CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT EPISODES:
THE EMERGENCE OF NEW LANGUAGE-GAMES

'The origin and primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only
from this can more complicated forms develop. Language - I want to
say - is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed' [quoting Goethe]'
Wittgenstein, 1980a, p 31

In the last chapter, I put forward an argument for the existence of 'fleeting moments' of educational influence and what constitutes them, and how the 'primitive reactions' that occur within these, can be a precursor to the creation and evolution of new *language-games*. In this chapter I want to examine in more detail in what manner such language-games might manifest themselves, how they might enable new forms of life/new practices, and what might be involved in their evolution and development. Through providing further video and textual examples and evidence of this multi-level process in action – here very much to do with the 'development episode' level of my pedagogical framework – I will continue to build the evidential justification for this conversational view of influence that I've framed as the 'presencing of developmental possibilities'.

As in Chapter 4, I begin this chapter with an outline of a framework, or perhaps more potently an 'ecology of ideas' (Bateson, 1972), that has emerged within my own practice that enables me to stimulate and support the evolution of change and development through provoking primitive reactions which unfold and flower into new language-games.

LANGUAGE-GAMES: exploring the concept
According to Wittgenstein (1958), words get their meaning from *use* in the specific contexts in which a practice unfolds. He developed this term to show that meaning is embedded in local fields of practice, where speaking is part of an activity or form of life: and it is the particular language-game associated with the situated practice that provides the 'conversational contexting' people need, to know how to go on together. The emergence of new language-games is I believe part of a larger, multi-levelled, improvisatory, and mediated non-linear process that takes place over time, and provides the environment for the emergent and 'focal' process (Polanyi, 1983) I've termed 'presencing developmental possibilities'[17].

Language-games – framing 'conversational contexts'
As mentioned earlier, my experience suggests that one of the keys to the working of this developmental process, is for me as coach to hope, expect, and anticipate that one or more of the many suggestions/questions/challenges I am making in logs and conversations, will strike a potent chord at some point; to be particularly vigilant about what comes up in the logs/essays and other contacts that might provide brief glimpses of

---

[17] I'm now framing this as 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' and here in phrases like 'conversational contexting' and 'focal' process, am showing early signs of this shift.

this emergent phenomenon; and to be receptive and responsive in 'amplifying' these; or as Shotter puts it, being 'spontaneously responsive' (Shotter, 2008) to whatever signals of potential development, and opportunities to work on these, emerge. In other words, as I mentioned at the end of Chapter 4, the development process is not just about a magic 'fleeting moment' every now and again. There is much more to account for in understanding this: everything I do is about preparing the ground, seeding the moment, supporting and extending the language-game, and helping students integrate and embed their learning about 'how to go on' with others so that it becomes an ontological, identity influencing process. But before I get into this, let me say something about the concept of language-game and then, as a scene-setter for the original thinking in the chapter, offer you a personal example of the evolution of a language-game and the 'development episode' associated with it.

In explicating his use of the term 'language-game', Dolhenty (1998) identifies two important metaphors that Wittgenstein used. He first suggested that languages are *games* where, as with children learning their native language, we play games with words. He also suggested that the words and language we use are *tools:* 'Think of tools in a toolbox. There is a hammer, pliers, a screw driver, a rule, a glue pot, glue, nails and screws – the functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects' (Wittgenstein, 1958, no 11). He also felt that language required no external justification: like e.g. the game of chess, meaning takes place *within* the game. Hence it is critical to know what game you and others are playing to be able to know what the words being used, mean.

In this context, John Sowa (2011) in his online paper 'Signs, Processes, and Language-games: Foundations for Ontology' quotes Wittgenstein (1958) as follows: 'There are *countless* — countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols,' 'words,' 'sentences.' And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten.' As examples of the multiple uses, he cited: 'Giving orders, and obeying them; describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements; constructing an object from a description (a drawing); reporting an event; speculating about an event; forming and testing a hypothesis; presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams; making up a story, and reading it; play acting; singing catches; guessing riddles; making a joke, telling it; solving a problem in practical arithmetic; translating from one language into another; asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying. (Wittgenstein, 1958, no 23)'

These are all activities in the language that we understand, and are expressions of our form(s) of life: as Wittgenstein himself stated 'to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life' (Wittgenstein, 1958, no 19). Accordingly, a language-game cannot be understood out-with the context in which the language is being used and the form of life in which it is interwoven. If in any given language one cannot e.g. ask questions, give orders, or tell jokes, *then these activities do not exist there*. Similarly, if a new language-game does afford say, a more participative way of engaging with staff, then that new activity/behaviour, that new way of being, *can* exist and does become a possible new form of living. In this lies the power of the concept for capturing important elements of change and development which I explore in this chapter.

In my usage, new language-games are essentially orientational and conversational framings that enable students to know how to go on to develop new embodied

capabilities through situated action. This dynamic and situated framing process is essentially a means through which people construct conversational contexts to make sense of the practice(s) in which they are involved, and to account to others for this sense making. In looking at such 'practice' and what theory can contribute towards understanding this, Jo Helle-Valle makes the point that to study meaning is to study uses of language within forms of life (Helle-Valle, 2010, p 198) and Wittgenstein's concept of 'language-game' is a powerful term for showing how meaning is indeed embedded within forms of life or fields of practice.

Language-games – personalising the framing tool
Now let me turn to my personal example which offers you an example of the process of a 'development episode' that this chapter is primarily about. You may recollect that in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 I talked about a 'search for roots in the future' which I was framing as a search for identity: not going back to my roots in South Africa, but looking forward at what I was doing and planning to do, to secure some new kind of personal foundation for myself. The initial 'instruction' came to me from my less than conscious mind, as I was driving back home to Oxford along the M5 motorway after a seminar at Bath in 2002: '*that's* what you're doing – searching for your roots in the future!' This new way of framing much of the personal development activity I'd been engaged in for over 25 years, did come right out of the blue and with great force, and in hindsight, definitely led to a 'primitive reaction' on my part. And as you might also recall, this reaction did not then just fade away. Instead it seemed to take possession of me as I began to think about it on a regular basis, using it to look at, challenge, and frame my experiences. I now understand that what I was doing was 'indwelling the subsidiaries' of the 'focal' idea (Polanyi, 1983), testing it out more or less continuously but not consciously in everyday situations, using my bodily responses to assess the relevance and edges of its application, and building up a rich body of momentary experiences of what was involved for me to perform it *as a practice*.

Through this embodied learning process, the 'name of the game' shifted. Firstly by 2005 my frame had moved to the more active form of seeking 'to root' myself in what I was doing. Here I was not looking for so-called 'roots' but actively 'rooting' myself, in a rhizomatic sort of way, to various potential 'truths' about myself in an active searching for some basic elements of my identity. By 2006 the initial primitive reaction had undergone two further important changes: one was to place the rooting process in *relationship* – so I was seeking identity in a relational sense; and the second was to locate the process in the living present. So I was, to use the concept popularized by Scharmer (2007), seeking to 'presence' myself in the very moments of interaction with others. So during some four years of indwelling, the primitive reframe had become a much more developed, embodied, and influential root metaphor for me. And though there was still more to come, the 'primitive reaction' had become a fully fleshed out 'language-game' concerned with how I was orientating myself towards and making sense of my educational relationships and practice with others: not just MA students but private commercial clients, family, friends, and even casual acquaintances.

To give you a better feel for this development and the impact on my sense of being, here is a video clip – *primitive reaction, indwelling, language-game* - where I seek to capture the power of this development process. In the two clips I show how I move through a lengthy process of indwelling which takes me from an initial primitive reaction to the instruction 'you're seeking roots in the future', right through to a new sophisticated

language-game where I experience myself as 'becoming' in relationship (or presencing myself) in the moment. And in so doing, creating expectatations, anticipations, and contextualising assumptions in my dialogically structured interactions with my students, that encourage and support an openness to new learning and practice. (The video clip is in two parts because of You Tube restrictions.)

16a. *primitive reaction, indwelling, language-game part 1*
http://youtu.be/xsvPs5bYZDo

16b. *primitive reaction, indwelling, language-game part 2*
http://youtu.be/skhkKCoSdfg

I hope you'll have been able to see in this clip that I find this language-game life affirming and highly valued: it offers me a wholly different way of regarding my relations with others, what I do and who I am with them, which lifts my spirits and offers me a new and inspiring way forward. Of course this language-game, as with others, is not exclusive: it is one artifact of many that I can call upon to help me know my way around, and jostles for attention with others within what Helle-Valle calls a 'language-game complex' (Helle-Valle, 2010, p 204) formed to integrate several language-games, in this case all to do with ontology and my experience of self-identity. So if we go back to Wittgenstein's 'forms of life' and my own example of a language-game mentioned above, holding the view that independent isolated selves communicate in 'pipeline mode' with others, would *not* exist; though a parallel language-game might be saying just the opposite!

**DEVELOPMENT EPISODES: enabling new forms of living**
Let me now turn to building up the perceiving and valuing process – what Ilyenkov (1977) quoted in Burkitt (1999) refers to as a social artifact - that led me to the notion of 'development episodes'. As identified and explored in Chapter 4, it is what happens in 'fleeting moments' of influence that initiate and can energise longer episodes in which new 'language-games' can evolve, and enable the development of what Wittgenstein calls new 'forms of life'. These longer periods which I've called 'development episodes', provide opportunities for students to use the evolving language-game to reorient themselves towards their ongoing experience, providing time, situations, and motivations that encourage them to evolve how they relate to and work with others within their complex and changing circumstances.

130

So what ideas have led to the development of a social artifact that allows me to view this local learning world in this way and consequently engage in appropriately responsive coaching activities? As mentioned in Chapter 4, Wittgenstein, reported by Shotter (2008, p 74), says 'The origin and primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop.' (Wittgenstein, 1980a, p 31). And further, '…this sort of behaviour is *pre-linguistic:* that a language-game is based *on it*, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought' (Wittgenstein, 1981, no 541).

In line with this idea of *prototype* as against 'result' of thinking, I offered in Chapter 4 several examples of implicit communication as well as simple examples of 'gestural instructions' that provoked such reactions. But if a language-game is based '*on it'* (or these kinds of pre-linguistic prototypes), how might we think productively about the nature of the learning and development that needs to take place to influence this potential evolution cum transformation? And further, how might we notice and map over time, any consequences in terms of learning and changed behaviour?: if it's just an internal shift or primarily non-verbal, it's quite likely to remain 'rationally *in*visible' (Garfinkel, 1967). So how might a 'primitive reaction' achieve its fruition in a 'language-game' which allows students to use new ontological capabilities to respond differently in order to go on more effectively with others in difficult situations? Here is how I think about this process.

Tacit development of new ontological skills
If a 'primitive reaction' within a 'fleeting moment' of influence does have an educational impact, it should result in some *changes* we can recognise - in the ideas and language being used, behaviours, and ideally in changes to practices within the situation. In conventional training/development programmes we might regard and refer to such a new method or skill that is being taught/learned, as being *transactional* in nature, in line with the 'banking' or 'warehouse' metaphor of knowledge: something bounded and known is handed over in a linear manner from one who knows to someone who doesn't, usually for a fee that places a value on the expert's expertise. And then the trainee still faces the challenge of using this new knowledge/tool to perform more creatively in their own local context.
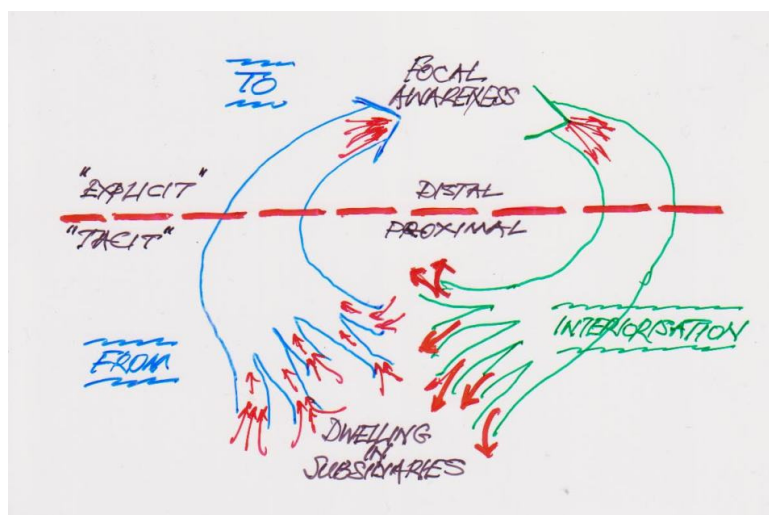
In contrast, the development of the kind of situated embodied knowing that I'm talking about, is complex and not completely knowable in explicit terms: it is *transformational* in nature and cannot be absorbed through a 'training' process. Here the different kind of learning, developing, and performing work that is required to transform the momentary reframing of an issue/perception in a face-to-face or virtual dialogue - the primitive reaction - into appropriate ontological (embodied) skills, is in my experience achieved through a largely tacit learning process which Polanyi calls 'indwelling' (Polanyi, 1983), as illustrated in the diagram. And this is what the newly forming language-game helps frame, energise and guide – the new embodied capabilities and sense of identity to go on more effectively with others[18].

This more complex learning is achieved not in a conscious and planned way but where a person dwells in what Polanyi calls the 'subsidiaries' of the 'focal' issue, 'as if they were a part of our body' (1983, p x). His original framework proposes a 'from-to' process of creating embodied knowing, where we cycle back and forth between a largely tacit level of fragmented background 'from' or *subsidiary* knowing, and the more explicit, synthesised and spoken form of a 'to' or *focal* level of knowing. Hence his catch phrase 'we know more than we can say'. Lyotard offers a similar account of such learning in talking about the process of creativity, particularly as this applies to artistic activity, where he says: 'The artist and the writer are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. In this sense, values are "formulated" in your (effective) practice with others, and you discover their existence after you've successfully created them' (Lyotard, 1986, p 81). As you'll have noticed with my earlier example of moving from 'seeking roots' to 'rooting in relationship', I believe this naturally occurring human process enables us to work continually and largely unconsciously on situated and embodied meaning-making, and offers a vivid metaphor for the everyday situated and embodied form of learning and development that underpins genuine changes in *practice*. The earlier personal video clip I offered, provides a personal example of this tacit development process.

Ontological development – the creation of new social artifacts
My experience suggests that such deep development work takes place largely at a tacit level, as one goes about one's everyday activities. Thus to take one of Polanyi's well known examples, the blind man soon begins to regard the end of his body not as his hand but as the point of his white stick. This is not because of any real deliberate and conscious thought, but because this is how embodied change happens: he ''tacitly submits to the new values/practices involved, by the very act of creating and adopting them' (Polanyi, 1983, p ix). In a similar way, more abstract frameworks like say, family therapy's 'systemic thinking' or my own 'rooting in the present' are able through 'interiorisation' to extend the individual's reach and influence well beyond his/her physical body, and allow new and more complex experiences of being-in-the-world. So

---

[18] In this I see some similarities with Wittgenstein's approach to problem solving, as explored by Shotter: 'we feel an "overwhelming temptation"…to treat our uncertainty as to how to respond…as a "problem" requiring a "solution" in terms of an "explanation"…[however] If we *dwell* [my emphasis] upon it, and do not try to get beyond it…stay in dialogue with it…look it over as we look over a painting or a sculpture in an art gallery…respond to it from up close, from a distance, from this angle and that…we can begin to gain a shaped and vectored sense of the space of possibilities it opens up to us in the responses it "calls" from us. And we should do this in collaboration with the others involved with us in the practice in question.' (Shotter, 2003, pp 462)

such artifacts, whether they be theoretical models or more practical/technical tools, are able to touch and transform our everyday practices in our social and material environments.

If I follow this 'practice theory' line a little further, we can regard the human being as the nexus of the arrays of activity that constitute our everyday practices (Schatzki et al, 2001). As Peterson suggests in his research into newspaper reading habits in India, (Peterson, 2010), changes in such practices involve a dialectical process of redefining social contexts *and* redefining actions to suit them. This way of looking at changes in practice is very similar to that of Erving Goffman (1974) whose 'language of habitual interpretive "frames" which can be "broken" or "repaired" in order to negotiate mutually interpretable behaviour', can be seen as a precursor to more recent thinking about practice (Peterson, ibid, p 142). So we now seem to have some further support for the idea that development, described as the creation of new artifacts, can be usefully seen as being located within practices in social and material environments, where the nexus of this/these practices, the human agent, is the one who through the meta activity of frame making, breaking, and repairing is able to (re)define social contexts and (re)define actions in order to know how to go on with others.

Practice, persons, and social artifacts
It is this longer, emergent process that I believe provides the time and space students need to work with 'primitive reactions' and more fully re-orient and embed the values and skills needed to deploy different ways of being and 'going on' more dynamically in the situations they face. While Polanyi focused primarily on the relationship between the body and language in his writing about indwelling, the Russian philosopher Ilyenkov went a lot further to take account of *all* kinds of what he called 'artifacts', to include invented objects like dwellings, weapons, utensils, tools and technology. As Burkitt reports, Ilyenkov 'sees thought as movement and action within reality, aided and mediated by artifacts.' (Burkitt, 1999, p 79). The thinking body therefore is capable of 'orienting itself in its community of meaningful practice. Thought is therefore lived in and through its embodiment in public activity, in the person's meaningful social relations with others *and with objects'* [my emphasis] (ibid, p 80). So according to Ilyenkov, it is artifacts *as a whole*, not just language and the body, which transform our human bodily experience of the world around us. To me this brings out more clearly the central idea identified in 'practice theory' (Schatzki et al, 2001), that embodied knowing involves interactions beyond the person, with the physical environment and the material as well as symbolic objects in it, playing a crucial constraining as well as affording role. With this in mind I now regard the *creation of new social artifacts* which locate individuals within, and reveal links to, the contexts in which they perform, as a more fruitful way of looking at the ontological development of situated practice - and very much in line with the ideas of Polanyi (1983) and Ilyenkov (1977) as well as others like Merleau-Ponty (1962), Bourdieu (1981), and Foucault (1977).

Language-games – contextualising 'practice'
If a 'primitive reaction' within a 'fleeting moment' of influence does have an educational impact, it should result in some *changes* we can recognise - in the ideas and language being used, behaviours, and ideally in changes to practices within the situation. And it should be possible to see this both in changes to practice as well as in the social artifact that is created and which in the process, frames and energises this

change. This will include changes in 'soft' practices such as *showing emotion* like e.g. 'being joyful'. Such practices are considered by some such as Burkitt (following Wittgenstein) not to be something *inside* an individual but aspects of the conditions of life within which a person exists. Therefore such feelings can be regarded as being created within relations with others in specific contexts (see Helle-Valle on Burkitt, 2010, p 199) Further, according to Wittgenstein, to study meaning is to study uses of language within 'forms of life' (see Helle-Valle, 2010, p 198), and as his concept of 'language-game' is a term for showing how meaning is embedded in fields of practice/forms of life, it would seem to offer a good proxy measure of the changes in practice I'm seeking.

Further, if we use Helle-Valle's definition of a 'language-game', this becomes even clearer: 'practically formed communicative contexts that provide statements with meaning' (Helle-Valle, 2010, p 193). Clearly this can be seen as a particular and very powerful or meta form of social artifact which can serve both to change practices and, through how people account for themselves to themselves and to others, to provide evidence of such changes. So as the germinal 'primitive reaction', stimulated by continuing interactions within different situations, starts to grow and take shape, the edges and essences of the emerging language-game start to exercise a growing influence on a student's meaning making, leading to Helle-Valle for one, to state very firmly: it is the *language-game* as 'contextualiser of practice', that we should adopt as our datum point, rather than fellow practice theorist Couldry's view, that 'media practices' should form the analytical anchorage for work on other practices (Couldry, 2010).

Practice, identity, and in/dividual
In this way, the gradual evolution of a primitive reaction into a new language-game can be seen to provide the conversational contexting for the learning and development needed to improve local practice. However, as Hobart maintains, practice is 'not a natural object but a frame of reference that we use to interrogate a complex reality' (Hobart, 2010, p 62). It therefore needs to be identified as such by someone; and given that it's usually a complex interaction involving the environment and individuals, this may not be a simple requirement. One way of making progress here is to use LiPuma's idea of 'in/dividual' (1998) as different aspects of the person engaged in practice. The term 'dividual' points to the embodied state of mind associated with a particular language-game, which is context dependent and can shift rapidly. The more integrative and stable term 'individual' then can be used for less context bound discourses where several communicative contexts are in play and the person wishes to appear to be a seamless unity.

So using this concept we can select the 'who' of a practice by identifying what kind of practice it is e.g. 'integrative' or 'dispersed' (Schatzki et al, 2001) and whether it would be more productive to talk with the 'individual' who is involved in dispersed practices like 'describing/explaining' or whether we should engage with many more 'dividuals' who are part of more integrative practices like cooking or business. Finally, these frameworks, the creation of new artifacts, and the development of new language-games are not just about the individual. Frame development work is a practice which is *not* all about individual agency but something more complex, as people in forming the nexus of interactions between practices and the environment, absorb something in interaction with their environment (Peterson, 2010).

These key ideas constitute a frame that encourages me to believe that the indwelling process within local practices enables students to develop new social artifacts which enable them to respond more creatively in the situations they live and work in. Sparked by primitive reactions, the formulation and use of associated language-games contextualises the development of new ontological skills required to create and/or improve local practices that are 'new forms of living' for going on with others. And it is here that my ontological coaching tool 'presencing developmental opportunities' can be seen to be speaking directly into the 'gap' between primitive reaction and language-game, encouraging students to direct their attentions to what they need to work on, to go on more effectively with others in changing situations[19].

DEVELOPMENT EPISODES: exploring examples of what happens
If we accept for the moment the postmodernist notion of our lives taking place at the edge of chaos as we try and make sense of 'how to go on' in the hustle and bustle of everyday interactions (to use Wittgenstein's primary concern about 'orientation'), it becomes very difficult to make straightforward claims about causing or influencing something. There are so many factors potentially in play, operating in many different contexts and time frames with multiple feed-forward and feedback loops, that it takes a brave man to draw clear conclusions and justify particular views as to what or who is causing what, and how. But to make progress in my argument I do need to make an attempt to do this - not only for possible personal satisfaction but to create some further knowing about what might be happening and how I might improve my practice by influencing 'what works'. In Chapter 4 I made a start on this process with the idea of a 'fleeting moment' in which a 'primitive reaction' is engendered. Having explored the social artifact that has been guiding my thinking in the previous section, I go on here to offer some practical examples of what I've called the 'development episode', where a momentary 'fleeting moment' of influence takes hold and unfolds into a new 'language-game', so offering a second 'window' for looking at educational influencing and the development process.

Introduction to the cases
I use the term 'development episode' here in order to punctuate a temporary but particular space/time domain for learning purposes. This enables me to look at fairly immediate and what we might regard as relatively straightforward influencing, in the sense of 'I do these things and you seem to make some sense of them and react accordingly'. This assumes that I can specify reasonably clearly what it is that I 'do' and am able to show how the other 'makes some sense and reacts'. In the ideal scenario, these interactions would occur face to face in the same time and space. Unfortunately in the learning log interactions, the to and fro between student and coach is virtual and in most cases takes place asynchronously. So we have a much greater difficulty in establishing the impact of such 'fleeting moments' where this kind of influence could have occurred. However, perhaps because of the special kind of 'intimacy' that these

---

[19] this offers another example of the new 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' version of the tool in action, here offering ideas/encouragement into the 'gap', for developing greater 'empathetic responsiveness' to what might be 'requisite' practice in the emerging language-game

private interactions enable – virtually 'conversations in your own home' - it may be possible to regard these as being in a special kind of virtual time, and so get glimpses of such critical incidents in the textual record[20]. And by subjecting them to detailed critique, be able to draw out some learning about how this short term influencing process might work and what factors support it: what is it that turns a brief remark offered in passing, and spoken into a 'gap' in the dialogue so to speak, into a fleeting moment with some force on subsequent thinking and behaviour, and, consequently during a 'development episode', into a more fleshed out language-game?

In the cases analysed here, the origins, nature, and playing out of the 'development episodes' all differ (as one might expect in this very tailored form of personal coaching), and the process for identifying and supporting the arguments I put forward, consequently also differ to some extent. In this chapter I provide further follow-on information on the three students I first talked about in Chapter 4, so that you can see how the influence process develops from 'primitive reaction' into 'language-game' during the 'development episode' phase. With John, a senior officer in the military, I show how a simple intervention ('ask for more and better') which falls on well cultivated ground, allows for further contextualisation and elaboration into a fuller scale language-game – in this case the transformation of leadership interaction within his team. In this chapter Colleen, a senior manager in a large public organisation, provides the main example for this phase of influence and development. Using textual evidence of our interactions, I demonstrate that her response to situations ('stark choices') and her outlook on her sense of self and how she could use the MA programme, was influenced by a series of small interventions that I offered into the 'gaps' (see Chapter 3 for more on this concept) that I imagined were present in her learning log writings, leading to a more positive approach to her academic and professional work. Finally with Ian, a senior manager in a large industrial concern, I provide evidence of how he takes a high level concept – 'leadership is a situated behaviour' – and patiently works on the everyday skills that allow him to embody effectively what was initially a foreign style to him, in his working relations within his organization.

John - developing 'ask for more and better' *(see Appendix 1 for more detail)*
I begin with further exploration and evidence of how John built on his initial reaction to the 'ask for more and better' injunction, to develop a rather different approach to how he was leading his immediate staff as they battled with the challenges of a very large and complex change project. You might recall that at the end of the case in Chapter 4, John was still not sure how to respond to these challenges, saying: 'Perhaps one immediate action should be to close my office door in order to concentrate on strategic issues, rather than listen to everyone who visits my PA's office and immediately think how I can assist them with their individual problems – no matter how trivial. Or would that make me a worse leader?'

My rejoinder at the time was to suggest to him that he:'…work from strength, both in terms of your 'everyday' work, and your concurrent 'development' work to improve the 'everyday'. Closing the office door doesn't quite sound like that! But like the 'more and better' fit for purpose response we came across a week ago (and in what ways was that

---

[20] A good illustration of 'intimacy' and 'conversations in your own home' appears in the quote from my Icelandic student Peter '…feel like I am popping into a friend's house for tea…' that appears in Chapter 7, on page 200.

an ENFP response?), you could ask yourself what a more 'strategic' ENFP orientated set of responses might look like. So not working or 'competing' at the same level as others, but like your 'figurehead' image above, working at a higher level in the service of the whole, to enable others to be more productive.' And in my post-hoc reflection I noted that: Apart from the single statement '…have already taken corrective action in a number of ways…' there is still little evidence as to any practical effect the intervention has had, and/or if anything happened, how it was carried out. So in my response I had persisted and reprised the basic ideas of asking for 'more and better', focusing on 'servicing the whole', and working in a more collaborative manner. What I now provide is further evidence of how this particular intervention seemed to unfold as John went about his everyday work with his team.

I first offer some comments on an extract from his Phase 1 essay which appears in Appendix 1. In this he indicates that he now can apply a new 'discipline and rigor' in his self-analysis, which has led to 'greater confidence in my leadership role and a willingness to interact differently with my management'. These together with his view that he is now 'better acknowledging and utilizing my skills', suggests that he has found his own particular way of unfolding and embedding this idea in his own practice with others. As he writes: 'I am certainly more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of my management board and have already started to more consciously play to their individual strengths and mitigate against their weaknesses.' His quoting of my own earlier suggestions in regard to his 'accomodating' style - 'This is your foundation and your trump card so use it wisely' and 'you work within a network full of these other capabilities, so mobilise these in the service of the task and keep your own powder dry' seem to indicate to me he has found these ideas helpful in creating his own personal formulation of the 'ask for more and better' suggestion. As I write in my own 2010 reflections on this excerpt:

Looking at these excerpts from the essay suggests that the 'ask for more and better' move did more than just register momentarily: he seems to have felt supported enough ('support is fulsome and sincere') to have taken new action to follow the idea through in a practical way. In doing this he has found a new way of dealing with his dilemma of 'trusting his gut instinct/using detailed analyses of staff'. This has allowed him to build more confidently on the strengths of his staff, leading to a more collaborative ethic. What's not clear yet is how he went about influencing the quality of interaction in what he calls 'level 2' detail discussions, and how this enabled him to rely more on a better informed gut instinct for the more strategic 'level 3' debates. Despite this gap, the intervention does seem to have been timely and framed to help him take practical steps in the situation facing him. It seems to have allowed him to translate the general 'more and better' injunction into an immediate and practical set of conversations where he has been able to more confidently use his ENFP/CE-Accomodator preferences to advantage.

More light on this remaining 'gap' in evidence about how he goes about developing the new language-game, is cast in three brief video clips. These show more clearly how the initial 'reaction' is transformed into new embodied and situated behaviour as he patiently, courageously, and creatively explores new work patterns and associated relationships as the team tackle their everyday tasks. These video clips are taken from the two hour discussion I had with John soon after he had completed Phase 6 of the programme and had decided to take a break from his studies.

In the first video clip - *engaging staff* - John is responding to my question: 'so how did you respond to the 'more and better' proposal?' He explains that what this did for him was to provide 'greater clarity and understanding of the relations between me and staff', which gave the staff greater confidence to make their contributions. He and his programme manager in effect became the 'conscience' of the project, working together in a more 'collegiate' manner which allowed the team to 'fight our corner…from a sounder foundation' at a time when there was widespread frustration with how things were moving. It's clear from John's measured and sincere tone, that this development of greater togetherness particularly with his No 2, had been very satisfying for him, allowing him to involve a wider group of staff in novel and motivating ways.

17. *engaging staff*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7TokY1XcUY

I believe this clip starts to unpack some of the grounding detail of how John was working through the high level injunction 'ask for more and better' to alter the way he was relating to and exploiting the talents of his staff. Becoming clearer in his own mind about how he could work with the tension between 'gut feel' and 'detailed analysis', allows him to 'bolster' his 'affable' working relationship with his No 2. 'Together' they find ways of 'compensating' for each others' styles/preferences, which allows them to find 'a surer footing', build stronger more rounded arguments, and increase their levels of confidence. And this then seems to diffuse down to lower levels. But the level of description is still quite general and full of metaphor, and I'm still not sure just how John is going on with this 'indwelling' process with his colleagues. The next video clip provides more clues.

In the second video clip - *building trust and confidence* - as John continues his train of thought, he reveals that one of the most interesting effects was on his relations with his subordinates: 'the more I engaged staff in what I was doing…discussed this openly with them...showed them my essays…' and asked them for their views on his work, the more their confidence was boosted and the more they responded positively to the work. They felt 'far more involved…getting a far greater hearing…built the team up…greater degree of participation…', leading to several getting involved in self development and wanting to go on the same leadership courses that John had attended.

18. *building trust and confidence*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFSISYZUaYw

It's now becoming clearer that John's 'indwelling' with the 'more and better' idea, is encouraging him to be much more open about himself and his thoughts about work with what he calls his 'subordinates' - obviously no small matter in a 'rank' focused military organisation – and is showing a much greater degree of trust in both how they might react to his new 'gestures' and how they might then be able to help him tackle the challenges. In other words his view of what they have to offer has moved from being critical of their 'detailed analyses' to a realisation that these could be complementary to his own more 'gut instinct' approach. And further, that he himself has to make the first move and be more open and perhaps vulnerable with them, before they would know how to respond in an appropriate manner.

So we have here a very good example of new leadership starting with the self and while he doesn't say it here himself, an instance of Gandhi's 'be the change you want to see in the world'. Reading between the lines it seems that this becomes a real possibility for him when he finds his initial overtures along these lines towards his very different 'ISTJ' programme manager, meet with success. And, moving yet further back along the chain of influence, it's quite likely that his frank exchanges with me in the learning logs during the first phase, had offered and encouraged him to try out another model of relating and communicating. So there does appear to be a degree of 'mirroring and modelling' taking place here, with the relational communication model that John and I are gradually developing, providing something for him to use to begin his indwelling experiments with his No 2. What also is pointed to in this video clip, is the possibility of further diffusion of this model of leadership to influence the social formation in which the work is being carried out.

In the third and final video clip – *towards distributed leadership* - we start to get a much better idea of how John and his staff use their own originality and situatedness to mediate and extend the initial 'more and better' idea, to create what John calls a local form of 'distributed' leadership. The clip starts with me asking him to think about what conditions need to be in place for an idea like 'more and better' to take hold in a situation and have the effect that it's had here. He immediately identifies some concrete illustrations of changes in behaviour that have helped this idea prosper, and as he talks, I feel I'm sitting right next to him as he describes the fortnightly 'white-boarding' or brainstorming sessions with his No 2 and staff, where he gives the participants 'free

139

rein' to contribute. An important new piece of information offered is his need to curb the tendency for his No 2 to dominate these discussions, by not encouraging more participative behaviours or giving other people air time. As a result his No 2 starts to realise that he's not always right… and through changing his own approach, gets more out of the team.

19. *towards distributed leadership*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WPSV5vw6Ik

Having set up the basic structure of free-wheeling review meetings every fortnight and shown his commitment to the programme, John now seems to have adopted a much more coaching oriented role, listening, guiding, and encouraging: he comes across as being much happier with this approach and with the results that are being generated. Over time this more involving process diffuses down two levels resulting in a much 'more effective briefing up' process that makes the whole team feel stronger. He has in this I believe 'presenced developmental possibilities' both for himself and his staff.

The text excerpt and video clips demonstrate quite succinctly but I believe convincingly, how the first 'primitive reaction' – ask for more and better – has been transformed over time and through patient and detailed experimentation with everyday work patterns, into a new language-game. This new language-game has enabled a new 'form of life' or leadership practice to evolve, where instead of being critical of and 'fighting' the contributions of his more analytical and detail oriented staff, John has been able to re-orientate and re-position himself 'to go on' in more participative and creative ways. And the results, both in terms of working relations and more effective contributions, seem to bear witness to their efficacy.

As you may have noticed in these three videos, my own behaviour in the face-to-face situation though generally quite restrained, continues to model the receptiveness and responsiveness that I show in our interactions in the online virtual world, paying close attention to what he's saying, regularly checking for understanding, and offering gentle, teasing, and humorous questions and comments to provoke further learning – all characteristics of the inclusional coaching approach I've labeled 'presencing development opportunities'. This is most obvious in his response to my question in the final clip about 'conditions' where his energy level is higher and his delivery much livelier and flowing.

_____

What now follows in the second example might again seem like a lot of textual material. However these excerpts represent a very small proportion of the work done online in this fashion. What you will see here amounts to some 4000 words whereas the learning logs and responses from which they have been extracted can amount to as much as 75,000 words over the 18 months of the structured programme (in Colleen's case the total was 56,000). These writings are reviewed and responded to by the coach, as indicated in these excerpts, but are ungraded. With the seven graded essays of 5000 words each, and the final dissertation of 20,000 words, these more informal exchanges devoted more to formative than summative goals, clearly represent a very significant proportion of the educational exchange.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

The second example of a 'development episode' that I now offer, is of a different character to John's that I introduced in Chapter 4 and that I've further explored above. In his case, there was just one particular behavioural intervention 'ask for more and better' that seemed to capture the start of a new language-game which I was then able to track in various logs, the phase essay, and in the follow up interview I then held with him at the end of Phase 6. In Colleen's case which now follows, there seems to be a longer prelude and build up as we begin to appreciate and trust each other.

_____

Colleen - moving beyond 'stark choices' to …?   *(see Appendix 2 for more detail)*

The intervention that I choose to highlight - about her framing her experience as 'stark choices' - is made several times in different ways in response to what is being created in the interchange. But throughout the period under consideration, I also offer a range of other interventions e.g. 'explore women's ways of knowing' and 'use the MA for your own purposes', which are added as the phase continues. These broaden the scope of the intervention and create the possibility of a range of micro language-games being initiated which might come together to bring Colleen to some important insights. In this instance, the one that seems to emerge most clearly is the realisation that this MA is not just another academic programme with a rigid structure and evaluation criteria that she has to 'fit into'. Instead she realizes that she *can* reflect and inquire into her *own* experiences, feelings, and ideas in the privileged 'container' constituted by the MA interchanges, to much more freely explore and change the way she is framing choices and responding to the challenges being thrown up in her changing organisation.

In Appendix 2 to this chapter I provide selections from her logs as she responds to set work and her own 'dear diary' reflections, taken mainly from the first phase, with my accompanying comments. These are all *excerpts* as the log entries and comments are generally much longer in nature. These log excerpts are supported by further excerpts from her Phase 1 essay, notes from a discussion we had when we met during Phase 2, a few excerpts from a couple of Phase 2 logs, and some 'course evaluation' work she completed during Phases 3 and 4. Together these form a loose 'patchwork' narrative (Buck et al, 1999) which I believe provides a representative and informative sample of

her work over this period. It also offers evidence of how language-games can develop through indwelling where everyday, tacit and 'subsidiary' experiences and learning gradually come together to support a new 'focal' framing or language-game which significantly alters how she is experiencing her working life, and how she can 'go on' with others.

This first selection is taken from logs and comments written during Phase 1. Colleen is very open about her feelings in these writings and quite quickly we see a picture emerging of someone who, very much caught up in situations at work which she finds oppressive and demeaning, is hoping the MA experience will help her create new ways forward. As indicated to Appendix 2 to the Introduction, the font style and colour codes show who the author is and when the comments were written.

Week 1
She begins critically: 'the impact of leadership courses...[has been]…minimal' and hopes that the MA programme 'will engage me in an ongoing, holistic sense, allowing me to question, challenge, and develop confidence in my own intuitive style of leadership which does not meet the "norm" in my field. She is 'tired of compromising'. I begin by responding and affirming the emotion she shows – 'What a terrifically passionate start to your learning log entries' – which many online students find difficult to express in written form. I also introduce the idea of using 'framing' and 'influencing context' as key aspects of exploiting learning and implementing change, and the need to also influence 'the culture in which performance needs to be altered. I imply she's got time and she'll need to puzzle things out for herself.

She finds returning to university study a challenge: 'am I good enough?' She's also concerned that her 'organisation may not support me in the way that I want - this is seen as "training" whilst I want it to be a key part of my role at work'. I continue to affirm her inherent capability, encouraging her to learn to value her own tacit knowledge – 'don't underestimate the wealth of knowledge you already possess by virtue of your own life experience ', and to think about the MA not as an academic programme, but as a means of working on her life and work challenges – 'make a point of framing what you're doing in the MA as being central to what you're doing in your role at work… to live your role as though it were the *central* point of your study.'

Week 2
Her feistiness takes a big knock in the second week after a difficult meeting: 'Emotionally a "fight or flight" reaction. Felt like an antelope being stalked by lions. Started to feel humiliated, with a knot in my stomach…my behaviour again belied my inner feeling of desolation… I had to stay within its boundaries'. Though she is very aware of them, Colleen clearly feels wary of being open about her feelings in her organisation, and the 'career' risks involved. Here I continue to appreciate her readiness to work with these: 'You show considerable ability to trace the movement of your changing emotions, and awareness of what effects these have on your behaviour', but begin to question her assumption that these are things that are 'real' and can't be altered (or at least her response to them altered) – 'is what we experience much more to do with what we in social interaction with others, construct through our 'emotional talk'?' Given the very strong emotions she is experiencing, like humiliation and desolation, I'm trying to get her interested in what the social constructionist perspective might be able to offer her, and trail the ideas of Schon (1983) and Shotter (2008) for later reference.

Week 4

Her anxieties continue to show in a 'dear diary' entry: '...am I good enough....how can I become the leader that I desperately want to be again?...I am probably at [one] of the many most stressful moments of my life...Can I achieve the greatness that I want aka achieving the MA...' Here I continue to affirm her basic ability and encourage her not to rush to action but to take her time - sometimes the tough just sit quietly contemplating, girding their loins for the battle, and preparing the ground for success. And then get going when the time is right/ripe…I sense she's panicking a little with all the MA 'knowledge' she 'has to' absorb - What's important is for you to learn to appreciate and use with confidence all that tacit knowledge you already have - which is far more than the MA's 'body of knowledge' could ever offer

Week 5

I now begin to notice the polarization that seems to characterize her thinking: 'Will I allow myself yet again to be herded into a role to pay the mortgage, or to so I hold out for a role that suits my learning style, with the implicit risks to employment?' I first remark upon it - You pose stark choices: mortgage or harmony?; being herded or holding out? And then I challenge this assumption, suggesting that there is always some room beneath the 'gaze' (Foucault, 1977) for less conformist behaviour, and encourage her to try and generate more choices for herself.

Her need to be true to her 'true' self, and exhaustion when pretending otherwise, is raised again. '…behaviour can be changed but personality cannot…leaders behaving uncharacteristically in public are usually "outed"…to be untrue to my values and principles is ultimately physically and emotionally detrimental!' I continue to offer an alternative view which I hope she might get interested in – that identity is not an absolute kind of truth, and though it is dependent on relations with others and local contexts, and so is not subject to complete control, it can be influenced - your ideas illustrate…the essentially relational nature of identity and behaviour. We are not isolated individuals acting 'on' others but rather fellow travellers taking part 'in' various activities within relations - I'm hoping she might start to entertain the possibility of a 'looser' and more dynamic version of self.

She continues to raise questions about her values and judgement given her experiences of 'successful' leaders: '…is my expectation of leadership misjudged – am I the rebel?' I continue to support and affirm her feelings of confusion and frustration but, through introducing Foucault's more dispersed notion of power (Foucault, 1977), try to get her to look beyond 'individual' explanations to include those that attend to situation and 'power-knowledge', offering her the possibility of more 'context' related explanations, and responses, to the questions she poses - you need to 'box clever' because you're not fighting particular individuals, you're fighting a much more dispersed 'disciplinary power' (Foucault again!) which is hard to get your hands on.

Week 6

Her discomfort with power and conflict situations and desire for more harmony and empathy in relations with others, surfaces again: 'difficult interpersonal interaction …there was a sense of domination… powerful and damning statements… unpleasant and humiliating'. I note that - harmony in relations seems very important to you – but seek to push her into a more active stance and, continuing the previous commentary, invite her to think about this issue in more 'contextual' terms - What could you have

done to have made the first situation more unpleasant and the second less so...what is it about situations and processes that leads to good feelings or hostility?

Her discomfort with power is again evident here, and her sense of feeling deskilled and powerless in these situations: '… my lack of ability to intervene made me feel powerless and uncomfortable. I was not proud of myself at all…' You do seem to be very sensitive to the emotion you're calling 'humiliation' and it does seem to raise strong emotions in you whenever you 'see' it. I persist with the idea that the meaning of an event is not cast in stone and can be influenced in how we use language, to ourselves and others - Social constructionism…proposes that emotions don't exist as real entities within people…as such, but are rather constructed in language with others – I challenge her gently to try reframing her experiences *and* interest others in these reframes

Week 7
Her self-critical tone continues: '…I naturally take on these roles…explain a lot about why I feel so tired, exhausted, frustrated and even "put-upon" at times, as I am prepared to take the blame… martyrdom or immaturity?' I begin to adopt a more provocative line: Do you like being put upon and frustrated, and experiencing martyrdom - are there some real 'gains' that I can't see…? I also make use of the 'externalise the problem' technique of Michael White's narrative therapy (1989) – are you ever able to duck/escape/trick yourself out of these inevitable situations? - encouraging her to look for another storyline that better fits with her values. Again I question - you offer yourself rather stark and dramatic choices…?

The tendency for Colleen to see issues in black and white terms continues: 'I am torn between the sort of leader that I want to be: passionate and capable, respected and authentic; and the sort of person who "achieves" in my workplace, that is, passive with seniors but aggressive with peers, lacking in loyalty and very often in ability' I again urge her to try and get beyond simple polarities - Keep trying to break these simple either/or's up a bit more, so there are more angles to look at…! She wonders about 'self-employment' but feels her 'ultimate dilemma' is concerned with finding a position that is motivating but also financially rewarding. To reduce the pressure, I urge her to - find a way of containing your anxiety around this 'ultimate dilemma' so your unconscious has time to work on the key questions you want answers to.

A week or so later I was very pleased to receive this final self initiated 'dear diary' entry at the end of the phase: 'Can I just say how really helpful I have found your comments/responses to my learning log over the past term. When I said that I wanted to be "constructively challenged" by you in the "hopes" section at the beginning of the term, I meant just this type of interaction!' These responses also seem to have been in line with earlier feedback she'd received in the more intense face to face interaction of an 18 month group psychotherapy programme - good - and she's keen to transform her heightened self awareness into a more authentic form of practice: 'the MA "work" is so enjoyable…[which]…will help me to contextualise a lot of this…need the practice to develop and integrate this into a working model which I do not find damaging'.

Phase 1 Essay
Here at last I get a sign that one of my many interventive responses – 'posing stark choices' – seems to have stimulated a 'primitive reaction': '...I have been greatly enlightened by my Learning Log, and my tutor's responses on several occasions, and the revelation for me is contrast - namely that I either see a positive side to outcomes, or

144

a ==stark== one. I find it challenging to compromise in my personal and professional life, as I appear to be obsessional in attempting to achieve the best in both'. Interestingly she uses the term 'revelation' to explain what has happened (Rayner, 2005), and is beginning to use language which implies a departure from her earlier 'starkness': 'I am beginning to realise that my behavioural (and attitudinal) resolution must incorporate 'good enough' and 'compromise' as factors to embrace…'

'…Managing my anxiety whilst still supporting others has been greatly assisted by my Learning Log work…Reframing my unconscious need to martyr myself may bring about the greatest change in my personal circumstances.' Though this issue has been brought up before by close friends and family, it's taken some time to surface in this context, and seems to have gained some additional purchase by emerging from our educational interactions: 'to see it ==noted starkly== in my tutor's feedback was perhaps the shock that was required to realise how blatant that tendency is in my make-up…' Her phrase 'unconscious need to martyr myself' suggests that she's already moved on from the initial 'stark choices' framing to something deeper and formative – and with use of new words like 'good enough', a new language-game seems to be starting to evolve.

Phase 2 Week 3 Learning Log
My efforts to shift her perspective continue as she starts Phase 2 where students are introduced to a wide range of theories and models about leadership: 'There are some unfortunate similarities between elements of Machiavelli's text and the current situation, as I experience it…the national process of organisational change is being managed by "armies" or teams, that are "disunited, ambitious, without discipline, disloyal". In turn, this is witnessed by other individuals, or workers, who are baffled and confused by this behaviour, which breeds a lack of respect, and cynicism.' I counter with - But my experience of ███████ is not all like that. So there must be all kinds of pockets of resistance to this view of life, where the workers/customers have been able to push back the oppressive norm based 'disciplinary power' that Foucault talks about, such to be able to express and live according to other more positive and human codes.

Judging that it's difficult to 'act morally…in an immoral world' leaves her 'feeling guilty' and to encourage a shift I ask - how could new leaders go about discovering and nurturing these suppressed discourses which offer a different and more positive way forward for the whole? I'm continuing to work with the idea of an 'alternative story' raised in the first phase, repeating the Foucauldian line on repressive disciplinary regimes, but move here to something that has a more positive tone about it, and that I intuit might be more appealing to her – the writing and sounds of "womens' voices": read some feminist literature that shows how e.g. womens' voices have been able to develop a unique sound despite the dominance of the masculine for so long…. in this moment feeling that this would be just the 'medicine' that Colleen needed to shift her symptoms from passive guilt to something more positive and pragmatic.[21]

Comments from a note to Jack Whitehead written during Phase 3
During the workshop held during Phase 2, I had the opportunity to have a three way discussion with Colleen and another student over the lunch break, and stimulated by this exchange, wrote a reflective note to Jack Whitehead capturing a few experiences that I

---

[21] in re-reading these last few pages (142-145) it strikes me that all the way through this Phase 1 dialogue with her, I'm intent on urging/encouraging her to think again about her *responsiveness* and trying to help her develop a wider and more empathetically discriminating range of responses to choose from in relation to the situations she is facing

thought might be relevant to my evolving working hypothesis about our educational relationship

- While we were discussing the value of my feedback to her in the learning logs, she spontaneously said '…that material on womens' voices…I've started reading it - how could you have known that *that* was exactly what I needed!'
- When I suggested that her own 'personal inquiry' could provide a broader 'frame' for the formal MA programme, allowing her to be more critically engaged with the materials and freer to bring in her own experiences and other readings, she suddenly exclaimed: 'Wow - I've just been knocked off my feet! I thought I'd have to respect and keep to the programme stuff and exercises… didn't realise I could be critical and independent like you're suggesting. This is amazing…I can be *myself!'*
- She felt that one reason why she was enjoying the programme so much was because the solo nature of the learning allowed her to duck the 'interactional' aspects that she wanted to alter; and so she wanted to be provoked/goaded into tackling this side of things through more critical and negative feedback from myself, by e.g telling her she's 'paranoid', and so on. I responded tongue-in-cheek with 'so you want more of what you're already getting in ▮▮▮▮ i.e. punitive feedback!'

These entries suggest several other angles to the evolving language-game: in continuing to deconstruct her dominant story (White, 1989) she was happy 'to be provoked and goaded'; the ideas offered by 'womens' voices' ('exactly what I needed') seemed to provide an important new resource for supporting this process; and the new found realization that she could be 'critical and independent' in her work on the MA ('knocked off my feet…this is amazing…I can be myself!') seemed to provide a powerful new frame for our work together.

E mail interchange during Phase 4
Colleen achieved a high mark and positive formative feedback on her Phase 2 assessed work including 'You write very frankly and expressively and seem to be gaining many important insights into the impact of earlier framings and patterns that are having a negative impact on your self regard. Good to see that you are well on the way to reframing these in more positive ways. I would recommend you continue to explore the importance of 'context' in your thinking about leadership and pay more attention to 'receptive-responsive' relations as you seek to improve your practice. She wrote a general note of appreciation for my support, and I requested more specific feedback on certain thoughts she had expressed. Following her earlier comment on 'womens' voices' she had written in her essay: ' The organisational change that is taken place in ▮▮▮▮ currently will be a positive life-changing experience for me, coupled with this MA course. ...It could not have come at a better time, as, whatever the outcome, I see the opportunities and potential for a win-win situation. Belenky's work (1986) has started me on my emergent "living theory" (▮▮▮▮ 2006, p 8). I asked her: in regard to Belenky's work, I wondered what kind of 'start' this start on 'my emergent living theory' might represent?...I'm wondering what effect your initial engagement with Belenky's ideas is having, why was it just what you needed, and how has it got you started on your own living theory?

She responded: 'Belenky is one of the few writers on this subject who has written what feels partly…a reflection of my life story. How could my tutor pick this up? Because

146

there is an understanding and acknowledgement from him of the needs that I have identified at the beginning of the course, and an intuitive grasp of key issues that have arisen in my Learning Log and assignments, where I have been open and honest about my self-beliefs, and have been prepared to be challenged on these. I sense that my tutor and myself are both on an educational and personal journey, albeit he is further along the road. I feel that it is synchronicity that our paths have crossed in this academic fashion at this time'.[22]

This final excerpt from her writings shows that she has become much more aware of her development issues, to do with power and her tendency to martyr herself; and identified what she needs to address them by e.g. moving from being 'obsessional' and 'perfectionist' to being satisfied with 'good enough'. In the concept of 'living theory' I've offered her, she seems to have found an enlivening frame for her work and found great comfort and renewed courage from the Belenky writings (1997). As I implied at the start of this case, I felt that she and I had set off a number of hares during these early phases of the programme e.g. the perils of 'stark choices', exploiting the MA as a vehicle for living life more confidently, the resources and sense of coming home offered by the 'women's voices' writing, and the excitement of being able to develop her own 'living theory' (Whitehead, 2009) of leadership. By Phase 4 these various strands were beginning to gell into a language-game about self-identity and development which seemed to generate much greater levels of energy and confidence which she could use in the difficult months ahead.

Evidence from Phase3 and 4 evaluations:
In contrast to the texts on John and Ian, I've been unable to arrange and video a review discussion with Colleen to support and extend the learning that has already been identified. I therefore have to rely for evidence instead on feedback offered in standard assessments carried out by the MA administrator during the programme. Some quotes from these two assessments carried out soon after the above e mail interchange, indicate that she and I had been able to create a stimulating learning environment and that she is positive and appreciative of the tailored and challenging help she has been receiving: 'I know from previous experience that the feedback that I get from my tutor will be valuable, challenging, and add to my learning...My tutor is so challenging, so wise and gives me so much material to work on that I feel continually supported and blessed that I was lucky enough to be assigned to him!!...Sometimes, I feel that the assignment is too easy, but the response from my tutor to my work becomes the real assignment!...I think that it is my tutor that is the fulcrum…he has an intuitive response to directing me to papers/issues that will challenge me further!! I am living this curriculum!!!!'

These more general evaluative comments from Colleen, asked for by and directed to the academic director of the MA, indicate that she is finding the educational relationship we've developed during the first half of the programme to be challenging and supportive, nudging her into the learning territory she wants to inhabit, and helping her deal with the dilemmas she experiences at work. For some reason I did not see these assessments at the time they were sent in, but now looked at from afar, they suggest that my receptiveness and responsiveness to her situation and the intensity – both challenging and supportive - of my feedback, has helped create a very fruitful educational space. In this space she has been able to build on the initial 'primitive

---

[22] her language here picks up very nicely the notion that we are on a learning journey *together,* and that, following Freire's metaphor, 'we are making the road by walking' (Horton and Freire, 1990).

reaction' – stark choices - and a range of other coaching interventions mentioned earlier like e.g. 'exploiting the MA as a vehicle for living life more confidently', to motivate and support the indwelling work that fleshes out the new language-game that re-contextualises her everyday practices. While she is clearly not yet 'out of the woods', her confidence levels and resourcefulness have clearly improved, and I get the sense that she's now in a much stronger position to engage in serious identity-changing development work – as we will see later in Chapter 6.

_____

In contrast to John's 'ask for more and better' example, Colleen's case provides a more lengthy and complex illustration of the ups and downs of the development process as captured by the ideas of 'primitive reaction' and 'language-game'. In this it becomes much clearer how the regular and situated presencing of developmental possibilities can be enabled by the intuitive but rigorous use of a wide range of coaching responses to what the student writes about, and how he /she writes about this, in both logs and essays. The receptive and detailed application of this 'responsive 'repertoire' of coaching 'moves' provides the kind of support that helps students notice and nurture those often small 'voices' that can be missed in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Over time these can lead to the emergence of a virtual educational space between student and coach, which enhances the quality of reflective and reflexive dialogue (Cunliffe, 2002) about the knowing and doing of student learning and practice improvement. And the ensuing culture of inquiry can reciprocally enhance the responsiveness of students to exploiting 'fleeting moments' and doing the detailed work involved in accompanying 'development episodes', helping them work more creatively with real issues in their local contexts. These are matters which I'll turn to more specifically in Chapter 6.

<center>*   *   *</center>

But before this, for reasons of continuity and completeness, I've provided a little more evidence on the third of my exemplars, Ian, who you came across towards the end of Chapter 4. At the end of the story at that stage, you will have noticed that he had been quite effectively applying reflective skills to his work experiences, using the significant but quite generic concept or tool that 'meaning comes from context' and that leaders must attend to such contexts if they are to be effective. I'd been encouraged enough by this to send him Keith Grint's more complex material on this idea (Grint, 2005) in advance, as well as that of Heifetz (1994), though their materials did not and do not feature in the following phases of the programme: I felt he was ready for these ideas!

In what follows I provide just enough material to show you that the 'primitive reaction' created by the initial affirmation of the value of reading and responding to 'context', has continued to evolve. In his Phase 1 essay, as the excerpt shows, he is now using the concept quite freely and fluently, and though I believe his understanding of this new language-game is still at an early stage, he is definitely in the 'indwelling' stage, using the frame quite actively to create new understandings as a basis for novel leadership action. I also offer more evidence of this process in a video clip that follows but hold back other materials for Chapter 6 where Ian's story about his developmental experiences will form the core of that chapter's view of 'reflexive biographies'.

<center>148</center>

Ian – learning to use 'context' as a tool of leadership *(see Appendix 3 for more)*

An extract from his Phase 1 Essay
'The importance of context in leadership has provided me another key insight into leadership. Differing situations demand different approaches. I do change my leadership style, aiming to be inclusive and to form a collaborative atmosphere. However, I have a tendency to take over in a critical situation. I thrive on being part of the solution and getting the issue resolved…

This approach has served me well in the past enabling me to gain a reputation as someone who leads from the front and gets the job done. I am able to put forward solutions and get the team behind the idea and guide them to a successful resolution. However, because I am in the situation, I am not above the day to day tensions; it means that I can make emotional decisions instead of more fact based assessments that are possible when viewing a situation in a detached manner. Also, now I am in a higher position I can alienate managers by taking over the situation. They need calm guidance and support while they solve the issue. yes, as you rise up the hierarchy the style that was effective lower down can become a barrier…
…
In gaining the insight that leadership is not a one size fits all I have also gained an understanding that to lead in these different contexts I have to understand 'when' they are changing. what have you learned about noticing these transitions? It is very possible that the changes I am making are not appropriate. MBTI (ISTJ) shows I learn from experience, when a new situation or context presents itself I can over react, and jump in whereas a more suitable course of action may be waiting for a solution to emerge. The Snowden and Boone article would suggest this less directive kind of action e.g. ask questions, when you're in what might be 'complex' or 'chaotic' contexts
…
Snowden and Boon (2007) have provided a frame work in order for leaders to recognise the differing situations they can find themselves in…following such a frame work will allow leaders to make better decisions and responses by understanding the context they are working in. In section 2 I reflect that I can get frustrated with the pace of action and also I have a tendency to take over. Therefore, I believe that a greater understanding of the context of a situation will improve my actions as a leader… This will aid me in changing my behaviour to match the situation I am in and act appropriately depending on the context of the situation.' how do you think you're going to learn to be more sensitive to this 'contextual' data, not just to 'reading' it but also 'constituting' it, as Grint proposes?

In these brief excerpts from Ian's essay we see clearly laid out some important practical insights into his tendencies and practices – overreacting, jumping in, taking over, alienating – because he 'wants to be part of the solution and getting the issue resolved'. We also see that he's not only realized that 'context' may be an important factor in leadership effectiveness, he's beginning also to appreciate that in some contexts e.g. those that could be termed 'complicated', 'complex' or 'chaotic' by Snowden and Boone, his preferred 'first over the top' approach might be wholly counter productive.

Although this text shows that he is working with the 'primitive reaction' that the affirmation of 'context' and follow up article has provided, he's till talking/writing

about this in a straightforward, 'linear' and tool-applying manner: as though embodying this insight would be a simple matter, and not involve much deep change on his part. He's at this stage also not yet grasped the significance of Grint's more radical 'constitutive' approach where context is regarded as something leaders can 'create' and not just 'read'. Nevertheless, I sense that he's already started the 'indwelling' work that will alter this. And given his strong need for results, something he will push on with in the next few phases, leading to the development of a more fully resourced language-game which will allow him to engage colleagues and staff in more varied and fruitful ways. To support this claim I provide a short video clip - *'indwelling' and embodying ideas in practice* – taken from an interview with Ian a year after he completed the MA. This illustrates how Ian thinks about the development work that he was doing during the programme and how he went about embodying new ideas in his leadership practice.

20. *'indwelling' and embodying ideas in practice*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jk9725ngJ-U

I offer some brief notes to help you understand the context of these remarks. This clip comes just after we've been talking about how Ian has been using his reflections in his learning logs as preparation for writing his phase essays, going over all the entries and coach responses before putting pen to paper, in order to distil and consolidate his learning. So having this reflective and dialogic history, the written text in the logs is much richer than it first appears. He contrasts this with his experience on the MBA programme where he was given literature and told to 'write essays', and where there was little encouragement to make use of his own experience and ideas. As he remarks, this realisation was something he came to quite late in the MA programme when he found it was fine to share and value his own experience and views; and this helped him to relate the ideas of others to his own. This he says allowed his thinking to 'flow out much freer and easier... helps me on the journey'. It doesn't just stay 'in the books', and when he uses these ideas, they are framed and energised by his own experience.

The conversation continues to explore how Ian works to get a personal feel for using various ideas, and in particular the notion of 'context', which in Chapter 4 I claimed was a 'primitive reaction' that would in time develop into a new 'language-game'. He talks about a recent fatality on one of the sites and how he approached this very difficult situation. After 1 minute and 50 seconds I feed back to Ian that he seems to be 'feeling his way into situations', becoming sensitive to the 'dynamics', and showing how he is

150

allowing his experience to mediate the context model he picked up from the Snowdon and Boone (2007) and Grint (2005) articles. He talks about 'adapting his way'…and 'meandering' his way through…it's like 'herding cats'. And I suggest that in doing this, he is 'presencing developmental possibilities' for himself that are latent in his everyday work, and building a 'repertoire' (at 3 minutes and 20 seconds) for applying this idea in his practice. I comment that because of his experience he is now more subtle and discriminating in how he relates to and reframes the situations he works in, and offers leadership that seems appropriate or is seen as 'requisite'.

This shows (at 3 minutes and 50 seconds) how he has found a way of overcoming the barrier I've termed the 'cognition to practice' gap – 'yes that's true'. I offer the idea of 'indwelling' as a way of explaining what is happening in this development process, that is 'always in the background', and at 5 minutes and 10 seconds, he supports my explanation with 'you've summed it up really well'. The clip continues with him showing how he now finds it possible to create more creative conditions for problem solving, 'bouncing stuff around', and it's clear that he finds this 'really enjoyable'. He ends by contrasting how he was at the beginning of the programme – someone who wanted 'all the kudos' for himself - and he admits that this shows a real shift in his thinking 'yeah, yeah!' (laughter).

In contrast to Colleen's case, the movement from primitive reaction to fully fleshed out language-game seems much more straightforward, and the end result is easier to grasp: from 'typical ambitious go-getter' to someone who now 'meanders' or feels his way into situations seeking feedback from others and the situation to guide his responsiveness, and much readier to trust and entrust others with responsibility for outcomes. And it's clear from his manner and language that he feels much more confident and fluent now in how he uses the Snowdon and Boone model, now having indwelled the concept for two years. Yes, there are ups and downs but there is a ready acceptance of the practicalities of the indwelling process and the need often to let go and be vulnerable in order to make progress, something the Ian of two years ago would never have considered.

Again, the receptive and detailed application of a 'responsive 'repertoire' of coaching interventions provides the kind of background support that helps students notice and nurture those often quiet 'voices' that can be missed or are 'rationally invisible', in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. In the video clip you'll have noticed that in contrast to the clips with John, here I'm being a lot more expressive in this interaction. Particularly between 1 minute and 55 seconds and 2 minutes and 38 seconds, and then again between 3 minutes and 22 seconds and 5 minutes and 10 seconds, I am offering reflections on what he's told me, and am engaging in the reframing work that is a central aspect of 'presencing developmental possibilities'.

DEVELOPMENT EPISODES: supporting the formation of new language-games
As I state in the introduction to this chapter, one of the keys to this process I've termed 'presencing developmental possibilities', is for me as coach to hope/expect/ anticipate that one or more of the many suggestions/questions/challenges I am making in logs and conversations, will strike a potent chord at some point. And following my earlier analysis of Shotter and others, the *anticipatory* element works at two levels: firstly, the expectation that something *will* show up on the various influence 'screens' I've devised; and secondly and just as importantly, that all my work is aimed at creating a particular

expectation, a calling out to students, of how I expect them to respond to what I'm offering. In other words, I'm entering into dialogically structured interaction with them where my utterances already in their temporal unfolding have a notional shape to them that I expect students to respond to in appropriate ways.

As I then went on to say, the coach needs to be particularly vigilant about what comes up in the logs/essays and other contacts that might provide glimpses of this emergent phenomenon; and to be receptive and responsive in 'amplifying' whatever signals of potential development and opportunities to work on these, emerge. To say again: the development process is *not* just about a magic 'fleeting moment' every now and again. There is much more to account for in understanding this: everything I do is about preparing the ground, seeding the moment, supporting and extending the language-game, and helping students integrate and embed their learning about 'how to go on with others' so that it becomes an ontological, identity influencing process.

In this chapter I've continued my story about 'presencing developmental possibilities', looking in more detail at what follows those first 'primitive reactions' in fleeting moments of influence which begin a process of potential change. At the start I offered a conceptual framework or artifact though which I, and you the reader, can view and appreciate the largely tacit and untidy process of development that follows, leading to a new 'language-game' which will contextualise and support a new form of life or practice. I've called this phase of experimentation, learning, developing, and performing a 'development episode' to emphasise its episodic nature, as a student uses the programme to extend and elaborate their repertoire of language-games, as well as build new ones. The process is multi-levelled and subject to all kinds of subtle and non-linear influences, but I hope my argument and evidential illustrations have helped you appreciate the significance of this idea for thinking about the developmental process in higher education degrees that focus on improving situated practice.

I then showed you several different kinds of evidence – personal accounts, learning log and essay excerpts, and a series of video clips - to illustrate various facets of the process in action. These have been taken from my own experience, and from the experiences of the students that I've chosen to help me make my arguments. In John we've seen how the 'ask for more and better' primitive reaction has flowered into a new language-game which enables him to lead in a far more participative way and which encourages his staff to also change their approach to working with others. With Colleen the primitive reaction is more personal, dealing with challenges to her sense of self: the indwelling process focuses on evolving a language-game that will help her re-contextualise her everyday practice to get the most out of the MA programme. And finally with Ian who has the least coverage here, we see him well on the way to adopting a frame that places 'understanding context' at the top of his tool list, to help him further evolve his new language-game about effective leadership.

All three cases and my own examples show that further 'indwelling' work is required for the momentary reframing of an issue/perception in a face-to-face or virtual dialogue, to stimulate the development of the ontological (embodied) skills needed for a more significant process of development and change. This longer emergent process which I've framed as occurring in 'development episodes', enables students to more fully re-orient and embed the values and skills needed to deploy this different way of being and 'going on' more effectively with others. What they end up achieving is the creation of new artifacts which enable them to relate and engage in different practices and in their

environments as different 'dividuals' (LiPuma in Helle-Valle, 2010). How these are linked and dynamically integrated from time to time such that an 'individual' appears at the nexus of these different practices (Schatzki et al, 2001) becomes more visible in the next chapter.

In a world of increasing uncertainty and ambiguity where all knowing is contested and subject to challenge both in higher education and the world of work (in Barnett's conditions of 'supercomplexity', 2000), students' needs are well served if they can do their learning and performing in similar conditions, where they are subject to levels of both epistemological and ontological doubt. As students tackle real work with others under such conditions, learning to re-orient themselves and go on differently in the moment, they need to be helped to develop a range of 'being' or ontological skills that are needed to perform effectively in such conditions of 'supercomplexity' - both in the context of higher education and at work.

The coaching required to support this kind of more open ended, dynamic, and intertwined 'learning while practising' *and* 'practising while learning' - both at the *same*, and for yet another *first*, time (Garfinkel, 1967) - can be thought of as taking place within a pedagogy which consistently provokes alternative perceptions and feelings, in order to presence the developmental possibilities students need to exploit to improve their academic and work capabilities. The presencing of developmental possibilities within an evolving learning relationship that focuses on improving both educational and leadership practice, constitutes a new inclusional 'coaching pedagogy of presencing' that supports students as they feel their way forward: learning how to develop their practices of re-orienting and 'going on' in the face of ontological difficulties, as well as dealing more sensitively with the more routine forms of problem solving. I deal with this broader concept in Chapter 7 after first reviewing in Chapter 6 my findings on the development 'influence screen' I've called *reflexive biography*.