CHAPTER 6

REFLEXIVE BIOGRAPHIES
a longer view on development

'Walker, there is no path, you make the way as you go'
Antonio Machado, 2004

'I am sure we make the road by walking'
Paulo Freire (in Horton and Freire, 1990)

In the previous two chapters I have been exploring and explaining what I do, and why I do it, in the light of so called 'fleeting moments' of influence and the 'development episodes' that might contain and continue this initial influencing incident. But this analysis has been about relatively short term shifts in thinking and associated behaviour changes as the language-game has evolved. The issue for me in this chapter is about longer term consequences: what might development look like in the longer term, how might it be measured and assessed, and how I might better understand the influencing processes supporting such changes? The two shorter term 'screens' for capturing aspects or 'traces' of the development process would probably be sufficient for normal coaching relationships. But here we have a much longer process with weekly contact that continues for some 18-24 months and involves not only the 'intellectual' stretching required for a post graduate degree, but the more practical development needed for performance improvement in local work situations, including identity level shifts that might be associated with these. Do these shorter cycle processes just continue or do these come together and alter in some way to create meta changes of some kind? And if they do, what are these meta changes about and do they e.g. extend beyond behavioural change to influence the beliefs, value systems and identities of the students? It is to exploring such changes that I now turn to in this penultimate chapter.

DEVELOPMENT: what becomes visible in a longer view?
As explored in Chapter 5, the receptive, situated, and intensive application of my 'responsive repertoire' of coaching interventions, leads over time to the emergence of a virtual educational space between student and coach, which in my experience enhances the quality of reflective and reflexive dialogue about the knowing and doing of student learning and practice improvement. The ensuing 'culture of inquiry' that is constituted by student and coach, enhances the responsiveness of students to exploiting fleeting moments and associated development episodes, helping them work more creatively with real issues in their local contexts. I'm wondering now how I might characterise this longer term side-by-side process…

I came across the idea that 'we make the road by walking' recently when reading a set of dialogues between Paulo Freire and Myles Horton (Horton and Freire, 1990) in which they explored the cross-overs between their histories and ideas over the previous two decades or so. I quoted it above because the embedded metaphor seems to capture so clearly the general world view that I've been exploring in this thesis. Though the original Machado line is more poetic I prefer the emphasis on the 'we' offered by Freire, and the idea that there is also a 'talking' during this walking, and a constant

dialogue between the two which informs the practice of 'making'. As Lyotard suggests, we 'work without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done.' (Lyotard, 1986, p 81), and here there is an insinuation that Wittgenstein's quest to 'know how to go on' (1958) is very much like this - a shared, social and situated activity that creates and shapes knowing along various 'roads'/forms/artifacts as we feel our way forward. So this is what I'd like to explore further now.

Ontological development and 'reflexive biographies'

At the back of my mind is the idea of being able to look back after a time and be able to say 'I've been living a worthwhile life'; and be able to assess how and to what extent the varied and countless development events and processes I've taken part in, have helped facilitate this. After all, how else am I to judge the worth of all this investment in 'development' if not on this basis? In this regard, I often play with the triplet of 'learning-developing-performing': here I see 'development' as what is needed to fill the capability gap that 'learning' identifies when actual 'performance' is compared to desired. And this of course includes the 'contextualising' of 'self' and 'tool' in situation and moment-in-time that is needed to enable someone to alter a practice in context[23]. In this I find Barnett's views in his Realising the University (2000) of some help here in thinking further about knowing how to go on. In this book he says that higher education needs to involve students in understanding the 'contestability' of knowledge frameworks, using the phrase 'supercomplexity' to conjure up the complex and chaotic fields of knowledges in which post-modern education now operates. And to do this, students need to be encouraged and supported to take up a more active role in *making* their 'reflexive biographies' in order to develop what I've been calling the 'ontological skills' (following Shotter [2008]) they need to contribute in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment.

So what I'm looking for in all this complex unfolding of primitive moments and language-games, are signs of such longer term ontological development – like e.g. those I started to inquire into in my 'ontological indicators of progression' (see Appendix 8 in Chapter 3). How might I become more sensitive to an emerging subtext which begins to float mysteriously above the micro-level texts of the learning logs/essays, a storyline that is as yet invisible/intangible and not yet 'presenced' (quite possibly still subjugated by other more dominant narratives), but still looming in the mists ahead, that I can respond to sensitively and constructively. And looking also for what kind of 'walking alongside' might be helpful as students make their own way along this longer path, constructing new embodied 'artifacts' through which to make better sense of the world and so be able to 'make' their reflexive biographies? So I'm wondering what this kind of development might look like, what kind of indicators of development might be appropriate, and most importantly for myself, what have I learned about helping students make progress towards these longer term goals? This is the ground I now want to cover, focusing particularly on any 'developments' the textual records in the logs, essays and dissertations might show.

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[23] this is an example of my idea of 'contextualizing' being a process that goes both 'inwards' and 'outwards', that I comment on in Chapter 7 when describing what 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' is about. This also feels similar to Shotter's view (2003, p 458) that: 'In lacking specificity, the activities produced in such dialogical exchanges are a complex mixture of not wholly reconcilable influences'; and, as he goes on in regard to Bakhtin's remarks on 'utterances' (1981, p. 272), at work are both 'centripetal' tendencies *inward* - toward [as he says] order and unity at the center, as well as 'centrifugal' ones *outward* -toward [as he says] diversity and difference on the borders or margins.

But first some more 'artifact-building' work to help me see this phenomenon more clearly…Here, as in Chapters 4 and 5, I began at the outset of my writing to do some further work on my methodological lens or artifact, in order to be able to see the 'content' of this chapter more clearly. However, though I found this artifact building process useful, in the end I didn't feel that it added new insights to my interpretations of the three reflexive biographies that form the main content of this chapter; I experienced it as too theoretical for my liking or immediate use and so I decided to place this original 'writing-as-learning' work in Appendix 1. Here instead I offer just the main ideas to help you position yourself for reading these three stories.

What is 'development'?
To this point in the thesis, I've been looking at e.g. John's decision to try the 'ask for more and better' approach with his more technically minded staff, as change in terms of *learning and adaptation* within specific situations, and characterised them as the initiation and/or extension of new 'language-games'. Language-games can of course continue growing/altering over longer periods but, as I extend the period of observation to months/years I prefer to think of the change process now more in *developmental* terms i.e. progressive change in the process of learning/adaptation, where 'progressive change' leads to higher levels of differentiation and organisation, connoting 'positive progress, increases in effectiveness of function, maturity, sophistication, richness and complexity' (Reber et al, 2009, p 211).

Developmental models based on notions of 'higher levels of differentiation and organisation' typically involve a sequence of changes occurring over a relatively long period of time, going through a number of 'developmental stages'. These models often promise more than they can deliver, offering a clarity that is seldom there in practice: it would be more realistic if they showed these stages as fuzzy, systemic, and multi-dimensional in nature. Further, following Wilber (1996) nobody is ever simply 'at' a stage but will have a centre of gravity at one, with a distribution across two/three adjacent stages. There is also a lack of research into the process of *moving between* identified stages which after all is what development is primarily about. Nevertheless I have found Torbert and Associates Leadership Development Framework (Torbert and Associates, 2004), to be a useful example of this type, which offers at least a metaphoric perspective which my students and I can relate to. (see Appendix 2 for a brief summary of this model).

Worth mentioning in this context, though not of this type, is the influential work done by Argyris and Schon on *levels of learning* often referred to as 'single and double loop learning', and the various tools they've developed to explore these ideas (Argyris and Schon, 1996), as well as Schon's differentiation between problem *solving* and problem *framing* (Schon, 1983). Both of these bear a family resemblance to how I've been using Wittgenstein's concept of language-game in the context of 'knowing how to go on'. Similarly, another group of ideas that speak to the kind of development that is relevant to improving leadership work, are primarily *systemic* in nature and don't really fit into this idea of 'levels'. These include 'systemic thinking' (Campbell & Huffington, 2008), 'practice theory' (Schatzki et al, 2001), and a range of 'body-mind' approaches like 'Inner Game' (Gallwey, 1974), 'Feldenkrais' (Feldenkrais, 1977), and 'process work' (Mindell, 1982). And of course I can't leave this very brief scan without mentioning the very powerful development effect that e.g. my experience and use of ideas such as 'tacit

knowledge' (Polanyi, 1983) , 'power relations' (Foucault, 1977) , 'natural inclusion' (Rayner, 2004), and 'living theory' (Whitehead, 2009), have had and continue to have on me – all of these need ideally to feature in my 'development microscope'.

Each offer new ways of looking at and making sense of experience and relatedness, increase the richness and depth of perspective that can be brought to bear on both problem framing and problem solving activity, and contribute towards the development of 'artifacts' (Ilyenkov, 1977) which extend and nuance my being in the world. What these have done is to alert me to the wide range of phenomena that I should be aware of when looking at the progress of my students over time. But as Lin Norton says in her book on pedagogical research in universities (Norton, 2009), though these models may be interesting, unless we can find ways of assessing/measuring achievement within them, ideally in an informal 'as we go along' basis, they don't take educators much further. So how might I do this in ways which I could apply to my own students' work so that this could influence my everyday work with them?

How can development be assessed?
As a starting point for reviewing approaches to assessment, I look at my own experience and changes over time, to examine what kind of development I've been seeking in order to improve my own practice, and how I've been assessing this, at least tacitly if not explicitly. Here the 'narrative of my learning' offered in Chapter 1, offers a good idea of the *range* of areas that I've explored with development in mind, and indicates the real difficulty of using these as assessment tools in any sort of standardised manner. I need to focus on those that relate most appropriately to the 'data' at my command or readily accessible, which is constituted primarily by the regular text-based reflective writings contained in logs, essays, and dissertations. From this narrower perspective, there do seem to be two main approaches which could be helpful: the first is influenced by *phenomenography* (Marton & Booth, 1997) and the other by the approach of *narrative inquiry* (Clandinin, 2007).

In regard to the former, a key question is whether 'performance' i.e. getting good results, is all we want to measure? Ramsden wrote that learning is reflected not necessarily in a change in behavior, but rather in a change in how people 'understand, or experience, or conceptualize the world around them' (Ramsden, 2003, p. 4), and I would say this is true for development as well. *Phenomenography* seeks to understand differences in ways of experiencing situations, looking for the ways in which learners vary in the manner in which they experience, perceive, apprehend, understand, and conceive of the same phenomenon (Marton, 1986). While Torbert and Associates (2004) do not specifically mention using the phenomenographic approach in their work on their Leadership Development Framework, it is based on well respected adult development research originally pioneered by Loevinger in the 40-50's (Loevinger and Wessler, 1970). It is an example of the hierarchical type of model, concerned primarily with perception and problem solving capability, or what Torbert and his colleagues call 'action-logic'. I have had good personal experiences with it (see Appendix 2 for more), and the issue for me here has been whether I could use their model based on analysing 'autobiographical writing' (Torbert and Fisher, 1992), ideally informally and inductively on an 'as I go along basis', to assess and show how my students' writings, and hence at least their potential capabilities or 'forms of life', are and could be developed during the programme.

Narrative inquiry while still being based on what people write and say, is instead a much more open and inductive approach which seeks to identify through the kinds of stories people tell about themselves, and the way these stories change over time, the nature of the development they have achieved and are experiencing. It is much more attuned to the unique and timely aspects of individual development. As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) discuss, it privileges the immediacy of first-person lived experience, and complements the current dominant emphasis on 'leadership styles' which the 'levels' models favour. Thematic analysis commonly used in sense making of narrative, takes account of context, focusses on 'who' is mentioned, and takes as a given that people may behave politically. However, a potential weakness is that it is retrospective and requires the production of texts for inquiry. But of course in my case, this whole process of interviewing and transcription with all the interpretation that this entails, can be leapfrogged, as the reflective learning logs and essays with their commentaries, have already generated these.

So assuming that I treat what students write as narrative, constructed by 'socially situated individuals from a perspective and for an audience', and influenced by various 'circulating discourses' (Riesman, 2007, p 23), how might I approach the ongoing analysis of these narratives of learning, change, and development (or 'reflexive biographies'), given my particular interest in their development *during* the programme? What I'm looking for is not the customary approach to formal analysis of narrative as one would carry out when doing formal research using this 'methodology'. Here I'm looking for something that could be used informally on an everyday basis as the coach works his way through learning logs and essays, looking for thoughts about identity and potential trajectories for longer term development, and whether these desirable goals are indeed being 'presenced' or to coin another phrase, 'distanced', in the students' languaging of their emerging stories?

Here, with my interest in understanding and countering the effects of disciplinary power, both in the university relationship and within the employing organizations, I've been particularly drawn to the narrative therapy approach heavily influenced by the ideas of Foucault, developed by Michael White, (1989). A cursory look at my interventions in students' logs reveals many examples of this kind of approach where I question a student's attachment to a particular story about themselves or something they find 'natural' or a 'habit'. For example in my work with Colleen a lot of my focus was on challenging her about her rather negative self image, where I used White influenced language like '…Do you have any ideas why you feel it incumbent upon yourself to 'take the blame because nobody else will'? This approach has also helped me get across the social constructionist proposition that 'reality' is not a fixed object out there but something that can be influenced at least in terms of how one experiences it.

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So, in going over my thinking here on 'development' and how it could be assessed, I feel I've been able to refresh the 'artifact' that I've been developing to assess changes of a more significant longer term nature. What I'm looking for in all this complex unfolding of primitive moments and language-games, is for something of a longer term nature I can respond to constructively and sensitively in the moment. While formal narrative inquiry and phenomenographic methods do seem to have much to offer, they

both are backward looking and I want tools which I could apply both retrospectively in research mode, and in the moment to enhance my coaching work. So what I'm likely to use in the following section are the Torbert and Associates LDF 'levels' model and White's narrative therapy approach which both provide useful and informal methods, to help me understand selected materials from the work of the three students I've been using as exemplars.

REFLEXIVE BIOGRAPHIES: what kinds of development trajectories?
In their paper on ethnography and jazz, 'Is ethnography jazz?', Humphreys et al (2003) raise a provocative question: **'**If, as in *Anatomy of a Jam Session*, we were to include all our takes, there would be perhaps 20 or 30 different versions of this article, but we have only put the final *cut* into the public domain. There is a crucial difference here between jazz and ethnography in that academics and ethnographers submit their "final" manuscript for blind critical review before publication'. This is exactly how I feel as I begin to describe potential 'reflexive biographies' of three of my students. There will unquestionably be many possible versions, and here for obvious reasons I will be offering just one for each of them, and each of these despite my care and attention is likely to differ quite markedly in different parts from the one(s) the student has told or would tell. But as my purpose here is not to claim a single truth but to seek out and offer evidence of longer term development, I am relatively happy to accept the consequences.

Nature of the evidence base varies
So in this section I follow up the preparatory 'artifact building' work done earlier, and provide supporting practice-based material from the three students I've selected, to help me illustrate and support the claims I'm making about educational influencing. And, as in the previous two chapters, the material I offer is not provided in a standardised format: the kind of development that each student achieved during the programme has unsurprisingly been quite varied and how they have been able to demonstrate this in their evolving writing, has also differed. So here I provide information and evidence in three different formats: for John in Appendix 3, I attempt a complete 'cut and paste' narrative of his development over the two years comprised of excerpts from all his phase essays, supplemented by extracts from key learning logs, and my own running commentary on how I saw the development process evolving; with Colleen, I offer in Appendix 4, complete copies of her original Phase 1 and Phase 6 essays together with the feedback I offered her at the time, in order to create an opportunity to compare and contrast across a period of over a year, the nature of her writing, thought, and actions; and finally in Appendix 5, I provide selected extracts from Ian's final dissertation. In this he used the idea of 'reflexive biography' to structure and inform his research, thus directly providing a means of assessing the nature and extent of his development as seen by himself and close colleagues over the two year period. In this last sample of student work, as I wasn't permitted to include comments in the dissertation itself, I also include some of my feedback offered at various times during the programme to show how and where I may have had an influence.

Trajectories are emergent and temporary 'punctuations'
So, three students, three different examples of how their writing, thinking, and behaviour developed over the period, and three opportunities to explore and interpret the kind of development each achieved, and to get a sense of the nature of any influence

from the coaching support that was offered. Contrary to the specific theories and models used to help me explore and explain what might have been happening with the educational process in Chapters 4 and 5, in this chapter I restrain myself from using a particular lens at the outset. Instead I allow myself to see what seems to be emerging from a close reading of each of the sets of material offered, and then in a more reflexive manner, 'pull in' models and ideas to help me with my sense making, many of which I've already outlined in the two earlier sections.

In comparison to the 'fleeting moments' and 'development episodes' materials, this more patchwork version of text that makes up the 'reflexive biography' requires greater engagement and creative involvement of the student in sense making i.e. finding the 'red thread', filling in gaps, providing evidence for claims, defining the outcomes, and deciding the meaning of the process. And this 'greater engagement' has varied, being good for two of the exemplar students (and two other students who appear in video clips in Chapter 7), but only partial for the third. However, the 'raw' materials provided in the appendices and the 'distillations' in this section, do provide persuasive aide memoires that remind, stimulate, and provoke further reflections and self reflexive questioning in both the students and myself: about the phenomenon of leadership, about the efficacy of leadership development activity, and about the contribution achieved by the student-coach relationship towards improved learning and practice.

REFLEXIVE BIOGRAPHIES: cases of developing a situated practice

These 'partial' reflexive biographies (commented on and possibly affirmed and/or altered in parts by the students) potentially contain up to *six levels/layers of reflection* on student learning experiences during the programme: their learning log reflections (1) on experiences during each Phase; their essay reflections (2) on these logs; the coach's original reflections (3) on the reflexive aspects of this double reflection, as contained in the 'coach comments' in the original texts; the coach's present day reflections on re-reading these materials (4); the student's present day reflections (5), hopefully provoked by the coach's comments, on the previous four levels of reflection; and then possibly a final level of reflection contained in the shared 'knowing of the third kind' reflections during the post-programme video interview/dialogues (6).

Finally, just to be clear on why I'm doing this analytical work here. While there are many ways of analysing and interpreting narrative, I'm using it here primarily to assess/demonstrate that it's possible to influence longer term more significant developments - or more specifically the 'reflexive biographies' of students - through the coaching based educational relationship; and that this kind of assessment of development trajectory can be done in an informal and timely, 'as you go along' manner. So for this purpose, I use an eclectic approach to narrative analysis using a range of approaches including e.g. Michael White's approach (1989), the 'competing commitment' questions developed by Kegan and Lahey (2001), and the assessment of writing patterns used in Torbert's Leadership Development Framework (2005), to identify/generate in the context of the whole thesis, some preliminary evidence of what can be achieved in the development of a situated practice.

JOHN – 'horizontal' development: engaging the team

In Chapters 4 and 5 I offered evidence to show that my coaching work with John had had some effect both in terms of primitive reactions and then language-games. At the

end of the section in Chapter 5, I said: '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 had 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 was 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.

Now in Appendix 3 to this chapter, I provide further extracts from John's learning logs and essays that I have selected to illustrate possible elements of a *reflexive biography*. Most of the excerpts that make up the 'patchwork' of texts, are from the six essays which already represent 'reflections on reflections' and so are 'twice interpreted'. I also make use of some learning log materials to fill in any obvious 'gaps' which are not touched on in the essays. In addition I provide a high level storyline (in blue text) that I developed as I read through the six essays he wrote during the first 18 months of the programme, before he decided to take a break prior to the dissertation phase. John had a chance to read these interpretive materials before we met to reflect on his MA experience, and at our review meeting he indicated that he broadly agreed with what I had offered in this high level storyline. He subsequently added some written comments of his own (in green text) which are included. And of course there are the several video clips of our discussion that I've used to support earlier points that you've already seen in preceding chapters, and which I'll use here too, to support the claims I'm making.

The topics for these formal essays did not ask students in that cohort to focus particularly on the questions of development trajectory and identity formation, and so the selected materials I've offered cover a wide range of topics and issues; accordingly the question of longer term development is addressed only in an indirect way. Some further interpretation is therefore needed to tease out their meaning in response to the kinds of questions about development that would get at the heart of a reflexive biography like: has John improved his leadership capabilities and performance during the period under review?; and if he has, how has this come about?; and in particular, what educational influence might we be able to attribute to the coaching interactions during the MA? What now follows is my own interpretation of a possible development narrative of this kind, and the kind of influence I might have had on it. In this I suggest that there has been significant development of a 'horizontal' nature (Torbert and Associates, 2004) of his situated practice, which allowed John to increase his ability to 'presence' leadership behaviour that was appropriate to engaging his wider team in responding to the varied challenges in the different situations they faced during the period of the programme.

From 'asking' to 'performing'
When he began his studies John very quickly found that the constant study supported by reflection within the work situation was having an immediate benefit on his development. He soon became aware that he had been living comfortably in a 'leadership straightjacket', and that, influenced by his extreme 'accomodating' preference, his default 'laissez faire' learning style had led him in the past to avoid opportunities for development. At work his strong gut instincts about the most sensible way forward were often leading to clashes with the findings of more objective and

analytical work carried out by his staff. An important realisation was that it was always too easy for him to discredit the detailed analysis and criticize the process without suggesting alternative methods. He also realised that a key issue 'is quite clearly the balance between the more traditional role of an individual leader and a more distributed approach to leadership'. An early intervention - <u>Don't fight them - ask for 'more and better' so that your intuitions can be tested against so called 'harder' data.</u> - led to a breakthrough with him, framing relations with his immediate staff in a more collaborative manner so that he could begin to address the work challenges more confidently and in a more balanced way, playing to his own strengths and those of others. This was later complemented by his greater awareness of the need in the complex situation in which he was working, to understand and appreciate stakeholders better in order to gain their support. A significant shift in his approach seemed to occur during Phase 5 when he realised that his avoidance of confrontation with key staff had not helped – 'people cannot be content and enjoy affable relationships all the time' - and that he should have been less tolerant and demanded more from key staff at an earlier stage. He begins to use words like 'moderate' and 'reconcile' more often in his writing, and decides that it makes sense to assess where flexibility exists and does not, and to focus his efforts on those areas where he could actually exercise influence.

Obviously over this longer period of time, there have been a wide range of influences both direct and indirect, but it seems from the texts that one significant influence during this period has come from the coaching relationship, and how it has helped him create an 'envelope of reflection' around the MA materials and his work experiences. These regular interactions have helped him make new sense of his role and how he might more effectively engage his colleagues. In his own words, the coaching process has provided what he refers to metaphorically as 'holding up the lens' and 'acting as the catalyst for reflection', challenging his perceptions and habits, offering other ways of assessing issues, and helping him formulate new ways of knowing how to go on with others. As one illustration, the tacit indwelling work he has done following the initial language-game identified in Phase 1 - 'ask for more and better' – seems to have continued to help him evolve a more engaging, creative, and relaxed approach to exploiting his own talents as well as those of his staff in those areas where he felt he could make a difference.

In the brief video clip that follows - *'what's shifted in your mindset?'* - John responds to my question 'so, how would you describe your mindset now…what's shifted?' as a result of his experiences on the MA. He begins by saying: 'Far more considered…less impulsive…probably more relaxed…' He feels that he now has the ability to 'sit in any forum', internal or external, in any role, and use the tools developed on the course 'to more intelligently read the…situations, behaviours…and position yourself such that you're making one, a far more valid contribution, but two, you know far more *instinctively* where you stand in terms of all your stakeholder relationships and where you should be going…'. He feels that this provides for a 'far greater clarity of context and clarity of thought in terms of direction and actions…*and that's quite profound'*

Using the Torbert model as another potential gauge of his development, I would say that he began the programme very much with an Achiever centre of gravity supported by a polished Diplomat e.g. his avoidance of conflict with subordinates, and under-developed Expert e.g. his dislike of a technical approach to decision making. By the time of his study break he seemed to have further developed his expertise in using Achiever capabilities e.g. having 'a more complex and integrated understanding of the

21. *'what's shifted in your mindset?'*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvheUX38N4k

world…open to feedback…realize that many of the ambiguities and conflicts of everyday life are due to differences in interpretation and ways of relating.' (Rooke and Torbert, 2005, p 4). And he'd found a way of strengthening his Expert through much better use of the capabilities of his staff. These are examples of what Torbert calls 'horizontal' development, where the learner becomes better equipped to perform in their environment through the gaining of new knowledge, skills and behaviours *within* a particular stage of development. (This is in contrast to 'vertical' development where the learner seeks to raise their action-logic to a *higher* stage of development).

However, though he still talks in terms of using 'tools' – as against 'being different' – and about 'reading' as against Grint's 'constituting' context, his greater appreciation of the impact of contexts on meaning making, and his readiness to be more open and vulnerable and adapt his behaviour accordingly, clearly shows that he has also begun to make sorties into Torbert's 'postconventional' territories of Individualist and Strategist thinking and action: he's become more questioning about his beliefs, is ready to try out more creative ways of doing things, and shows the Strategist's greater readiness to exercise 'the power of mutual inquiry, vigilance, and vulnerability for both the short and long term' (ibid, p 3). Also his development work with his staff (reviewed in Chapter 5) certainly demonstrates a willingness to appreciate the talents of others and be more vulnerable, opening himself up to the critique and ideas of staff, both key indicators of a move up into these territories of 'post-conventional' action-logic. Using my embryonic 'ontological' criteria of progression, he certainly has become more 'receptive', 'relational', and 'responsive' in relation to his staff, showed greater 'resilience' and 'rigor' in facing up to the demands from his seniors and partners in the project, and has become a lot more 'reflexive' in making sense of his own sense making.

He clearly found the coaching relationship helpful in supporting these moves, in particular as a means, as he puts it, of 'holding up the lens' and 'acting as the catalyst for reflection'. As he comments at the end of Appendix 3, 'my leadership at work and my relationships at home have both improved considerably from this study. I am more understanding, confident, relaxed and tolerant than when I embarked on the course…but maybe [I] have slipped back "to type" a bit in recent months. This most recent discussion and analysis demonstrates the continued benefit of coaching intervention ….that important role of "holding up the lens" and "acting as the catalyst for reflection".

Whereas coaching is usually seen to be a short-term intervention … should it be a longer term relationship to be most beneficial?' So it seems reasonable to claim that this ongoing educational relationship has in fact helped John to make quite a significant shift in his capability and his flexibility to take effective action in difficult contexts; and that, as he says at the end of the video clip, is 'quite profound'.

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In Chapters 4 and 5 I offered evidence to show that my coaching work with Colleen had had some influence both in terms of 'primitive reactions' and then 'language-games'. At the end of the section in Chapter 5, I commented: '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 do to address them by e.g. moving from being 'obsessional' and 'perfectionist' to being satisfied with 'good enough'. In the concept of 'living theory' she seems to have found an enlivening frame for her work and found great comfort and renewed courage from the Belenky writings (Belenky et al, 1997). As I implied at the start of the 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' of leadership. In this chapter I want to see how this encouraging story has been playing out during the remainder of the programme.

COLLEEN – regaining lost ground/re-inventing herself

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. Now in Appendix 4 to this chapter, I provide extracts from two of Colleen's formally assessed essays to illustrate or hint at possible elements and threads which might have shaped her reflexive biography. In contrast to the patchwork materials I provided for John's, here I just offer Colleen's complete Phase 1 and Phase 6 essays without any fill-in of learning logs and materials from the four phases that took place between these. These two essays which already represent 'reflections on reflections' and so are 'twice interpreted' include my own commentary at the time. However as the assignment topics/questions for these essays did not asked students to focus particularly on the questions of development trajectory and identity formation, the original data I'm offering here often only speak indirectly to my question about longer term development. Accordingly they require further interpretation to tease out their meaning in response to development oriented questions that might frame and seek the essence of a reflexive biography.

In this instance, much more so than with John's and (to follow) Ian's stories, I'm strongly reminded of something that Dutch film maker Wim Wenders revealed in an interview I heard on a recent BBC Radio 4 programme. When asked why his photos (as against his iconic films) which he's now exhibits, often were of vast empty town and landscapes without any people in them, he said something which I understood on the following lines: *when you actually have a person in a photo, they seem to greedily take over the lens demanding to be in the foreground and in the centre of things. I prefer*

instead to let the landscape be the foreground, and then I look for the <u>traces</u> that a person or people have left, and imagine what they must have been like.

Analogously, here the student has not being asked face to face to answer a direct question about something they might not have thought much about, and which they might also get 'presentational' about. Instead they've been asked to write about some experiences that they are having within the broad theme of leadership and leadership development, and my job is to look for 'traces' of their reflexive biography that appear between the lines or are hinted at in the background of the events they write about. Of course this is a much more intuitive and artistic way of doing things, and so has to be much more tentative than what you might get from a strict piece of narrative inquiry, as discussed earlier. But I'm expecting when I ask Colleen to comment on what she's read, this approach will surface and stimulate a more interesting and subtle story than one I'd get from a more 'scientific' analysis.

So here is what I've been able to get in touch with through looking at the texts of Colleen's two formal essays. (Note: to reduce my own bias, the two 'landscapes' I offer were developed after I'd had a discussion with a female professional colleague who read these essays without any briefing other than – 'can you notice any differences between them?' - and who knew [and knows] nothing at all about who wrote them.)

Traces in Landscape 1: reading 'between the lines' of her first essay, 2005

She is sensitive, and wants to please/do the right thing. Though she is ready to receive feedback and intellectually sees the value of it, it seems to reach deeply to a place where her self esteem is low. The MA programme represents a big stretch for her, particularly in exposing her vulnerabilities and accessing the negative beliefs she has of herself. However this does demonstrate her courage and desire to tackle a challenge and try something new. She has a tendency towards despair and seems highly sensitive to mood/tone of the voices of others. She is easily knocked back but is able to stay with it through her courage/determination; or perhaps she doesn't know she can leave the space? She is used to things being difficult and accustomed to being treated badly and being a victim. She seems to have internalised that she isn't 'OK' and probably has difficulty discriminating between past and present experiences. She's good at presenting a calm and pleasant exterior (probably typical of her INTP type?) but this contributes towards ongoing stress - *'masked inner turmoil and a sense of humiliation'*. In coping with this, she may occasionally be feisty/confrontational and have some difficulties working in teams. Her internal reactivity is exhausting and her response then is to despair and martyrdom: 'I'm not OK' colours everything - *'my confidence and self esteem have been battered over past two years'*. Her courage in seeking feedback exposes her to an agonising position: she's stretching to open out and express herself but she gets further negative feedback which is wounding. She doesn't question that the pain of adapting to others' wishes just limits her expressing the more open and competent aspects of her; and that the adaptation process is not just about her changing, but involves others.

In summary:
Because she's passionate about offering leadership for the work of the organisation but unable to express this passion in an acceptable way, she feels ineffective and unable to

get what she wants. Her dilemma is how to show her passion while remaining popular and successful. Her tendency is to mask her true feelings when things don't go to plan, absorb the negativity and blame her lack of success on her own inabilities. The resulting low self esteem often leads to her feeling like a victim of the 'system', trapped in a downward spiral of despair, and often taking on the role of martyr. This inner turmoil can be exhausting and leads to her seeing things in stark black and white terms, shutting out the wider range of possibilities for understanding what is going on and the variety of options she might consider. She feels very much a lone figure with little support, who is battling on against powerful forces which she feels she cannot afford to offend. In Torbert's LDF terms she has regressed from the Expert/Achiever 'action-logic' with her willingness to conform and look to others for judging what is right, showing a strong centre of gravity with the Diplomat, and perhaps even regressing to Opportunist behaviour at times when under severe duress.

Traces in Landscape 2: reading 'between the lines' of sixth essay, 2007
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She seems to like herself better, and is less harsh and self-critical. She's able to appreciate her talents and special qualities and is motivated to change her behaviour. She feels supported by others so she doesn't have to fight on alone. The regular self reflection she has been doing for the past year or so has given her more insight and better observation skills, and this has helped her develop her leadership skills. She has discovered that whatever is done, is never quite good enough – you can always do better. Her renewed passion is captured by a quote from Gandhi: *'you must be the change you want to see in the world'* and is inspired by Foucault's view that his role is *'showing people that they are much freer than they feel'*. She feels that both of these ideas energise her own orientation to self improvement and helping others. She has moved from a core feeling of 'I'm not good enough' as a person, to a position of 'desiring self improvement'. The paradox is that it touches the part of her that has been bullied, but she is now more confident to challenge the bullying rather than question her own competency and judgement. Rather than feeling less valid and in despair, she is now able to see that some of the behaviour of the people in power towards her and others, has been unacceptable. The part of her that knows about the victim mentality is still sensitive and rises in anger in regard to the unfair treatment of her colleagues. However, her self awareness of not wanting to take any personal responsibility at an earlier stage shows that she has started changing, and that this can be ongoing. She now believes that all change has to come from within. She is also finding that her practice of self reflection is now happening almost without conscious effort, and she can now see herself and the effects of her behaviour more clearly. She is prepared to take responsibility for what is happening, and take action to change her behaviour where necessary. She is now reflecting on exploring what she truly wants rather than what she *should* want, or what others expect her to want.

In summary:
She continues to want to be a passionate and effective leader but in an authentic way where she can show her true self. In contrast to hiding her feelings and views, she now has found through reflective practice a less vulnerable position where she can deal more constructively with her dilemma of 'be tough to be successful' but 'show empathy to be authentic'. She no longer feels she has to blame herself/her perceived inadequacies for failure; instead 'criticism' can now be used as 'feedback' to help her

develop the skills she needs to succeed. She now acknowledges there is a basic lack of support for who she wants to be in ▮▮▮▮▮ *system, but feels much freer to develop her way out of what currently seems a dead end, either in* ▮▮▮▮ *or elsewhere. Her mood is now more a mixture of feistiness and optimism with a clearer sense of her own power to change. In Torbert's LDF terms she seems to have turned the corner showing solid Expert/Achiever action-logic but now leavened through her deep excursions into the 'post conventional' action-logic of the Individualist, where she can be more reflective and creative and looks more to herself and others like her for support and recognition.*

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Development changes between Landscapes 1 and 2 and potential influences
So we now have these two snapshots gleaned from an intuitive 'between the lines' reading of the two essays separated from each other by some 15 months. What might they tell us about the shifts in Colleen's mindset and capabilities, and what kind of longer lasting development she has achieved? Here is my own interpretation:

The 'dominant story' that guides her meaning making has changed quite significantly. The traces in Landscape 1 can be captured in words like: 'can't show my true passions – avoid power games - adopt a façade of pleasantness - can't achieve things - 'I'm no good' - see only stark choices – feel humiliated and trapped' The following quote (first offered in Chapter 5) was written in a Phase 1, Week 2 learning log (responding to a question about a difficult meeting she'd attended), and, I think captures her feelings at that stage very tellingly:

> 'Emotionally a 'fight or flight' reaction. Felt like an antelope being stalked by lions. Started to feel humiliated, with a knot in my stomach… I realise that I can get through by utilising my acting skills of pleasantness, being aware of my body-language and standing tall and remaining open… having incorrectly assumed that being well-prepared and innovative in my approach to the task would enable me to reach a compromise… I acted intuitively to rescue the situation and bring it to a conclusion, but feel that my behaviour again belied my inner feeling of desolation. I was not happy with the situation, but knew that to remain within the systems I had to stay within its boundaries, and altered my behaviour accordingly'

During the intervening 15 months she seems to have been able to 'externalise' or deconstruct this oppressive story (White, 1989) sufficiently to enable her to create a more positive and motivating narrative to guide her judgement and decision making. The bones of this new story can be captured in words like: 'freer than I feel - take responsibility –embrace my femininity – regain the passion: what I *want* to do'. The quote extracted from a Phase 6, Week 2 learning log (responding to a question about how she helps subordinates, and her boss helps her perform better) expresses succinctly the new more balanced perspective and more positive, confident, and responsible attitude she has now developed:

> 'What do I do to help "T"? When he recently "failed" in his eyes to obtain a post that he desperately wanted, I enabled him to see that he didn't get the post because he is authentic, and that is what people admire about him. He feels rejected and humiliated, and I have worked with him to look at this. Could he have changed his behaviour to comply with the harsh behavioural requirements of the post? No.

Would he have wanted to change his values, just to get the job? No. So would he really have wanted the job? No. So has he failed? No. Failure is a belief, not a reality.

And my boss? Who hasn't got the time to give me feedback? At the moment I reckon that I have at least six 'bosses', and in reality I am the 'piper who calls the tune' as all of them are too busy watching their own posteriors. So am I afraid? No – what have I got to be afraid of? My attitude? No – I am thankful that I am one of the few people that I deal with who is not afraid of the consequences of my actions.'

So there has been a really significant change in the way she relates to the world and others, and in how she knows 'how to go on together' with those around her. I've already commented on the shifts in her probable LDF profile where she's been able to move herself up from a rather debilitating Diplomat style into a more active and creative Achiever stance aided by her sorties into the much freer territory of the Individualist. Further in terms of my embryonic set of 'ontological' indicators (the 6 R's), she has always been 'receptive', perhaps overly so, but through focusing on becoming more 'reflexive' herself, she has been able to show greater 'resilience' and increasingly 'rigorous' in her relations with her employer; and this has enabled her to start becoming more 'responsive' to her own needs as well as those of others.

What has helped to distance herself from the initial debilitating frame and construct this more positive outlook? Given the period of time we are considering, there are likely to have been many influences both fleeting and longer lasting, that have contributed towards this shift, so I don't think I can talk about any kind of direct/linear influence, but rather 'nudges' within a complex mix of other nudges that have both countered and/or supported the development trajectory she's chosen. However what I believe I can say quite confidently is that the whole MA experience and the coaching and support she's been offered as part of this, definitely seems to have played a significant role.

In support of this claim I offer the following thoughts: she's clearly found new sources of support, opportunities to engage in dialogue, and feedback being offered in challenging but more constructive ways. Most importantly she has been valued for who she is and what she can do. And this has no doubt come from several sources. However from her own feedback on the programme, it's clear that the MA experience has served to provide what I might call a 'container' for a development journey within which she has been able to make her way through the often turbulent and hostile ████ context over the past two years. This supportive educational context has enabled her first to cope with the everyday pressures facing her, and then step back and take stock, receive and accept support, and feel understood (see her comments in Appendix 4 e.g. *'I have learnt how lucky I am to have an excellent tutor, who challenges me, provides excellent feedback, and is extremely supportive… 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!...he seems to know exactly what I need!)*

This has helped her learn new ways of framing and then responding to situations e.g. using 'good enough' as a criterion. As a consequence of this, her emotional register has gone from fear and feeling humiliated to anger and determination, from seeing only fearful and stark choices to being able to look at calmer more discriminatory options. And in contrast to 2005, she's been able to look at the 'other' coolly and fearlessly and arrive at relatively balanced assessments about the value of what they are doing and what she has to offer.

Through this special kind of empathetic support, she has been helped to regain confidence in her own judgement. This has allowed her to find other ways of handling feedback so that rather than being humiliated, she now feels she will be able to use this to help her improve her performance and so be able to offer her contributions more effectively. The Gandhi and Foucault quotes indicate the new positive outlook she has developed: the world hasn't changed its behaviour towards her but she has changed the way she responds to it – she is now much less reactive and through her reflective practice more in charge of her responses. She has noticed that the views/behaviour of the 'strong' leaders who seem successful do not meet her own standards of judgement, and she is now wondering whether or not ███████ is the place for her talents. Further her changing life situation with children leaving home has also opened her mind to other possibilities outside the large bureaucracy. In Torbert's terms, she is no longer stuck in the Diplomat frame where the other decides what is acceptable, and has moved back more into familiar Expert and Achiever territory and is pushing beyond into the post-conventional 'action-logic' of the Individualist stage. Further, it's fascinating how similar her example of her subordinate 'T' maps onto her own story, and seems to show she has not only learned to find more effective ways of distancing herself from such negativity, but has learned to transfer this learning to others…possibly by 'presencing developmental possibilities' for him?

Unfortunately, it's not been possible to have a follow up review with Colleen to get her views on how she herself sees the longer term impact of the programme on her overall development, and what has happened since. We know that she successfully completed the programme, achieving a very good merit pass with several distinctions in her formal essays. We are also left with the strong evidence of change and influence of the coaching relationship provided in Chapters 4 and 5, and the more prospective judgements made from comparing her earliest essay writing and something created much closer to the end of her studies, in this chapter. My final thought springs from seeing again the 'folding paper' demonstration of inclusionality offered by Alan Rayner on a You Tube video. In this he talks about the 'fold' in the sheet of paper as the dynamic boundary pivot or *fulcrum* that reciprocally mediates the relations and identities of the two halves of the paper. This word 'fulcrum' is the word that Colleen used to describe me in her end of Phase 4 assessment, which leads me to wonder if in fact this was how she experienced my role: mediating the learning interchanges between the propositional world of the Academy and 'studying' leadership, and her own emerging tacit knowledge of 'doing' leadership in the altogether messier and more painful world of work. I sincerely hope so. I've provided a brief analysis of this view together with Alan's You Tube video and Colleen's feedback in Appendix 6 to this chapter.

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In Chapters 4 and 5, I offered evidence to show that my coaching work with Ian had had some effect both in terms of stimulating 'primitive reactions' and then supporting the development of 'language-games'. At the end of the section on Ian in Chapter 5, I said: '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 become aware 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 not be that productive.

Although that text shows that he is working with the 'primitive reaction' that the affirmation of his interest in 'context' and follow up article helped initiate, he's still talking and writing about this very much in a straightforward, 'linear' and tool-applying manner i.e. very much as a 'first over the top' leader. In this he seems to be implying that the challenge of embodying this insight would be a simple matter, and not involve much deep change on his part. I also didn't believe he'd yet grasped the significance of Grint's more radical 'constitutive' approach (Grint, 2000) where context is regarded as something leaders can 'influence' and not just 'read'. Nevertheless, I sensed that he'd already started the 'indwelling' work that would help him develop these insights, and given his strong need for results, something he would push on with in the next few phases. This would I sense lead to the development of a more fully resourced language-game(s) which would allow him to engage with colleagues and staff in more varied and fruitful ways. It is these potential developments that I turn to in the next section

IAN – 'vertical' development: from Opportunist towards Strategist
At the end of this chapter (in Appendix 5) I provide selected extracts from Ian's final dissertation to provide the reader with text that illustrates possible core elements of a reflexive biography. In contrast to John and Colleen's examples, here I offer extracts which can be said to already represent 'reflections (in the dissertation) on reflections (in the essays) on reflections (in the learning logs)' of his ongoing everyday experience. They therefore might be regarded as 'thrice interpreted'. And in further contrast to the previous examples, Ian here actually takes the notion of his reflexive biography as his dissertation topic: so here the material offers a far more direct response to the development questions I've been asking, and therefore requires less positioning and interpretation on my part. He is actually telling us himself, what he thinks he has achieved, how he has gone about developing his leadership capabilities and situated practice/performance, and what has influenced this process. I believe he also demonstrates during this period an ability to 'presence developmental possibilities' both for himself and others, which I will pick up in more detail in the final chapter.

In this instance, in his dissertation text there is no immediate coach commentary provided at the time to show you, as no 'embedded' comments are allowed on the printed pages of dissertations. So instead I show the briefer reflections - in blue in the abstracted version in Appendix 5– that I made as I read through his dissertation before writing this section. What follows now is a shorter narrative based on this material in which I seek to 'capture the bones' of Ian's reflexive biography. This follows a similar format to that used for John and Colleen, responding to the two main questions: what is the nature of the longer term development achieved – in terms of situated practice - over the two years?; and to what could we justifiably attribute these changes, taking account of the educational influence of the coaching process within the MA experience?

A snapshot at the beginning of the programme:
Ian is from a working class background in North Wales. He left school at 16 and went to work for a local cement factory in 1987 as a mechanical maintenance apprentice. He describes himself as a '*jack the lad*' fitter seeing work as a means to an end (socialising

and holidays). As he says in his dissertation, he became a hard working supervisor, and then a tough no-nonsense manager, driven by productivity targets rather than relationships. Here is a snapshot of his leadership approach at that time (2003-6):

> 'I took over, and drove things. I was aiming to lead from the front, setting the pace and trying to improve things. The comment relating to my style of leadership being *"bound to piss a few people off"* … would not have bothered me one bit back then; I was focussed on *"getting the job done"*… My view of leaders at that time was of people who took control, pressed on with ideas and did not get too bothered if they upset people as long as the job got done… I closed people down, and in doing so shut down the possibility of good ideas.'

These comments can I believe serve as a datum point for assessing changes in Ian's style after he enrolled on the MA in Leadership Studies. At this point in his development trajectory, he believed firmly in taking charge and driving action forward without much concern for the relational aspects of what he was doing. Using the Torbert framework he refers to later, I would say he was still showing strong Opportunist leanings within an overall Achiever action-logic supported by an Expert back up (Torbert and Associates, 2004).

This approach had certainly brought him early career success in the results-driven world he was working in. So why register for the MA so soon after getting his MBA? I think we get an answer quite early on when he reflects on the reasons for his failure to get the outcome he was looking for from the first 'critical incident' in the dissertation. This had happened just before he started the MA and he realized he had not understood the importance of 'politics' in getting his proposal accepted. So he hadn't tried to form any working alliances, and he was still relying on positional power to force followers to do things. It's clear from this that he still was holding to his 'unreconstructed' views despite having completed an MBA…or perhaps because of it!

A snapshot towards the end of the programme:
This second set of comments come some 15-18 months after Ian had started the MA programme, and capture his reflections on how he has changed over the period, as he starts to draft his dissertation. Since those early days, he has had two promotions and is now a Director of the company with overall responsibility at 'exco' level for the major ▮▮ project which he'd been instrumental in initiating. He has also by this stage completed the six formal phases of the MA which have involved him in a great deal of reflection and active experimentation. Though these are still early days in his new way of offering leadership, there is clearly a shift in how he thinks and expresses himself. Here's the snapshot:

> 'When I read the comments about team work and support and compare them to [earlier] remarks, I can see that I have developed a different style. Certainly in my interactions with my peers at ▮▮, I seem to be listening more, being more supportive and participative, and I am willing to take a back seat, and be more of a team player or lead by supporting from behind. ▮▮ comments about the non-confrontational way I make my points seem to back up that there has been a shift in style…All these outwardly positive attributes (from my perspective anyway) seem to still be having an internal battle with the 'old me'…There is the old me who wants to lead everything, who likes power and wants the Kudos, and a new

more educated self-aware me, who is trying to be more participative, involving and more measured in what I say.

I am operating in at higher level than before, and my maturity and ability to operate at this level is bound to be tested…I actively reflected within the meeting to stop saying what I wanted to happen (i.e. that I attend the meeting) to agreeing and supporting the way he wanted to go. (this is an example of Ian using his new ability to 'reflect-in-action' [Schon, 1983] which allows him to catch himself before he reacts in the usual way, and so be able to change direction within the flow of action). A quieter, more contextually aware leader has emerged from this studying. I have learnt to listen and think more, which allows for a more measured and thoughtful response to be given, even when emotionally charged about an issue. During the process of the…'roll out' I was consciously trying to be supportive and behave in a way as the leader that I want to become…If I'd have acted like I would have [as earlier], making a stand and arguing my point, I may have alienated people and the programme could have floundered.

By being willing to compromise and listen to others, a better outcome has occurred. However, that's not to say that by compromising what I wanted, doesn't cause me frustration; it does. However, this case has shown that I am willing to take an overall look at the situation rather than just from my perspective. This is a shift in thinking from me, that is evident as each of the case studies is read. I have gone from wanting to be in the centre and leading to being satisfied to be at the back supporting. My values have changed over the period, I valued metrics and logic (and I still do in the right circumstances) to make decisions. But I now seem to understand in some circumstances people's feelings, views and own agendas have to be considered if you want to get them on side, in order to get something you believe in, to be taken on board.'

These more measured and even handed statements about how he has changed over time from e.g. leading from the front to being supportive of others, indicate that the 'new more participative and contextually aware Ian', is not just a flash in the pan. His writing about how his new values are being expressed in behaviour, already shows this new side to him, and he seems to have entered another phase of indwelling and consolidation.

So I think it would be safe to claim here that Ian has definitely achieved significant development of a longer term nature, both in terms of capability, his concept of leadership, and his sense of self. The obvious question now is: how did he do this and what/who helped him 'make' the 'road' he's been walking down? This is what I now turn to.

Development milestones along the way
Ian started the MA in October 2008. At the Induction Workshop he immediately impresses me as a practical, direct, and ambitious person who is probably going to be a disciplined and hard working student. He tackles the first phase concerned with seeking personal insight and building a development agenda in a very businesslike manner. In the very first week we connect on the subject of 'context' and I start to offer him extra materials e.g. the Snowdon and Boone and Grint articles, encouraging him to dig deeper in what I see as a potential development gateway, and opportunity to 'presence developmental possibilities'. And this meta skill of 'contextualising' in its many guises, in time proves to be a major factor in how he creates a wholly new approach to offering

leadership to himself and others. But before he could make the most of this breakthrough he needed to surmount three other major development obstacles: finding ways to 'read' and 'influence' context; learning how to become more open, vulnerable, and able to let go; and finding/creating an alternative leadership metaphor or language-game to replace his dominant 'pacesetting' lead-from-the-front style (Goleman et al, 2002). I begin with the first of these.

1. Reading and influencing 'context': some four months into the programme Ian takes part in a 'leadership exchange' with another MA student. The approach to learning in this third phase is based primarily on observing and being observed at work; it's much more experiential and practical and with little academic reading required. This exchange provides Ian with a direct experience of a new language-game, which I'll refer to here as 'ask questions, listen carefully, respond to the feedback', and a sense of the new ontological skills he would need to acquire to perform this game effectively. What is so powerful about this piece of learning using an 'ethnographic' approach, is how much he is able to absorb the sensory richness of the experience including the largely tacit elements of the different work situation, and how his student colleague effortlessly contextualizes his use of various 'tools' which create a climate of receptiveness and responsiveness. As he asks of himself: 'Perhaps by asking questions rather than giving my views I can get a better understanding of the context, how the problems are being presented to me, and then process if they are actually being framed correctly…'. As he reports later on in his dissertation:

> 'An appreciation of matching style to context is something that I had picked up on early in the MA in leadership; however I was struggling to find an appropriate tool to let me gauge it, and therefore allow me to adapt my leadership style. I found the asking of several questions and really listening to the answers served me well in being able to gain the information I needed to 'read' the context, and to adjust and pitch my responses in a way that either matches the context of the situation, or if I feel it necessary, to reframe the context and then behave in line with that reframing'

So an important element is added to the mix and this time, not something from a textbook but from the experience of seeing someone embody a different more engaging approach through the intelligent use of questioning, careful listening, and giving feedback. As many traditional managers abhor asking questions (these indicate ignorance not wisdom, and a lack of leadership, don't they?), this was a surprising insight on his part, and represented a marked shift in Ian's attitude towards the relational aspect of influencing.

2. Becoming more responsive: and this same experience also gives him another development 'jolt' which addresses the second hurdle identified above. As he reports in his dissertation:

> 'In Phase 3 I had observed a different leader (and him me) and through this process I had began to understand that keeping quiet, listening and seeing things from others peoples perspective could lead to better outcomes…I was willing to see past my own frustration to the larger objective of being part of implementing a ▮ programme within the organisation… I felt that by being positive and helpful, it put me in the best position to influence how the programme was going to be rolled out. This was a definite change of tactics from the cases in the preceding

chapters…I felt that I could be part of transforming the organisation, and for this reason I chose not to be honest about my feelings, which only 12 months before, I would have expressed clearly and possibly aggressively…The MA in leadership was having a very positive impact on me, I had learned to adapt from the brash '*do it my way*' manager of the year before, but was unable to deal with my frustrations in a constructive way, choosing to suppress them rather than discuss them.'

Here Ian's adoption of what I would call a new 'language-game' - of 'being positive and helpful' rather than acting so as to 'close people down/do it my way' - allows Ian to see his work relations in a new light. But this progress in one respect immediately reveals another 'competing commitment' (Kegan and Lahey, 2001): his need to be 'true to his inner feelings'; and finding a way of dealing with this dilemma is to pre-occupy him for some months to come.

3. Developing ontological skills of 'being engaging': in addition to Ian feeling the tugs of old patterns and rewards that would slow down his appreciation and full adoption of the new language-game' he was exploring, he realized there was another barrier he'd have to surmount: the acquisition of the new skills and situated behaviours he would need to perform effectively in the new mode. Moving forward by engaging people in dialogue requires a rather different and more challenging set of capabilities than just telling people what to do and moving on. And this is what he reflects on next:

'I did not have the leadership understanding that different problems have different levels of complexity and require different methods to effectively solve them… Heifetz and Laurie (1997) suggests that with technical problems, solutions can be implemented but with adaptive problems the solution has to be created. Further, the elements needed to solve the issue are scattered throughout the organization and an environment must be created which bring the necessary people together to solve the issue, with the leader facilitating the finding of a solution…it was the work of Snowden and Boone (2007) that enhanced my understanding and gave me a framework in the understanding of how the changing situation can alter the effectiveness of different types of leadership interventions…in more complicated less time constrained situations, a more team oriented, participative style gets better results…How to effectively practice these skills was now the challenge'.

This paragraph makes clear that the importance of 'contextual awareness' first mooted in the programme in Grint's writings on the 'constitutive' approach, has been moved centre stage for Ian, by the Snowden and Boone model. Remember this was just an article I sent him on an intuition that he might find this interesting right at the start of the programme. Over time the initial 'primitive reaction' he must have experienced when first reading the article and seeing the matrix of options, has evolved, and it has now become perhaps one of his most useful new language-games. But to deliver its full effectiveness he needed to discover/create further language-games which could help him build a really powerful personal 'artifact' embracing new 'ontological skills' that would enable him to transform his leadership effectiveness in a variety of situations.

Through becoming more aware of the power of this very different approach, Ian finds he is now able to make more practical use of the first language-game he initiated right at the beginning of Phase 1 – shall we call it 'attend to context'. Understanding context is a vital activity but how to assess it other than to talk with others in that context, if it's *relations* that turn out to be more important than he had thought? And so as Ian finds

himself putting these two ideas/practices together, perhaps quite unknowingly, he becomes aware that he has developed a powerful new capacity to offer leadership in a completely different way.

> 'Mintzberg (1999) believes that by holding up our leaders as "*heroes*" we undermine the hard work of everyone else in the organisation. Leaders who manage quietly are more effective. These leaders take time to find out what is going on from the bottom up… It seems that quiet leaders succeed by building a culture of trust and understanding problems that are put before them by team members before they turn into disasters…I had been practicing this technique as it allowed me to test, probe and gain a better understanding of what the actual context was. I now had a framework to help me see the context of a situation with the Snowden and Boone model, and I had a method to help see what the actual context was, in order for me to then act appropriately. By the first quarter of 2010 I had used these techniques to develop a more supportive, participative, lead from the back style...'.

He shows here how he is continuing through explicit and tacit 'indwelling' work to deepen and elaborate his understanding of what it might take to perform effectively in this more participative style. In this process you are using your everyday experience as the 'practice world' in which to develop your new take on something - by testing out boundaries and implications, mentally rehearsing possible responses; and in a parallel stream of experience, 'shadow boxing' your way through various situations, in order to build up the elements of an 'artifact' needed to perform or more fully express the new language-game. He indicates that through 'reflexive analysis' he has been able to 'tease out' changes in his 'values, beliefs, and assumptions' and the effect on his perceptions and judgments, leading to a stance which moves him from self-absorption to favour '*our* view and *our* priorities'. Through this assiduous work-based 'action-learning' he is now practicing, he is also tacitly picking up the context influencing ontological skills that effective leadership depends on: 'by reflecting on past events with my newly acquired lenses developed on the MA programme, I can obtain new perspectives on old events that help me understand the present in new and more fruitful ways.' So here Ian is speaking directly to the idea of new language-games – new ways of knowing how to go on with others – which allow him to 'understand the present in new and more fruitful ways'

It is during the Phase 5 module on 'coaching' where Ian has an opportunity to develop his own style of coaching, not as a specialist coach but as a leader using coaching skills to improve effectiveness. These exercises developing new skills allow him to progress his desire not to 'use teamwork as a leadership tool' but to find ways of engaging in real team working as a leader. The ▮ project provides the opportunity:

> 'I wanted to be seen as a team member rather than the leader, wanting to harness the power of the group and enthuse the team rather than roll out my interpretation business…By using solution focussed coaching, listening, reframing and asking appropriate questions and adapting my position to the answers, I created a climate of respect and mutual trust…Regarding my leadership style: "▮ felt I went out of my way to demonstrate the behaviours that I felt the group should demonstrate. I led by example, I listened, I contributed, and I was enthusiastic. He said my attitude towards the programme was infectious"…Reflexively speaking, the ▮ project is a defining "moment" in this study: it seems that up to this point my

changes in behaviour had been incremental and maybe invisible to others: to me this is when the new more participative, contextually aware 'Ian' arrived!'

As Ian indicates in these excerpts, he was attracted to the idea of matching style to context in a dynamic manner quite early on in the programme. This 'primitive reaction' began the process of developing a new 'language-game' but it was not yet enough to get him over a tipping point into performing in the new way. More work, tacit experience, and 'indwelling' would be required. In Phase 5, through studying the tools of coaching and then applying them in practice sessions and live in critical work sessions, Ian achieves a breakthrough, and in the CI project shows that he has made a significant shift in how he offers leadership to his people. He has now clearly been able to move from a 'do it my way' brusque and direct style to a much more engaging 'let's work together creatively on the issue'. This provides a good example of how the further elaboration and development of a 'language-game' can allow someone to both see and behave in a more context-influenced manner in how he/she goes on with others, to achieve better outcomes.

Experiencing different kinds of development
It seems evident from what has been said so far that Ian had been able to make considerable progress in moving from a dominant single-minded 'take charge' approach to a more versatile and context-responsive 'let's collaborate' approach where he can vary the nature of his contribution in response to the feedback he is getting from others involved in the situation. Study of the Torbert model (Torbert and Associates, 2004) helps him understand that he is engaged in at least two different kinds of development activity: one which help him improve his skills at his current 'level' and those that encourage him to explore the uncertain territory in the 'next' level.

> The studying and coaching has been occurring in tandem within different organisational leadership contexts. It leads me to think that I have moved through different levels of leadership understanding, as the knowledge and practice "click" in - sometimes in Eureka moments (I would read this as a reference to 'primitive reactions') , and sometimes just evolving. (I would read this as tacit learning and 'indwelling' work) Rooke and Torbert (2005) have developed a framework that helps me understand this thought process in their 'seven ways of leading'…The framework is based around "*action logic*" which is to *"interpret their surroundings and react when their power or safety is challenged"…* Leaders who understand their action logic can take actions to transform their own capabilities and move up the scale.

> So how is this understanding acquired? How do you move from one level to another? The Collaborative Leadership Institute [see Cook-Greuter reference below] offers a useful way of framing leadership development. They believe that it must be considered using two dimensions, *"horizontal"* and *"vertical"*. Leaders typically engage horizontal learning strategies that expand and enrich their current way of thinking. Such as acquiring new knowledge, new skills, and new competencies, and all this takes place within a current mindset. Although this learning is important it may not bring about radical changes to an individual's thinking, but does improve the person's effectiveness. I would suggest that the work I did as part of MBA improved my horizontal learning. Vertical development refers to a transformational process where an individual progresses through a sequence of worldviews or action logics. Basically, vertical

development expands worldviews towards deeper understanding, wisdom and effectiveness. (Cook-Greuter, 2002). The MA in leadership has expanded my world view. Not by reading case studies about corporation X and how they should have done things differently. The learning has occurred by me looking at myself and my actions, through different lenses, and through other peoples' perspectives. I have found a way to improve the way I lead by looking at the world differently. I have become wiser by stopping talking and doing more listening, reframing and acting. I have become more effective by learning to understand the context around me.

In this commentary here Ian talks about 'The learning has occurred by me looking at myself and my actions, through different lenses, and through other peoples' perspectives. I have found a way to improve the way I lead by looking at the world differently.' You'll note that the last sentence refers quite directly to what I've called a new 'language-game' which allows people to look 'at the world differently'. What else can Ian tell us about how this kind of learning occurred, and in particular about how 'other people's perspectives' have helped him achieve these changes?

The educational contribution of the coaching process
At the very start of his dissertation Ian offers us the following quote: '*Those who are willing to work at developing themselves and becoming more self aware can almost certainly evolve over time into truly transformational leaders*" (Rooke and Torbert, 2005, page 11). And to bring home this point, at various stages in his dissertation Ian indicates that 'by reflecting on past events with my newly acquired lenses developed on the MA programme, I can obtain new perspectives on old events that help me understand the present in new and more fruitful ways'. Further he indicates that through 'reflexive analysis' he has been able to 'tease out' changes in his 'values, beliefs, and assumptions' and the effect on his perceptions and judgments, leading to a stance which, as already commented upon earlier, moves him from self-absorption to favour '*our* view and *our* priorities'. So here Ian is speaking directly to the idea of new 'language-games' – new ways of knowing how to go on with others – which allow him to 'understand the present in new and more fruitful ways'. And it is in supporting this form of learning/developing practice that the outlines and elements of the coaching contribution become visible.

> Although I had made some progress I was not the finished article (you could argue whoever is). I was awash with new tools and theories I was reading about, that I was trying to use to deal with situations, that maybe I was not as proficient as I could be: "*…cognitive learning no more makes a manager than it does a swimmer. The latter will drown the first time she jumps into the water if her coach never takes her out of the lecture hall, gets her wet, and gives her feedback on her performance…we are taught skill through practice, plus feedback, whether in a real or a simulated situation*" (Mintzberg, 1975, on p 26 in HBR, 1998)

Many students struggle to capture and make sense of the richness and complexity of critical moments that occur when you 'jump in the water' that seem to flash by, allowing little time for them to carry out 'single loop' problem solving, let alone the questioning of assumptions and values, and the creating and evaluating of new theories of action that is involved in 'double loop' problem framing work (Argyris and Schon, 1996). Even in Phase 1 when one whole week is devoted to exploring the practice of

identifying and analyzing critical incidents, students have difficulty digging below the surface of incidents; and often then, even if they've found it valuable, find it impossible to continue when the study load increases. Ian has been one of the exceptions and as we see in his dissertation, has been able to use this practice to great effect. And it is here in particular that the coaching interchanges have had their greatest purchase:

> 'As Sherman and Freas (2004) point out, it is rare for relatively successful highly motivated individuals to step back and review their own behaviour. Mintzberg (1975, page 51), suggests "*The leaders effectiveness is significantly influenced by their insight into their own work.*" This is what occurred here, in the learning process I have undergone while taking part in the MA in Leadership Studies which has allowed me to understand my weaknesses and, once I was aware of them, I could do something about them. Without this awareness, there could have been a tendency to keep doing the same old things, leading to the same old results. However, the journey I have been on has been more than just reading the different theories and then trying them out. What has made the difference is the coaching I received during the course, and then (towards the end of the course) an insight into business coaching methods.
>
> *"No one learns anything without being open to a contrasting point of view"* (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997, page 181). This is what my coach did for me, he challenged my assumptions, and he made me look at situations from different perspectives or using different frameworks: for example he told me about the Snowden and Boone article. He pushed me from "horizontal" learning into "vertical' learning" (Rooke and Torbert, 2005) by giving me an expanded view on the world, making me understand things that were going on past my own experiences. In summary, our e-mail and web based conversations provided new ways of doing and thinking, reframed long held views by giving an outside view (Somers, 2008). As Albert Einstein once said "*We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."'*

In these two paragraphs Ian is able to sum up succinctly ('in a nutshell' as he puts it below), key aspects of the educational influence the coaching relationship has had on him and his studies and leadership practice: the critical importance of gaining insight into one's own work; the value of being offered different viewpoints that challenged existing assumptions and habits, the provision of a range of different ways of making sense and approaching situations, and an expectation that relevant new ideas and approaches would be tried out and reviewed in the light of feedback. While he doesn't use the word 're-framing' here (or Wittgenstein's similar word of re-orienting), his Einstein quote clearly speaks to this very point, and underlines the critical contribution such work can make to 'giving me an expanded view of the world'.

To illustrate this point more graphically I offer a video clip - *'like a tennis match'* - in which Ian speaks specifically about how the coaching interactions that took place in what I call a 'development container', actually helped him. The clip begins with me asking him to describe what happens between us in what we create together – mostly in the written interactions in the virtual world: what does this add up to? He ponders deeply…then likens it to a tennis match…e.g. 'take the topic we're discussing: it goes, sometimes it doesn't comes back...it goes and comes back….(I offer: there's a rally)…what's happening is the idea that is going back and forth is being refined…(I offer: put a bit of spin on it)…take a raw idea…I can get that…I don't agree with

that…might not agree with that, but here's the argument…read this and this...have a real good rally on something. When you look back – there's my view at beginning…and the end: because we've had a debate, my view has changed….because we've had that rally. If I'd just read it in a book…I wouldn't have got to that bit of thinking –it's like jumping in the pool and see if you can swim... what we're doing in the rally…here's an idea…use it…that's the process – it gets you past that back and forth.' Ian compares it to university lectures...'you ask a question…it's killed …[in] this, you go past that…(I agree and offer that it allows you to think about putting a different 'spin'… sometimes a winner?)...also part of it is jumping in the water and trying it out before you send it back…' (I offer a framing: in a sense it's that process that is converting this 'thought' into what Bohm calls 'thinking' [Bohm, 1996] which only happens *between* people…the thought is 'alive' only in the debate in a relationship – once it drops out of the interchange, it's dead…no longer informed by the energy and curiosity enlivening that relationship.)

In this clip Ian captures the dialogic nature of our communications, as thoughts go back and forth, as in a tennis rally, and are transformed within the active thinking relationship and the expectation of 'jumping in the pool' of practice, that is fostered in the 'development container'. And it is this active process between coach and student – which is 'presenced' in this interaction here - that creates and sustains the climate of inquiry that over time becomes something which can provide a 'container' for development work.

22. *like a tennis match*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMGlxgGPRMc

What he goes on to say in the extract below is how the coaching process became doubly valuable to him when he himself began to explore the attitudes, tools, and practices of this approach to offering leadership to others, as part of the Phase 5 experience:

> 'In a nutshell, I have been coached to a new way of thinking. So being coached has been a positive experience. What also provoked a shift in my thinking was actually using coaching techniques my self. The use of solution focussed coaching was a very positive experience and helped me define my own context when it was used on the ▮▮ pilot study in Box 4, and has been useful in other applications. However, the most useful element of the coaching techniques has been the questioning, listening and then reframing. This allows me to probe and sense the

problems I face without making a judgement until I have been given all the information. Since this has become embedded in my general leadership style, the behaviour is seen as being very supportive by the people who work with me

This final paragraph shows the value of going beyond cognitive understanding to embodying ideas in one's own behaviour: the life enhancing energy that becomes apparent when somebody has gone beyond the application of skills to living an approach, is unmistakeable. As I say in my commentary at the very end of extracts from his dissertation in Appendix 5: In finally pulling together his argument, Ian clarifies more specifically how the coaching process has helped make the significant changes he has achieved, and in two ways. Firstly, many of the extra resources that I offered him on a responsive and timely basis throughout the two years, have hit a fruitful mark, as evidenced by their direct use in the dissertation. But in addition to these invitations to expand and enrich his world view, what he seems to value just as strongly are the challenges to his way of thinking and behaving and to the questioning of self-imposed boundaries to his ways of operating and his sense of identity and what it meant to be a leader. And secondly, this kind of provocative coaching process carried on online seems also to have helped develop his own coaching skills sufficiently to enable the significant shift in leadership approach that he has achieved. This represents quite an achievement in 'improving practice' when you realize that the vast bulk of our interactions have been through the written word, online, and asynchronous!

So this is how Ian has understood the development process – a mixture of eureka moments followed by slower evolution of ideas and skills. What is clear even from this abbreviated account is that throughout this period he has had his eye very firmly on the 'development ball', kicking it ahead along the 'road' ahead, paying attention to its movements, and responding to its deflections and dynamics. As I re-read his dissertation I begin to see how on a regular basis he's taken a 'pass' from me as I seek to 'presence' a development opportunity, and quite quickly begun to develop his own version of the 'game'. In this he's started to presence developmental possibilities for himself, and in so doing, similar opportunities for others in the organization to learn and benefit from.

In terms of the Torbert model which he uses directly in his dissertation, he suggests that he's moved up from the Diplomat stage into the 'post conventional' action-logic of the Individualist. My view is that he's done better than that: I think with his generally pushy 'do it my way' style, he still had at the start, quite a bit of the Opportunist action-logic about him; and that by the time he completed the degree he was beginning, in his more relativist framing of context and readiness to trust others, to think and use action-logic approaching the Strategist level. This is some going over a two year period and using Torbert's framework, represents amazing 'vertical development'! Using my own as yet embryonic set of 'ontological' indicators of development (the 6 R's), it seems to me that he was already very strong in terms of being 'resilient', but that during the programme he made giant strides in the remaining five categories…although given his natural impatience for results, he has probably struggled most with the 'receptive' modality.

As I say in my examination grading comments on his dissertation: 'His "inside story" of how he has changed while his organisation has been changing is very frank and engaging, particularly when he examines and tries to resolve the tensions he experiences in himself as he learns to change his way of working with others (pp 46-50). He makes a noteworthy contribution to the literature on how leaders at any level can go about developing themselves to improve their leadership, taking advantage of the multiple

As a concluding comment on Ian's development story, I offer here a final video clip – '*how did the MA work for you?*' - that shows Ian responding to the ideas and claims that appear in this section, made during our conversation held about a year after he'd successfully completed the programme, achieving a distinction in his dissertation. The clip opens with me asking Ian 'so against all the odds, how did the MA work for you…what was special about it…what made the difference…in the relationship between the university and yourself and your work…allowed you to be more vulnerable…?' Ian pauses thinking deeply for some time, before responding at some length: 'if you look at the way it works…without the MA there's nothing to cause you to pause…so you carry on doing the same old things…there's nothing new to pull on…in that cycle of life it [the MA] puts in a block or a filter…where those things going round are stopped, checked, challenged…and you could even say there's another loop going on above this…and what comes in now goes through a whole new process…(I 'gesture' some possibilities: what could this mean?; what else could I do?)…so there's little old me getting the way I am, challenged…wanting to be better….so you engage that information and that process….and if you engage it fully and take it all on board….what you get out of it (at 3 minutes and 36 seconds) …a new way of doing, a new way of thinking, and new way of being…outwardly I haven't changed…my missus knows I've changed…and others close to me…That's how it works: because you get that check…gives you different ways to do things…challenges assumptions…gives you tools to challenge other peoples' assumptions develop other people…see situations from different angles (at 4 minutes and 30 seconds)…maybe see the world from different perspectives…'

I suggest to him the Torbert model he used in the dissertation might help explain things…you've changed on the inside…allows you to stick with the mucky stuff but think differently…at several levels up…your sense of who you are is changing – 'yeah' he agrees – and the fact you touch things in a different way. Ian continues (at 5 minutes and 40 seconds): 'you're happier and more confident…as an individual…what it's given me…a confidence in being me …that surprised me…even now…it leaves a buzz.' He then compares it to the MBA which he enjoyed '…it broadened me….but concentrated on the mechanics stuff. This [the MA] is more like the oil that flows through those mechanics…keeps everything moving… enabled me to move around different individuals and situations…' (I suggest 'you've become more watery')…He responds with a boxing analogy…'ones that flow…coming from everywhere…giving you a rounder style.' (I offer...you can use all of your resources… you can be more what's needed…you're allowing the situation to call out a response from you[24]…much braver…way of going about things.)

In this clip Ian clarifies how the MA process has offered him a new way of being, helping him become more rounded and confident and enabling him to perform effectively in a wider variety of different situations. I knew this from our interactions at the time but it's good to hear it directly from him now some 9 months later, and to see that the development process that was started then, has continued.

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[24] saying 'you can be more what's needed…allowing the situation to call out a response from you', provides a clear example of what 'requisite' might mean in the phrase 'requisite situated practice'

23. *how did the MA work for you?*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WXtJTmk34g

Looking at my own behaviour in this clip I enjoy seeing how closely I attend to Ian's ideas, building on and amplifying what he's saying; and am pleased how often - when I choose to add my own spin to his remarks – he seems to be in agreement, adding his own examples of the 'spin', indicating that we are sharing in an inclusional, reciprocal exchange where the dynamic identity boundary between us serves to enhance our communications. I feel again the deep pleasure of conversations that seem to happen when I'm walking along a path that is characterised by an intention and behaviours that continue to 'presence empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice'.

*   *   *

So in this chapter I've added to the ideas and evidence regarding shorter term change offered in Chapters 4 and 5, by providing a range of text and video-based evidence that indicates that the MA programme can also influence longer term ontological development. John, Colleen, and Ian's stories each provide persuasive evidence they that have indeed been able to develop their different situated practices. I believe the argument also shows how the kind of inclusional and ontological coaching offered can significantly influence the quality of the learning relationship and culture of inquiry that supports the kind of developmental process needed for improving a situated practice like leadership.

In the next and final chapter I will continue to build on the arguments offered up to this point to articulate and support my claim that it's possible for students to improve their scholarship and leadership practice studying on an online higher degree programme. But the main task will be to pull together all the elements of my working pedagogy that has been closely associated with these aschievements, to show that a key enabler in this process has been an inclusional and ontological form of coaching pedagogy which embodies the 'presencing of developmental possibilities' as the primary or 'focal' goal of educational interactions.