical project when compared to her experiences in Taiwan:

> Yeah I think that's a very big difference in what I learn...maybe in Taiwan the way of teaching most of the time the tutor or teacher will teach you "Oh you can...you just do that, do that", but now the way I learn is the tutor doesn't just tell me what I should do, but they give me the direction, different direction, then I need to find myself through the practice (IT5:1).

Such new-found independence proved challenging for Lin to begin with but I find it interesting that she refers to finding *herself* through the practice, rather than referring to finding her focus, reference points or sources. Lin sought to gain not only her pedagogic autonomy, or what Barnett (2007) might call an epistemological autonomy, through the practical project, but an ontological freedom, the possibility of finding herself through her project. Such aims for Lin reflect the cultural shift in educational practice and philosophy on arriving in the UK from Taiwan.

Sophia struggled with her English to say that we teach through ourselves:

> Yeah, because I think whatever you're going to learn now, it...you learn it like a pers...you become pers...that's your person, that's...and that's what you bring with you when you teach. Whatever you learn, whatever you experience, it all comes through your teaching (IT7:4).

For Sophia, a teacher's education, background and values are important and she saw the PP as helping her become " a better person". I responded:

> This suggests that this project, the practical work, is about more than skills and knowledge. You mentioned there values, behaviour, so it's actually about the teacher's, a person's whole attitude, almost whole philosophy towards art and education (IT7:5).

For each of these students it seems, the practical project has benefits that are personal and professional, that relate to their sense of self and being, for example, and, in Mary's case, has potential economic and social benefits.

Iterative complexity

The students interviewed readily understood both the iterative nature of developing their work in the practical project and the scope for ideas and references to come from a wide range of sources. For Mary there was also no point in covering ground that was already familiar:

> I'm going to learn more about English craft because if you keep on doing what you know, what you have been doing, you are not learning. You just stay in one place. You need to move forward (IT2:6).

> ...I love to teach art, but I'm going to make art in a new way when I get back to Nigeria (IT2:13).

Mary made it clear she saw the practical project as an opportunity to explore ways of facilitating employment and livelihood opportunities for young people in Nigeria. Concerned about high unemployment amongst youths and high drop out rates from school, Mary talked about the barriers faced by school-leavers who aspire to higher education. This is a theme Mary described in detail in her written report:

> For instance, [UNESCO] has promoted international recognition of creative artisans and has laid emphasis on capacity-building of women and youths through pilot projects, for the training of instructors in product designs and organizational techniques....training in these techniques of fabric decoration has been used for empowering underprivileged sectors of the population and local communities in Nigeria in recent times (IT2:3).

> Presently it's useful to me, but I know my future plans are just, you know, they are in a series because I intend to go further than this. So I think it's just...it fits my goals (IT2:2).

Sophia's ideas for the practical project were not as fully formed as Mary's. Picking up the notion of challenge in her interview, Sophia responded:

> Deciding on what you're going to do. That was the most scary; that gives me all the fears, but even now that I have concluded at some point, I'm really...I'm searching...I'm still searching and also thinking of new ways and all the different ways that I can go with (IT7:6)

So it's changing and evolving all the time? (JH: IT7:6)

Yeah it is. Everything's going to change by the end. It's going to have a different outcome by the end of it (IT7:6).

Sophia clearly valued the openness as she felt it gave her the structure " to go whatever…or where you wanted to go" and did not have "things that restrict it" (IT7:1) Asked about balance between guidance and freedom, Sophia explained "At first I was a little bit scared to be honest" (IT7:1).

> You don't have specific restrictions, you don't have specific time limits and, er, confined ..um, that confines you. So it's pretty open that you can work on whatever you want or however you want (IT7:6).

Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

Lin saw the practical project as an important means of learning through doing, supported by theory, as previously, in Taiwan, she had not been able to or had not had opportunities to combine theory and practice:

> I think it is quite important because for me to do something…the most efficient way is through doing that, and through doing you need to find some theory to support that. Then this is the …new area learnt because before I usually just decided the practice and the theory, just divided them, but now I know how to just combine them together and learn from each other (IT5:6).

The practical project was seen by Sophia as "getting totally engaged and involved with the art education theory and background" (IT7:1). Asked about the relationship between her art practice and pedagogy, Sophia replied:

> Well the relationship can be either direct or indirect, because at the same time, you're learning as well so in my case I'm learning to…how to use clay and everything…so I am learning as well at the moment, but in the future, I could be a teacher in that…so that would be more indirect at the moment, but it would also be direct from getting involved with the things that are actually taught now at the school…. (IT7:3).

We discussed Sophia's use of the terms direct and indirect, which I felt suggested the links between her art practice and art education may be immediate or postponed. I responded to Sophia's point by saying;

...you can immerse yourself in practical work, in making art and exploring artists, doing that research the links with education will be almost inevitable. You know, they'll come anyway. They will evolve naturally...(IT7:4).

Interview with Peter

Peter is my tutor colleague on the MA programme; he took over from me as programme convener several years ago. After receiving the interview transcript, I read it and wrote up initial interpretive notes, 'my first reading'. It was several months before time could be found for Peter and I to meet and discuss my first reading. Hence, this interpretation of my interview with Peter was written after our second meeting. Discussions with Peter tended to focus upon how students and tutors position and perceive themselves in relation to the practical project, therefore the second theme, Self, Identity and Autonomy was to the fore. The other overarching theme in relation to my interview and subsequent discussion with Peter concerned the relationship between made and written texts so the fifth theme, Contested Ontologies/Epistemologies/Pedagogies was also selected to structure the discussion.

Self, Identity and Autonomy

Peter felt the practical project gives students the opportunity to make choices about how they position themselves in relation to art and education.

It's also good I think for them to have the option to put the teaching completely to one side and say for this project I don't want to necessarily refer to the context of me being a teacher (IT1:1).

This view may seem, at face value, to question the aim of the practical project for students to produce artwork in an educational context. However, the concept of 'setting aside' is important here: the teaching or educational context cannot be completely ignored or abandoned, not least as the students' programme of study leads to a degree in art, craft and design education. Setting aside the educational or pedagogic concerns, however, implies a temporary respite from a teacher's responsibilities, or daily focus, giving students some freedom and space to develop their ideas.

For Peter, it is significant that students have the choice to make the practical project either a substantial or subordinate aspect of their programme of study. 'For me, the important feature of it is it needs to be flexible and I can think of one student who needed to make it a substantial part' (IT1:1). Peter's emphasis on flexibility and student choice highlights the importance of the student taking the lead in designing and determining every aspect of their project: the central theme, the conceptual framework, media and methodologies, the nature of their project and its relationship to other work. Students may see themselves as reclaiming their artist identity, working within their role as a teacher, questioning their identity as a teacher or all adopting all three positions. Such openness inevitably raises questions about:

> ...the pathway that's taken them to the point where they currently are and inevitably the pathway that leads on from that point as well. Um. It's difficult to talk about this without referring to my own sort of personal journey if you like (IT1:2).

Following taking a fine art degree, Peter had gone into primary teaching and eventually moved to lecturing in art education at Roehampton. He saw this as moving from being a specialist to a generalist and back to a specialist '...which I think has sort of raised lots of issues for me' (IT1:3).

> For me...positioning myself within art and design is an opportunity to sort of go back to my roots before I was a teacher. Whereas for people with a secondary experience, I think it's more a case of... a more linear route. I think that the subject's always been more central to them; whereas in primary the pupil is always central (IT1:3).

For art educators there is often a sense of interaction or journeying between artist and teacher identities and each of these is necessarily complex, there being no singular definitions of either teacher or artist identities (Hall, 2006). Peter highlights differences between the perceptions of the practical project held by students who are primary teachers, students who are secondary teachers and equally, tutors who were formerly primary or secondary teachers. I acknowledge the practical project was designed originally with students who were secondary teachers in mind but the context has changed over time as the majority of MA students at Roehampton are now primary teachers. I suggest that MA students with a primary background have interpreted the practical project, translating the project into a

mode and language that works for them, suggesting the project structure has held within it sufficient openness and flexibility to allow this to happen. Other modules in the MA have content that is more defined by the tutor; the 'open agenda' of the practical project generates a different approach to learning for the student and a different teaching approach for the tutor. The student establishes and maintains control of their learning, making their own decisions and choices.

> What we've also got is ...students who have done a...spent three or four years at art school and see the practical project as this kind of breath of fresh air where they can actually pick up on ideas they haven't had time to pursue because they've been teaching , or to explore new identities within their identity as an artist, to explore perhaps technologies that they haven't used before maybe because of all sorts of reasons (IT1:5).

Discussing with Peter, our own positions as tutors for the practical project, I suggest:

> ...I think that we quite freely and openly share with students our own experiences and our own identities with students which I think is an essential element. And I think that perhaps makes it different from the other modules as well...because our own artist identities are part of the kind of teaching tool of this (module) in a way that for the other modules perhaps they're not quite the same. I don't know what you think (JH, IT1:8)

> I think a lot about this to be honest and there's quite a lot I'd like to say about it. I mean I'll begin by questioning that assumption about sharing our own identities. And I think in terms of what students need from us and what they hear from us, what's important to them is the things that we say that connects with what they suspect is missing in their work so far (IT1:8).

Peter questions my point about our artist identities being a teaching tool. He interprets his tutorial role as providing students with resources in terms of feedback on work being produced and references to artists.

> What you can do is to look at the potential that lies within their work and highlight what you see as being the positive points, suggest certain references that they might be interested in pursuing that again is to do with identity because I feel as though here's me at the front but behind me there are dozens of artists who are, you know, struggling to raise their hand to be included in the conversation because they...they were a potential reference point for this student. So I feel as though I'm kind of drawing on this bank of...support behind me and that...I'm a kind of a ...what's that word?

> JH: Conduit?

Peter: Conduit? I hesitate to use that word because I don't know exactly what it means but I feel as though I'm a conduit between me and many other influences behind me. That's ...a situation which I think is quite complicated but which I personally think I deal with quite effectively in those situations. I leave the student feeling as though she's really on the right track and pursuing different potential paths. But I don't think I'm sharing my own identity with her. Because if I were it would be...it would be too narrow, I think. It would be...insufficiently broad, it would be just, you know...they need more input from all sorts of influences because you never know what exactly is going to light the fuse (IT1:9-10).

Peter's view seems to be at some variance from my notion that tutors' own artist identities are part of the resource when teaching the practical project. We appear to have a different conception of what is meant by our identity and how this might be a teaching resource. I have a sense in which we are teaching ourselves as much as the content or focus of the student's project. Subsequent reflection suggested to me that, just as Peter emphasises artists for the students to reference, I tend to emphasise a certain disposition or way of being through which students approach their project as an artist. Perhaps my own and Peter's complementary perspectives could be described as ontological and pedagogical, respectively. My aim is to encourage and support deep and personal enquiry that students are able to sustain beyond the practical project and their MA; that is, to continue making art as a form of research that supports their ongoing personal and professional development. I see students turning to their own resources in the hope that the spark that is going to light the fuse of their project comes from themselves and endures. I would argue that Peter's view of the tutor as a conduit for particular lines of enquiry and artist resources complements rather than opposes my positioning of the tutor as a mentor who encourages and challenges the student to develop her own personal resources and way of being as an artist, not just for the limited duration of the practical project but beyond.

Peter and I seem to be using different conceptualizations of identity: Peter in relation to the content of the artwork, filling 'gaps in knowledge', references to artists. Therefore, if we 'share' our own artist identity, as Peter expressed it, we share our own work, ideas or artists who have influenced us. However, I think back

to Peter's earlier observation that it was difficult to talk about students' journeys without referring to our own.

My understanding of how tutors' artist identities might inform our teaching is in relation to supporting students developing an independent, reflexive disposition towards their project, generating their own creative methodologies for the artist-teacher. For some students this may mean reclaiming an artist identity and a more imaginative and open-ended space than either their practice as a teacher or their studies for other MA modules allow. For students whose first degree may not be in art or design and who may never have seen themselves as artists, a tutor may draw upon their own experience to encourage the development of certain artist qualities in a student. For example, the tutor may wish to help nurture a sense of adventure, enquiry, playfulness, qualities that support the notion of art as a form of research.

Each conceptualization of the tutor's artist identity seems a necessary but different kind of resource. Peter's references are more objective and extrinsic, to art, artists, the artwork; my references are more subjective and intrinsic, to the self, reflexive and learning processes. Peter extends his objectivity to the role of the teacher.

> Many artists, not all, are involved in kind of exposing their identity in some way. And this links with the uniqueness that if you're really making work that's genuinely interesting it will expose something of your identity, your view of the world, whereas I don't think teachers do that …I don't think they need to do that (IT1:19-20).

A different, opposing view is that teachers cannot hide their selves and teach about and through themselves as much as they teach their subjects: their world views, their beliefs about people, how we relate to them, teachers' values and beliefs inform both what they teach and how they teach. Equally, students need to project themselves into their studies. Unless students engage and identify with their subject matter, they will merely be adopting practices that hold no meaning for them personally. This relates to theories of deep and surface learning: Barnett (2007) argues a deep orientation towards study is a personal stance on the part of

the student in which she invests something of herself as a person, projecting herself into her studies and taking an active stance in her experience.

Peter differentiates artist and teacher identities through the contrasting pressures placed on artists and teachers. Peter suggests artists are under pressure to be unique, original, to establish an identity and voice.

> As a teacher, you're under pressure to meet specific targets that are the same targets for your colleagues in other schools across the country....within primary schools, you know, you're working towards English and maths tests and what have you, and I think that the opportunities for creativity and originality really are more restricted and you're not...you're certainly not measured on your originality, you're measured by outcomes that meet specific targets and these are some...I guess I'm highlighting some of the things I've sort of struggled with in my own sort of kind of joint identity (IT1:19).

Peter raises the concept of peer learning and students constructing identities in relation to communities of practice, " ...as I've tried to explain to the BA students they will learn as much from each other as they will from me" (IT1:6). Students establish their identities and individual voices in concert with others, acting together, learning together and supporting each other, a philosophy that departs from a view of art education as supporting individualism. The fact that the majority of MA students at Roehampton are primary teachers appears to be a factor here: students bring their more collegiate, team-working, primary teacher ethos to bear upon their MA work. This is manifested as 'looking out for each other', showing interest in each other that was not my experience when I was an MA student 20 years ago, nor when I first started teaching on an MA programme15 years ago. Formerly, the majority of students on MA Art Education programmes were from secondary, further or higher education backgrounds.

Contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies

> I don't know it's a weakness but I would...but it's something I would question is about the written rationale. When we go to an exhibition of an artist's work we don't expect to see a written rationale. When we do see one it can sometimes, for some people, detract from the visual impact of an exhibition. And I...I worry a little bit that by asking students to provide a written piece of work to support something that's purely visual we're giving them a slight message that you're an artist, but you're not quite an artist because you

can't pass this practical project without a written component as well (IT1:1-2).

That each reading of a text is a new construction of meaning, building on the previous reading in an iterative process applies to both the practical project and my research process. An iterative process is one of the themes picked up by Peter, drawing attention to the written report and his feeling that, for the practical project, the requirement for a written rationale could be undermining the ethos of the project. The practical project gives students opportunities to express themselves in other ways yet, Peter fears, the writing task may be inhibiting the journey towards completing a body of work. I suggested the writing task is a written report on the project, which included a rationale and could be seen as a commentary and evaluation of what was done. In relation to requirements, the format of the report is more open and flexible than a standard written assignment. The writing style is open to student choice and the word length is flexible, between 2,500 and 3,500 words. I do advise that the report should conform to academic conventions in that it should include references as sources of ideas should always be acknowledged and all MA work is produced in a theoretical framework, not in isolation.

Picking up on my term 'commentary', Peter thought this left the project more open-ended, as work in progress rather than a finite piece of work. As with many of Peter's ideas, he drew parallels with art practice undertaken as a specialist module that he leads within an undergraduate teacher education programme. Peter also drew attention to the MA practical project's requirement for a presentation, assessing a student's ability to talk about and present their project to a small invited audience. In addition to the artwork produced, we expect students to produce written work and spoken/presented work. Peter wondered if the artwork and live presentation was not enough?

Peter contrasts the experience of our MA students with students in an art school environment, where the tutor would often visit students 'in their space' in which there would usually be evidence of the student's thinking which could generate a dialogue. Such evidence may take the form of visual work in progress, references,

images, objects, notebooks, sketchbooks, books and many other things besides. This supporting and visual backdrop is not normally available for one of our tutorials when the student normally meets the tutor in the tutor's office, usually bringing examples of work. This suggests the tutorial dialogue has to be generated and supported in other ways and, Peter seems to be implying here, could be seen as privileging written and spoken language, much like a tutorial for a written assignment. Reflecting upon this view, this is the case at the outset when a written proposal is required, one or two sides of A4, rather than a visual proposal. The dialogue for the project is opened and concluded in written texts, sandwiching the practical dimension and possibly, diluting or distancing the visual dimension, Peter seems to be suggesting.

When students start the practical project they also write a proposal – a short and open-ended outline of their ideas in around 500-750 words. Peter's questioning of written work prompted me to consider whether students need to write a *written* proposal, which may encourage a more rational, linear, outcomes-led and planned approach to the practical project when a creative, open-ended approach is more appropriate for the practical project. It may be worthwhile considering whether students should submit a *visual* proposal, or one which combines visual and written text.

Peter suggests the written can detract from the visual and may dilute the message that students are also artists. My view of this is that students are working as artist-teachers rather than artists, they are producing their own work in an educational context which means that ideas about learning and teaching are always present, even if they are set aside temporarily. The distinction between artwork produced for the practical project and an exhibition is that students' work is produced as coursework for assessment towards a higher degree. By presenting artwork for a degree, it can be argued and course criteria may specify, students are obliged to render ideas and processes explicit. In the arena of professional practice for artists, information may remain implicit in an exhibition outside the academy. However, it could be argued that contextual, critical commentary can be achieved through a

live, oral presentation as a form of viva voce and that a written submission in addition, is not necessary.

Peter likens the teaching process for the practical project to an open-ended dialogue in which

> ...you're constantly re-defining, reviewing, re-assessing what it is that you as a tutor think is important about art ...you can probably take away as much from a tutorial with a student as the student can...for me, being involved directly in students' practical work, that's the benefit I get from it. It makes me reassess what I'm interested in looking at (IT1:11).

Peter relates how he's said to his BA students that the strongest exhibitions are often those that look like work in progress, "... that convince me that you're going to go on and pursue this line of enquiry further" (IT1:17).

We moved on to talk about the language of the module and Peter's unease with the term 'project', it seems for many of the reasons I had become critical of the terminology for this module.

> Personally I find this...the term project is a bit limiting... it suggests to me that there's...there's a finite end to this and that when you've handed in your project it's not one of many steps that you take sequentially. It's the end of something (IT1:17).

The term 'project' frames the student's work in a package that defines the experience in a way that an exhibition, presentation or installation of artwork does not; in these terms, the experience is left open for further development. 'Project' could imply a sense of completion or closure to the work; as I discussed in Chapter Two, projects are often driven by aims, objectives and methods in ways that do not necessarily fit with the diversity and unpredictability of visual enquiry.

Chapter Five

Making, reflecting and self: a discussion of findings

In this chapter the research findings and texts are brought together and distilled into an interpretive discussion of findings. I have sought to integrate the emergent themes into a coherent whole; the five themes that structured discussion of the results in the receding chapter are reconstructed and integrated into three themes:

- **Making Art as an Enquiry Process**
- **Reflexivity**
- **Self and Identity**

The three themes of iterative complexity, openness and flexibility and contested ontologies/epistemologies/pedagogies have been rolled into the overarching heading of 'Making Art as an Enquiry Process'. The single category appears to me to be capable of capturing the key themes concerned with making, and is complemented by the two categories of Reflexivity and Self and Identity.

I have sought to draw together the threads from the preceding chapter that encompasses the results of the research, the initial theories and research questions discussed in the introductory chapter, and the literature discussed in chapter two. The findings are thus distilled from all the preceding chapters. Key concepts are italicised for emphasis.

Making Art as an Enquiry Process
Students and tutors perceived the practical coursework in the MA as artwork rather than 'education work' in at least three important related respects. First, students' practice-based coursework carried a *'productive ambiguity',* a concept of Eisner's that Hannah drew my attention to.

> By productive ambiguity, I mean that the material presented is more evocative than denotative, and in its evocation, it generates insight and invites attention to complexity....the open texture of the form increases the probability that multiple perspectives will emerge. Multiple perspectives make our engagement with the phenomena more complex. Ironically, good research often complicates our lives (Eisner, 2005:180).

Complexity is embraced in students' practice-based work, an ethos that contrasts with a curriculum ideology prevalent in higher education, not just schools, that promotes the production of intended learning outcomes as clear, unambiguous statements of what learners should know, understand or be able to do. Huebner identified such an ideology as 'current' in 1975:

> Current curricular ideology reflects, almost completely, a technical value system. It has a means-end rationality that approaches an economic model. End states, end products, or objectives are specified as carefully and accurately as possible, hopefully in behavioral terms. Activities are then designed which become the means to these ends and objectives (Huebner, 1975:223).

Such an ideology reflects a 'technical rationality', that has characterised curriculum planning and assessment in schools in England, certainly since the introduction of GCSE examinations in 1986. For much longer, almost 40 years, Eisner has advocated the use of expressive objectives in arts education, as they allow student and teacher to explore issues that are of particular interest to the enquirer, issues that have not been prescribed or predicted and are capable of recognising the irrational and intuitive. The English curriculum ideology and systems are not geared to cope with recognizing complex, emotional responses and uncertainty. Grayson Perry reminds us that responding to art is not simply an intellectual process:

> Contemporary art often plays to the part of us that is very uncomfortable with not being sure, that cannot maintain a state of 'don't know'. The over-prioritising of meaning gets in the way of just experiencing the art in a more sensual way. Judging quality purely from an intuitive emotional response needs more confidence and experience than just working it out like a crossword clue (Observer, 2008:9).

In the MA practical project, students can experience a tension between on the one hand, the increasing explicitness of an objectives-led pedagogy, an instrumental input-output model of education and, on the other hand, the world of contemporary fine art, where artworks can be deliberately resistant to interpretation, or can stubbornly refuse to release clear meanings. As their tutor, I also experience a

tension between the summative assessment demands of the academy and the open, emergent qualities of the artworks students produce.

Second, Hanrahan (2006) cites Margolis' (1980) view that artworks are *culturally emergent phenomena,* a concept that I have applied to students' and tutors' perceptions of practice-based coursework. Hanrahan suggests that meaning emerges in the encounter and conversation between the viewer and the artwork, the viewer gradually coaxing ever more subtle nuances of meaning which change with each encounter. The notion of meanings as emergent, for both makers and viewers of artworks, attunes with the theme of iterative complexity, that we return time and again to read and re-read and re-interpret the artwork, text or data. Interpretation is never a single act or event but a potentially lengthy or even continuous process, lending itself to the construction of complex, multi-layered realities.

I found that students' identification of a topic or focus for their project rarely began with their enrollment for the module. They did not start with a blank page. Hannah concurs with the view of all the students studied in that they were returning to, or revisiting themes, concerns, threads of interest that had preoccupied them, often for considerable periods of time. The topic was present but had not received the attention the student wanted to give it; perhaps the ideas were latent or hidden, (Hannah later uses the term 'buried',) investigation being postponed for lack of time, opportunity or an appropriate conceptual framework. Over time the unexplored idea could grow in complexity and, despite being lived with, could become very difficult to access and articulate. The practical project provided a conceptual space and framework within which students could draw together previously conceived elements.

Aisha's experience also aligned with this view, as she welcomed the opportunity to 'work through' ideas first explored elsewhere at another time. Indeed, Aisha's concepts of 'working through', working 'around issues' and 'to-ing and fro-ing between ideas and disciplines, implies a fluid and dynamic approach to inter-

disciplinary learning in which she capitalizes upon skills and approaches gained in her studies in art, anthropology and education.

Peter saw the tutor's role as supporting a continuous dialogue with students, constantly 're-defining, reviewing and re-assessing with the student'. Both Peter and I saw ourselves as encouraging and supporting students to work and think as artists. In a talk with Clyde Hopkins, former Head of Painting at Chelsea College of Art, Matthew Collings said:

> To get anything from painting, either doing it or looking at it, you have to accept the unacceptable, the hard work of balancing elements, having an idea then doing something and then correcting it and correcting it again, finding the right placement for everything (University of the Arts London, 2007:4).

Third, Macleod and Holdridge (2006) argue that meanings in artworks are constructed '*a posteriori'*, after the event, through viewing, reflection and contemplation and are "...thus, ill suited to the institution's pursuit of prescribed outcomes" (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006:7). This cannot be absolute as, historically, meaning in art was attributed by patrons such as the Church or State, with the artist's role to translate the commission into a given medium. Additionally, Atkinson reminds us that children and students are capable of constructing meaning *in and through the event* of making:

> The processes and outcomes of visual practice provide (children and students) with an opportunity to develop a form of action and comprehension that evokes a form of learning that is valuable and profound but which it is impossible to encapsulate in words (Atkinson, 2002:195).

However, as I have argued, education systems at all levels appear to have become increasingly wedded to educational values that view learning as predictive, planned '*a priori'*, before the event, indeed, almost guaranteed, teacher and learner virtually expected to deliver the goods on demand. I see this linked to what Sennet refers to as 'impatient capital', in this extract from an article about Sennet by Richards:

> This, he argues, is because of the domination of the values of "impatient capital" with its insatiable demands for short-term returns, distrust of any relationship deeper or more lasting than a financial transaction and

assumption that any established expertise or emotional attachment to work will obstruct that pursuit of immediate profit. It is a world designed by and for consultants, with their absence of attachments, rather than for skills that may take thousands of hours to develop and define. (Richards, 2007:15).

The concepts Richards cites – impatience, immediate results or returns, lack of attachment chime with an input-output model of education obsessed with impact measurement. Artistic value is an end in itself and counters the instrumentalist ethos of a consumer society. However, my research revealed that the language of the practical project, both in the module booklet and in the exemplification of the task, inadvertently risks undermining artistic value in favour of educational values of a somewhat prescriptive and controlling nature. The source of such languaging of the project I traced to the quality and standards mindset of my Assistant Dean role. I conclude from this that models or prescriptions of practice cannot be provided as routes to be followed but "….have continually to be worked out anew" (Ingold, 1993:242).

Fourth, students' practice-based coursework displays *intertextuality* – traces, resonances and interlacings between texts of different kinds (Woods, 1990). Readings of texts are never 'complete' due to their endless referability. My interviews with students and Peter made reference to students' oscillation between classroom, studio, gallery and the academy as they encounter competing philosophies, pedagogies, beliefs and values. Pazienza (1997) identified a cross-over or reciprocity between the openness and adaptability present in the art-making processes of her studio with the dialogical ethos she tried to create in her classroom. Equally, migrations between sites of practice and enquiry can prove to be difficult and uncomfortable, as MA students try to reconcile contested pedagogic practices in their studies and professional practice as teachers (Burgess and Addison, 2004; Hollands, 2004).

Theoretical texts can never wholly capture, describe or analyse practice, just as practice can never simply illustrate theory in action. Tensions exist in the relationships between different kinds of text, for example, the made and the written, between art practice and art education theory, which cannot be fully resolved. Rather, this is an inherent, creative tension that is exploited through Eisner's notion

of productive ambiguity. This may create difficulty for some MA students who, as teachers, see their role as developing subject knowledge that informs their teaching. Such students may be uncomfortable with the rough ground or rough edges of art, which cannot be explained or understood, as neat packages of knowledge for them to pass on to their pupils, as some curriculum guidelines might have us believe. I see the practical project as an opportunity for students to live with, exploit and capitalize upon the tensions between competing values and languages. For example, made and written texts can be inter-woven and mutually supportive; writing can be subordinated from its normally dominant role to live in the shadow of art. Macleod and Holdridge draw our attention to art's "…uneasy embrace of linguistic systems. We need to bring our writing nearer to our making" (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006:12).

Claxton (2000) argues that balance is necessary in rehabilitating intuition and reason, effort and playfulness, a balance acknowledged by Henry Moore who wrote:

> It is a mistake for a sculptor or a painter to speak or write very often about his job. It releases tension needed for his work. By trying to express his aims with rounded-off exactness, he can easily become a theorist whose actual work is only a caged-in exposition of concepts evolved in terms of logic and words. But though the non-logical, instinctive, subconscious part of the mind must play its part in his work, he also has a conscious mind which is not inactive. The artist works with a concentration of his whole personality, and the conscious part of it resolves conflict, organises memories, and prevents him from trying to walk in two directions at the same time (Ghiselin 1952:73).

Rather than discord between opposing worlds of explication and ambiguity, one might see a blended world, where variance of meaning and plural forms of knowledge are addressed.

> "Read poetry: it's quite hard", the poet Don Paterson crisply suggested. To do so requires us to claim that imaginative space, and to live with Keats's "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts", rather than rush to conclude and summarise. Part of what Eliot called the shock of poetry lies in the fact that what it offers is often both instinctively recognisable and at the same time resistant to interpretation – a three-dimensional experience for the imagination, not a mere scanning of captions (O'Brien, 2008:3).

Students have to live with discord and ambiguity, using this to generate the necessary creative tension at the heart of the practical project, the challenge of which is to gain insights into connections between art practice and pedagogy. Students are challenged to align or reconcile the contested worlds of art and education; an increasingly explicit, outcomes and assessment-led educational climate with an uncertain, contested art world where single or specific meaning is resisted or refused. As Barnett suggests of student writing:

> This is a necessarily creative act: even if the substance of the paragraph has been evinced by others before, still this is a creative act in its own right. No one will have formed a paragraph exactly like this before: it will be original and the resources for that act of creativity lie within the student. Even if the student is drawing on existing data or scholarly resources, still the orderings, the analysis, the commentary, will be the student's. The framing of a paragraph has to come from within the student. It is a struggle – in which sentiments and murmurings are turned into textual utterances – that may bear some scrutiny (Barnett, 2007:31-32).

I suggest that Barnett's concepts of creativity in academic writing apply also to other media, languages and forms of assessment, art-making included, though as Sullivan tells us, in contrast to text-based enquiry, "[w]hat distinguishes arts-based research is the multiplicity of ways of encountering and representing experience" (Sullivan, 2005:60). Indeed, the multiplicity of means may combine text-based and image-based methods in various ways. Citing Friedman (2002), Gray and Malins suggest;

> Certainly part of PhD training must be concerned with the skills of clear and concise expression, yet the written medium is only one form, and the ability to communicate verbally and visually are equally important. However, we have yet to experience and be convinced by a purely visual argument. The 'self-explanatory' object/artifact constituting a complete research report remains a challenge [Friedman, 2002]. On the other hand, the inclusion of different kinds of visual evidence as components of an argument is entirely reasonable (Gray and Malins, 2004:95).

This view aligns with the UK Council for Graduate Education, which references the art and design research training policies in place at the then University of Central England to state;

> Whereas an artist or designer can simply present his or her end-product, and refuse further explanation, the academic art and design researcher is

obliged also to map for his or her peers the route by which they arrived at that product (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997).

Gray and Malins (2004) are not yet convinced by the purely visual argument, the 'self-explanatory' object/artifact constituting a complete research report in the context of a practice-based PhD in fine art, therefore I feel the 'stand-alone' artifact in an art education MA remains even more of a challenge?

Reflexivity

In chapter two I distinguished between 'reflexivity' as describing researchers interrogating and problematising their own positions as researchers (Usher and Edwards, 1994); and 'reflective practice' describing an epistemology of practice through which professionals seek to maintain a critical stance towards their own practice and learning (Schon, 1983). For the students, reflective practice has provided a resource that enabled them to explore and articulate the intersections between their art practice and their pedagogical concerns. For me, it has supported my attempts to maintain a self-conscious and self-critical stance towards the research. In summary, reflexivity supported our collective learning as we sought to deepen our understandings of practice-based coursework within the MA programme. Four significant dimensions of reflexivity have emerged from the research:

Centrality

Reciprocity

Making the familiar strange

Disturbance

The first dimension concerns the centrality of reflexivity for the research; the second a reciprocity and correspondence between my own and my students' reflexivity; the third, a recognition that the familiar and intuitive can be made strange and interesting again; and fourth, my awareness that reflexivity and what it reveals can be uncomfortable and disturbing. ₊

First, reflective practice has been foregrounded as an important resource through which our experiences and assumptions can be examined in order to gain insight and deepen our understanding. In acting reflexively in the practice of this research,

I aspired to follow Holliday (2002) in capitalizing upon the complexities of my presence in the research setting. This entailed not only remaining conscious that I am part of the worlds being studied, but maintaining awareness of the place that power and discourse have in the construction of research texts (Usher and Edwards, 1994). I described, in chapter two, the paradoxical situation whereby it is the professional's own practice, the text that is closest to them, that is often the most difficult to access, to acknowledge and to change. For this reason, I sought to draw upon intuitive and emotional responses to experience, developing what are known as meta-cognitive skills.

> By contrast, meta-cognitive skills are more likely to be employed in analysis, synthesis, critical judgement and evaluation, autonomy and ability to learn. Meta-cognitive skills are important because they affect the ability to understand and make sense of experience. As such they are essential to the process of reflection and working in situations of uncertainty (UKCLE, 2007:1).

Claxton has called this ability, learning to learn or learning power: '…getting better at knowing when, how and what to do when you don't know what to do' (Claxton, 1999:18). In my view, there is an emancipatory aspect to such 'learning power', giving professionals the freedom and autonomy to create knowledge, to question what we know and how we come to know it. In relation to interpreting the interview data, I have attempted to read the texts as closely as possible, to see through the data and be open to "alternative conceptions and imaginative options" (Sullivan, 2005:101). I have strived to achieve this honestly and transparently, for example, by explaining my thinking and decisions. Holliday (2002) reminds us that the claims we make have to be appropriate and valid and we have to be careful with people's words.

> The personal power of the writer is one thing; but perhaps more important and problematic is the personal power of those she writes about. We need to be wary of "putting the personal self so deeply back into the text that it completely dominates" [Lincoln and Denzin, 1994:578. citing Bruner]. No matter how open and sensitive the language used by the researcher, it will still have an irrevocable power, which critical, postmodern and feminist researchers continue to struggle to reduce (Holliday, 2002:175-6).

I have tried to moderate the landscape of power between myself and the participants in the research by sending them my first readings of interview transcripts as my early attempts at interpretation. Whilst only two participants gave me a substantive response, which further informed my analysis in a dialogic sense, I feel my actions had a moderating effect.

Through the heuristic enquiry process, I feel that I have been able to collect together and combine records in my reflective diary with what I have learned from sensitive, unstructured interviewing. 'Sensitive' (van Manen, 1990) as the researcher is listening carefully to the participant, for their nuances and meaning. What is subdued is the researcher's own consciousness and meanings which can easily clamour for attention and colour if not drown out the participant's voice. Through these methodologies I feel that I have been able to elicit insights and identify aspects of students' and tutors' practices and experiences of the practical project that they have been unable to articulate. It is through looking closely and attempting to describe in detail the realities of our practices that those unconscious moments are brought into consciousness, confronting us with the ambiguities and contradictions that are often smoothed over in our routine practices (Erickson, 1986).

Second, reflexivity acted as a reciprocal practice in my research, embodied and practised by both tutor and student, a collaborative and critical pedagogic enterprise.

> The teacher cannot hope his students to become critical beings if he himself does not openly exhibit such a mode of being and share it with his students. Criticality has to be lived (Barnett, 2007:158).

I contend that reflexivity is essential to critical being and a critical pedagogy. The tutor must adopt a critically reflexive stance for students to be able to develop reflexivity and carry this forward to their own students in school. Hannah referred to a mutual relationship whereby she encouraged her pupils to develop the reflective practice that was now part of her art-making and her teaching.

Barnett (2007) sees the university teacher as a role model for their students, with the potential to exemplify the qualities and dispositions they seek to encourage in their students. I see reflective practice as an essential disposition for myself and for MA students engaged in practice-based coursework. It is learning to learn, 'learning power', the meta-cognitive ability achieved through a reflexive disposition, that I consider the most important benefit for students.

Third, reflexivity allows us to focus on everyday practices and gain new insights. My diary reference to Patrick Caulfield's noting 'the shock of the everyday ' in the context of art relates closely to Erickson's observation that fieldwork research on teaching can, through its inherent reflectiveness, help teachers and researchers to make the familiar strange and interesting again.

> "What is happening here?" may seem a trivial question at first glance. It is not trivial since everyday life is largely invisible to us (because of its familiarity and because of its contradictions, which people may not want to face). We do not realize the patterns in our actions as we perform them. The anthropologist Clyde Kluckholm illustrated this point with an aphorism: "The fish would be the last creature to discover water" (Erickson, 1986:121).

For Erickson (1986), a learning environment or pedagogic space should be a reflexive space for both learners and teachers, each engaging critically with their own actions, interactions, positions and identities. Erickson argues the academy needs to understand specific phenomena in the meaning-perspectives of the actors themselves – students and teachers – rather than appreciation of generalized characteristics of phenomena in a pedagogical encounter. Detailed descriptions of actors' meaning-perspectives are necessary because of the invisibility of everyday life.

However, Erickson notes that such close encounters with actors' practices can reveal uncomfortable discontinuities and ambiguities. The fourth dimension of reflexivity to emerge in my research is that reflexivity can cause disturbance and discomfort, can unsettle as it is capable of exposing difference and contradiction. For example, I became aware that my colleague Peter and I held contrasting views on the extent to which our artist identities are present in our teaching. We also expressed different orientations towards what, as tutors, we had to offer students.

Peter saw his role as providing resources in the form of references to artists, whereas I saw my role as helping students develop a certain orientation or disposition towards their studies. Tutors perceive and interpret courses differently, hopefully not so differently that students get confusing messages but rather helping students appreciate differing and competing positions and perspectives as they strive to begin to define their own positions. I also experienced a 'shock of recognition' in confronting the prescriptive and somewhat restricted language of the practical project booklet. This was text that I had written and re-written but become blind to through familiarity and everyday proximity, being 'inside' the situation. In mitigation, van Manen (1990) contends that we operate in different modes of thinking and practice, writing module booklets being a pragmatic mode that is often unreflexive and uncritical.

> Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance [which] is likely to be somewhat painful (Dewey, 1993:13).

It is precisely because the reflexive practitioner does not accept the everyday at face value and is not prepared to work with generalised, abstracted understandings of practice that they are confronted with certain uncomfortable realities, contradictions and tensions. For myself, incongruities in module language could be partly accounted for by tensions in my own dual identity as tutor, living and working 'inside' the practical project, and as Assistant Dean, with a view from 'outside' the module with a quality and standards perspective.

Self and identity

The deep engagement of self by students in their practice-based coursework as they sought to construct and re-construct their artist and teacher identities, emerged as significant themes in the research findings. Discussing self and identity in turn, I have argued elsewhere (Hall, 2004b), that in making and responding to art we are making and re-making ourselves, through acts of disclosure, saying this is who I am, what I am, and what or who I might be. Davey asks us to:

> ...see artistic disclosure as being inseparably bound up with the question of what it means to be human, and insists that through making and

contemplating art we dare look at what we have and are making of ourselves (Davey, 1994:80).

The students and Peter confirmed self-engagement as an important aspect of the practical project. Barnett (2007) argues the engagement of self is necessary for students to be able to develop the independent, critical voice that is a key goal of higher education, for unless we are engaged we learn nothing of lasting value. Hannah spoke of 'diving into' an intensely personal, deep and solitary engagement in practice-based coursework which she needed to follow and complement through 'resurfacing' to critically engage in a community of practice. Lin talked about 'finding herself' in her project; Sophia referred to teaching 'through herself' and becoming a 'better person' through the project. Mary welcomed the freedom and space to define her own agenda and area of enquiry in the MA, connecting to new ideas previously unexplored. Nicoletta valued art as a social activity through which she worked with and learned from others. Aisha spoke about the practical project as a conceptual space in which to 'work through' some ideas and 'around issues' she had engaged with for some time.

Students' ownership of their ideas and projects was very important to them, autonomy and freedom being important conditions for students' self-engagement. The freedom to choose a field and direction for their work was clearly valued by students and the diversity of subject matter and approach is evident. Hannah's orientation was towards connecting her artist-practices with those of her students; Mary was oriented towards the potential for crafts to provide livelihoods for young people in Nigeria; Aisha's slant was towards a more abstract, theoretical and interdisciplinary approach to making; Nicoletta was interested in the social aspects of making, interpreting and art education;   Lin and Sophia in personal engagement. As a tutor, I feel that I have nurtured the individual student's self-engagement in practice-based coursework through an orientation to my own teaching that is sensitive, empathetic and caring, reflecting pedagogical qualities espoused by van Manen (1990). I reflected in my diary about being 'inside' a situation, intensely conscious of my own experience, seeing a situation in close-up detail, face-to-face with the messy, contradictory complexities of teaching and

learning in higher education. Such a perspective contrasts with the relatively dispassionate, objective stance adopted in my quality and standards role as Assistant Dean.

I suggested in chapter two that the identity transformations art teachers can undergo as they seek to discover or re-claim new identities as artist-teachers have been widely considered (Adams, 2003; Stanley, 2004; Hyde, 2004; Thornton, 2005; Galloway et al, 2006 and Hall, 2006). The objectives of the practical project imply students reflect on and question their artist and teacher identities. For Peter, the practical project provides an opportunity to set the teacher identity aside, though recognised this challenged the key aim of connecting art practice with pedagogy. Students value the freedom, even if temporarily, from explicitly educational or pedagogical concerns, which are 'set aside' for the time being, not forgotten. Hannah found her teacher identity was always present in her artist self and viewed artworks through a pedagogical lens.

I found that, in Hannah's case, she took back to her teaching not only new ideas, themes, knowledge of artists and developed skills, valuable as these are, but a transformed artist-teacher identity. Although a certain hybrid and complex identity already informed Hannah's practice, the practice-based approaches she experienced in the MA brought about an altered disposition towards her practices and new-found qualities, characterised by:

- A disposition towards teaching and learning as a creative collaboration
- The confidence and courage to afford her pupils the unpredictable space between control and chance that she experienced in her work
- The key role that reflective practice plays in adopting a critical stance towards your work

Chapter Six

Blended Worlds of Enquiry: conclusions and implications

The contribution of my research to knowledge, understanding and practice in education is summarised in this final chapter. I seek to draw my own conclusions; reflect on implications for further research; evaluate the success of the research; consider implications of the research for my own practice and for the wider professional context; and consider methods and implications of publishing and disseminating my work.

The contribution of the research to knowledge, understanding and practice in education

The opportunity for students to engage in making art in the context of an MA in Art Education is highly valued by students and tutors. Both perceive art practice as an alternative and complementary method of enquiry to dominant, language-based, rationalist methodologies. Art practice methods are perceived as more capable of exploring and capturing complexity, ambiguity and emergent meaning. Students' artworks display a more open texture than their written texts, encouraging multiple perspectives, iterative readings and an endless referability.

The openness and uncertainties inherent in practice-based approaches to MA study contrast sharply with a prevailing technical rationality in the curriculum and its assessment that is most obvious in schools but is also powerfully present in higher education. Technical rationality promotes the use of prescribed outcome statements, against which students' performances are measured. In such an outcome-oriented climate the practice-based coursework that I have researched sits somewhat uneasily, perched between competing ideologies, epistemologies and pedagogies. Students navigate between sites of practice and enquiry, oscillating between the rough ground and rough edges of art and the more regulated, moderated surfaces of education practice.

Reflective practice emerged as a key resource for students, enabling them to explore the intersections between their art practice and their pedagogical concerns.

In this research and in my professional practice in various roles, reflexivity has been a key dimension for me and my students, reciprocally living off each other's abilities to reflect and learn collectively. In my view, reflexivity has given us learning power – the freedom and autonomy to create knowledge, to question what we know and how we come to know it. I have sought to maintain a self-conscious and self-critical stance towards my research, in particular struggling to subdue the power and centrality of my own voice. It seems inevitable that I have only partially succeeded in this attempt, as the sole author of this final text, representing others and their views. I do feel that I have experienced some success in confronting a certain shock of recognition, my self-dialogue and interpretation of the data allowing me to notice contradictions in the language of module booklets and the views and practices of tutors.

Students' deep personal engagement and investment in the practical projects emerged as a significant finding. One student in particular, needed to follow a period of intensely personal and solitary investigation later 're-surfacing' to engage in critical reflection, meaning-making and evaluation in a community of practice. All the students and my colleague valued the social engagement and peer-learning the project promoted. Students valued the freedom and autonomy they were afforded to define their own study agendas and pathways, often following traces from long-standing interests and pre-occupations. Such ownership and personal investment contrasts with students' practices as schoolteachers in increasingly regulated and controlled environments. Furthermore, the Roehampton practice-based philosophy contrasts with some programmes of continuing professional development for teachers that are frequently and persistently defined by institutional and government goals and interests.

The interplay of art practices and educational practices: blended worlds of enquiry

My own conclusion from the research is that, rather than a paradigmatic and methodological schism between practice-based and language-based approaches to MA coursework, I perceive the importance and value of a *blended world of enquiry*, through which:

- variance of meaning, alternative modes of enquiry and plural forms of knowledge not only co-exist with outcomes-led pedagogies, but generate a necessary creative tension that adds to and enriches the milieu. Without challenge, outcomes-led pedagogies run the risk of reducing learning to the uncritical acquisition of prescribed outcomes.

- practice assumes a privileged and leading position, written texts living in the shadow of art.

- students are afforded space to live with and work through preoccupations and personal interests, often more evocatively than explicitly, multiple perspectives being valued above attempts at singular meanings.

- students have scope to exploit and capitalize on the inherent creative tensions between rationalist and creative epistemologies;

- students have opportunities to rehabilitate intuitive approaches to enquiry and blend or reconcile them with rational enquiry as important complementary means of living with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty as they explore the intersections between art and education.

Implications for further research

> Beyond answers to questions lie more questions and answers and yet more questions lie beyond answers and these also demand answers. Learning, then, typifies the human condition and is part of the human quest – one that is bound to remain unsatisfied within the bounds of time (Jarvis, 1992:246).

It seems inevitable that research generates further quests and areas for exploration. The implications of my research for the MA Art, Craft & Design Education programme at Roehampton and its development will follow, but in relation to the potential for further research, there are two related areas to which I have referred throughout the thesis. One is the area of practice-based doctorates to which much of the literature refers (Gray and Malins, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Macleod and Holdridge, 2006; UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997), though for the great part, these studies refer to art and design disciplines in higher education, rather than art and design education. To my knowledge, no student at Roehampton has undertaken a practice-based doctorate in the field of art and design education, though we have had enquiries and I have discussed the

opportunities and possibilities with several interested people. I should like to begin my experience of co-supervising research degree students, if possible, by working with a student who adopts the practice-based route, undertaking a case study to enhance my critical reflection on the process. I distinguish between a student undertaking a practice-based doctorate, where the rationale, methodology and outcomes are essentially 'practical' and a student including some practice-based elements in their 'traditional', i.e. written, thesis for the degree of either PhD or EdD in the field of art and design education.

I perceive considerable potential for opening up doctoral research to the potential of visual methodologies and outputs in the field of art and design education. Somewhat ironically, academic regulations at Roehampton permit the presentation of thesis results in the form of exhibitions, artefacts and performance but these options are very rarely pursued in any field of the arts, and are, as stated, without precedent in the arts in education.

> A candidate for either degree, if appropriate to the field they are researching (usually the visual or performing arts) may submit a portfolio of original works that he or she has undertaken while registered for the degree in lieu of a thesis (normally, the portfolio shall comprise a body of original works such as musical compositions and/or recordings, paintings, sculpture, printworks, designs or works of performance (dance, music etc.). the portfolio ideally should include documentation in appropriate form such as photographs or recordings. The portfolio may be presented for examination in the form of an exhibition or live performance. The works shall be accompanied by notes on each item in the portfolio and either an extended analysis of one item or a dissertation on a related theme (Roehampton University, 2008:4).

I suspect the reasons for the lack of take-up of practice-based doctorates at Roehampton include students' and possibly some tutors' lack of awareness of the options; the absence of cases in the form of previous research; and the absence of research training in visual methodologies. I have already begun to exchange ideas with colleagues in other departments at Roehampton, e.g. film, drama and dance, in a recent seminar, where we agreed a distinction between cultural products produced in the professional arena and those produced in academia, where the

artist-researcher is obliged to map the route by which they arrived at the product (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997).

Another logical step would be to undertake further research into the Artist-Teacher Scheme, building both on my thesis and IFS (Hall, 2006). The Artist-Teacher Scheme has expanded and developed since I conducted my IFS research and I feel there is an ongoing need to deepen our understandings of individual student cases and experiences, particularly as there are plans

> to extend the Scheme to include the crafts and design. A programme of regional workshops for primary teachers has been established with the support of the TDA (NSEAD, 2008:5).

The Artist-Teacher Scheme includes several Artist-Teacher MA programmes which I define as practice-based MA degrees, distinct from Roehampton's MA in Art, Craft & Design Education which is a degree with practical elements, now worth as much as 100 credits from the 180 required credits.

My thesis findings could contribute to a growing body of knowledge about the alternative, practice-based modes of study for artist-teachers pursuing MA programmes (Adams, 2003; Hyde, 2004; Thornton, 2005; Galloway et al, 2006). There is evidence that practice-based CPD is popular with teachers who see it as empowering and invigorating, particularly when it is contextualized in relation to contemporary art practice (Adams, 2003). New partnerships between galleries, schools and HEIs have developed innovative learning strategies that facilitate the appreciation of contemporary art practice (Page et al, 2006; Burgess and Addison, 2007), and opportunities for teachers to engage in their own artwork in this context could be explored further. Such developments in the CPD opportunities for teachers have the potential to begin to address concerns about the 'School Art' curriculum, its shortcomings and calls for its re-appraisal (Atkinson, 2006). The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) provides some funding for teachers to take part in the ATS; two recent TDA initiatives involve support for student teachers gaining placement experience in settings other than schools, including galleries and the provision of Masters' level CPD for all teachers in their

first five years of practice. Such developments suggest a broader and more diverse range of initial and continuing teacher education opportunities may become available.

Balancing the intuitive and the systematic: evaluating the research according to the aims and methodology used

Electing to conduct a heuristic enquiry positioned me inside the situation I was investigating, part of the phenomenon researched. The text narrates my own and seeks to represent others' perceptions and understandings of practice-based coursework. Whilst research demands the process is systematic (Kerlinger, 1969; Robson, 2002), I have not set out to arrive at a 'system' in the sense of an explanation or theory of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, I experienced tensions, as should be expected with heuristic enquiry, which is "autobiographical, providing for deep, personal analysis" (Gray, 2004:29), between reflexive, self-dialogue, and the discipline and rigour of keeping in sharp focus the purpose and scope of the research.

One of the greatest challenges has been how to manage and position my own voice relative to the participants' voices in the research. In the previous chapter I referred to Holliday's (2002) warning about the dominant researcher's self and voice, all but drowning out the voices of those we research.

> The researcher must struggle to allow textual room for the people in the research setting. This involves putting her preoccupations, discourse and ideology in their place, and appreciating how little she knows (Holliday, 2002:195).

I faced such a struggle in the context of a heuristic enquiry which involves, as its starting points, autobiography and self-dialogue, as the researcher tries to articulate and make sense of their own experiences, observations and intuitions (Moustakas,1990). Heuristic research places immense responsibility upon the researcher, ethically, to treat their participants with respect and to extend the self-dialogic process to include others.

> At the heart of heuristics lies an emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure from others – a response to the tacit dimension within oneself sparks a similar call for others (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985:50).

I have not denied my central role in the research and aimed to explain my position to the participants at the outset in my letter to them (Appendix 2). Further qualitative research, particularly of a heuristic nature, into related themes, should allow me opportunities to build on my experience of the EdD research, developing my understanding of methodological issues and skills in representing the voices of the participants in the research setting.

Whilst I generated research questions as part of my proposal, I found these became less relevant and less practically useful as the research developed and unfolded. In common with much if not most research of a qualitative nature (Robson, 2002), heuristic enquiry is flexible in design, the methodology evolving and emerging gradually. The research design, by which I mean the title, questions, abstract, initial literature review and methodological outline, provided a necessary if not essential signposting framework through which to initiate the research and keep it on track but these precepts became less relevant and important as the research gained momentum and took hold.

Heuristic research is not only highly demanding intellectually and ethically but is extremely time-consuming. The researcher needs to *live with* the problem and findings and *work through* the emerging data, including his or her own thoughts, reflections and insights, gradually sifting, defining and giving meaning to what unfolds, committing "endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration" (Moustakas, 1990:14). I highlight above the terms *living with* and *working through* data as these are common terms in heuristic research and were also used by Aisha, demonstrating a further example of reciprocity between my own and the students' enquiry processes.

My reflective diary was a highly effective key research tool as it provided an essential integrating device, bringing together observations with methodological, theoretical and personal notes as Richardson (1998) had described. The interviews varied in length and depth; it was clear that the interviews with Hannah and Peter yielded considerably more data, involving me in more extensive interpretation than

the other interviews. Aisha's was also what I might call an extended interview whilst those with the remaining four participants (Mary, Nicoletta, Lin and Sophia) were more restricted. Hannah's engagement and interest in the research was clearly influenced by the fact that she was the only participant to date who had pursued the practical approach for her dissertation and is currently considering pursuing a practice-based doctorate. Aisha has begun her doctorate and was keenly interested in scholarship in the related fields of art, anthropology and education, making a significant contribution to my understandings of interdisciplinarity in art education. The research afforded Peter and I specific time and space to devote to our shared interests in this field; in the event, differences in our perceptions and understandings were revealed and which should inform our review of the practical project and the dissertation. What I have termed the restricted interviews with four students arose in part from language difficulties, which I might have done more to alleviate. For example, although the broad outline of the research focus and questions were provided in advance (Appendix 2), more detailed written support could have been provided and a preliminary discussion before recording began may have helped the students to feel more attuned and confident in the interview.

A reader of a draft of this thesis commented that, in a reflexive study on the significance of practice, it seems strange that there is little reference to making, to working with materials in the valued traditions of art, craft and design. Whilst I concede the apparent paradox, what the reader proposes amounts to a different study that might, for example, have sought to illuminate the *processes and products* of students' practices. My focus was upon understanding students' and tutors' *perceptions* of practice-based coursework, on what it meant to them in the context of the MA, personally and professionally. However, I do acknowledge that 'making' and 'materials' are perhaps absences in the narrative texts and this observation informs my ideas for further research that I should like to undertake in the field. I also concede that a more visual approach might have assisted the engagement of the four students for whom the interviews were somewhat restricted.

Competing demands and interests

It is the nature of undertaking an EdD that we study and carry out our doctoral research programmes in the midst of increasingly complex and demanding roles in higher education. My experience of the EdD has involved trying to protect time for concentrated periods of research, in my case, at least one day per week, evenings and weekends. In reality, my thinking was drawn out, protracted, left for long periods when other obligations and duties kept me pinned down, and then returned to, when I tried to re-trace my steps, picking up the threads of enquiry. Somehow, despite this far from ideal scenario, the EdD research has helped me to cope with and get through my professional roles, helped to re-affirm my academic identity, anchoring me to scholarship and research, without which my precarious and fledgling researcher identity might have been gradually but relentlessly eroded.

The implications of the research for my own practice and the wider professional context

In the opening chapter, I stated an aim for my research to be personally and professionally rewarding. The benefits however have been much greater than anticipated as I have found them to be personally and professionally transforming. The conclusions I reached and outlined above, have profoundly altered and deepened my view of the value and potential meaning of practical work produced by students as part of an art education programme. I have been able to articulate the interplays between art practice and educational practice that take place in blended worlds of enquiry. A dynamic synergy between research and practice potentially occurs from the outset for an EdD student, in my own case, informing and enriching not only my teaching of the MA Art, Craft & Design Education programme, but my teaching other courses and broader aspects of my professional practice. I shall describe each of these areas in turn.

The research has enhanced my teaching of both the MA practical project and supervising students opting for the practical approach to the dissertation. My developing understanding and emerging insights have enriched what I have been able to offer students in individual and group tutorials. For example, my questions

for students have been more probing and searching, responses to their questions informed more deeply by my ongoing research, including my developing knowledge of relevant literature. I may, for example, have been able to offer a quotation or reference to one of the key texts that I have drawn upon.

In response both to student requests and the emerging findings of the research, the number and frequency of group tutorials have been increased. Previously, the majority of tutorials were individual and by request; more recently, group tutorials have been scheduled on a monthly basis. The increased contact that students have with me and each other has increased opportunities for peer-support and peer-assessment, as students engage in discussion about each other's work. The strategy also increases equity in the power relationship between students and tutors, enhancing the student voice and their potential for critical independence.

Revisiting the course design for the practical project is underway and will continue as the MA programme is revalidated and implemented next academic year. A shorter, 20 credit module taken over one semester, in addition to the two semester, 40 credit version, has been introduced to provide more flexible access to art practice for those students who wish to make the practical dimension a smaller part of their MA. Equally, for those students who wish to extend their practical work, the dissertation itself will be reviewed to seek ways of enhancing and enriching students' experience and supporting their learning. For example, ways will be sought to introduce practice-based, visual methodologies to the research methodologies module.

Through my experience of the EdD programme and the thesis research in particular, I feel that I have developed a deeper, more critical understanding of educational research, particularly philosophical and methodological issues. Around the time I began the EdD in 2002, I started teaching on Roehampton's *Research Methodologies and Enquiry in Education* module, a compulsory course for all MA students in the School of Education and my teaching on this course has been significantly enhanced. My supervision of students undertaking Masters' dissertations has also developed considerably, a deeper grounding and experience

of complex research issues having increased my confidence and, in turn, my students' confidence in their own abilities to undertake a substantial piece of research.

I am greatly fascinated and stimulated by philosophical and methodological issues in research which encourages me to progress to teaching research methods courses and supervising doctoral research students on either the PhD or EdD route. To this end, I have undertaken a programme of staff development in preparation for research degree supervision and plan to play a role in the School of Education developing an International EdD in partnership with a university in another European country.

More widely, my professional learning through the EdD has benefited my role as Assistant Dean (Quality) in the School of Education, through the insights that I have gained into course design and teaching and learning generally in higher education. I have appreciated how academic infrastructures, including the normative, controlling demands of quality and standards regimes in higher education, can unwittingly constrain and prescribe the learning programmes they seek to enhance. My deeper knowledge has already been applied as I contribute to and chair validation panels at Roehampton. I also sat as external adviser on a validation panel for a suite of MA programmes including an MA in Art & Design Education and an Artist-Teacher MA at the then University of Central England (UCE) , now titled Birmingham City University.

More widely, there is a growing body of evidence that practice-based CPD is popular with teachers who see it as empowering and invigorating, particularly when it is contextualized in relation to contemporary art practice (Adams, 2003). New partnerships between galleries, schools and HEIs have developed innovative learning strategies that facilitate the appreciation of contemporary art practice (Page et al, 2006; Burgess and Addison, 2007), and opportunities for teachers to engage in their own artwork in this context could be explored further. Such developments in the CPD opportunities for teachers have the potential to begin to address concerns about the 'School Art' curriculum, its shortcomings and calls for

its re-appraisal (Atkinson, 2006). Rhetoric about teachers' CPD actually seems to be becoming a greater reality with: the additional funding provided by TDA, through its Postgraduate Professional Development Projects (PPD); the recent shift of PGCE programmes to masters level, opening the possibility for more new and recent qualified teachers to follow MA programmes; and the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Children, Families and Schools that funding would be provided for teaching to become an all-Masters qualified profession, through the introduction of a Masters in Teaching and Learning.

Implications for dissemination and publication

As with implications for my practice, dissemination has not been postponed to the completion of the research, particularly with regard to debating methodological issues with others. The research in progress was presented at both Roehampton's annual educational research conference in December 2006 and at the Institute of Education's Doctoral Students' Poster Conference in the same month. In May 2007, I presented a paper titled: *Looking over the shoulders of students and tutors: dilemmas and issues for the involved and implicated researcher* to The Story of Research: a one day Symposium on Reading and Writing Research at the University of Sussex. I found these experiences to be very helpful as I felt both supported and stimulated by colleagues who shared many of my interests and the dilemmas and issues I faced.

On completing my research and the thesis, I plan to disseminate my research through a seminar as one of a regular series organised in Roehampton's School of Education through its Centre for Research in Creativity, Learning and Education (CIRCLE). I shall ensure colleagues from the School of Arts are invited, particularly from the disciplines of Film, Theatre and Dance as many share my interests in practice-based enquiry. I should also be interested in presenting seminars at universities where I am aware similar interests are held and where I have connections, for example the Institute of Education, Goldsmiths, Birmingham City University and the Universities of Cambridge and Hertfordshire. I should also be keen to look for opportunities to present more widely, nationally and internationally, through conferences and seminars organized by two organizations of which I am a member, the National Society for Art & Design Education (NSEAD) that oversees

the Artist-Teacher Scheme and the International Society for Education through Art (INSEA). I am already committed to a presentation based upon my EdD research to the Artist Teacher Scheme Annual Conference at Tate Modern in October 2008.

Both NSEAD and INSEA have journals published under their auspices: the International Journal of Art & Design Education (iJADE) and the International Journal of Education Through Art, respectively. I plan to develop my Tate Modern presentation into a journal article for submission to iJADE in the autumn and to follow this with an article based upon my experience of heuristic research for submission to an educational research journal. There may also be scope to contribute to guest editing a special edition of iJADE devoted to the growing body of research on practice-based enquiry in art and design education, out of which may develop an edited book of contributions to this field.

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Appendix One

**Art, Craft & Design Education Practical Project
(Module Booklet)**

Appendix Two

Letter to participants concerning the research

School of Education

Roehampton University London

13 March 2007

Dear Aisha, Hannah, Lin, Mary, Nicoletta and Sophia,

Research Interviews concerning the MA Practical Project

As you know, I am researching students' and tutors' experiences of the MA Practical Project for my Doctor of Education (EdD) thesis and I should be most grateful if you would be prepared to be interviewed by me as part of this investigation. I should like to interview all five students currently taking the practical project in London and Peter. In addition to using interview data, I am collecting what I call 'naturally-occurring data' such as my notes in the form of a reflective diary.

A brief summary of the research focus follows. The interview would be one-to-one conducted in my room, M22 in Montefiore. With your consent, I should like to make a digital audio recording which will be professionally transcribed.

My methodological approach

Rather than attempting to step outside the arena of practice, to distance myself from the research setting in order to claim a more impartial objectivity as a passive observer, I am speaking from within it, involved, inside and part of the world I am researching. The rationale for the MA Practical project claims tutors and students are co-enquirers in a community of practice, a learning partnership in which knowledge and research are shared, and I see my approach to this thesis research as consistent with this pedagogic philosophy.

In my time in higher education, I have increasingly and instinctively felt that we have more to understand and learn about lecturing practices, about tutor-student relationships, module design, and about how our individual or personal rationales or philosophies inform and relate to taught programmes and modules. I sense and occasionally glimpse new meanings and insights lurking beneath the surface of hectic practices, tantalisingly hidden from view, obscured by the pace and breadth of work agendas; gone before there is time to pause, notice and reflect, you are hot foot in pursuit of the next task or crisis even. It seems new meanings and scope for professional development are inherent in the experience of practice itself; a challenge lies in developing sufficient reflexivity to see the hidden and unarticulated and find ways of articulating these new possibilities. This is what I have been attempting to do through my EdD study and I am aware that I am only now articulating this process. In many ways then this research is the subtlest or slightest of interventions into tutor and student intentions, interactions and perceptions. My research is *about* my own, my students ' and my colleagues' practices; is conducted *through* these practices and is

intended both to add to our *knowledge* of practice, and theory and to *benefit* the practices and our thinking about them as the research is conducted.

The implication of this approach is that I invite you to become a co-enquirer in the research, rather than simply a participant who provides data and then has no further role. Therefore, I should like to share your interview transcript with you and, should time allow, have a further discussion with you to begin to explore our interpretations of the text. Finally, I shall come back to all five students and Robert with my subsequent writing and final report. I see this research process as dialogic and collaborative; a process to which I am inviting you to contribute and from which you can reasonably expect to learn and benefit. If your experience does not benefit your practical project, then something has clearly gone wrong! These ambitions will need to be balanced by the demands upon our time, particularly your time.

Confidentiality

In my final thesis, the identities of research participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. The principle of confidentiality will also apply to any conference papers or journal articles that relate to the research.

Possible dates

I should like to conduct the interviews during the weeks commencing 16, 23 and 30 April, so, if you agree to take part, I should be most grateful if you could nominate a date and time, allowing one hour plus, that best suits you.

Tuesday 17 April

Friday 20 April

Tuesday 24 April

Wednesday 25 April

Friday 27 April

Monday 30 April

Thursday 3 May

Thank you for taking the trouble to read this and please do not hesitate to ask should you have any queries or concerns. Please do not feel under any compulsion to take part, it will not 'wreck' or invalidate my research! I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

James Hall

University of London
Institute of Education

James Hall
EdD Thesis

Provisional working title: *Understanding the perceived value of practice-based coursework to students and tutors on the MA Art, Craft & Design Education programme at Roehampton University, London*

The research focus
The aim of the research is to develop a deeper understanding of practice-based coursework undertaken as part of the master's degree in Art, Craft and Design Education at Roehampton University. Following Ellis and Bochner (2000), I seek to capture something of the *meanings* and *value* that students and tutors attach to their experience of doing and supervising practical work. The term 'Practice-based coursework' refers to the students' own practical work in art, craft or design, which will also be referred to as 'visual practice' or 'practice-based study'. The students' practical work in this MA degree, is undertaken 'in an educational context' (MA Practical Project module handbook), indicating the visual work must relate to theories and/or practices of teaching and/or learning.

I am interested in the values and meanings that practice-based work holds for *students*, for example, the nature of their experience of the practical work; what they see as the most significant challenges and benefits of the practice-based modules; and understanding how their experience may have affected them, personally and professionally. Reciprocally, I also seek to capture the meanings of practical work constructed by *tutors*, for example, their aims and intentions in designing the modules; their experience of teaching and supervising students undertaking practice-based work; the strengths and weaknesses of the modules in their present form.

The research problem and questions
The main and traditional form of assessment on this and other Masters' degrees in Education in England is written work, in the form of essays, reports and dissertations. Increasingly, diverse modes of learning and assessment are being developed by MA Art Education[2] course leaders and welcomed by students that recognise visual art practice as a form of research and enquiry in its own right that does not need to be legitimized by text (Candlin, 2001; Macleod and Holdridge, 2004). Work in this area (Sullivan, 2005) has focused upon the practice of artists and students of fine art in Masters and Doctoral programmes where outcomes are predominantly visual and criteria for practice-based research are well-established in AHRC and RAE frameworks. However, visual work

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[2] Art Education is used as shorthand for Art, Craft & Design Education in relation to the full title of the Roehampton University degree

undertaken by students taking Masters or research degrees in University Schools or Faculties of Education, study in a context where assessment and research outcomes are strongly language-based, Education being more closely aligned to social sciences than the arts in academic infrastructures.

However, the value and significance of practice-based research in the experience of the MA students and their tutors at Roehampton is not sufficiently understood nor underpinned by theoretical frameworks. As module tutor for the 'practical project' and supervisor for students undertaking practice-based dissertations, my own understanding and enthusiasm for this practical work is based upon personal conviction, experience and an instinctive or tacit belief that students make important gains through this mode of study. 'It seems to be a right or appropriate thing to be doing', I hear myself saying. I suspect this situation may be similar at other Universities pioneering and expanding practice-based work in MA Art Education programmes. For example, encouraged by their achievements in the practical module and by the course tutors, increasing numbers of students are keen to follow a practical option for their dissertation.

The practical module has been successful in terms of student recruitment and achievement, being selected by all students and often cited as a key reason prospective students apply to Roehampton. Despite this success, the module lacks detailed guidance in the form of a closely-argued rationale, and the learning outcomes and assessment criteria may be expressed somewhat generally and vaguely. We lack such guidance because we do not understand sufficiently what students and tutors experience in following and guiding this mode of study. Therefore, my research seeks to address the following research questions:

What values and meanings do students perceive or construct in relation to the MA practical project?
What do students see as the most significant challenges and benefits of the practical modules?
How has students' experience of the practical modules affected them personally and professionally?
What is the perceived value and constructed meaning of the MA practical project for tutors?
What are their aims and intentions in designing the modules?
What do tutors see as the strengths and weaknesses of the modules in their present form?

Appendix Three

Glossary

ACE	Arts Council of England
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
ATS	Artist Teacher Scheme
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EdD	Doctor in Education
GCE	General Certificate in Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IFS	Institution-Focused Study
iJADE	International Journal of Art & Design Education
INSEA	International Society for Education Through Art
IT	Interview
JH	James Hall
MA	Master of Arts
NSEAD	National Society for Education in Art & Design
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PPD	Postgraduate Professional Development
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RD	Reflective Diary
SCR	Senior Common Room
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UKCLE	United Kingdom Centre for Legal Education

Appendix Four

Exemplar of Interview Transcript: Aisha

Q   Okay Aisha, it's interview number seven and can you tell me what the practical project means to you?

A   Most of all, it's a time and a space in a sense, a conceptual space, um, to work through some ideas that I've had and I've been working on practically, er, in my own work, um, around issues where abstract painting and text can be incorporated to work with, um, issues of contemporary political or community concerns, um, like I might have mentioned before around interface, intercultural notions, self and other, um, you know they sound sort of quite large issues, but I've brought it down to working with particular text and I'm interested in, for example, Hebrew and Tamil which is my own sort of ethnic tongue.

           And I recently, for example, attended, um, a Roman Catholic Tamil service and it was highly interesting to see Hallelujah or Amen written in Tamil, having seen them written in Hebrew and those were the sort of real life occurrences that I suppose inspire me and that I then think of translating into works with, you know, abstract painting, taking on from that abstract expressionism a more, you know, expressive colour field painting, um, techniques of working and incorporating text into it.

Q   Okay so...

A   So this is... this course has given me that space, given that I'm not currently either, you know, er, working full time as an artist or working as a teacher of art. Doing this course, gives me the space to work through that whilst I'm working on my anthropology, er, studies.

Q   Yeah. So that sounds like it's given you an opportunity to weave these personal academic intellectual and cultural concerns...

A   Yes and also there's...

Q   ...together.

A   Yeah this idea of, um, how... how Foster wrote this, um, essay on the art as a stenographer, and in a sense I, um, I suppose take from that notion in a way, partly because I am myself studying anthropology, um, but also that's just the way in which I take my inspiration for the work.

           So even though I might be working at this time, because I don't have one... only one media that I work in; I've worked in video before and photography and so on, but at the moment, for my concerns, I find that reworking, you know, the purely subjective formal concerns in a way that might be associated with abstract expressionism or colour field

painting, um, with text allows me to.. to work with those sort of aesthetic forms, but incorporate these real social ethnographic influences.

Q   Yeah. Because I know that anthropology and ethnography, um, have, er, well longstanding but increasingly recent concerns with visual culture and material culture...

A   Yes.

Q   ...don't they, so I mean do you read this practical project as a form of visual anthropology?

A   Yes I think I would say that, both in terms of, you know, trying to make my own material culture if you see what I mean from what I see in an ethnographic sense, using that term broadly, um, but also, you know, the way in which it could inspire ideas about how to work with... with students that you might teach, whether in class or in a more informal context. So it's a way of thinking that allows you to then make work in that sort of way, um, engaged way with the world. But equally that sort of work, that style of working, that approach to working doesn't mean that you wouldn't work with more aestheticised, you know, formal painting techniques. Um, because maybe in some people's minds there might be an either or, um, perhaps not so much nowadays, but, you know, I'm working with those kind of classic distinctions between the formal concerns or art that has that as a priority and art that's about issues of content, I want to work with both.

Q   Yeah.

A   I am working with both. I mean recently, one of my source of inspiration was about... when it was about... hearing about a group of students I think first in Norway, and then recently a school in England has taken that up, of building up an installation of paperclips because that was how I think a town in Norway had, um, shown their sort of resistance to what happened in the Holocaust and those kinds of anti Semitic ideas and I thought of a child taking that into a text work, just writing the word paperclip in Hebrew and using, you know, work like that perhaps still using discussions around dialogue with students in particular school areas where, you know, they might be doing a discussion on the Holocaust and, you know, you can make a visual item, a painting, um, out of influences or ideas that you come across or hear in the real world.

I think it takes a different resonance. So, you know, if you then have, I don't know, children actually doing some work trying to write these Hebrew letters and what it means to engage with that text, and indirectly connecting yourself to a people that

actually were affected by, you know, an event, historic event of, you know, unimaginable proportions.

So in that sense, I think I see art in general and art I make and how arts educational function as being about creating a visual object, but also very much, um, indirectly or directly, relating to many things that happen in the real world and reach out, you know...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...to lots of different things and making those connections, chain connections.

Q   Yeah. Um, and it seems to me that from your, um, social anthropology MA, masters, that you could have gone in this what sounds like a quest for something to do with art, art and design, you could have gone in a number of directions. You know, you could have gone to seek something that's more, um, art historical or fine art oriented, um, but you came to art education. You know, I think you sought out this course...

A   Yes.

Q   ...did a bit of research on it on the internet. So was the existence of the practical project, you know, was that one of the reasons?

A   It was key. It was key in my choosing this course, because I actually, as you know, I used to live a ten minute walk away, or eight minute walk away, I've now moved down the bit like, you know, a fifteen minute bus ride away, but I'm still in the area of Goldsmiths college...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...where I did my fine art and art history degree, and they do do some art education courses, but at the time when I came through Roehampton, I don't think Goldsmiths offered an art education MA that had a practical component.

Because I think there, there's very much a divide between, you know, the fine art department and then the education department, there's a sort of hierarchy and so it's almost as if the education department wouldn't venture down that way. I don't know if things have changed.

Q   Yeah.

A   They should.

Q   I think that... yeah I think things have changed because they've... they've strengthened their link with Tate Modern...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...and the... the artist teacher scheme which...

A   Okay.

Q   ...which Tate Modern have run and been engaged in...

A   Yes.

Q   ...probably to do with staff changes and new staff coming along, but, er...

A   As it should be, I mean rightly so.

Q   Yeah.

A   I thought it was very odd at the time when, you know, I was researching because it would have been far more convenient in terms of travel and getting to the place to go there...

Q   Yeah.

A   but, um... you know, but I don't have regrets except for the long travel journey, you know...

Q   Sure.

A   ...I love the campus and I love the way the course has been run and I like you and the whole, you know.

Q   Yeah.

A   So it's been a happy experience, but yes the practical project aspect was key, um...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...to my concerns. But equally given that, um, I had gone down this... exploring this route of doing the MA in anthropology and probably now might... when finalising ideas towards a PhD, so going down, you know, seriously down the anthropology route, but I'm doing anthropology at home, ie in Britain and I see my role both within the anthropology PhD and after as linked to communities here and in that sense, beyond

the anthropology PhD, both in terms of continuing with my own work and where I take my work beyond that, I would see a role for art education in that sense; um, bringing the anthropology and my interest in, um, a while range of, you know, inter cultural connections and faith communities. Um, very much interested in all those..

Q   Yeah. Yes I mean..

A   .. aspects that I hope to connect, you know.

Q   Yeah.

A   So for me through this time, the [10.04 Soast relationship and the Roehampton relationships, although institutionally they've been separate, in my head there've been connections, ongoing connections all the time.

Q   Yes I think... I think we're open to that in that the practical project is, as you say, a space, it's an opportunity for people to, um, er, come into that and interpret it, lay on to it, bring their ideas and issues to it. It's deliberately very open, very free, that's the way it's designed and this is what some other students have been saying is, um, they appreciate that freedom and openness.

They wouldn't want to be over directed into particular ways of working, particular, um, barometers in the model. So, um, that's what I seem to be hearing from you as well...

A   Yes.

Q   ...it's that you like openness and freedom.

A   Yes I certainly do. I mean I don't know whether that's because that's the way I, er, you know, the context of which I thrive in any case, but that it might not apply to... to peop... you know, some other students who might nevertheless be interested in art education, but, um, I think the course is quite... in the outline, I felt that it was quite clear that it wasn't going to be a very, you know, didactic, er, type of course where you have to fulfil the pre-given structure.

Q   It's deliberately as independent as the dissertation where... where the student nominates the area of enquiry and effectively is supervised by the tutor to be guided. Um, so it is a... it is a guided study modula as opposed to critical and contextual studies which is a taught module.

A   Yes but I suppose those two courses that I took, um, were also useful and relevant in terms of bridging, you know, the... the, um, the critical theory and so on that I'd been exposed to at art school, at Goldsmiths, but bringing it into an education context, I did

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find those useful and then to have the practical, er, module course where you had the space to do your own thing.

Q   Yeah.

A   So those courses were also, um, very useful and I can imagine particularly, you know, either students who come from other countries where, um, countries from abroad, where perhaps they don't have the same level of... same amount of critical theory and so on, or if you've been in art school along time ago where, you know, theoretical concerns were different, I can imagine that without those two courses, that perhaps the practical module space might be too open, you know, too contextualised.

Q   Yeah.

A   Perhaps, I don't...

Q   For kids to...

A   Yeah sure.

Q   .. the outcomes of the practical project reflect the students, reflect the study body the diversity students, their different backgrounds, their different careers, um, if they've been in other higher education courses, if they trained as primary teachers or have done an art degree first before an education course. So it does reflect the different parts of the backgrounds and concerns and ideas of individuals quite deliberately.

A   Yeah and it was interesting when I made that mid term presentation and I think there was one person from was it Brazil I think, um...

Q   The visiting academic yeah.

A   .. yes and, um, to some extent to me her... some of her comments were I mean entirely legitimate as we all have legitimate opinions to give and I'm interested to hear them, but for me, it struck me... and I'll tell you what her comments were in a minute, but struck me as quite a sort of romanticised or Romantic with a big R notion of the artist, the silent artist, you know, who would present the work and let it do its talking which all of us in a sense, or I want my work to do that, but in the context of our course, um, if I just present the work and was the silent artist, you know, it wouldn't I think engage, um, with the... the, er, requirements of the course, um, and also in an educational context.

You know, you want to strike that balance between letting the work do its talking and I,,, and I hope that I had expressed that, that it's not fine art, these were just some of the influences that I had, you know, refer to a number of different things and I think

that's a question that... that I also used to have, for example, in the critical sessions. You know, when you presented your work in art school and you had to present it, but you also were expected to say something and how much do you say. Er, you know, you do want people to make up their own minds and the student, the Brazilian student there was saying that, you know, in a sense she liked the work, but she wished that I hadn't said so much as she could let the work... you know, let her mind take it in different directions which as an artist I hope that I will allow this person to do that, but if I as the artist am going to present a work, or present a piece of work being engaged with, for example, with students, um, I think I'm going to have to say some of the things, but importantly say that these are just some ideas that either I've brought to it or you can take from it, but that's what's exciting about a piece of art.

That in spite of some extent closing it with some readings, it's always inherently open. I think it's that...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...balance thing, you know, that...

Q   Yeah to...

A   ...even if you... even if you say, you know "This work is about that", it's that sort of read a response theory thing, you know, that you can always... you can bring another perspective on the work. And immediately once again you open the work out to an infinite number of other readings.

Q   Absolutely, so it never closes.

A   I think it never closes. I mean basically that student was saying that she felt that my saying had closed it for her, but I want to in defence of that or, you know, in defence of people expressing what they might think they were.   as long as they don't foreclose it and say "This is what the work means" I would object to that, but I think if you say "These are the things have influenced it", because importantly, I think because in the end, even the artist who makes the work doesn't control the work.

You know, because I am sometimes surprised by how it looks when it's finished, when it's there, it has its own resonance and then I myself come to the work that I have made as sort of a viewer anew, you know, like I see new things. And after the work is done, I think it's almost like a clean slate and you can take a whole other set of resonance and that's just how I approach...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...my work and, um, you know, always see... see the... That's... that's the exciting thing about visual...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...works that, um, that, you know, they can be just so, er, productive in the meanings that they can inspire. Even I think written text have a certain degree of that, but with visual works, it's almost infinite I think.

Q   Where the Brazilian student may have a valid point, is that this was an interim tutorial, it was a dialogue, it was students coming together with tutors to have a dialogue about the progress in a module, that was the purpose of it, but where she may have a valid point is we'd allowed maybe even five minutes to just look, five minutes time for people just to look at the work and look at the examples and begin to respond and make their own sense of it, before we started to talk and before, you know, from the students and maybe that's something for me to bear in mind with the presentations and the assessment of the project.

It is first of all to allow people a bit of space and time just to look at the exhibited work of the artefacts, the insulations, whatever, first before the people do the presentation.

A   The presentation begins.

Q   Because the... as you know, it has three elements, the exhibition, the presentation and the written project and if people come in cold, "Right straight away first presentation", it kind of privileges the presentation it seems to me.

A   Yes.

Q   And then people might look at the work later on. I think it just makes me reflect that maybe we need to give it a time and space to people to see the exhibition, see the work first, before we hear any presentations.

A   Yes. I mean I suppose it's a bit like, you know, when people go to galleries, some people look at the label first and then they look at the work, as people look at the work and then at the label and then back at the work, and back at the label, and, you know, others might take... look at the work, then, you know, for a very long time before even...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...looking at what the label says.

Q   I do recall that evening and that, um, conversation and those discussions and I think, um, even though one is speaking about the work, one is speaking for the work, it's... it's... it's never going to be the total story. It's just some perception and some angle...

A   Yeah.

Q   .. on the work that may be useful, it may be an opening, it may be distracting from the work, but it's just something.

A   I think the difference though is that it's my view of the... the artist is significant in producing the work, but beyond that I think the work very much takes priority and takes, you know, precedence. So after the artist has made the work in my opinion, the artist is far less significant. You know, he's... he's someone who's produced his work and had certain ideas that have produced it, but it becomes sort of one... one way into it and only one way.

Q   Yeah.

A   Almost in that conversation with the other student, it was she was giving the words of the artist actually too much weight. It doesn't have the weight that... you know, it's something, but equally, you know, another person's response to it has the weight to it if the work... the visual work can inspire that.

          Um, so yes I mean I think I do take your point that, you know, I think it doesn't, um, detract from the view of saying present the work first and be silent and then when asked to talk about it, um, then do so and I think I'm happy to take that approach...

Q   Yeah.

A   ..too because the work takes the... the visual works takes precedence I think.

Q   Yeah. Yeah. So effectively, we're talking about your experience of the practical project, um, and I think you've... you've been ambitious and quite rightly ambitious in having these threads, if you like, the very personal, social, cultural, historical, anthropological, er, which is fascinating and here we are what three months or so off the completion and finishing of it. So in your experience of this project then over the months, what's... what's been the most successful or interesting, exciting for you aspects of it?

A   The making of the work, sorry to use that, it's so obvious, but the making of the work, but I think the making of the work in the context of the course, um, is another element to it. I mean it's different than I suppose if you were making the work purely to exhibit, you

know, at a Brick Lane gallery or whatever, as an artist, um, but I have made the work as an artist educator, and I think in terms of, um, perhaps even in the presentation that I made about the work, um, that might have come through.

If I was presenting the work or felt simply that this was work that I was presenting as an artist, then perhaps I wouldn't have said as much, um, not sure, but I think my saying that much is not because I want to present that as, you know, the definitive thing about the work, but I just wanted to... to make the... make it very clear that it was about making these constant to-ing and fro-ing, you know, the engaging with these issues and the work being kind of consistently just the work.

But yeah I think that's been exciting, making the work in the context of, you know, art education and then beyond this course as well I think I will take that with me. Um, whereas before this course, and because my PGCE actually was in English and media studies, so I was still very much art... was still art as an artist, you know, I'd not really thought of myself as an art teacher, as an art educator in this sort of broader context. Um, I feel very comfortable and I feel doing this course has helped to channel my interest down that way.

Q   Yes and you bring a very interesting background, quite an unusual background. I don't want to stereo type other people, but from someone who is a teacher and has been a teacher let's say for ten, fifteen years...

A   Oh, no, no, no not...

Q   ...you know, maybe somebody who's done an art degree, does a PGCE...

A   I was someone else yeah.

Q   ...you know, someone else who's a teacher, does an MA, has professional development to re-engage, to reinvigorate their teaching, to explore new ideas, step back a bit from the hectic practice and, er, make work as a form of development.

I think the perspectives and experience and qualifications that you bring are a different mix. Um, just as rich and differently rich, you know, in the anthropology and fine art and education and media studies and a lot more besides...

A   Yes.

Q   ...which does make it very interesting.

A   Yeah and I think the course did allow that freedom in terms of its recruitment I think because it was clear it was about art education in a broader sense, even if perhaps the bulk of the students might come from a, you know, school teaching context.

Q   Yeah.

A   The course did leave it open to. .

Q   Yeah.

A   .bringing other types of educators into it I think.

Q   Yeah I think on the reflection, part of the rationale and research in this product is to theorise it more, is, for me, to understand it more and discuss that, disseminate it and for others to understand more clearly what... what we're trying to do and I think I'm realising that that's my attitude to the whole degree, is that I'm pretty open about the whole MA and what it's about and what's it for.

I think I've realised that it's never been fixed, er, it's never been sort of battened down and secure and this is what it's about. It's... it's evolved my... my thinking about it has evolved over the years and the time I've been involved with it and it remains open.

Um, so there's a kind of risk of vagueness and lack of focus, but on the other hand, that provides an opportunity for people to come in and fill that space.

A   Yes and I think the exciting thing about that will be that each year, depending on the experience of the students that you have, you're going to have actually a very different type of course, you know, unfolding in terms of... it's the same course, but in terms of what actually occurs in the class and what discussions take place and so that's very exciting I think.

Q   Yeah which means that the diverse mix of students is so important. I don't think there's any danger we would get a modulus group of very similar kind, um, whereby, you know, it closes down or narrows the range of experience. We certainly haven't had that happening.

A   Yeah.

Q   You know, we've had people from very different backgrounds. So there's this key difference of making art as an art educator, not just as a fine artist and that has implications, that has differences for the way the work is, er, conceptualised, approached, made...

A   And presented.

Q   ...and particularly presented do you think, yeah.

A   Yeah.

Q   Because the presenting is educational. Talking about the work is educational it seems to me. Explaining, I mean not that we can, that was a concept that came up I think on that evening...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...when we were talking.

A   Yeah I would think...

Q   Even the possibility of explaining.

A   ...explaining, yeah. It's not about explaining.

Q   Um, or even other people would also say understanding, you know...

A   Yes.

Q   ...which is artwork is not learning to be understood.

A   To be experienced I think...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...is we experienced, yeah.

Q   But that is an educational act...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...in itself.

A   I would use words like experienced, engaged with, you know, more than understood and explained...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...and, you know, because as you are with the work to an extent, you know, you... you be with the work, that's not grammatically correct, but do you know what I mean? Being with the work.

Q   Yeah.

A   And even being with the work in different spaces for different people, the context changes the experience of the work and I think that is, you know...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...that is very much part of how I approach it and so if anything, if I was misunderstood by the other students, sorry I'm coming back to that, but it was... it was a big thing that I left with. You know, just thinking about there was no right or wrong about it, but what it brought up for me about some people's assumptions that words, you know, about art are explaining it or this is what the art work is about and if that was what she had thought I meant, it was certainly not what I intended and I think I did try to emphasise that.

Q   Yeah.

A   But it's about, you know, this is how I experienced it and again I suppose different people work and are influenced in their work differently. Before I start a work and it could be influenced in any way, I mean as I said about this work on the paperclip... paperclip work, er, [28.56 Mehadek] is the, er, Hebrew word for it. You know, it just came from reading about it in a newspaper or whatever and I've just made a work based around a text. So, you know, obviously you're dealing with the execution of the text, but then also the... the sort of colour feel abstract expression instead of, um, background, foreground, sort of tension, engaged... or engaged me with the actual, er, materiality of the work and then it sort of goes off on a different tangent and becomes the work, you know.

And it's that physicality of it that I find very refreshing coming from, you know, perhaps other areas which are more academic or verbal or, you know, literature oriented or interviews, you know, sort of like ever linguistic oriented.

Q   Yeah.

A   Working with the physicality of paint at this point, um, so no definitely not about...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...explaining. Engaging with, experiencing are some of the, you know...

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Q   Yeah.

A   ...couple of words that very much I like to emphasise in... in work as a viewer and as a maker.

Q   I think this relates to a tension in art education, an inherent tension which is between the kind of drive, the search for precision of meaning and clarity, which is exemplified in... in, er, standards, in... driven by assessment and learning outcomes, writing a lesson plan, almost as if the... the plan is written, the lesson is delivered, the learning experience is assessed, did we meet the targets or didn't we, a learning outcome like, er, by the end of this lesson, the students will have understood how colour works in this way...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...have done this and everything is... is targeted, it's pinned down, it's predicted and does teaching reduce to the kind of delivery of this content and then you measure whether the children have, er, understood the content. You know, it kind of characterises teaching as such a narrow, technical, er, [31.10 inaudible] activity.

A   Yeah but I think what is interesting is, you know, you use this word like predicted, but what's exciting about art, in fact, any educational creative writing in English or whatever, is that there's the structure and then the possible chaos that comes afterward, but it's a creative chaos in that you can predict, or attempt to predict, but actually the outcome is never predictable, you know. Er, it is unpredictable and I also having said experience, engage, I think the explaining, the understanding words also have a part to play, as long as they're qualified in... in being in my mind anyway, somehow less important eventually than you experience as in the engaging.

         But in a qualified sense, and, you know, it's important to stress it in my view, the explaining and understanding do have a part to play in... in starting off with some sort of structure. You know, if it's entirely chaos, I use chaos in a metaphoric sense...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...there's no structure of any kind, and this I think whatever the structure, so whatever possible, you know, reasonable explanation is equally valid as a starting point. And I think that's how you begin, or I begin a work, that you start with some sort of sense of idea. Although even just entirely process based work, um, also, you know, has... has.. has an outcome, but I suppose even in an entirely processed based work where you're just working with the colours, you would still need to employ some sort of technique to... to sort of, um, produce a material object wouldn't you and in that sense, that

technique that you're employing is a type of structure, even though the person might be unconsciously working with the techniques, but they are also formed by certain formal concerns that they might not be aware of, but they've, you know, imbibed them.

So I think, you know, the thing about the structure and school delivery, if they are not used as sort of straight jackets, I think they can be... they can facilitate that sort of creative chaos, that's the exciting bit that brings new types of work and...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...you know, doesn't end up producing the same type of art forms over thousands of years, you know.

Q   Yeah.

A   So...

Q   I think... I think probably what I'm... what I'm thinking and reflecting on with that is that the practical project can be used by different art educators in many different ways and in many different levels. It can be used by even a student teacher, you know, a teacher very earlier in their career. Um, in a particular way, it can be used by a very experienced teacher who's perhaps confident with, um, motivating and managing groups of pupils, perhaps quite large groups of pupils and perhaps potentially quite difficult to manage and potentially unruly pupils as well...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...so they're not... you know, that doesn't... they're not phased by that aspect, although it continues to be a challenge. Um, there's just so many facets, er, factors concerned with art education and teaching art and learning art, um, but this project deliberately goes beyond the formalised art lesson or the formalised classroom or even school or institution.

It does deliberately frame teaching and learning as any kind of human development, any kind of communication, er, so that's why gallery based learning and informal learning, um, artist teachers and they're important too.

A   Yeah. I suppose one of the questions that arises would be then both in terms of the artist that... the artist educators and the art that they produce and the work, potentially, of the students and so on, people [35.05 inaudible], what about the question about what is good art, you know, is the work any good. That question comes up...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...and, um, I suppose... and this relates to the questions that we'd sort of discussed in some of our other modules, how is work to be assessed, what criteria and then the issue of criteria will require people, you know, using those criteria or making those assessments to, you know, be up front about what those criteria are.

Everybody has, I think, certain criteria as to why they think such a work is good or bad, um, so I think you can still make... it's a question about whether you can still make judgements, you know, in this creative chaos when you inspire... you know, when there's no strict rules about what is allowed. I think you can still make judgements, but then you have to back it up by saying, you know, why and obviously it's much more... much more open than it might have been with much stricter requirements. But even with the much broader sense, I think if a work is not informed in any way by other, you know, artists or references, consciously or unconsciously, I suppose for the person making the assessment, they may be influenced by that.

Q   It's very complex assessment in art which is why, er, it can be characterised as, um, as hopelessly subjective. So it's just what people make of it.

A   Yeah.

Q   Or as opposed to, you know, we do have examinations in art...

A   Yeah.

Q   ...in more levels that it can be objective, we can have agreed criteria that... and, you know, different people who can arrive at the same judgement, applying the criteria. So...

A   But it really puts you on the line particularly if a student was very well informed and, for argument's sake, you know, in secondary school, and came back at you with, you know, various conceptual art arguments on the basis of which, you know, you could present the work as a piece of conceptual art. So if you judged it on the basis of certain formal concerns, and he said "Well that's the not basis on which I've made this work", you know, this is the thing and it has a art historical prominence or, you know, background to back it up and it's had, you know, sort of gallery validation in a sense it's own, so, you know, it's now an art historical icon, um, and teachers and assessment processes have to take account of that, so...

But in those cases, I think it's the verbal skills or the critical argumentative skills of the student which are skills also that are coming into play. So I think where a student...

Q   Yeah.

A   . .you know… different students bring different skills to bear in art as different contemporary artists bring different skills, and some of them who are well known artists and so on have very highly developed formal technique based skills that are commended and so on, and others don't bring that, but they bring effectively their verbal, you know, word based skills.

But these days, it therefore means that word based skills and the marketing of themselves and what not, are also skills that are part of the whole package.

Q   Yeah very much so and for example, GCSE came in roughly twenty years ago brought to the fore critical contextual studies and understanding, and didn't envisage that being a separate element that you make the artwork and then you write an essay about an artist and so on, that they were separate. But that's often the way it is even now, that they do their critical studies separately…

A   Yeah.

Q   …rather than the critical understanding being embodied in the artwork.

A   Yeah and that's…

Q   And how…

A   …how it should be.

Q   …and how that's demonstrated…

A   Yeah , that's fine.

Q   …and how you…

A   Yeah.

Q   …how that's evidenced if you like and. Um, so it's interesting because with our discussion it just shows, it seems to me how your experience with the practical project and mine connects very strongly to all these key concepts in art education and ongoing concerns and ongoing debates and tensions.

A   Yeah I mean I found them, you know, absolutely relevant…

Q   Yeah.

A   …to the making of my work. I mean the only I would say to some extent disadvantage that I've experienced and, um, you know, one can't do everything all at once, but

because I'm currently doing the other anthropology studies as well, but I have… it's almost a preparation for, you know, the… beyond this course the sort of work that I… I hope to be doing in the community because I'm still engaged with something else.

Um, so it remains to be seen I suppose, you know, to what extent, um, I can realise some of these, um, ideas that, um, experimenting with and realising, um, yeah that's the only sort of frustration in a way, but, you know, I am aware that, you know, I can't do everything all at once. Some of the work that I'm doing is preparation towards.

Q   Yeah. Yes I think the practical project needn't be an end point, it can be a springboard or a stage or a journey…

A   Yeah.

Q   …to further work, it certainly has been for, um, for one student as you know who went on to her dissertation…

A   Yeah.

Q   …continuing the same practical approach and very successfully and we'll certainly encourage other students who are interested in pursuing that path. It's not compulsory, it's entirely voluntary, but it is a possibility, and indeed students who want to go beyond that to doctoral research…

A   Yeah.

Q   … which is partly, um, it could be wholly in a fine art context, but in an art education context, it could be partly through practical engagement and practical work. No-one has done it yet, no-one has attempted that yet, not at Roehampton anyway.

A   Yeah.

Q   But that's perhaps another stage. So this… my research connects to all that, um, conceptualisation and knowledge and effectively what is knowledge in art education, what is understanding what our skills, what is the…

A   Yeah, so I suppose your work, this work you're doing, will be key in possibly establishing the foundations for, you know, PhDs in this field here.

Q   It connects to that, certainly to those possibilities, but did I understand you earlier that. . that you're doing a PhD or you're starting one?

A   Well I finish the MA and this year I did Hebrew which actually I did well in and it went well. Um, and then I'm now trying to finish off a proposal, um, but I've had a slight re-think about the partic... you know, we have... I have to choose a particular "community" in quotation marks because community sometimes closes it in, again it's a sort of very porous thing, but I had intended to look at, um, a liberal Jewish community, the certain... certain problems that I won't go into full detail now, to realising that at the moment, partly because I don't live in a Jewish area, the most sort of concentrated Jewish communities are the north... North London...

Q   Yeah.

A   ...um, access issues and other sort of identity issues around misunderstandings and so on and so forth. As you know, last summer I wasn't allowed into Israel and things like that. Although I've actually developed a very good relationship with a South London liberal community in Stratham because I'm doing some Judaism classes at their synagogue, a very lovely Rabbi there and so on, but I think I'll come back to that and I'm going to keep up with the Hebrew. Next year I'm going to go to the intermediate level of the Hebrew, so keeping with that, but I've actually decided for the purposes of the, um, PhD and it's also actually linked to the specialists that there are at [43.26 Soas] and in general within anthropology, you don't find many anthropologists working on Jewish communities. It tends... it's fairly a protected area, it tends to be Jewish studies or, you know, kind of area studies, Israeli studies and I want to remain in social anthropology because my interests aren't just with Jewish communities; I'm interested in, you know, other communities, other issues and I also wanted to tap into my other languages.

I know Malay and Tamil, so now I've actually decided on what would have been... what I thought would be my second project, but now this is my first project. I'm going to look at Tamil speaking Roman Catholic community. So that's peripherals that I'm finishing off and there are specialists both in vernacular Christianity, um, and, you know, the Tamil speaking communities in [44.18 Soas]. So there's a... a parish church very near me that actually hold not just their main sort of, um, mass services and so on, but also, um, Tamil services where they use Tamil. So I attended a service the other day, Pentecost and it was very interesting to see these, you know, songs being sung in Tamil and...

Q   Fantastic.

A   ...then delivered in Tamil, so that's...

Q   Okay.

A   ...going to be... yeah.

Q   Right well we'll end it there. So thank you very much.

ENDS