Revealing what is 'tacit/rationally-*in*visible/in the background': an online coaching pedagogy for developing improved leadership practice through 'presencing empathetic responsiveness'

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PROLOGUE

This is a story about my practice over the past eight years as an online coach on a Masters programme in leadership and change. While there may be several aspects of this situated practice in higher education that you might find interesting and/or useful, I realised during my viva that there was a danger that you might have some difficulties in identifying and appreciating some/all of these. During the three hour dialogue with my examiners I became increasingly aware that there were important features of my practice that were still tacit, 'in the background', and not all that obvious even after some exploration. And so with their active encouragement I've written this special prologue to the thesis to offer you some pointers and extra signposting to help you get the most out of your reading of this work. In doing this I am providing an example of the process I call 'presencing empathetic responsiveness', writing this prologue in response to ideas and questions that were revealed during the viva that the examiners and I agreed would benefit from further explanation.

Using a metaphor from the game of golf, what I'm going to do now is attempt to 'mark your card'. What I mean by this, as the 'designer' of this [golf] 'course', is that I'm going to introduce you to the nature of the terrain you are about to traverse, point out 'hazards/out of bounds' areas, warn you about the most likely 'bunkers/sand traps' you might land in, generally keep you on the 'fairways' and out of the 'rough', and help you read some of the tricky 'greens'. There are a number of ways in which you could 'read' this course [my thesis] and I'm keen that you get the most out of the time you spend with my story, using it to stimulate your own thinking about how you regard yourself as a person in relationship with others, particularly in a coaching role, and the other contexts in which you work and live. Though this story is situated very much in the world of online coaching in a higher education programme in leadership studies, I'm hoping you will be able to get ideas about how you might go about developing your own skills of relating and influencing what happens in the world around you, and so be more aware of 'what what you do, does', so you can better 'know how to go on with others'. I put these two little phrases in quote marks because they are ideas borrowed from two philosophers, whose work I draw on in sharing with you this much more practical story. But given that this is a PhD thesis, I have needed to frame my ideas and findings using the resources and the language of the Academe to provide legitimating support for my more practical living story about my coaching practice. This integrating process – relating theory to practice and vice versa – is one I've very much enjoyed, but my intention here is to invite you to seek out what you find of personal and *practical use* in these pages.

So what I'm offering in this prologue is an *invitation* to approach your reading in a particular way. And, whatever else you may want to get out of this process, I invite you, as an important first 'mark' on your card, to use this reading to develop your own practice of *presencing*. What I mean by this term 'presencing' is the process of bringing into the present moment something – a feeling, an idea, an intention, a skill – that prior to you doing this, is tacit, invisible, or temporarily unavailable to you; and which when presenced, allows you to experience and see a situation, an event, or an issue in a changed light enabling you to 'go on' in a different way. There are of course other ways of thinking about 'presencing', but in this thesis I focus particularly on two forms of this 'take' on the process: 'presencing development possibilities' by which I mean bringing into the moment an opportunity to develop an idea, skill, or practice *while* you

are working/performing – a process I refer to as 'close learning'; and 'presencing empathetic responsiveness' to what's required or preferable in the situations around you, by which I mean intervening and offering appropriate leadership in a situation that you're involved in and where the current practice leaves something to be desired.

Both of these 'presencing' practices are ones which I've created and exploited in my own development and online coaching work as I've looked for ways to help students improve their scholarship and develop their own practice as leaders. So as one thought, I invite you to use your reading, and your reflections during your reading, to 'presence development possibilities' for yourself i.e. to bring into the present moment ideas and thoughts that might address in new ways, issues that are concerning you about your own coaching practice and its effectiveness. And to see what new intentions and actions these thoughts energise and encourage you to experiment with in your practice…and what influence these might have on your ability to respond empathetically to the needs in the everyday situations you find yourself in, and so be able to offer/take part in appropriate leadership activity in such situations.

From this beginning you may gather that the process of 'presencing' has become an important part of my online coaching practice, informing many things I do. In fact it has become so central that it now *frames* my practice as a coach, as well as providing powerful coaching tools. So instead of seeing my role in perhaps the more usual terms applied to coaching like listening, questioning, making new connections, providing support, and so on, I now see it primarily in terms of 'revealing what is rationally invisible'. What a strange phrase, you say – what can he mean? And yes, I too found it a little strange to begin with. But as I grew more and more interested in approaches/tools that allowed me to 'peek behind' appearances or 'look beneath' the surface of the taken-for-granted, I realised that *this* was what I was most interested in doing as a coach: helping people see other ways of understanding and dealing with what they were taking for granted, by seeing what was for them at the particular time and place, tacit, 'rationally invisible' or 'in the background'. And it is this particular feature of the thesis, what might be hidden from view or rationally invisible in my students' worlds, in my practice, and in my writing about my practice - that I became more strongly aware of in the viva, and realised I needed to respond to and bring out more clearly.

So to introduce the main ideas I want to tell you about in this prologue, let me comment on aspects of experience that often seem hidden from us i.e. 'there' but not noticed, and how I've made this a central focus of my coaching practice and the research you will read about in these pages. In what follows I deal with these often fleeting and evanescent phenomena – now you see them, now you don't - in four sections which form the body of this prologue:

- what actions are taking place between the students and myself in our everyday interaction in the learning logs and essays, on the main educational 'stage' so to speak, which are associated with the developments and changes I make claims about in the thesis, and which are the most 'visible' aspects of our practice?;

- what aspects and features of these interactions between us, and the contexts in which we are operating on this main 'stage', might be tacit, hidden in the background, and/or rationally invisible to us, and which if revealed, might help students improve their scholarship and leadership practice?; and, to continue with the theatre metaphor

- what kinds of things am I the coach, thinking and doing 'backstage' (and how am I doing these) to make the varied contributions you can see 'on stage', where I explore, experiment, and enable the changes/developments you see taking place, through working with, presencing, and revealing what I'm noticing 'in the background'?;

- and finally, what am I doing in parallel, but in different domains and to a different time scale, to further develop my own skills, everyday practices, and sense of role and identity, to be able to be aware and responsive enough to what is happening in front of me at any moment, and which enables me to deliver the type of coaching service that I describe here?

What's happening on the main 'stage' – interactions in the learning logs/essays?

What's happening on the main stage is what should be visible to you the reader, at least as far as the various materials and examples I've included in the body of the thesis and appendices. So here you see examples of the texts from learning logs and essays and my responses to them, my later reflections and commentaries on these interactions, as well as reflective writings and discussions captured in video clips with students and my supervisor. In a sense all of these are made 'rationally visible' to you because I frame them as evidence of what is going on between coach and students and within the coach himself, and they appear mostly in black and white textual form. What you will also notice, particularly in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, are examples of often verbatim interchanges in which I help initiate the following 'events' which I then use as indicators of development progress: firstly, what I've called 'fleeting moments' of educational influence which can initiate significant change; secondly, what I call 'development episodes' where students are able to take a momentary shift in perception/response and develop this over time into new ways of seeing and behaving, so developing an aspect of their leadership capabilities; and then in the longer term i.e. over the two year term of the programme, how these various incremental shifts/reframes and developments can come together to influence a student's whole approach to leadership, and often their very sense of identity, and which can be recognised in what I've called their 'reflexive biography' – the story of their development history. Because I've framed this level of information in this way and so 'made it visible', most of this should be obvious to you as you read through the text – this is the front page story of how I've understood how my coaching has influenced the development of students, offering in the process a three stage framework for recognising and amplifying incidents of such influence.

So far, so good. But what might *not* be so easy to notice and understand in my experience, and writing up of this experience - and so need further signposting?

What might be taken-for-granted/'invisible' - to actors and/or audience?

Perception is very much a relational phenomenon and so is strongly affected by one's location in space and time. What you notice and hence know from any single position can only ever be partial, and so it makes sense to seek out multiple ways of seeing and knowing in order to appreciate situations and possibilities in more rounded and creative ways. On page 78 of the thesis I introduce one such framework which I refer to as a 'systemic spiral' of different perspectives (see also Appendix 13 to chapter 1). This has

helped me appreciate 'many ways of knowing' and has given me the potential to think 'systemically' and so be better able to see how context and feedback processes can become associated to create subtle and complex but often unexpected inter-relations and effects.

Because of the constraints and affordances offered by one's location, and the fact that the written texts can only show the tip of this complex communication 'iceberg', a lot of what is happening or supporting what is happening, is inevitably located at a tacit level or in the background. Much of this may not be obvious to the eye, not only of readers like you but more importantly to the actors on the stage – the students and I. And it is here that my version of 'presencing' becomes the key move in my practice, where I use this process to reveal important aspects of what can be regarded at one level, as a continuous and indeterminate flow of experience that is in the background and often 'rationally-*in*visible'. What might be some of the potentially important features of this ongoing 'hustle and bustle' of everyday living and conversation, and relations with the environment, that I seek to reveal and make rationally visible to students to enable them to better influence their own practice and those of others around them? There seem to be at least five aspects which I regularly pay attention to:

- *tacit knowing:* a lot of our knowing is tacit in nature and so we can have difficulty understanding how we and other people arrive at our/their conclusions: what information do they notice, what assumptions do they make, how do they reach decisions, and what inner explanations do they offer for these? What we miss are all these tacit operations which happen in milliseconds, and just see the outward behaviour and outcomes. Such apparent outcomes and behaviours will in any case be surrounded by more or less uncertainty and ambiguity so requiring further detailed questioning and dialogue.

- *complexity:* the new science of complexity shows us that in any situation there are usually countless possible variations that might occur, and that what happens/emerges (or is assumed/agreed to have happened) is merely one outcome amongst many. We generally don't see/appreciate that the singular is but one possibility amongst the many. And in a similar vein, our culture encourages us to look for 'attributional' explanations i.e. those that explain things by referring to the characteristics of individuals, rather than the more complex but probably more accurate analyses that look for more dynamic and 'contextual' explanations.

- *social accounting practices:* similarly, our 'accounting practices' – how we account for how we create meaning - encourage us to see only what is 'rationally visible'; that is what social norms and local practices tell us *should* be seen or done in that situation. In this way such accounting practices work to instruct us in how to 'see' an otherwise indeterminate flow of activity – the hustle and bustle of everyday living and conversation - as having 'this' rather than 'that' form to it. These accounting practices also in this way, work to render certain things 'rationally *in*visible' to us. However, these shaping and moving influences spontaneously exerted on us by the use of language and the dominant discourse of the day, remain in the background and are a largely invisible presence, out of our direct control.

- *power relations:* these social accounting practices are not just to do with the grammar of our local language. Again in a less than conscious way, all of these

language practices are suffused by what the French philosopher Foucault called 'disciplinary power' which is a distributed and usually hidden feature influencing relationships within a practice/situation. While in this view, power is not seen as being possessed by particular individuals, asymmetries in the power relations that exist often suppress certain voices and delete and distort meanings.

- ***meaning-making:*** finally, we easily fall into the trap of not seeing that we are *participants* in ongoing practical action, concerned to engage with and make ourselves understood in this action, to others around us. We consequently imagine that what we are constructing together in conversation is an arms length and strictly rational process. In reality it's a much more relational, improvisatory, and embodied process where we and others continually respond to each other – and to the contexts in which we are interacting - in a never ending search for/negotiation of meaning. The intimate nature of our involvement and responsibilities for outcomes in these engagements, therefore often escapes us, and so we end up blaming others or the situation for what happens.

So in addition to what's 'on stage' and more easily recognised, there are also these less visible/legitimate aspects which I've labelled as being 'in the background', taken-for-granted, or tacit, which together contribute towards the multi-layered context and flow of experience in which we live. These have a critical role to play in how matters turn out, and how students make sense of their studies and work practices. As a coach, I've found it very helpful to be able to notice and reveal some of this 'background' as an integral part of the development process, so that students, through raising their awareness of these factors, can take greater responsibility for their contribution to certain interactions and situations, and hence have options for behaving more creatively.

This level of experiencing is less obvious both in my practice and in my writing about it. However, you will see some evidence of it in the reflections I've added (in blue text) as I lead you through sequences of learning log interactions in Chapters 4 and 5. For instance on p 113 and p 118, I offer examples of tackling the issue of power relations and how this – in the form of 'dominant stories' - might be holding students back. It's easier to see that in these reflections I am bringing forward thoughts that probably were largely tacit and not obvious to me and others in the original entries.

So given that these 'invisible' phenomena (as well as the visible) form an important dimension of what is happening 'on stage', what and how do I attempt to understand and influence these dynamic interactions?

What's going on 'backstage' to support these educational interactions?

Because a lot of this enabling work happens in the background, most of us don't notice or take account of these important influences in what happens and how this happens. So while the focus of the story will usually be on the higher profile signs of change/development, other things will be happening mainly in the background to facilitate and support such shifts in appreciation and framing. This opens another potential space for knowing, a space where one can notice and take account of the usually not seen or valued, adding this 'messier' data to what's already visible and agreed to exist. This space exists 'backstage' (behind the higher profile reported actions you read about in the learning logs) where the coach works, again largely in the background, to achieve useful outcomes for the students, by revealing and making

visible potentially useful aspects of the situations they are working in. Many of these activities form what I might call the 'choreography' of my practice, where I seek to improvise and experiment within the dialogues with students, to stimulate, provoke, and 'presence' development possibilities. And by 'presence' here I also mean the bringing forward into the moment, the intention and readiness to *act into* the present situation. By doing this, students immediately alter the relations of self to self, self to other(s), and self to context, increasing the likelihood of what I've referred to as a 'fleeting moment' of influence, the very first indicator of change. This can then lead to them enhancing their empathetic responsiveness to what might be needed in the situations they are working in, and so taking timely action to 'go on' effectively with others.

Because I see these moves as exploratory steps in a 'dialogic dance', I deliberately use the term 'choreography' to presence the 'dance' metaphor, and so to convey the image of a creative form of conversation where the outcome remains open as colleagues and interlocutors feel their way forward together towards mutual orientation and meaningful interaction. Much of this kind of positioning and preparatory work associated with e.g. rapport building, developing empathy, and creating and maintaining dialogue, is not normally that obvious in face to face coaching activity, as it's mostly in the background as a natural part of human communication. But in the asynchronous and largely written interactions that take place online, these need much more attention. So it is here that my portfolio of 'moves' associated with the general process of 'presencing' comes to the fore in my practice, where I use these to reveal something of what is often tacit and/or 'rationally-*in*visible', to enable students to better influence their own practice and those of others around them. Very much as in the theatre, much of this work is done 'backstage' or in the background to the action on the stage, and so might not be visible to the casual observer. So what might be some of the more important of these 'backstage' activities? Here in addition to talking more about the meaning of my 'presencing' practice, I touch on four of the more important 'moves' I use i.e. 'fishing', experimenting, contextualising learning, and fostering dialogue.

Presencing – transferring resources into the present
I've already indicated that for me 'presencing' is the process of bringing into the present moment something – a feeling, an idea, an intention, a skill – that prior to this is absent, invisible, or temporarily unavailable to you; and which, when presenced, allows you to experience and see a situation, an event, or an issue in a changed light, enabling you to go on in a different way. But this process can take many different forms. For example Scharmer who first popularised this concept sees it very much as a group phenomenon where people sense and embody emergent futures, 'letting go' present ideas and 'letting come' something new and preferable. Against this rather mystical view, Shaw with her complexity theory approach, sees it more pragmatically as people choosing particular courses of action in 'a living present', that are likely to make sense in moving forward together with others. From a learning point of view, Polanyi's 'from-to' notion of tacit knowing that comes from 'dwelling in the subsidiaries' clearly also depends on a tacit process which presences and embodies new experiential information to inform decision-making and outcomes. Similarly the ideas of someone like Bahktin on the improvisational nature of dialogue, point to a presencing process at the very heart of these interchanges between people, where new information is introduced at each conversational 'turn' which can alter the meaning and direction of travel.

I've already referred to two main uses in my own practice concerned with 'presencing development possibilities' and 'presencing empathetic responsiveness', and there are

many examples of both of these uses in the pages you are about to read. For an example of the former see 'read some feminist literature' on p 145, and for one of the latter, see 'ask for more and better' on p 112. In these applications, 'presencing' in our languaging and gesturing is about *grounding* our working in what's before us in the moment and *moving towards a resolution* of some shared nature; rather than moving us 'up into the air', into theorising and planning type activities, which distract and can move us away from what we want. These uses in the area of one-to-one coaching are clearly more influenced by the ideas put forward by e.g. Shaw, Polanyi, and Bahktin than those of Scharmer, and find purchase in supporting students in 'knowing how to go on' in their leadership and their leadership development work.

'Fishing' - looking for important development ideas and opportunities

Many of my coaching responses are offered in what I call a 'fishing' mode. In this I cast out ideas based on my intuition, empathy, and sense of what might resonate. All the time I keep looking for glimmers of interest in their feedback and writing: is anything I'm offering ringing any bells? What's important about this process is that it's not a wholly rational and explicit intellectual process where I work through my 'responsive repertoire' or some framework in a mechanical manner. Instead I liken it to a tacit activity where through an embodied 'intuitive inferencing' process, I spontaneously cast out a range of 'baited hooks'…and then scan the logs/essays for signs of interest which I can start 'playing' with. This is not like seeding 'ground bait' in a general way to attract interest, but a more precise process where each baited hook is tailored for the intended recipient and to the situation itself. There are of course some common ingredients in this bait which over time I've found to be useful across a range of students. To change the metaphor, these 'development seeds' often include ideas such as the role of the tacit dimension in the learning process, the contribution of contextual as against attributional explanations to meaning making, how personal and social narratives both restrict and enable perception and action, and the open-ended and improvisational nature of dialogical communication, which I use to encourage and anticipate certain shifts in how students might frame their own experiences.

This process shares similarities with actual fishing where there is both a need for diffuse, unhurried, attention while you wait for the fish to bite; which then needs to be supported by a more precise and dynamic awareness to bring the fish in. In my work the 'fish' is the unexpected, spontaneous hint/shadow that suddenly reveals itself in the text to the meditative 'blank' mind, the first glimpse that something important may be about to emerge. And the precise awareness is what is required to respond acutely to this first showing and through 'playing' with this new line of thinking, to gradually reel in/develop this into a useful piece of learning that can unfold further. If I suspect that something is beginning to emerge, I attempt to amplify this by offering praise, further relevant materials, and encouragement to experiment with the idea and begin what Polanyi has called the 'indwelling' process which tacitly 'translates/tranforms' ideas into embodied practice. This fishing/seeding activity is supported by the portfolio of responses that I've partially identified in what I call a 'responsive repertoire' (see p 79 and Appendix 6 to Chapter 3) where I range across a number of standard activities to do with e.g. influencing expectations about the learning process, challenging initial perceptions, extending personal knowing, and presencing knowing-in-action. You can see illustrations of these multiple interventions in the many examples I offer in the excerpts from student learning logs in Chapters 4 and 5.

In this way, this 'fishing' process acts very much as an heuristic helping me find ways through the complex meaning –making 'jungles' that my students are creating, living and working in. If you look at my response to one of John's logs on pp 111-113 you'll note that I make at least 8 deliberate 'interventions' (and possibly more if we take account of the fact that many useful interventions are non-deliberate). Across 50 weeks of programmed study with two learning logs per week, this can amount to as many as 800 such interventions, with many covering the one or more key issues which the student is struggling with. I realize that this is something I created specially to deal with the particular difficulties of working online in an asynchronous and written environment. I learned to work at this intensity because I couldn't get/wasn't getting immediate feedback to my ideas, and wasn't able to take advantage of the usual 'background' conversational practices, as I would in face to face work (see 'fostering dialogue' below for more on this). I needed to find a new way of stimulating feedback in the distance learning context that was less sensitive to time and the timing of my remarks. Here the idea of 'radar' provides a useful metaphor for thinking about the nature of this process. Imagine that my written 'interventions' in the learning logs are like bursts of electromagnetic energy in radar and go beaming out across the student's domain of practice. When these strike something interesting – a hint/shadow of a 'fish' - they come back to me with added information, which I can then build on in future interventions. Because I'm sending out so many and there is so much redundancy across a series of logs, the timing of my remarks is less critical: if I persist in responding to hints in their writing, the important issues and ideas will get a response at some stage. You can see an example of this in my series of responses to Colleen on pp 117-120 where over a period of weeks I gradually home in on to the issue of 'stark choices' as something important to work on.

The other very important feature of this 'fishing' process is that to be most effective, it needs to be offered from an embodied state of being. I use the term 'intuitive inferencing' above to emphasise that although I'm sitting in front of my computer reading what a student has written in a log days before, I need to be imagining we are together engaged in dialogue, to generate the spontaneous flow of insights and interventions that populate the learning logs and essays. The clearest signal of this not being the case, with me just 'being in the head' is when I find myself feeling alienated from the student's experience and struggling to think of useful and 'clever' comments to make. That's why the metaphor of 'dance' and the relational energy that goes with it, makes such an important contribution to my practice.

Experimenting – stimulating tacit knowing
Students typically expect to absorb explicit knowledge from the university to add to their own again largely explicit knowing. Though this might be sufficient for the academic requirements of the degree, I don't believe this is sufficient to support the kind of critical engagement and embodied development they need to improve their practice and performance. I want instead to provoke them into developing a more personal and embodied kind of knowing, and I do this through encouraging them to critically engage with their own and others ideas. I push them to try out and experiment with ideas in different contexts, and through reflective and reflexive work on their experiences, to refine their knowing, skills, and confidence for delivery in context. So as a continuation of the 'fishing' activity, I encourage them to try things out for themselves, create their own practical 'fishing' experiments, and learn from the feedback: what influences are they having on themselves and others in their context, and in the social formation of the organization in which they work? If any of the ideas are to

lead to anything practical, they need to be tried out and experienced in real everyday situations – 'jumping into the water' - so that embodied knowing about the dynamic fit between tool and context can be presenced.

In this way, the open and extending 'fishing' activity gradually gives way to a more focused inquiry into what's being done to use the knowledge, exploring the boundaries of application, and making adjustments to capability and identity. There is a good example of this 'developing through acting into situations' in the cascading process commented on by John in video clip 19 on pp 139-40.

Contextualising learning - generating uncertainty

To help them gain the authority and confidence they need to be effective in their working worlds, students need to have the opportunity to *make* their own reflexive or development biographies, as distinct from having them decided by other forces in the situation. This need is well served if they can do their learning and their performing in similar conditions, where the need to *act into uncertainty* - where they are subject to similar levels of both epistemological and ontological doubt - apply. In the online programme, the coaching required to support this kind of more open ended, contested, uncertain, and dynamic intertwined 'learning while practising' *and* 'practising while learning' - both at the same, and for yet another *first* time - needs to be thought of as taking place within a pedagogy which for example:

- consistently provokes alternative perceptions and feelings to develop a capacity for multi-perspectival framings;
- helps 'presence' or make visible and present the many developmental possibilities latent in their everyday lives for inquiring into these; and
- encourages experimentation and reflection on feedback in practical situations.

This kind of coaching relationship provides students with the kind of side-by-side support they need to feel their way forward in the face of ontological challenges such as 'how can I become and practice what is being called forth in this situation?', as well as dealing more sensitively and responsively with the demands of more routine forms of problem solving. I believe they best learn how to develop their practices of re-orienting and 'going on'…*by doing just that!* And so I work to create a supportive culture of inquiry in which they feel confident to do just that.

Fostering dialogue - stimulating creative conversations

Over and above these everyday human difficulties which we all face in whatever situation we are in, there are also important differences between coaching in a conventional 'face-to-face' manner and in the 'online' environment. Because so much of what we do 'face to face' is of a taken-for-granted nature, these differences may not be obvious to those unfamiliar with the characteristics of the online virtual learning environment, and so it's worth offering a few words about this. In face-to-face communication there are a number of things which are critical to understanding but which are in the background and which we take for granted. Amongst these are what we might call the 'occasionality' of expressions where the meaning is closely associated with the place and time of occurrence, the 'specific vagueness' of references where people offer something that seems to generally fit the situation, but not in a black and white manner so the specific meaning remains open and yet to be determined, and the associated 'retrospective-prospective' sense of a present occurrence in which we wait for something later in order to see what was meant before. All of these are sanctioned

properties of common discourse and furnish a background of seen but unnoticed features where people won't take predetermined meanings imposed on them in a conversation, and where their actual utterances are recognised as events of common, reasonable, understandable, plain talk.

These everyday taken-for-granted characteristics of face to face communication cannot be presumed to happen naturally in the online environment where all the non-verbal and contextual features of conversation are absent. Therefore, in order to foster the natural improvisatory process of dialogical meaning making, special effort has to be devoted to creating these necessary enabling features in this asynchronous and written medium. In my practice I realised over time that much of the 'fishing' work I was doing was not as redundant as I thought, because it served to create and support what in the text I call a 'development container'. This learning relationship located in virtual space, in which students could feel trusting, and able to inquire openly and creatively into the challenges and dilemmas facing them, created the feeling and many of the missing features of face to face conversation, where the students and I could engage in truly creative dialogues. I offer a range of examples of how this process 'in the development container' has worked, on pp 196-200.

So can anybody just turn up and do this kind of thing 'naturally' without any special development work or preparation? Or might this too involve work in the background that then enables this kind of intuitive and spontaneous support to be offered?

What background development work is needed to support this way of working?

Something that again will not be that obvious if not 'invisible' in the thesis, is the personal development work that I've engaged in over many decades that has helped me develop and provide the kind of coaching service that I explore in this research. As I mentioned earlier, this aspect of my practice is something that I've engaged in very much in parallel, in different domains and to different time scales, to the development and coaching roles I play. But my ability to work in an open-ended and creatively responsive way has been enabled, and continues to be sustained, by my own ongoing attempts to improve my own practice and the capabilities that help me do this. As you will note in various chapters in the thesis, this has formed an important thread in my life over many decades and continues to this day. You will also note that in many ways it has mostly been of an indirect nature following many different and personal paths which might seem to bear little relation to the coaching practice I describe here. For example I've spent much time exploring the ideas and practices of embodiment and in many different ways e.g. playing tennis/golf, doing shiatsu, practising chi gung, and learning to sing. Similarly I've also spent much time over many years exploring communication practices in a range of different group and individual therapies. So what might be important features of this work?

Empathetic responsiveness as fluency in pattern seeking and making
None of these development experiences have an obvious and direct relationship with my online coaching practice. But they have clearly served to help me learn to deal with the uncertainties and ambiguities that my preferred open-ended and improvisatory working stance poses, and have also provided a wide range of resources and tools to enrich my responsiveness. I talk about these improvisatory activities very much in terms of natural spontaneous responses, as though this is something that anyone without any real effort

could, perhaps lazily by just 'doing what comes naturally', achieve in the same situation. But I doubt whether this is likely to be so, and here use the metaphor of improvisation to illustrate the point.

Most so-called 'free' improvisation that takes place in jazz groups is anything but 'free': it is most often the result of many, many hours of devotion to exploring and making familiar in mind and body, the typical patterns that characterise the harmonies and melodic lines of well known jazz 'standards'. What then seems to happen 'spontaneously' during jazz sessions is more of a conversation between players, exchanging these well practised 'riffs' and also, if things are going well, some more in-the-moment and original expressions of this basic material. Without this preparation such improvising patterns would tend to be inchoate, banal, and stumbling and quite possibly not resonant with the playing of others in the band. Jazz is essentially a form of conversation and requires a special form of deep listening – and then responding – that is only possible when the preparation has been done, and tacit knowing takes over. In a similar way, the online coaching 'choreography' that I engage in depends on the same kind of discipline where I have many partial patterns to call upon and synthesise in the moment, as stimulated by my empathetic responsiveness to the other and their practice in their context, as we engage in our dialogic dance.

Theory building as constructing temporary 'handholds' along a learning journey
Despite the considerable amount of intellectual argument and theorising that you will find throughout the thesis, the focus is principally on my coaching *practice*. For this reason you will notice that a fair proportion of the theorising and argument building is not to do with the final 'model' of coaching pedagogy that I arrive at and present at the end in meeting the formal requirements of the PhD itself. Many ideas make a fleeting appearance and then go. These arguments are developed primarily as a means of helping me craft 'handholds' for helping me take the next step forward, in getting to know 'how to go on'.

So for example when I introduce the idea of 'improvisation' e.g. on page 38 in Chapter 2 to illustrate a point I needed to make at that juncture, I do not really develop the idea further as I might have, given the eventual Bahktinian-influenced approach I do adopt. And this is not because it wouldn't be a good metaphor for what I'm seeking to do - as you will have already noticed in the previous point immediately above when I do just this to illustrate something I want you to bear in mind. No in the example in Chapter 1, I use it instead to help me over a practical hurdle and then move on. Other such ideas like 'language-game' and 'indwelling' also pop up in the course of my developing story but they continue to inform my journey and so end up in Chapter 7 where I pull these key ideas together.

The paradox of 'modelling'…but not 'modelling'
Something I'm sure you will notice, as I point out on p. 20 in the Introduction, is that 'in contrast to a conventional form of thesis which would have a chapter devoted to "methodology", this whole thesis is concerned with my methodology as it develops and emerges over the period under review.' And so in addition to an extensive review of methodology in Chapter 3, I continue the process at the start of each of Chapters 4, 5 , and 6 , and then review and put it all together again in the final chapter. So there can be no doubt that despite my protestations to the contrary – 'this thesis is about my *practice!*' – I am nevertheless fiercely interested in theories and models and perhaps

more importantly in theorising and modelling, as these inform my practice and my attempts to improve it. This much is something that probably becomes more obvious as you progress in your reading.

But perhaps what will not be so obvious is my equally fierce resolve not to become tied to any particular approach, model, or tool/technique. Yes, I'm happy to enjoy whatever benefits they might offer me and my students at a particular time but...! More important to me is that I am able to present a relatively open and responsive 'face' to whatever is being offered to me in the logs, essays, e mails, and Skype conversations, and *not* to be seeing these at the outset through 'this' framework or 'that' technique. This idea of having a 'blank mind' before the information is presented is of course idealistic – we cannot *not* bring prior frames/experience to what we see/read – but this is a very important matter for me: to try to be neutral before, so that I reduce the possibility of unknowingly being led down various predetermined sense-making pathways…by *my own* assumptions/prejudices/favoured models etc. So again you might notice as you read through that I seem to be using some approach, model, or tool with great enthusiasm, only to find a few pages later that I've dropped it cold and am pursuing another line of attack. This is the paradox I have to work with every day – so be warned!

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So in these preliminary remarks I hope that I've 'marked your card' sufficiently to help you have some idea beforehand as to what might not be so obvious and straightforward about the story I'm telling you - what might be slipping under the radar - and to have you well and truly alerted to the often tacit nature of my knowing, the important clues that are hidden in the background, and the unwritten social 'rules' that so often like a magician, transform what is before our very eyes, into something that is 'rationally invisible'. Good luck with your reading of my text - I hope you find it stimulating and developmental.

CAVEAT LECTOR…

The illusion of understanding

'You cannot help dealing with the limited information you have as if it were all there is to know. You build the best possible story from the information available to you, and if it is a good story, you believe it…Our comforting conviction that the world makes sense rests on a secure foundation: our almost unlimited ability to ignore our ignorance'

(p 201)

The illusion of validity

'The story was always the same: our ability to predict performance [of leadership candidates] at the school was negligible. Our forecasts were better than blind guesses, but not by much…The dismal truth about the quality of our predictions had no effect whatsoever on how we evaluated candidates and very little effect on the confidence we felt in our judgements.'

 (p 211)

Kahneman, D. 2011. *Thinking, fast and slow.* London: Allen Lane.

ABSTRACT

Revealing what is 'tacit/rationally-*in*visible/in the background': an online coaching pedagogy for developing improved leadership practice through 'presencing empathetic responsiveness'

This thesis reports on a self study into educational learning, energized and guided by the question *'how do I improve my practice?'*(i), as I coach mature students on a distance learning Masters in Leadership Studies at Exeter University.

My 'living' educational inquiry (ii) captures and articulates the development of online pedagogic practices which stimulate a 'virtual' culture of inquiry. These regular 'dialogically structured'(iii)web-based interactions help students successfully negotiate learning barriers posed by the online medium, allowing them to notice and exploit the variety of opportunities for learning and development available in their everyday lives, and the many different forms of knowing embedded in these. Through developing richer epistemologies and more resourceful ontologies, students increase their receptiveness and responsiveness to challenges in the situations they study and work in.

Through detailed analysis of textual and audio-visual data, I offer glimpses of such learning and development, and the coaching associated with this, in *fleeting moments* of educational influencing which spark *'primitive reactions'*, in *development episodes* where 'indwelling'(iv) transforms these into new 'language-games', and in *reflexive biographies* which trace the longer term development of new ontological skills involved in 'knowing how to go on' (v).

At the heart of the online coaching pedagogy is an original 'inclusional'(vi) coaching process I call *presencing (vii) empathetic responsiveness* which I use to encourage students to contextualise and presence their learning under conditions of epistemological and ontological uncertainty. This 'ontological' form of coaching enables students to become agents in the production of their own lives despite the masking and insidious effects of disciplinary power (viii), so they can learn to contribute effectively in a world characterized by 'supercomplexity'(ix).

The originality of the thesis lies in the synthesis of and creative linking between the development of this situated learning, the methodological inventiveness (x) of the pedagogy, key ideas on communication and learning from the literature, and the embodied values that have enabled me to become a better educator.

i I use two meanings of the word 'practice': the first is the generally accepted meaning used to describe what an individual habitually *does*; the second meaning looks beyond the individual to the complex of interactions in a specific place and time in which she/he and others are embedded and responsively involved in. The meaning I'm using will generally be evident from the immediate context of the surrounding text.

ii The question 'how do I improve my practice?' and the term 'living' educational inquiry come from the version of action research developed by Whitehead (Whitehead, 2009)

iii 'dialogically structured' is a term used by Shotter and refers to Bahktin's idea that 'every utterance must be regarded as primarily a *response* to preceding utterances' (Bahktin in Shotter, 2008, p 51)

iv Polanyi's 'from-to' model of tacit knowing uses the term 'dwelling in the subsidiaries' to describe what happens as one moves *from* 'tacit' *to* 'focal' awareness (Polanyi, 1983)

v The terms 'primitive reaction', 'language-game', and 'knowing how to go on' come from Wittgenstein's ideas in Philosophical Investigations (Wittgenstein, 1958)

vi The term 'inclusional' comes from Rayner's work on 'natural inclusion/inclusionality' as are the earlier terms 'receptiveness' and 'responsiveness' (Rayner, 2010)

vii This is a term coined by Scharmer (2005) combining the words 'present' and 'sense' to convey the action of bringing into present reality a vision/idea from the future.

viii This idea from Foucault's Discipline and Punish refers to the subjugating effects on what people feel they can and cannot say, of exclusionary practices in mainstream discourse (Foucault, 1977)

ix The term 'supercomplexity' refers to Barnett's idea that knowledge in the modern university is contested and uncertain, and that teaching/learning for operating effectively in the modern world, should accordingly take place under conditions of 'epistemological and ontological uncertainty' (Barnett, 2000)

x This is a term used by Dadds and Hart to describe how developing the right form of methodology for a piece of research can become as important a source of motivation as the research topic itself (Dadds and Hart, 2001)

Revealing what is 'tacit/rationally-*in*visible/in the background': an online coaching pedagogy for developing improved leadership practice through 'presencing empathetic responsiveness'

LIST OF VIDEO CLIPS

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

> 'For to see a problem is to see something that is hidden. It is to have an intimation of the coherence of hitherto not comprehended particulars…we commit ourselves to a belief in all these as yet undisclosed consequences…we are guided by sensing the presence of a hidden reality towards which our clues are pointing…The discoverer is filled with a compelling sense of responsibility for pursuit of a hidden truth…we can know things…that we cannot tell.'
> *Polanyi, 1983, p 21-25*

This is a story about a higher education programme in 'leadership studies'. The very term 'studies' immediately conjures up images of students listening to professors delivering lectures about what leaders ought to be doing, reading academic articles, analyzing case studies, and writing formal essays. And yes, all of this does happen on this programme. However, this is a 'distance learning' programme with educational materials delivered online, and most of the interaction between students and staff taking place in 'asynchronous' and 'written' form in learning logs and essays. With *leadership* being a 'situated practice', it's difficult to see how students could genuinely improve their 'practice' by following this arms length and primarily cognitive approach to study, and with virtually no face to face contact time between students and staff (Dreyfus, 2001).

Well, against the odds, this programme *is* working and is achieving practical success, with some 70 students graduating over the past 7 years, including 30 with full masters degrees. This thesis tells a story, *my* story as one of the online coaches on the programme, of how this unlikely educational proposition has been made to work. Through adopting a 'living theory' approach to action research, I've been able to slowly clarify and embody the values and pedagogic principles and practices which have enabled me to achieve two things: to provide coaching that has helped my students on the Masters in Leadership Studies at the Business School at Exeter University, achieve worthwhile practical and scholarly outcomes; and to create and present an original and critical piece of educational research which offers the Academy a new standard of judgement for assessing the efficacy of online education. But much ground needs to be covered before these two assertions can be fully explored and understood and the basic claims confirmed or otherwise – which is what I plan to do in the rest of this thesis.

But to start at the beginning, I need first to start at the end, and admit that it is only now during these last few months while finalising the last chapter of my thesis, that the deeper meanings of my educational work have emerged most fully into my consciousness. These meanings have emerged – in response to a question as to what it was that really constituted the originality of my thesis - in a form which I feel now really does clarify the trajectory I've been following for so long. They also create that sense of expectation and stretch that tells me that though I am right on track, there's still plenty of room for improvement. Such is the nature of the transformatory journey that Polanyi speaks about in the quotation above – in pursuit of a hidden truth that we can 'know' at some level but have difficulty telling others about it – and one that continues to promise yet further possibilities of 'fruitfulness', and hence heightened validity.

As I notice in the introductory remarks to his own thesis, Geoff Mead also had this kind of enlightening experience after 'finishing' his thesis (Mead, 2001). I've not quite 'come full circle back' (ibid, p 16) but like him, I want to take advantage of the perhaps

paradoxical phenomenon – 'introductions' are generally written *last* – to give you an idea of these late revelations and how I've decided to treat them in my thesis. As these are essentially concerned with a deepening of the original ideas, and as I've since noticed a wide range of clues to these, dotted through-out the thesis, I've decided not to re-edit the materials written earlier that appear in Chapters 1 to 6, to take account of these later realizations. Instead I will take advantage of the introduction 'paradox' to offer some extra signposting now which readers might find helpful later on[1]. So to the beginning…

PRELIMINARY SIGNPOSTINGS

From an early interest in the mysteries of human communication that I first became aware of over 40 years ago on a dusty power station construction site in Canada, I do seem gradually over the passing years to have been able to get closer to an understanding of a question about 'reality' that I've been pursuing, as though 'obsessed'. As Polanyi suggests: 'looking forward before the event, the act of discovery appears personal and indeterminate. It starts with the solitary intimations of a problem, of bits and pieces here and there which seem to offer clues of something hidden. They look like fragments of a yet unknown whole. This tentative vision must turn into a personal obsession…its content indefinable and indeterminate. Indeed, the process by which it will be brought to light will be acknowledged as a discovery precisely because it could not have been achieved by any persistence in applying explicit rules to given facts.' (Polanyi, 1983, p 75-76) You will find plenty of evidence in the narrative of my learning that follows in Chapter 1, that it has indeed become a 'personal obsession'!

But the opportunity in these last months to step back from this obsession and reflect on the thesis as a whole has brought closer to the surface potential new framings which are good examples of one of Jack Whitehead's 'living theory' principles i.e. the meanings of your embodied values emerge in your interactions with others (Whitehead, 2009). These may take some time to emerge, and only surface in 'eleventh hour' moments of fleeting recognition, as these three have. I comment on them briefly here as I believe they will help the reader get a more up to date sense of the context and ground I'm writing from.

From 'possibilities' to 'responsiveness'

The first reframe happened at one of our final supervision discussions in July, 2011 when, in responding to Jack's challenge 'so *what* is it that's really original?', a new deeper meaning of my educational purpose was 'presenced', signaling to us both in that moment that I had moved 'a little closer'. My first big breakthrough, identified in an earlier supervision session in October, 2008, was that I was driven by *presencing developmental possibilities (PDP)* - for myself as well as with my students. Now in this second game-changing moment, I began talking about my long term and deep, but till this moment largely backgrounded, interest in the process of 'contextualising', and mentioning having 'contextual empathy' as one aspect of this. As Jack started responding to this 'admission' I suddenly realized that coming right up into the foreground, was a potentially much deeper understanding of what I intended by this 'presencing developmental possibilities'. During my journey home these ideas engaged

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[1] As you will discover, this 'now-then' impulse is one which lies at the heart of my desire to 'presence development possibilities'

in a stimulating dance sparking off other implications and possibilities in my mind, and this continued for several days more before settling down in a new form which I now call *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice (PERTRSP):* I now realize that it is opportunities to develop this particular capability that I'm *really* trying to presence.

This is not exactly a catch phrase that trips lightly off the tongue, so it's not one I will use again till the final chapter when it will be easier to explore and explain. For now I'll stay instead with the simpler 'presencing developmental possibilities' till that time. However I have noticed since revealing this new framing to myself, that elements of this phenomenon appear throughout my writing over the past year, and even in earlier appendices attached to Chapter 1. So I believe I can offer this new framing as an example of what Polanyi, within his emergent 'from-to' model of tacit sense making, would call a new 'focal awareness' of my earlier 'dwelling in the subsidiaries' (Polanyi, 1983). It does embody an intention and practice which I hope you will grow to appreciate, in terms of meaning and importance, as I clarify the central contribution it makes to my coaching pedagogy, in the six chapters that introduce you to my learning journey over some 40 years. In this new form it now more clearly constitutes an 'inclusional' coaching tool (Rayner, 2010) which seeks to reveal continuities between 'I', 'others', and 'situations' that are usually masked by the so-called 'excluded middle'. And so I put it forward as such as an original standard of judgement which I explore further in Chapter 3.

From 'knowledge about' to 'practising with'
While this insight was the highlight of our July meeting, something else emerged which in the context of a discussion about originality, is something I feel I should also comment on in this opening statement. As you will see in Chapter 2, in scanning the research fields within my horizon, I explore framing statements made at the 2010 annual conference of AERA (Lee and Rochon, 2009), to do with enabling students to make full use of their resources in whatever pedagogic context they find themselves in (and which I certainly attempt to address in my own work). In this year's conference, AERA have decided to inquire into the second part of their mission which they feel they are not yet fully addressing - I italicise this in the full statement which follows: 'to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and *to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good'.* In talking about this, Ball and Tyson state that 'Education must become the agent rather than the object of change...' and to do so we must '…expand our vigilance to ensure that our research is central to the enterprise of educating human beings in all circumstances' (Ball and Tyson, 2011).

Given Jack Whitehead's intention to contribute to this conference, we quite naturally looked at my own work in this context and felt that it could be seen as an example that addresses the *whole* mission statement: in helping my MA students I am making use of 'knowledge about' and 'scholarly inquiry related to' education – see the many examples of this in Chapters 4 to 6 in particular; and in a self-study of my coaching practice, I am also 'using research to improve education' in a live and practical sense, which is in its own small way, trying to 'serve the public good'. While this has never been the primary purpose of this inquiry, I would ask you to bear this claim in mind as you work your way through my narrative and get inside my world view and arguments.

From a focus on 'projects' to 'methodology'
The third insight started surfacing in the weeks prior to our penultimate supervision discussion in October, 2011. In looking back over my career it began to dawn on me that in every role I'd taken up since the mid 70's I'd found it impossible *not* to lift my focus up from the level of 'task/project' to that of 'methodology'. Without exception, within six months or so of joining a new organization I would begin a process of involving colleagues in 'meta' discussions which focused on improving 'our' approach and methodology. Though I always seemed to be the main driving force behind this development activity, it was without question always about an 'us', and how 'we' could improve the services we offered to our clients: it was about a relational commitment to what the organization was supposed to be about (perhaps a little idealistic on my part?) and the clients we served. You will notice clues throughout this work to this intense 'can't let go' interest in seeking improvement in everyday working through exploring and strengthening the foundations that underpin such working practices[2]. And notice too that this 'can't let go' quality is informed by a determination to resist closure, staying open to uncertainty, and the view that any 'solution' can only ever be a temporary one. Please bear this in mind especially when you read Chapter 3 when I talk about 'inventing an aligned methodology'

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

So with these three 'signpostings' now complete, let me go back to my earlier question (how could this kind of programme work?) and say a little more about this. Given the success the online version of the MA programme has had since it first saw the light of day in 2004, it is easy to forget, or perhaps not even realize, the very real pedagogic difficulties that a distance learning programme focusing on a situated practice like leadership, faces. At first sight, many people, both students and staff, used to more customary face to face methods, are very doubtful that it could work. So let me say a little more about why this might be so, here at the start, so that you can read what follows with more awareness of these potential issues.

THE 'PARADOXICAL POSSIBILITIES' OF DISTANCE LEARNING?
Since the initial study by Ladkin et al carried out in 2005-6 (Ladkin et al, 2009), my own continuing exploration of the influence of coaching within the online provision of the programme, has identified a number of further educational 'barriers' which cast doubt on the MA being able to deliver genuine development which can influence back home performance and practice. However, as in the initial study, I have found in my own research that it is possible to approach these barriers in ways which offer 'paradoxical possibilities' for learning and practice development. I list the six I've identified so that you are aware at the outset of the thesis, of the practical local barriers posed by higher education and online provision that need to be circumvented if there is to be serious influence on the learning, development, and performance of a situated practice like leadership. The full text of these remarks appears in Appendix 1 to this Introduction.

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[2] A current example of what I mean by this intense focus on 'methodology' appears on my website at www.the-pin.co.uk which I set up with my Exeter CLS colleague Roger Niven in 2010

- **Distance learning:** there is a strand of literature which is sceptical of the potential for on-line technology to equal or surpass the educative outcomes offered by face-to-face teaching and learning relationships (Arbaugh and Stelzer, 2003; Brower, 2003). How can 'dated' propositional knowledge located in a 'distant' university be experienced by students as a stimulus for thinking and behaving afresh in their workplaces?
- **Transmission mode of knowledge provision:** given that all students already have a very full 'day job', the unyielding week in week out 'transmission' of prepared 'packages' of academic knowledge is intense and can be experienced as mechanical, rigid, and oppressive, especially if students get behind in their work, as can often happen.
- **Asynchronous relations:** in contrast to face to face modes of education, here the provision of knowledge, the reflective work done by students, and the coaching which follows, is provided in an asynchronous, arms-length, written, and virtual manner. Due to the demands of their jobs, student's 'logs' and the coach's 'responses' can be weeks apart and lack closure, and students can get months 'out of synch' with the programme schedule.
- **Asymmetric power relations:** the presence of a distantly located centre of expertise providing 'propositional' knowledge - framing notes, theoretical articles, professorial critique - supported by a summative approach to grading, often generates conditions where students undervalue their own experience and tacit expertise.
- **Learning transfer gap:** given the largely propositional knowledge base of the MA, and the university's focus on the reproduction of such knowledge in graded essays, one would normally expect that the learning and knowing achieved by students would tend to be cognitive in nature. How could this process support the transfer of learning that leads to improvements in situated practice?
- **Discontinuity between theory and practice:** as in much higher education, theoretical considerations dominate in the university, and within their organisations, the students as practitioners of leadership, are dominated by matters of immediate practicality. There seem to be few formal links and little interflow between these zones of different kinds of knowing and practice.

These six areas are often seen to be, and in practice can be, major barriers to the kind of educational influence that might be associated with the development of a situated practice. Is it possible to overcome these or reduce their negative influence on the educational process, such that they offer 'paradoxical possibilities' for students on the programme? The remainder of the thesis is devoted to exploring these questions, not directly as such, but through reflecting on action research of the everyday interactions between students and coach as we work our way through the two year part time programme together, and I as coach seek to improve my practice. I will come back to respond more directly to these so-called 'barriers' to development in the final chapter.

SOME INITIAL CALIBRATIONS
When you read through the text I'm conscious that there may be a number of influences at work which may not be visible to you. While there has not been a deliberate attempt on my part to camouflage or 'smooth' the flow of writing, this final text represents a significant reduction of a much larger draft, and many re-positionings of text to create a more 'readerly' version of my earlier 'writerly' drafts. As such you'll notice I include in appendices to most chapters, many supporting writings so it's possible for the

interested reader to go deeper where necessary. There are also other issues which I've only really become conscious of myself in the latter stages of finalizing the text, as I've been able to step back and look at the meanings of what I've written – I mentioned three earlier - and these too are likely to be hidden in the subtext, and not visible certainly at a first reading. For example you may be expecting and you may think on first impression, that this thesis fits into a traditional form of social science research, following a typical qualitative research sequence: for example in Chapter 2 there seems to have been a literature search seeking to identify a niche topic within a recognized research field, in Chapter 3 there is talk of epistemology and methodology, there's lots of data gathering and analysis in Chapters 4 to 6, and throughout the piece there are plenty of references to the literature. Further given my strong interest in theory and method, you might think that I'll be focusing mainly on epistemological issues and the development of propositional models and knowledge. But these clues would give a false impression of the process that I've been engaged in, and so to highlight some of these now largely hidden dynamics influencing the shape and style of my inquiry as it has developed, I offer a few preliminary explanatory comments.

A focus on improving practice
Since registering at Bath in 2002 and becoming a coach at Exeter in 2004, I've been focusing my efforts primarily on the everyday, ongoing work involved in responding to student work in their weekly learning logs, and grading and providing formative feedback on termly essays. My 'research' as it was in those early years was focused more on 'improving' my practice as against 'researching' my practice - although with action research it may not be that easy to differentiate between the two. The 'research' element consisted mainly of reflections committed to a digital recorder that occurred most often while on long drives along motorways between Exeter, Bath and where I was living at the time - for some reason these journeys particularly stimulated my reflective mind. Reflecting on and transcribing these 'digital diary' or field notes which I've now kept going for some seven years, very often informed my formal writings on the first part of the Bath CARPP PhD programme – as you will see in the chapters that follow – as well as the self initiated writings I later developed for Jack Whitehead, my supervisor, once the formal 'diploma' part of the programme was completed.

As a result I've discovered that many of my 'research' ideas have in fact been ideas which I've already embodied in my own coaching practice, like e.g. 'presencing developmental opportunities': I've been applying this to myself for decades though obviously not using this term until more recently. This has also meant that my engagement with the ideas of others has usually come from the grounds of my own experience and motivated *not* by an intention to find a niche for my research or through a systematic literature search. Instead, very much as Winter describes, I've been *pulling in* research (Winter, 1989) as signaled by the demands of improving my practice, and often on an intuitive basis as I pursued Polanyian 'clues' emerging from my work. So you are likely to find 'gaps' in my review of *the* literature, as well as perhaps a surprising range of ideas from outside the immediate field I'm working in.

An emergent research process
As Paulo Freire says 'we make the road by walking' (Horton and Freire, 1990), creating our way forward in *what we do* and *how we do it* with others, more so than through design and planning. And my road has changed quite radically in nature over the past 15

years or so since I first registered for a PhD. One important aspect of the change has been my focus and role: over the years I've moved from 'consulting' about change, to 'facilitation' of change, to 'researching' in change, or in this last mentioned activity, to how *I've* changed as I've sought to improve my practice. This has been paralleled by a sympathetic movement from a 'third person/them' to 'second person/us' to 'first person/me' perspective (Heron and Reason, 1997) as I've increasingly saddled the boundary between facilitator and researcher over the past 7 years. And these changes in positioning have been accompanied by parallel transformations in my epistemology – from 'systems' to 'systemic' to 'social constructionist' to 'embodied practice', as I discuss at the end of Chapter 1.

These shifts in consciousness have enabled me to gradually bring a sharper focus to my research, reducing my field of vision against the centripetal pull of my many and varied interests in e.g. multiple ways of seeing and rhizomatic notions of validity (Lather, 1991). And in this focusing process, my attention has shifted between e.g. what was happening with the students and their studies, to what I was doing/being in my coaching practice, to the more relational view of how I could assess the impact of what I was doing on what the students were doing in their practices, both as scholar and leader, and to the reciprocal influences between these various actions and the overall social formation in which we were learning together. So again this certainly has not been a straightforward march down a clear sequence of discrete research activities. Rather you will find evidence of my wanderings in a forest of emergent knowing, clearing a path whose edges have gradually become clearer as I've settled methodological, epistemological, and validity issues along the way, to create a pedagogy which has been guided all along by the question 'how do I improve my practice?' of helping others with their developmental challenges.

A shift from epistemology to ontology
As you will notice in Chapter 2, I have an aversion to what I see as often arbitrary 'punctuations' that academic disciplines make in order to restrict their field of view for research, publishing, and career development purposes. I prefer to locate an issue in its context – what the Milan School of Systemic Family Therapy called a 'problem determined system' (Anderson et al, 1987)) – and have often found it baffling when say psychological texts, never seem interested in looking over the wall at more socially influenced interpretations. This is probably why I have a tendency to prefer writers like Bateson, Capra, Wilden, Gladwell, and McGilchrist, who have no difficulty in crossing 'formal' boundaries to explore an issue. And that's also why in this text you'll find lots of ideas from different fields being juxtaposed with each other, either to round out a framing, set up creative tension, or seek a synthesis of some kind. This also explains my attraction to using a non-dualist approach to leadership like 'practice theory' (Schatzki et al, 2001). In sympathy with this I've also found in the past couple of years that my interest has been moving from a focus on different epistemologies and a notion of developing a new 'epistemology of practice' – so an 'epistemology first' position - to an 'ontology first' position, where I've become far more interested in finding ways of working more directly and 'roundedly' (McGilchrist, 2010) with the ontological skills involved in the practice of 'knowing how to go on' (Wittgenstein, 1958, no 154).

This I feel has been a natural consequence of my abiding interest in the phenomenon of tacit knowledge where as Polanyi says 'all thought dwells in its subsidiaries, as if they were part of our body' (Polanyi, 1983, p x), and my desire to know the world in this

way. My extensive grounding in body oriented and dialogic approaches to learning and healing has also influenced this shift, helping me work with the dynamic flow of experience in an 'inclusional' way (Rayner, 2010) trying to do justice to *all* kinds of knowing. And this I hope has allowed me to write *through* my experiences, giving my writing a 'from' or 'with' rather than an 'about' quality (Shotter, 2008).

HOW MY STORY UNFOLDS – THE CONTRIBUTION OF EACH CHAPTER

Can I now offer you some clues as to what is in the chapters that follow, and the role each plays in bringing out the learning and ideas that lead me to claim in this thesis that I make a coherent and original argument for the contribution that a coaching-based pedagogy can make to an online higher education degree devoted to developing a situated practice like leadership?

I think the most important point to make here is that in contrast to a conventional form of thesis which would have a chapter devoted to 'methodology', this whole thesis is concerned with my methodology as it develops and emerges over the period under review. So though Chapter 3 does address methodological concerns, you'll find many of these have already been foregrounded in Chapter 1, but in a different more narrative mode. And you'll find that many of these are again treated in different more specialised ways in Chapters 4 to 6. As Dadds and Hart explain in the context of facilitating what they term 'methodological inventiveness', for some practitioner researchers it's just as important to develop their own unique way through their research as their self-chosen research topic; and where the focus is primarily on creating 'enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care.' (Dadds and Hart, 2001, p 169). So you'll find that in each chapter, particularly in Chapters 4 to 6, that I seek to reprise and extend the key ideas/experiences which have helped me develop the complex 'artifacts' that allow me to engage in a particular kind of educational activity which helps students transform cognitive input into improvements in situated practice (Ilyenkov, 1977 in Burkitt, 1999)

So as I say at the end of **Chapter 1**, 'in looking back at the narrative I believe it provides evidence of several significant transformations of sense of self, focus, and nature of my knowing…that I've undergone'. These transformations have not been planned in a deliberate fashion but have crept up on me as I've refined my inquiry instrument to get a closer experience and understanding of my quarry. That they have been life changing has only become evident later on when, as Polanyi, talking about the process of 'interiorisation', suggests, 'the creation of new values is a tacit process in which people submit to these new values…by the very act of creating and adopting them.' (Polanyi, 1983, p xi) In addition to shifts in my sense of self and what it is to be a living social being, I've moved a long way in how I now believe I can know – from everyday common sense 'facts', through the use of systems and then systemic lenses, to taking account of the power of language and social interaction, and finally to focus more on embodied sense-making in the present moment. And it is this new epistemology that is closely allied to a 'becoming' ontology that now infuses my inquiry allowing me to see new ways of tackling the challenges in the online environment. So this chapter is very much about charting in 'patchwork' form, this emergence and evolution over 40 odd years, so that you as reader, can begin to grasp the worldview and values that characterise my 'living theory' as I practice it.

In **Chapter 2**, I look outwards from my own inquiries to offer a 'problematising' inquiry into six 'fields' that I see as encircling my own area of research. This leads to my conclusion that most of the mainstream approaches within these fields appear to be subject to 'splitting' behaviour of various kinds (Reber et al, 2009) and consequently provide an unbalanced approach both to appreciating the different kinds of knowledge that exist, and how to acquire and embody these. For example, models about *leadership* seem dominated by the usual debate between 'agency' and 'structure', and approaches to *development* generally split between an epistemological 'building' approach to do with increasing knowledge, and one using more ontological processes of 'dwelling' to focus on situational, embodied, and relational qualities of knowing (Heidegger, 1971). Further when looking at teaching/learning methods these divides seem to be mirrored in higher education's 'clean' but narrow focus on decontextualised objective knowledge as against the messy practical ideas emerging from practice.

Uncomfortable with the effects of this splitting activity in these and the other four areas, my focus has been on finding a more synthesising and balanced approach to knowing and living based on that knowing, and so this chapter starts to identify some of the elements which could facilitate a more balanced approach. Similarly, distance learning approaches seem to go for a passive 'transmission' model of teaching knowledge or attempt through more 'blended' approaches to make use of a much wider variety of interactive modes of exchange to explore other kinds of knowing. Even the more pragmatic activity of *coaching* divides between well tried recipes that focus on increasing 'know-what' and 'know-how' required for short term problem solving, or enter more challenging territory where coach and client mutually interact within a relational practice and where the knowing, which is of a more embodied and situated nature, emerges in a joint and more uncertain 'knowing from' process (Shotter, 2008). Finally in *research* the damaging divide between objectivist and subjectivist views of ontology and epistemology and the continuing struggle between the positivist and constructionist camps, continues unabated. From this I identify several themes that I hope will permeate my research.

In **Chapter 3** I trace the evolution of my action inquiry approach to developing and improving an online coaching practice. What emerges is how I've been driven in my lengthy Polanyian-like search for enlightenment by a strong constellation of values. Partway through my stint at Exeter, this constellation led me to a shift towards the research pole of my action research practice, so that I might better elicit my knowing and 'carry the word' into the public domain. And this has helped me clarify my own aligned version of the quartet of 'ologies' – axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology - that are critical to what I can know and how I can present and support my claims to knowing. I also have made explicit my evolving methodology for coaching and how I've gone about learning what might make it an effective way to support the development of a situated practice like leadership through an online programme of higher education. So this chapter covers much of the territory first encountered in Chapter 1 but is now more directed towards highlighting the elements which will in time synthesise into an online coaching 'pedagogy of presencing' which I bring together in Chapter 7.

Having set out my context and research approach, in the next three chapters I continue to develop my methodology in order to better notice and understand what I begin to consider are signs and examples of learning, development and educational influence in this online distance learning medium:

- In **Chapter 4** I demonstrate the possibility of the existence of 'fleeting moments' of educational influence, starting very much with Wittgenstein's idea of a *primitive reaction* being that very first spark of potential new knowing, and the precursor to the creation and evolution of a language-game (Wittgenstein, 1958). So this chapter is very much about how the characteristics of normal conversation, such as their anticipatory, suggestive, and improvisatory character, can also take effect within the asynchronous environment of the MA, leading to mutual meaning-making between coach and student.
- Building on these findings in **Chapter 5** I go on to show how such primitive reactions can evolve into new *language-games* during what I call 'development episodes'. In these, through a largely tacit process of 'dwelling' in what Polanyi calls the 'subsidiaries' (Polanyi, 1983), students evolve the new 'focal' framings that enable them to 'know how to go on' (Wittgenstein, 1958) in everyday situations which they find novel, difficult, or unsatisfactory in some way. So in this chapter I make the case for language-games being seen as deeply enmeshed in practice, and so enablers not only of new ways of talking/thinking but also of the development of new ontological skills needed for authentic embodied performance.
- In comparison to the findings in the chapters on 'fleeting moments' and 'development episodes', the longer term distillations in **Chapter 6** provide more of an aide memoire that reminds, stimulates, and provokes further reflections and self reflexive questioning about the phenomenon of leadership, about the efficacy of leadership development activity, and about the contribution of the student-coach relationship towards improved scholarship and practice. The more patchwork form that these *reflexive biographies* take on (Scott, 1995), indicates the desirability for greater engagement and creative involvement of the student in sense making after the event through e.g. finding the 'red thread', filling in gaps, providing evidence for claims, defining outcomes, and so on – and in most instances this is provided. So this chapter is about providing evidence of significant changes of an ontological as well as epistemological nature that have taken place over the longer period involved, and further provide evidence that the educational relationship between student and coach has played a pivotal role. So e.g. as one of the students reported: 'I think that it is my tutor who is the *fulcrum*'. [my emphasis]

Finally in **Chapter 7**, I build on these earlier understandings about challenges and educational progress in the thesis, and turn to capturing and creating a more integrated picture of the key elements that have formed my own personal working pedagogy over the past five years or so. This framework includes all the key elements I've already explored in some detail in earlier chapters, like *presencing developmental possibilities,* the *responsive repertoire,* the *development container,* and *online indicators of development,* but these are discussed now as parts of an online pedagogy, and in the light of my deeper framing of educational mission – *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice.* Finally, in the light of what I now consider to be exemplars of a postmodern pedagogy for supporting the development of situated practice, particularly in online programmes, I set up a short critique of the pedagogy I've developed, and invite you to join me in assessing this contribution in terms of the meaning framework I've developed in these pages.

To legitimate my claim that coached online education can support the development of a situated practice like leadership, I believe this thesis has to articulate at a high level of argument and provide evidence for, the following five assertions:

- *conversation* understood as an anticipatory and improvisatory dialogical process, is the 'ultimate context in which knowledge is to be understood' (Rorty, 1980)
- 'gestural' language (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and psychological 'instructions' (Vygotsky, 1986) offered in 'dialogically structured' interactions (Bahktin, 1981) can provoke 'primitive reactions' which through 'indwelling' (Polanyi, 1983) can lead to new 'language-games' (Wittgenstein, 1958)
- engaging in new language-games that enable students to 'know how to go on' in their everyday working life, develops the tacit knowing and ontological skills that enable improvements in situated practice
- development processes like this can take effect in online, written, and asynchronous online interactions when coach and student are able to co-create a culture of inquiry that generates and values multiple ways of knowing and ontological experimentation
- *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite social practice* is an inclusional and contextualising coaching tool that forms the centerpiece of an online coaching pedagogy that supports inquiries that lead to improvements in scholarship and situated practice.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

Having set the scene in this Introduction, I now invite you to continue reading this narrative as I begin my story more formally in Chapter 1 by taking you on a Cook's tour through my own reflexive biography of the past four decades. As I do this I'm very aware of my own sense of vulnerability as I commit my personal knowing, with an attendant claim to 'universal intent' (Polanyi, 1983), to the public domain. I'm hoping that as you engage with the multi-media text you will experience what Marie Huxtable has called 'empathetic resonance' (Huxtable, 2009, p 221) and be able to get closer to what I'm striving to communicate in this text[3].

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[3] As Daniel Everett who spent 30 years in the Amazonian jungle living, learning, and researching into the lives and language of the remote Pirahas tribe, says: 'These are *my* lessons. Someone else would no doubt have learned other lessons. Future researchers will have their own stories to tell. In the end, we just do the best we can to talk straight and clear.' (Everett, D. 2008. *Don't Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle.* London: Profile Books)

CHAPTER 1

LIVING LIFE AS A 'PRESENCER OF DEVELOPMENTAL POSSIBILITIES'
Who is the 'I' telling his story of his educational influence?

'Yet looking forward before the event, the act of discovery appears personal and indeterminate. It starts with the solitary intimations of a problem of bits and pieces here and there which seem to offer clues to something hidden. They look like fragments of a yet unknown coherent whole. This tentative vision must turn into a personal obsession; for a problem that does not worry us is not a problem…This obsession, which spurs and guides us, is about something that no one can tell: it's content is indefinable, indeterminate, strictly personal.'   *Michael Polanyi, 1983, pp 75-76*

'…His acts are personal judgements exercised responsibly with a view to a reality with which he is seeking to establish contact…Any conclusion, be it given as a surmise or claimed as a certainty, represents a commitment of the person who arrives at it…As he accepted …the discipline which the external pole of his endeavour imposed on him, he expects that others…will also recognise that presence that guided him…he will claim that his results are universally valid. Such is the *universal intent* of a scientific discovery.'   *Michael Polanyi, 1983, pp 77-78*

I choose to start my thesis with these two quotes from Michael Polanyi to suggest that, though not a 'scientist' in any conventional sense, I too have been on a journey of discovery which, with the benefit of hindsight, I can now trace back over at least four decades. It is one that I set out on very probably without knowing it at the time – though as Polanyi says, I probably did have 'an intimation of the coherence of hitherto not comprehended particulars', seeing 'something that is hidden' (Polanyi, 1983, p 21), *and* have been 'guided by sensing the presence of a hidden reality toward which our clues are pointing' (p 24). As a consequence my discovery has not been produced by 'applying explicit rules to given facts' but 'anticipating the approach of a hidden truth' (p 76), as I've been seeking to establish contact with multiple realities that seem to characterise my field of practice.

In this opening chapter as I guide you through my 'reflexive biography' (Scott in Barnett, 2000), I hope to show you how I have been pursuing an original but diffuse question which I now believe I've been able to grasp, at least momentarily and sufficiently enough to explicate both the framing of the problem and my resolution to it, at least in one particular context. Though you will notice that there have been many diversions and excursions off the straight and narrow, I hope that by the end of this chapter you will have a better understanding of both the context and the purpose of my inquiring over the years, have a sense of why it has intrigued me so, and have a good appreciation of the key ideas that have brought me to this place where I feel I can now make claims about my personal knowing of reality with 'universal intent'.

And so to begin with the unfolding of my 'unique stories within the context of everyday events' (Paley, 1990, p xii) in this opening chapter, I tell the emergent story of my development as a professional who works with people both as scholars and leaders, to help them improve their influencing, learning, work performance, and leadership practice of self, others, and their social formation (Whitehead, 2009). Though this is something I've been occupied with one way or another for well over 40 years, my story

will focus primarily on developments from much later on, beginning in the early 90's when I first considered the idea of doing a PhD while at Kings College London, and continuing on into the 00's when I started my studies at the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARRP) at Bath University.

I say 'considered' because my reason for undertaking such a task was not to get the higher level qualification but to find a focus for my own personal inquiries which seemed to be continually expanding, stretching me wider and wider as the years went by. Though I found this ongoing exploration of whatever I got curious about to be enormously satisfying, I also experienced a growing tension inside myself which I realised was an increasing need to also synthesise and consolidate all this learning, to make it part of my everyday practice, and so make a contribution to the world around me. The focus and discipline involved in creating an original piece of PhD level work seemed to offer a fruitful path - and as the developers of 'appreciative inquiry' are fond of pointing out, questions that you focus on are 'fateful' in the sense of implicitly determining what we find (Ludema et al, 2001).

So what follows *is* a 'fateful' story in this sense, of my struggle to find the focus, narrow my explorations, and develop the disciplines needed to achieve a level of consolidation of effective practice and scholarly knowing I might find satisfactory…at least for a while! What I hope you will gain in this initial chapter is a better sense of the evolving contexts in which I've been operating and the central questions that have been energizing my work and my associated inquiries – so you can judge to what extent my thesis responds to the question that has been evolving over these many years. In this chapter in particular, I make extensive use of the 'patchwork' model, which I first came across in the writings of Richard Winter, for organizing my writing. As he says: 'A "patchwork text" is a general name for written texts where the unifying structure is not simply a linear narrative but a series of loosely linked pieces illustrating a theme or gradually building up a set of perspectives' (Winter, 1999, p. 67).

I make use of this arrangement because I'm seeking to make sense of a learning and development history that spreads over some 40 years. To do this I will place before you extracts from various writings stretching back as far as the late 60's, to show how my focus, my thinking, and my practice has been changing (*and* in other ways, staying the same) over that period, as I've committed myself 'to a belief in all these as yet undisclosed… consequences…' (Polanyi, 1983, p 23), filled with a compelling sense of responsibility for pursuit of a hidden truth, knowing more than I can tell! I also use this form of writing to guard against any obvious attempt by myself to create a smooth, coherent, 'grand narrative' of what has essentially been a very varied and messy process, with many diversions and interruptions along the way.

So you will come across in this chapter a range of writings (<mark>highlighted thus</mark>) excerpted from longer papers located in the appendices to this chapter (these highlighted excerpts will also be visible in the appendices). I place each of these excerpts in context, offering up to date reflections, and seeking to link to earlier and later pieces, in order to create a 'red thread' through this chapter. You will also find that during this story I will make passing reference to many authors and academics who have influenced me, and hence my work with others, over the period, and who are important shapers of my experiences and the resulting narrative. Many of these will again make appearances in later chapters, especially Chapter 3 where I will explore in much more detail the axiological,

ontological, epistemological, and methodological aspects that condition both how I provide development support and how I've approached this piece of research. (Heron and Reason, 1997)

To give you an idea of the ground I'm going to cover in this opening chapter, I offer the following set of 'headlines' which I hope convey the flavour as well as the content of the sections that now follow: 'Early Days' – my initial experiences of leadership, consultancy, and my burgeoning interest in new ways of looking at organisation life, covering the period from the mid 60's till the end of the century; 'In the Middle' – the transition from an easy going and broad exploration to a more focused and disciplined interest in doing research on leadership and leadership development, covering the first few years of the new millenium; and 'The End Game' – exploring some of the key challenges I experienced in sampling and making sense of the huge mass of textual data associated with my MA work, linking these to my experience and knowledge of the literature, and then developing ways of organising and presenting my findings in a 'readerly' style.

THE EARLY DAYS – first flirtations and stirrings

Though I occupied positions of leadership at high school and later at university, I performed these naturally and without much reflection. It was only later, after I'd started my management education at Edinburgh in 1966-67 and then worked as a work study engineer in construction in Ontario, Canada that I believe I first started to get interested in learning about, and helping others learn and develop their, leadership.

Excerpt 1: the mystery surfaces – performance, people, and politics

Before returning to the UK in 1970, the last work study project I did at Nanticoke GS, a very large coal-fired power station on Lake Erie, was of a completely different order to what I'd been doing in the previous two years. From studies of detailed construction work processes e.g. rock drilling/concrete pouring/cable laying and so on, I was now pre-occupied with a major re-structuring of the overall planning and control system used to manage the very large and complex 3000 man project. And this, as I was soon to learn, involved grappling with the associated political and cultural fields in which this existed, and which in many ways were more significant than the technical efficacy of the system. As I quote in my work study report at the time 'The inter-group problems were not purely those of "personalities"…obviously also historical and situational determinants…[which] appeared to be that of "influence processes" a usual problem in line/staff relations.'

 This was in a sense, my first proper management consultancy assignment but as an insider facilitating and supporting the main players. I can now see it was a significant and effective piece of work going far beyond the usual work study/efficiency focus, and dealing head on with deep-seated conflicts between three groups who needed to work together for the project to succeed. However, to use Miller and Rice's framework (Miller and Rice, 1967), each of the three departments had *shared* task (function) and sentient (nationality/style/age) boundaries which supported a mutual unwillingness to understand the views of the other departments, leading to continual communication difficulties, conflicts, and ineffective working patterns.

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This first excerpt reveals a glimpse of the interests that were to pre-occupy me for the next 40 years, and can be seen some twenty years later when first registering for a PhD at Kings College London. Here my research question was about 'facilitating better communications between journalist and managerial "sub cultures" within the BBC'. And again, some ten years after this in the early framing of my research question in June, 2002, when I started the CARPP programme at Bath: 'How do I improve my practice as an independent facilitator to help managers in large bureaucratic organisations improve their communication skills in order to create informal, innovative, issue-oriented and cross-disciplinary communities which support and enhance the effectiveness of their organisations'. Yes, more complicated - but still pretty much focused on the same theme!

Excerpt 2: learning new perspectives – it's OK to be confused!
But first let's move forward just a decade to 1979. I've been back in England for 9 years, and I'm now an enthusiastic management consultant several years into a new career, engaging in exciting re-structuring and change programmes with large organisations like Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, and the National Coal Board. Senior executives in these companies are seeming to attribute to me enormous wisdom and power to solve their problems...though I'd never worked in their industries or done their jobs! I had found this puzzling and frightening and after a couple of years of trying to stay one week ahead of the game (I *had* done an MBA at the London Business School in 1971 – what else does that equip you for?), I'd gone to The Grubb Institute in London, to seek their advice on how I might better live up to these inflated expectations. I worked with one of their senior consultants, the late Barry Palmer, and contracted to do over a period of some six or so sessions, something they called 'organisational role analysis'. As I say in the article I wrote some 25 years later when at Exeter 'The scales were falling from my eyes and the very things which I'd been using to guide my contribution to these large change programmes, and that people were finding so "insightful", "interesting", and "creative", were now starting to look rather simplistic, narrow, and decidedly biased'. The sentiments in the Graves poem he sent me, particularly the punch line - *'He in a new confusion of his understanding; I in a new understanding of my confusion.'* seemed to accurately capture and positively connote the very state I felt I was in: so it *was* OK to feel like this and a necessary step in learning and developing.

My work with Barry Palmer (McCaughan and Palmer, 1994) certainly brought to my attention the power of an alternative perspective to use to 'peer beneath the surface' and offer new understandings about self, others, and the cultures in which we performed. This was probably the real beginning of what I now refer to as 'systemic thinking'. A few months later I found myself enrolling on one of the famous two week Tavistock Working Conferences at Leicester (Sher, 2003) - my hard nosed consulting colleagues thought I must be having some kind of a breakdown to go on something as weird as this! - to be followed six months later with a move to work full time at The Grubb Institute for a year or so – I saw it as taking a 'sabbatical' – in order to *really* learn about learning my trade.

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Despite journeys like this into the Tavistock tradition of group dynamics (Lawrence, 1979) and later the more cognitive 'modelling' approach of NLP (Bandler and Grinder, 1979), I was still pretty much engaged with this idea of 'systems' out there that one could study/re-design/change, and was finding this view of 'socio-technical systems' (Flood, 1999) a very useful approach in all kinds of situations. I was now much more aware of the 'human variable' and the benefits of involvement. So I was now a sophisticated 'systems' man - or was I…?

Excerpt 5[4]: how I see the problem is *part* of the problem!

A couple of learning experiences in the early 90's completely shifted this 'paradigm' if you like, and 'nudged' me along another much less certain path. I'd heard about the Milan Systemic Family Therapy approach while working at the Grubb Institute in the early 80's, and was intrigued with the mysterious way they seemed to be working with anorexic children and their families. Always being game to learn new approaches which I could adopt and adapt to my own organisational practice, I went along (almost a decade later!) to a two day family therapy workshop being run by Cechin and Boscolo, two of the founders (with Selvini Palazolli and Prata) of this innovative approach based on the ideas of Gregory Bateson (Jones, E, 1993). I was astonished at the impact on what could be seen in what they called the 'observer position'; and further, as I report: 'The comments made by Cechin were mostly playful and irreverent - as though what we were doing was a kind of a game, and we could allow ourselves to improvise and play about with the realities we were 'showing'/observing. He seemed to be modelling a kind of lightness where positions could be taken with a kind of temporary conviction - and then dropped without too much sense of loss, to explore another possibility.' It seemed as though what we were seeing was 'created'/not 'real', that other constructions might be more useful e.g. use the term A 'shows' and *not* A 'is', and that it was in our interest to find such constructions e.g. frame problems in ways that were resolvable. As the late David Campbell of the Tavistock, who was to become a colleague and close friend, proposed in a seminar I attended soon after: 'how I see the problem is *part* of the problem!' (Campbell, 2000)

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Excerpt 3: creating *social* realities - choosing what to foreground

The second frame breaking event happened in June 1993. I was now running a small consultancy at Kings College London and had attended a five day workshop on 'systemic thinking' being run by Peter Lang at the Kensington Consultation Centre in London. Special guests invited included American academics Ken Gergen and Sheila MacNamee, who were to talk to us about 'social construction' – intriguing? In fact I found the experience literally 'mindblowing' as Ken and Sheila introduced us to this wholly new way of looking at experience (Gergen and MacNamee, 1992), offering some delightful role plays to show us how each successive 'response' could completely alter the meaning of a conversation. I was so impressed, I invested in a ten day visit to New Hampshire in the USA where Ken and other colleagues like Shotter, Sampson, Cronen, and Lather were holding the first international 'social construction' conference.

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[4] this excerpt appears out of order because the papers in the appendix are in *date* order and this incident, though happening in the early 90's, was only commented on in a paper written some ten years later, after I'd registered on the Bath CARPP programme

After the conference I wrote a ten page note trying to capture the amazing variety of ideas that had been introduced e.g. Patti Lather suggested that validity is a limit question of research methodology…less a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing multiple frames which are able to co-exist…[so] There is an issue of what I'd choose to foreground and what I choose to background, and the difference this makes to the interpretation... This was also my first experience of an academic conference, and I remember feeling a level of irritation with many of the presenters who seemed over-concerned with disciplinary boundaries and not so concerned with practical matters. But it was also an expansion of my willingness to be uncertain, to welcome alternative and competing perspectives, and a desire to engage more deeply with this way of looking at experience.

<center>*   *   *</center>

These two events were inviting me to fashion a new world view where e.g. validity could become something that is multi-hued, and where I could have some choice in looking at situations from several different points of view, taking responsibility for foregrounding one over another to grapple with each local situation. I can see that I had now become engaged in evolving what I'd now call a new 'language-game' (Wittgenstein, 1958) which was transforming my view of knowing and how I was learning, and helping me picture a new form of living.

Excerpts 4: shifting from 'expertise' to 'co-creation'
It was also during this period that I first registered for a PhD, encouraged by a KCL colleague Ray Holland (Holland, 1990) who was to become my first supervisor. I was at the time working on a book with David Campbell (who was to become my second supervisor!) and Tim Coldicott, two consulting colleagues, on applying 'systemic thinking' in organizations. I sent Ray an early draft of what was to become the second chapter of this book, which outlined some of my and Tim's thoughts about 'principles' we thought might be important in our 'systemic' work i.e. 'From these 10 reframes…we can draw certain conclusions about the criteria that systemic consultation in large organisations needs to address…as we begin shifting from 'expertise to co-creation' His response was very encouraging: 'I can see immediately how you have ordered some of the most significant achievements of the systemic-constructionist bodies of knowledge into a usable framework'.

This first venture into writing suggested that the 'early 'stirrings' from the Nanticoke GS period were still alive and well some twenty years later…perhaps Polanyi was right? By this time, I'd also been working very hard on development projects in large organizations for some 15 years, both as line manager and independent consultant. And while I was 'earning a living' this way, I also regularly engaged in a parallel stream of explorations in a wide range of other professional fields like family therapy, and body-oriented practices like shiatsu, t'ai chi, and Feldenkrais, trying out a wide range of ideas from these fields to improve my facilitation and coaching practice. I will comment further on these developments in Chapter 3.

Most importantly, during this period I seemed to have crossed a critical development boundary, transforming the way I was looking at and relating to the world about me. For

example, using Torbert's leadership development framework (see Chapter 6 for more on this), I had left behind me the levels of Expert and Achiever, explored many highways and byways in the 'post-conventional' territory of Individualist action-logic and was now pushing into capabilities at the Alchemist level and beyond (Torbert and Associates, 2004). Very exciting!

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But we'd now entered a new millennium and with time passing, I felt I needed to become much more disciplined about my approach to my research studies. With only minimal support and supervision since first registering in 1994, the virtual lack of formal progress on my PhD studies told me I needed more of an academic structure and closer supervision if I was to engage more effectively with academic inquiry and writing: 'physician heal thyself'…the CARPP experience at Bath University was beckoning!

IN THE MIDDLE – becoming more focused and disciplined about inquiry
After registering with CARPP at Bath in 2002, I began to work at improving the discipline of my reading and writing. I developed a greater ability to reflect and be reflexive during what was an exhilarating first year with regular workshops and the need to write and discuss short papers in small group reviews with a supervisor. The most stimulating challenge was the basic question offered by one of the tutors, Jack Whitehead: 'how do I improve my practice?' which certainly seemed to fit beautifully with my own inquiry, and has continued to do so ever since.

One of the important issues to respond to in this regard was to become more aware of the embedded assumptions and values that I was committed to and expressing in my work, to help me identify what 'tradition' if any I might implicitly be working in. In my case it seemed to me and others in my supervision group, that I was someone working in the 'systems' tradition and the next three excerpts I offer, all concern my inquiry into this claim. In particular they demonstrate that while this might have been 'true' in the 60's and 70's, I had experienced a continuing dissatisfaction with aspects of this tradition and had sought to find new angles from outside the field through which to broaden my own knowing and 'improve my practice'. I believe these extracts also show very clearly my by then, almost built-in tendency to continually 'presence developmental possibilities'[5] for myself through which to translate my cognitive knowing into new embodied practices.

Excerpt 6: **searching for 'roots in the future'?**
The first of these excerpts was sparked off by a student colleague reflecting on her 'Jewish history' which reminded me of my own sense of fragmentation, alienation and a lack of rootedness - in the context of an upbringing in a broken home in apartheid-riven South Africa, and subsequent re-location in England some 35 years previously. As I remark, as a way of understanding what I'd been doing all these years, I was now seeing

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[5] this way of describing the process emerged much later on in conversation with Jack Whitehead in 2008, but as you'll be aware, was to become a central feature of my coaching work

this as 'a search for roots in the future…to look at my experience, my tacit knowledge, and intentionality as an implicit search for roots for an emerging identity - not in my past but in places where I've not yet been…for a "me" who would feel grounded, confident, and "at home"' This revealed to me more explicitly not only the historical influence of my biography (and geography) on present thinking, but also the seemingly magical way that the less-than-conscious, embodied form of thinking that goes on all the time, can be released through a 'not thinking' kind of activity like driving on a motorway!

A student in my group felt that the 'roots in the future' metaphor suggested I was suspended in the air! But while reading some material on 'complexity theory' (Stacey, 2001) I got the idea that we could also be 'pulled by the future', though what attracts us; and which cannot be understood from our everyday consciousness. So it seemed to be OK to be 'seeking roots' on a journey towards some Polanyian 'attractor'! I also see in this writing and the metaphor of 'seeking roots', the start of a fundamental shift in me from being interested primarily in epistemological and methodological concerns, to questions of ontology and axiology – as I say, 'a search for a "me" who would feel grounded, confident, and "at home"'. And though I didn't realize it at the time, this focus on ontology first and epistemology second, was to find a stimulating resource in the 'living educational theory' approach that my supervisor Jack Whitehead had developed i.e. how to inquire into how my embodied values/standards of judgement emerge as I study my everyday practice with others (Whitehead, 2009).

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

The second extract I offer comes from a follow up paper I wrote some six months later where I labelled the 'I' that is doing the researching, as a 'systems' man.

Excerpt 7: **marginalized voices and re-punctuating 'power relations'**
As you can see in this paper, I had been 'driven' over the years to seek out a wide range of different perspectives to remedy what I felt to be shortcomings in my practice, or at least shortcomings in the 'theories' of my practice. In addition to the key concept from 'complexity theory' of 'emergence' (Stacey, 2001), in this paper I pick out experiences that have continued to have a strong influence on my perceptions, motivations, and behaviour, including the idea of 'punctuating' experience:

'the influence of the "observer perspective"…So what you saw was not an objective fact *about* the system, but a 'punctuation' which became a part of the system or problem you were thinking about… we create our own realities in language in conversation with others… through use in a language-game (Wittgenstein, 1958)…[and the need] to understand the practices and power relations that produce and sustain a particular view of life and reality…[and] to problematise or deconstruct accepted views of what is going on, seems essential if I am to help people in that system create space for other possibilities to emerge'

As I re-read this paper, I'm amazed at how persistently my dissatisfaction with my current practice at the time, has driven me onward to look for better ways of understanding and influencing learning and change over a period of some 25 years. For

example my criticism here of the views of advanced 'systems' writers like Senge (1990) and Flood (1999) regarding their neglect of 'power' in work relations, shows how problematic I find cultures that marginalise voices, and explains why I'm so interested in pursuing Foucault's views on this issue, to see how I might address this more effectively with clients and students. Going back to the Polanyi quotes at the start of the chapter, it seems clear to me that there has definitely been something at work here that could quite properly be called an 'obsession'.

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The third extract comes from another early CARPP paper where I seek to show how my own thinking is being influenced by the ideas of others, in this instance the ideas of Michel Foucault. My admittedly passive and tacit awareness of the marginalisation of a large part of society during my upbringing in apartheid-ridden South Africa provides one shameful reason. Less obviously but felt strongly enough, is my own long-standing sense of fragmentation associated with the separation not only of 'white' from 'black', 'indian', and 'coloured' but also 'white' (English/'rooinek') from 'white' (Afrikaans/'boer'). Many of the 'voices' that I should have had within me throughout my early development as a South African are sadly mute or poorly developed, a realization brought home to me while taking part in the 1997 Worldwork seminar in Mumbai, run by Arnie Mindell, and focusing on facilitating conflict resolution and 'deep democracy' (Mindell, 1995).

Excerpt 8: **'fingerprints' - do I know '…what what I do, does?'**
As I wrote in the previous section, Foucault's ideas (1977) allow me to 'understand the practices and power relations that produce and sustain a particular view of life and reality…[and] to problematise or deconstruct accepted views of what is going on, seems essential if I am to help people in that system create space for other possibilities to emerge'. In the face of the numbing effects of the formal aspects of bureaucratic life, I've regularly been shocked at how timid and passive intelligent and powerful people can behave, blaming 'them' up there for the problems. And at a more personal level, I have also had to admit to the self-subjugating process of striving to achieve what seem to be generally admired ideals, and the resulting tendency to marginalize local knowledge, especially of the 'tacit' variety, in favour of expert 'universal' knowledge. It is here that I believe his thinking encourages us to listen to forgotten or marginalised voices, opening up new possibilities for influence and sense making; and offers me the opportunity to get closer to the 'truth' or 'reality' of living, not in a universal world but in a world defined by a particular discourse.

In writing this paper, I seemed to have become far more aware of the effects of power relations, that both constrain and afford, and the challenges of becoming and staying aware of your own contribution to/'fingerprints on' existing asymmetries as you act with the best intentions. 'As Foucault himself put it: people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do, does (quoted in Prado, 2000, p 29)' And with this greater awareness of 'what what I do, does' I feel that it is possible, despite the 'masking and insidious effects of disciplinary power', to become an *agent* in the production of my own life and those around me.

When I work with a group involving different professionals like accountants and programme makers, I often feel that they are just talking at each other and no real communication is taking place. There seems to be little appreciation of one's own standpoint or that of 'the other', so it seems to me that such people need to become much more aware of their own tacit knowledge e.g. assumptions, beliefs, root metaphors, etc, before they can hope to understand these 'others'. And the next excerpt comments further on this idea.

Excerpt 9: moral frameworks: from 'subsidiary' to 'focal' awareness
Accordingly, and still building on key ideas the literature offers in this third extract, I seek to clarify further the nature and value of *tacit knowledge* and the challenges involved in making this a more central focus of my work with others. I identify two features which are to significantly influence the further development of my research: the idea that much learning is largely a tacit process (called 'in-dwelling' by Polanyi) and one that in contrast to most 'objective' teaching practices, directly includes the body/emotions as well as relevant aspects of context; and secondly, that much of this learning can usefully be understood as forming embodied 'artifacts' which embed the individual in the context in which they are working (Ilyenkov in Burkitt, 1999). In other words, both of these can be understood as particular forms of 'local practice'.

Polanyi offers some useful ideas in this regard. As he puts it, in comprehending an entity e.g. an idea or object, we rely on our awareness of its particulars (through subsidiary awareness), to attend in what is an emergent process, to their joint meaning. So as I report: 'Whenever we use something to function as a proximal term of tacit knowledge, we incorporate it into our body, or extend our body to include it…so that we come to dwell in it…and it becomes a sentient extension of our body…[and therefore can act] like a moral framework which acts as the "proximal term" through which life is viewed…[so] Our body becomes the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge, and there can be no purely objective knowledge.'. So one of the big challenges for me is how to work with managers to help them develop alternative epistemologies through 'interiorisation', so that it becomes something that influences their perception and behaviour as they go about working to improve their own effectiveness in their relations with other individuals and groups.

My thinking here also points to the concept of the 'language-game' (Wittgenstein, 1958) which effectively reframes experiencing, and 'practice theory' (Schatzki et al, 2001) which reveals the continuities between individual and local context, which is something which I will be developing further in Chapters 4 and 5 where I look at work by people like Vygotsky, Ilyenkov, and Garfinkel, as well as Wittgenstein. There are also signs that I have begun to contemplate a fundamental paradox I'm facing in this research: how to capture and write about what I see as the most important kind of learning and knowing i.e. tacit knowing about practice in context, while working in typically asymmetric power relations as a purveyor of what is seen as largely propositional expertise. With a focus on the explicit, both knowledge and expertise, that consultants of all forms are expected to bring, how possible is it for me not to be caught up in such power games? In seeking to help others through e.g. showing them how to fight the drag of central policies and create space for local initiatives, am I not

devaluing the very thing I say I'm valuing: their own experience, local knowledge, ideas, contextual sensitivity and networks of capability?

THE END GAME – clarifying the focus
In this final part I focus on what has emerged as the actual focus for the PhD itself – the study of the contribution of online coaching pedagogy to the Masters in Leadership Studies at Exeter. These developments have taken place during the period 2003 to 2011, a period which includes two years of temporary absence from study due to personal/family circumstances. What had originally been a broad interest circa 1995 in the facilitation of intergroup communications in organisations had gradually been pared down over the years to a much narrower focus circa 2003: how to improve my practice helping mature students self educate and develop capability in leadership, in order themselves to engage more effectively in such work in a world of 'supercomplexity' (Barnett, 2000). In this final section I use excerpts or 'patches' from ten further papers/diagrams/e mail exchanges included in the appendices to Chapter 1, to populate the narrative with now increasingly up to date examples of how I've been presencing my own developmental possibilities as an online coach and a PhD research student, while offering the same kind of educational support to students, and the educational social formation in which they study.

Excerpts 10: 'living present' - how can we work on the future in the present?
This part of the narrative starts just after I'd successfully passed the Diploma transfer stage in early 2002. The first excerpt is drawn from a note I wrote for a supervision discussion following a special review I'd requested with Judi Marshall one of the founders with Peter Reason, of the CARPP action research programme. She felt I was 'formidably resourced' - would my seemingly continual search for 'more/better' perhaps become degenerative? She thought I would be attracted to 'Patricia Shaw's work on complexity (Shaw, 2002) and the use of a conversational approach to strategy and change…her ideas of 'opening conversations'- which I took to be essentially *contextualising* interactions…I'd come across her colleague Douglas Griffin's work on leadership and ethics (Griffin, 2002)…I liked his way of talking about a 'living present'…In this more spacious and participative sense of the present, things like identity formation and social context arise *at the same time,* not sequentially. She wondered if I might be interested in the potential for working in a far more fluid and creative way with whatever comes up[6]…

I had worried about losing my identity/expertise…if I started to work in a more unstructured and shared way, just what would I be bringing to the party? But following my review with Judi of the earlier 'smorgasbord' comment from Donna Ladkin, another of the CARPP tutors, it became clear I did need to develop a sharper focus! I also didn't need to be so 'formidably resourced': I could be effective working more in the moment, improvising, and presencing. I soon tried this approach out with one of my BBC groups. Rather than offering a structured approach we 'talked briefly about the notion of how we construct our futures not in grand plans/formal agendas but in what we do in our informal interactions in the present…invited them to be aware *as they worked* of what kind of a future they seemed to be constructing and comparing this to what they were saying they wanted to create… came across Jack's [Whitehead] reference to Scharmer's

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[6] in commenting on the ideas of 'contextualising' and 'living present' in the context of working more fluidly and creatively, this excerpt reveals two very significant aspects of my emerging pedagogy as early as 2003

article on 'presencing' (Scharmer, 2000)…felt a shock of recognition: he was using 'my' model of change in his paper!...the similarities were clearly there, particularly in the language used…continue pursuing the goal of working on the future in the present *and* raising awareness of the tacit knowledge available to people to deepen their awareness'

Clearly, I would need to pay more attention to my learning edges e.g. like what is holding back the fluent expression of my multi-vocality in mutual inquiries, and looking first to my own experiences as against abstract ideas. And this is to what I turned to after having a year off to take care of family difficulties.

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

After successfully completing the Diploma Transfer process in April 2003 I took a year's break, re-registering in October, 2004. What had emerged since my last formal piece of writing was that my general approach during the Diploma stage did in retrospect look quite open-ended – as though I was preparing myself to study 'anything'. I'm sure this was what Judi Marshall was pointing to when she remarked during our discussion in Bristol in June, 2003, that my research questions were mainly about the 'how', and therefore asked *what* my inquiry was about. Indeed, what was it to be about? Two things then happened which were to help me with this need to develop a clearer 'what' focus for my research.

In March, 2004 I was appointed a consulting fellow at The Centre for Leadership Studies in Exeter and quite early on was invited by Peter Case the academic director of the MA programme, to become one of the first coaches (the other was Donna Ladkin, ex CARPP) on the new 'coached e learning' version of the degree. It soon began to dawn on me that despite my long held interest in the wider aspects of organisation behaviour, I had quite fortuitously located myself in an institution that offered a particularly rich context in which to pursue inquiry into one crucial element of that complex domain – that of *leadership* - and the questions about what it is, how it's done, how to develop it, and so on. I was introduced early on to Keith Grint's idea that that leadership is 'an indeterminate skill that masquerades as a determinate skill' (Grint, 2000, p 419), and much more to do with the skillful application of a number of 'arts' of leadership.

Excerpt 11: developing 'leaders' and a 'relational' view of leadership?
What was now staring me in the face was the opportunity to study leadership and leadership development, not 'out there' in other external organisations, but at first hand on the MA in Leadership Studies I was coaching on! So an opportunity for me to be researching and speaking 'from' as against 'about' (Shotter, 2008). Talk about not seeing the wood for the trees! But in contrast to my usual preference for looking to 'contextual' interpretations of events, this caused me to reflect on the very personal and unique nature of the artistic process, and the thought that perhaps I needed to be a little less closed to insights from the 'individual as centre of the world' perspective.

While I was starting to get to grips with this new educational coaching role, I continued with my leadership development consulting work. And in this context, working with

groups of leaders within organizations, I continued to pursue my inquiries into more relational approaches to leadership and development. Working on an assignment for Royal Mail with Jonathan Gosling, Director of the CLS, we began experimenting with this approach where '"leading becomes more a function and expression of a network of relationships and less that of actions of *the* leader " (Gergen, 1999, p 6)…Further, in contrast to more conventional approaches where capability is seen as something "out there" and something to learn to do, we were being more ambitious and were "hoping participants might move more towards qualities/performances that *they were a part of* i.e. constituted by the relations they were in." This concept of leadership represents a more extreme form of relatedness or "becoming", pointing towards what Martin Wood referred to as the "excluded middle" (Wood, 2005)…I was now more committed to "the argument that meaning and identity are largely constituted by how we use language in networks conditioned by power/knowledge relations**…**the notion that mind is embodied, thought largely unconscious, and abstract concepts mostly metaphoric**…**the proposition that these ideas and associated human behaviours can usefully be seen as embedded in complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2001)"… This new perspective chimed with a conversation I'd had with Jack Whitehead about Alan Rayner's work on 'inclusionality' (Rayner, 2010), where his use of terms such as the "complex local self" and "relationally dynamic awareness" seemed to point towards a more relational ontology'.

What stands out from this excerpt is how, while I have become even more interested in *relational and diffused* views of leadership, I have at the same time started to focus my research attention on the process of coaching *individuals* to improve their leadership skills. My year off and the rapid developments in the first 6 months of restarting study seems to have had the desired effect: I appear to have found a fruitful research site where I could explore my ideas about the 'relational' kind of leadership that interests me – I might call this my 'ought' view of leadership - while paying attention to the 'is' view of helping individual students improve their own leadership practice. I was now left with the question: 'is it possible to entertain a notion of diffused, dispersed, and distributed leading implied by the process perspective, while engaging and working effectively with individuals who are called 'leaders' and who wish to develop their own skills?' As Alvesson and Deetz have proposed (2000), I'm now attempting to follow different themes without attempting to resolve tensions which might offer a synthesis… at least at this stage. What a difference a year can bring!

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Excerpt 12: **'becoming' through 'rooting in the present'**
With the need to take part in workshops at both Bath and Exeter, I find I've many opportunities to reflect on my learning during the MA coaching activity and my development work with organizations. My impromptu mutterings into my digital dictaphone while driving back and forth on the M4/M5 motorways, lead to a rich array of insights and new ideas, which I transcribe and write 'diary notes' about. One of these magical creative moments occurs when I find myself synthesizing a range of concepts and experiences which develop and expand my earlier identity-related idea of 'seeking roots in the future'. The new idea moves to a more dynamic process verb: 'rooting in the present'. This is a search for roots but in the present discussion or situation, and –

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taking the presencing 'move' - in ways that already embody those 'roots in the future' something that I can work with and influence *in the moment* rather than just reflect on after the fact…[the] sort of stance that Patricia Shaw [2002] talks about in her book on complexity…In this new framing I seem able to take my original metaphor of 'seeking roots' in a more *relational* direction in which I transform the metaphor from its existing methodological or 'how' emphasis, to a 'becoming' or ontological framing i.e. **'I'm searching for my identity in the present moment, in an ongoing process of 'becoming'…finding out/creating who I am *as* I help others.** Here I bring the relational perspective explored previously as an 'out there' epistemological concept, much closer to home to a place where I'm proposing that the formation and maintenance of my very identity could be influenced in the process of educating students and clients.

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Excerpts 13: creating a 'virtual' culture of inquiry: minimal conditions?
And now as I settle into focusing my research lens primarily on my coaching work on the MA programme, the opportunity for monitoring and analyzing such a process in more detail becomes a possibility. And this is what the next excerpt starts to explore, taken from a chapter I wrote for a new book on 'systemic thinking' co-edited by the late David Campbell. What I focus on in this chapter is how to create and support learning opportunities that are experienced as 'close' to the context of performance, thus reducing learning transfer by bringing into focus the *relational and contextual* implications of personal and organisational development, as well as the more usual cognitive and behavioural aspects. As I comment in regard to the MA: 'Obvious problems to struggle with here include asymmetric power relations between the university and mature students (the university 'knows'/the students don't), dynamising and personalising the learning materials to suit a wide range of participants (creating a 'personal' MA), and encouraging students to apply ideas, and learn from applying these, in their work roles (tackling the 'transfer' problem identified earlier)'

What becomes clearer as my experience builds, is that 'it seems quite possible to create a pedagogy which is quite *personal* in character, where knowledge appears to be largely *co-constituted*, *and* where the learning is very much to do with *local performing contexts*…[a] working hypothesis begins to form: "close learning" in the pedagogic or development "space" is best achieved when the coach is able through his/her "receptive-responsiveness" (Rayner, 2010), to "indwell" (to live with…at a tacit, experiential level for a period of time)… the *learning relationship* between coach and student…[in this situation] the coach is able intuitively to make comments and share ideas which seem to come from *within* the relationship, providing powerful support to the student…[and this] very much constitutes the conditions for a 'culture of inquiry'.

It seems that as the MA programme begins to draw me in, my writing turns more to dealing with the character of specific issues affecting student learning and the coaching relationship. At the same time having to write a chapter on my version of 'systemic thinking' generates the concept of a 'systemic' mindset or spiral which helps me generate multiple perspectives that can inform a side-by-side approach to coaching. My earlier thinking about 'close learning' gets a stimulus from the regular interactions 'at close quarters' that the weekly learning log exchanges provide; and the digital record of

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these interchanges begins to provides a textual record which, though I don't realize it at the time, will prove invaluable in the later stages of the research.

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Excerpt 14: **'close learning': development as improvisation?**
In 2005 the new director of the MA, Donna Ladkin, and I decided to write an academic paper about the programme, involving two other colleagues in the process, and this next excerpt comes from a piece of writing that was a part of this first formal inquiry into the online coached version of the long running residential programme (Ladkin et al, 2008). It was written in response to a question from one of the independent reviewers of our submission to *Leadership* who asked us to compare our approach with action learning. As I was asked to draft our response to this, it brought home to me the importance in such writing of positioning one's writing to parts of the 'field' that readers, reviewers, and examiners might consider relevant and possibly critical. 'What we are trying to achieve with 'close learning' is to facilitate relevant learning/development close to the situation of action – so the 'transfer gap' between 'learning/applying' is minimised. In the optimum position, as in improvisation where 'composing/playing' becomes simultaneous, this gap is eliminated. By definition this involves encouraging students in attempting to use new ideas to inform their behaviour-in-context i.e. in action, and then to learn something about themselves and effective practice from these experiences, both in the now and later in reflection and questioning with their online coach and colleagues.'

While I'm engaged in discussions about this article with my academic colleagues, I am surprised to find that I'm using different standards of judgement to them. In addition to the normal presentation of cognitive knowledge that a 'studies' programme looks for, I also want to see what students are doing or going to do with the newly experienced idea, in terms of *developing a level of skilled performance*, and *applying it in their own practice* in order to improve their own and others' performance. As my intent focuses on *situated performance,* my criteria go beyond the usual requirements of the university, the academic director and the external examiner, to include the kind of tacit and embodied knowing that leads to authentic performance in real life situations.

On reflection, I realize that the experience of using 'close learning' thinking on a development programme with a client in the public sector (discussed earlier in Excerpt 13) has provided a useful contrast with what I'm doing with students on the MA. And here in writing this piece, the need to contrast the MA with the action learning approach helps me clarify what is different and unique about the programme. So back to my research question – 'how can I improve my practice' to build on and exploit these differences to student advantage?

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Excerpt 15: **research:** *from* **improving practice** *to* **responding to context**
Something I found very useful through-out the decade was using sketches and diagrams to explore and clarify how I was thinking about my practice and about the research of

my practice. This was a habit first initiated in the late 60's when I learned about 'critical path networks' at Nanticoke GS and developed over the years through attending workshops as diverse as 'soft systems methodology' (Checkland and Scholes, 1990) and studying ways of mapping/diagramming discussions. I include here two of the diagrams to provide another view on how my thinking was developing over the period. The first diagram created in May, 2006 illustrates how I see the relational and circular nature of educational *influence* within the learning process, from supervisor through coach and student to the student's organisations. The labels indicate my particular interest in creating a 'culture of inquiry' in order to help students access 'marginalised or tacit knowledges', using the tools of multiple ways of knowing, close learning, and embedding/embodying development in the workplace. The focus is very much on the 'how to improve my practice' aspect of the thesis.
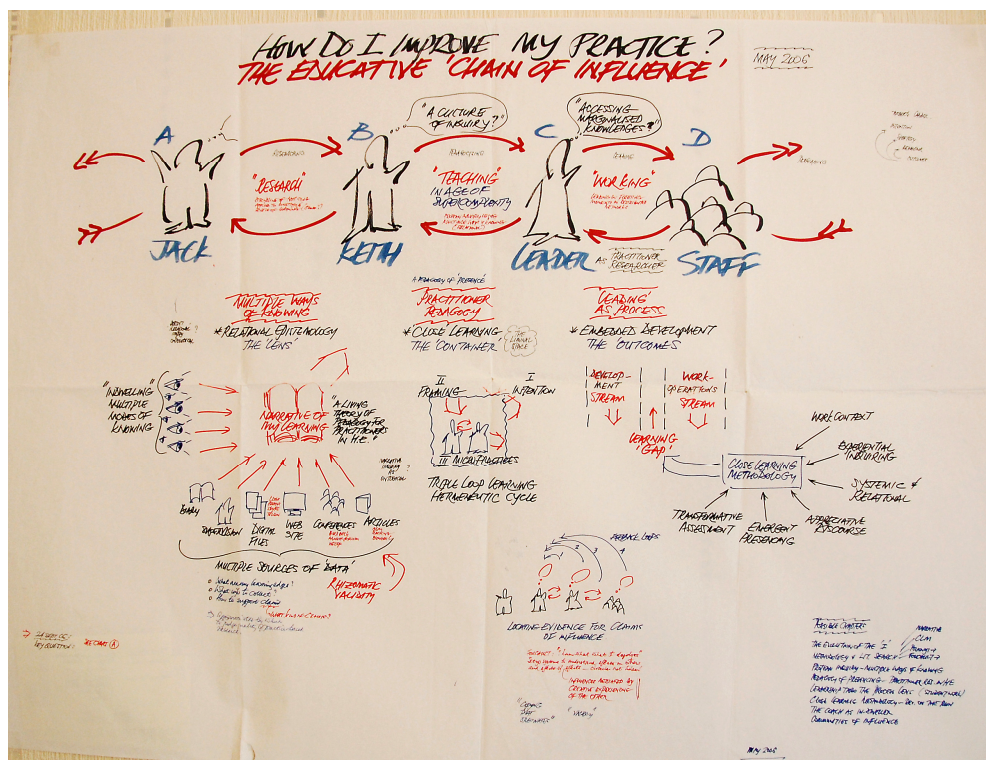
DIAGRAM PREPARED FOR SUPERVISION SESSION IN MAY 2006

In this second diagram prepared some 4 years later in February, 2010, my attention has shifted much more from my practice to the *context* in which my inquiry is taking place (particularly on the left hand side of this diagram); and locating my argument much more centrally within current concerns and ideas in the educational landscape - like helping students navigate through complex educational ecologies (Lee and Rochon, 2009), and finding means of accessing and systematising the rich resources of tacit knowledge possessed by educational practitioners (Farren, 2001). The various processes identified in the earlier diagram are still very much present but these have evolved and been focused: there are now more specific learning outcomes as pictured on the right hand side of the diagram, and more clarity about the educational tools that I'm using and their influence.
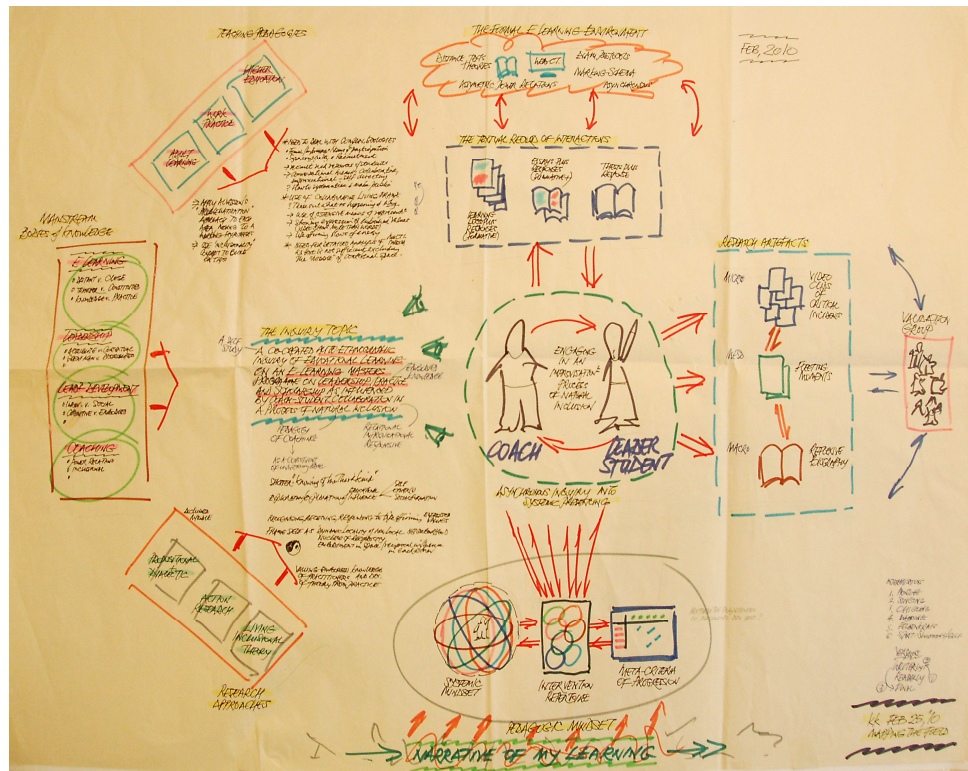
DIAGRAM PREPARED FOR SUPERVISION SESSION IN FEBRUARY, 2010

The two diagrams show in pictorial form how my perspective on the inquiry has developed over the four years, with a marked shift towards the appropriate *contextualization* of the more detailed work I've been doing with students. This 'lifting of my head' has been in response to the need to be much clearer about where in the educational research field, the learnings of my lengthy personal journey might problematise, cast new light, and/or usefully fit within the particular domain I'm working in. The need to make claims of originality and critical judgement, and the need to provide evidence to justify these, has also had a useful effect in encouraging me to look more at the 'what is' as against my usual pre-occupation with 'what might be', as I look at ways of improving my practice.

These also offer a useful artifact of my newer framing of 'presencing developmental possibilities' identified in the Introduction. What becomes more obvious here is my intense interest in the practice of 'contextualising', both 'inwards' towards the people involved and 'outwards' towards the situation in view, so acting very much as an artifact/tool for *including* and mediating the 'excluded middle'. Or alternatively using Rayner's concept of natural inclusion, to see this as a tool that allows me to appreciate and respond to the permeable and fluid boundaries that act as interfaces and are inclusive of dynamic local 'figural' neighbourhoods and receptive 'intangible' space (Rayner, 2010).

In the final excerpt in this chapter – Excerpt 20 – I make use of the second diagram to talk through my thinking with Jack Whitehead, about how I now see the thesis, and what steps I feel I need to take to begin bringing closure to the research phase and begin 'writing up' the narrative[7].

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[7] What was I thinking when I wrote this sentence – as if there was *any* chance at all of 'bringing closure' to the 'research' phase when I still had the whole 'writing' phase to work through!

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

I had been wondering for some time how I might better understand, present, and validate the *tacit* aspects of the educational process. My own experience suggested these were very important but I was struggling to see how I could capture and demonstrate this to others. In this regard, Jack Whitehead had in the past mentioned on several occasions the potential benefits of using video recording as a means of capturing and presenting information on interactive processes like teaching, and I felt that this might well provide an answer. But I wasn't sure how. So at one of our supervision sessions I asked Jack if he would video our discussion so we could explore how it might add value to what I was doing.

Excerpt 16: **coaching as 'presencing developmental possibilities'?**
The following two short video clips - *presencing developmental possibilities parts 1 and 2 -* are taken from the 70 minute video produced in 2008 and capture in real time the emergence of my original concept of 'presencing developmental possibilities', and how we then explored the potential relevance of this in my inquiry. I review each of these clips in detail in Chapter 3 when I use them to demonstrate aspects of the development of my methodology, and so I include the clips here without commentary just to show how they fit into the trajectory of my patchwork narrative. I suggest you wait till Chapter 3 to view them. However I can say here that my immediate response to viewing and reflecting on this audio-visual material made me an immediate convert to using such methods in my own work, both because of the deeper insights into the communication process they make available and the richer evidence they provide to illustrate and support consequent claims of influencing and knowing.

1. *presencing developmental possibilities part 1*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZC-DvE7N50

2. *presencing developmental possibilities part 2*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6PiA7txcuk

One of the methodological issues I had been having some difficulty with was getting to grips with the several ways in which values or criteria can be used in 'living educational theory' to address questions of 'why' – the axiological, 'what' – the ontological, 'how' – the epistemological, and 'how of how' – the methodological. And further, how these could be written about as 'ontological' or embodied values, as 'standards of judgement', and as 'explanatory principles'. In a series of exchanges with Jack Whitehead throughout the research period, I had been making my own sense of this multiple usage and in the process had been generating a number of possible candidates for 'standards of judgement' which were emerging in my practice. I deal with these questions in great detail in Chapter 3, and so here just note that this has been an active process as I try and get inside my own mediated use of this research-oriented language.

Excerpt 17: embodiment, emergence and standards of judgement

As I indicate in this excerpt from an e mail to Jack during this period: 'At the level of knowing-in-action, I'm using some standards of judgement to decide whether what I'm doing is right or not, and whether others' work deserves praise e.g. my message to a student colleague about the importance of quoting his own local knowledge. These standards can be thought of as values because I decide on their basis, whether or not something is good or bad. But because I'm often not conscious of what standards of judgement I'm using in the moment – they have become streamlined and tacit through many years of evolution and use - they can be thought of as *embodied* values, not theoretical or espoused values: it's right to think that they will inevitably emerge in my practice as I'm pushed this way and that by client challenges – what really counts for me, will out! So, as you say, I identify and clarify the meaning of my embodied values in the course of their emergence through my practice…I can use them to evaluate my own learning and likewise expect others to use them to assess my claims to this learning...

But if I wish to influence others, I need to follow certain rules of the game. I need to expose to public judgement the evidence I'm using to make these personal claims of learning and influencing others. And I need to do this in a convincing way which encompasses my whole experience of living, not just those parts that fit with my theory…it's important that I expose the 'I' that is doing this learning and evaluating, in a full sense – both those aspects where things are working and those that are in a sense a negation of that desired story, the contradictions that I create and am exposed to as I try and live a worthwhile life in the real world'.

It's clear from this that as I begin to consider writing up my interim findings, I find myself engaging (yet again) with what I might call the 'languaging' aspects of living educational theory. And what I realize again is that this is not a reified approach where definitions can be understood once and for all and applied in a standard manner. For each researcher this is a dynamic meaning making process where as Garfinkel put it, we need to regard each event as always happening 'for the very first time', and find the language to do justice to this process (Garfinkel, 1967)

*   *   *

Excerpt 18: **coaching: making 'connections' or revealing 'dynamic continuity'?**
Jack had introduced me quite tentatively and briefly to Alan Rayner's new thinking about space and boundaries as far back as 2005. But it was only in 2010 that I started to look at his ideas more seriously. One of the stimuli for this was the draft of his keynote speech he delivered in Australia that year (Rayner, 2010) which provided a more systematic, concentrated and lucid introduction to his concept of natural inclusion. Once I started to read this I got really attracted to his ideas and quite quickly took the opportunity to exchange some thoughts with him, to check my understanding of what he meant and to get his views on some my ideas to do with my approach to 'systemic presencing'. We seemed to get on the same wavelength quite quickly and very soon I sensed that his ideas, particularly that of '*revealing continuity*' as against '*making connections*', offered a wholly new image for my work with students. The textual record of our several e mail exchanges over a period of several weeks appears in Appendix 18 but the following brief interchange will give you the flavour of our conversation:

'(KK) my coaching work attempts to provide the *dynamic connectivity*…that helps learners heal the ruptures that they conventionally experience as they work with conventional linear logic offerings…This feels to me to be an example of a process of natural inclusion in which my continual 'presencing of developmental opportunities' is a receptive and relationally responsive improvisation to what I tacitly sense the person-in-context (or local neighbourhood[s]) is calling for…(AR) Yes, your approach does sound to me to be 'inclusional at heart'. In terms of language and logic, I'd suggest you might find the phrase 'dynamic continuity' works better than dynamic connectivity to describe what you are seeking to provide…(KK) when I read: 'natural inclusionality treats boundaries as energetic interfacings/influences and space as continuous receptive presence everywhere' and recognises that 'the presence in the gaps' is a source of continuity, not discontinuity, which doesn't stop at boundaries, I shout out 'of course: how could I see it as something that 'eliminates gaps' when they aren't there! How language entraps the unwary mind…(AR) I might add that what especially impresses me is your recognition that what is needed is more by way of REVELATION of what is, has been and always will be PRESENT all along - by way of receptive and transfigural space - than ADDITION of some new connective construct. The treatment of this receptive and transfigural presence as an absence or 'void nothingness' is at the root of the paradoxical inconsistencies of abstract rationality'.

This interchange did two things for me: it confirmed that there seemed to be a resonance between my own explorations of influencing and Alan's ideas about natural inclusion: 'this all makes good inclusional sense to me'. Further, given that our exchange was entirely via e mail without any face to face or telephone contact, it provided further evidence of the educational power of virtual communications of this kind even for complex and difficult topics like this one – we seemed able to engage in a real dialogue without any of the face to face and 'to and fro' of normal comversation.

The main idea I took from this exchange was the one of 'revelation' i.e. that my many different attempts to influence learning and education – which I had seen as seeking to 'make new connections' in the minds of others - could more fruitfully be framed as 'revealing what was always there'. And revealing not to me but to those learners themselves, who could then do something about it. This fitted much better with my idea

of a 'de-centred' practice (White, 1997) where the student's experience and development occupied centre stage, with the facilitator performing the light touch

'from-behind/alongside' role. So this new 'flow-form' way of looking at influence/identity felt like it needed to become another key part of my pedagogic approach.

<center>*   *   *</center>

CONCLUSIONS - 'recognising the presence'
As I near the end of this 'patchwork' introduction to some of the highlights of my development biography over the past forty or so years, I think I should offer some glimpses of where I felt I'd got to a year and a half ago, before I started to write up the first draft of my thesis. I do this by providing a few patchwork quotes from the e mail note I wrote to Jack Whitehead at that time.

Excerpt 19: natural inclusion and a 'pedagogy of presencing'
Since the brief but encouraging interchange of e mails with Alan Rayner last week, I've been engaged in the process of 'indwelling' - exploring, experimenting and implicitly embodying various aspects of Alan Rayner's new concept/value of natural inclusion, which I see as his own 'punctuation' (to use a Batesonian term) of the evolutionary process…in particular my 'becoming-in-relationship' view of ontology and the multi-frame 'systemic presencing' model that has informed my way of working with student learning logs…

In talking to Alan about how I now saw my coaching role, I used the term 'offering dynamic connectivity'. And I suppose what I was thinking when I wrote to him was about helping people 'close the gap' between one thing and another, like 'theory' and 'practice' or 'development' and 'performance'. He pointed out that this implied 'rupture' between the two, and a more inclusional phrase would be *dynamic continuity* where the apparent presence of absence between so-called 'discrete' objects, is *not* mistaken as an absence of presence…So instead of describing what I do as, in a sense, 'importing' new knowledge to close a gap, I'm now thinking that what I do can now be framed as *revealing presence*…what I'm doing is helping the person (and myself) notice something that could have always been there i.e. a previously marginalised, subjugated and unnoticed aspect of *continuity*, that relates his/her 'figure' to his/her local neighbourhood…

Because in the online space of e learning, I cannot myself see/hear/feel what is in the student's situation, any questions, challenges, and proposals have to be co-creative and improvisational in intent: he/she has offered me some kind of clue, I have responded, hopefully in a receptive and responsive way, and he/she will then offer some kind of tentative 'closure' by their next move in the 'conversational triplet' (Barnett-Pearce, 1989). And then we continue in the dance…

Alan has made the point that I should be careful not to isolate the 'being' from the 'becoming' and instead view the process as one where we can "*understand the 'present' as a dynamic inclusion of 'past' in the coming of 'future'*" (Rayner, 2010). This view definitely resonates with my understanding of the presencing process, and so I'm now thinking that I could see my 'rooting in the present' as an inclusional process in the sense that is relational, responsive, and improvisatory, and that my 'complex self' and those of others I'm working with, are being formed at the same time as we presence

<center>44</center>

*   *   *

Excerpt 20: **'anticipating the approach of a hidden truth'…?**
As a final commentary on this narrative I offer a video clip from the last supervision session I had with Jack Whitehead in 2010, just before I started the writing up process. To set the scene for this discussion, I offered him my view of where I'd got to with my research since our last supervision session, using the second diagram that I presented earlier in this chapter in Excerpt 15. As I finished my opening statement, he said right away, gesturing to the diagram, 'you've got your thesis'; and he then went further: that the 'contextualisation' of my work that I had just offered him 'is a transformation in the nature of your understanding of what you're doing'. I too feel in the way it captures my energized and animated manner, that it offers a good benchmark of where I was at the time, both in terms of thinking and feeling, and I include it here to give you a richer and more personal impression of what this thesis is about.

Because of the size limits on videos uploaded to You Tube (which I've used to get feedback from others), I offer this clip in two parts. In the first part you will notice that I begin by showing Jack a diagram I'd presented to him and other PhD students some 4 years earlier, and then speak to an updated version of the diagram which captures further developments in my thinking (note: both of these diagrams appear earlier in Excerpt 15). In this first part - *presenting the thesis, part 1* - I concentrate on summarizing my process of working and researching my working - to identify amongst other things the learning/development 'artifacts' being produced and the 'tools' I've constructed to support the learning process. I also start addressing components on the left hand side of the diagram concerned with the context in which students and I are working.

KK presents thesis – part 1

3. *presenting the thesis, part 1*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmEBdldG5c4

In the second part - *presenting the thesis, part 2* - I continue to explicate my reading of the context and how I'm planning to adopt a 'problematising' approach to clarify the

niche I want to focus the thesis on. I also then talk in more depth about the need for the research to capture, present, and validate what is actually going in the educational process and the critical contribution that students make to this. This then leads on to the advantages that multi-media methods of data capture can bring, showing us much more about what was said and how, than the words alone[8]. I also begin to wonder whether higher education institutions might with some advantage begin to think about coaching not as a 'nice to have' but as a critical resource for developing situated practices.

KK presents thesis – part 2

4. *presenting the thesis, part 2*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7a9ur5nZUk

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

I hope you've enjoyed and found useful what amounts to a 'quick canter' through many of the highlights of my forty year development journey. And I hope this 'patchwork' narrative excerpted from the twenty appendices, has given you a sense of how I've been influenced regarding what Polanyi refers to as '…the act of discovery appears personal and indeterminate. It starts with the solitary intimations of a problem of bits and pieces here and there which seem to offer clues to something hidden. They look like fragments of a yet unknown coherent whole. This tentative vision must turn into a personal obsession…'. I also hope that you're now better informed about the evolving contexts I've worked in, the question that I've slowly been revealing to myself, and the progress I've made in getting towards an answer of sorts…and that you will also 'recognise that presence' that has been guiding me (Polanyi, 1983).

I believe this chapter, and the more detailed appendices that support it, offers you a taster of most of the ideas that have influenced my own development and that of my facilitative practice, and which I will use to inform my arguments. In looking back at the narrative I believe it provides evidence of several significant transformations of sense of self, focus, and nature of my knowing that I've undergone over this period. One move which may not be all that obvious from the material in this chapter, is how I've changed my focus from a desire to 'change the system' through e.g. consulting work and 'large group interventions' – so a *consultancy* role; to a perspective where I'd

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[8] recently in a Skype discussion with a student, Peter, I made a jokey play on Polanyi's 'we know more than we can say', saying that when we use video 'we not only know more than we can say - we can also *show* more than we know', the video revealing much that is hidden from conscious awareness.

reduced my ambition to focus on influencing the thinking of small groups of managers in e.g. group coaching and 'action learning sets' – so a *facilitation* role; to finally a realization that the only person I could influence was myself, and a further 'retreat' to first person ethnography – so a self improvement and *research* role. Regarding my own approach to knowing, I believe these changes in focus and role have been accompanied by three parallel transformations in my epistemology, as follows:

1. *From 'systems' to 'systemic' where I've moved from seeking 'the facts' and propositional explanations to ones where the influence of human interaction looms larger and there is a need to explore the 'social facts' of personal meaning and motivation before an understanding can be formed and validated*
2. *From 'systemic' to 'social constructionist' where the power of language to construct realities, and the influence of power relations and dialectics on the particular meanings warranted within the social discourse, is recognized*
3. *From 'social constructionist' to 'embodied practice' where I've become much more committed to the tacit and ontological dimensions of meaning making seeking explanations in the relational and inclusional patterns of practice within local contexts in the moment*

Following Rayner (2010), I do not see any of these shifts as taking place between discrete phases with clear boundaries, but as a useful punctuation of how my thinking and becoming has evolved over the period. And also following Torbert's Leadership Development Framework (Torbert and Associates, 2004), I see them as being different aspects of a nested 'Russian doll' concept of knowing where all kinds of knowing are relevant and available.

In looking back I also realize that there is one very significant gap in the coverage of my formative experiences in this chapter, and that is the fact that I've not commented on any of my explorations and learnings from a range of *embodied practices* like shiatsu, playing golf, t'ai chi/chi gung, swimming, portrait painting, Feldenkrais, choral singing, and so on. With the goal in each of these being the development of *embodied skills*, I've not felt the need to *write* about any of them, and so effectively their 'voice' has been mute here in this 'text' dominated narrative. However, you will soon find that their 'voice' has been anything but quiet in my lived theorizing and practice over the decades. This influence will become more evident as you progress through future chapters, and I'll 'pull in' relevant explanatory material when appropriate.

So in summary, I seem to have been able to improve my focus and get closer to the issue I've been pursuing all these years, in a specific area of practice: *coaching on an online higher education degree devoted to improving a situated practice.* I've largely followed my own path to this point and one important question now must be – how does this fit into the research field(s) that it is a part of? In the next chapter I will position more clearly the particular question I've chosen to pursue in greater depth, in its context, and show how it relates to the various 'fields' it conjoins. Following Alvesson and Deetz's lead (2000), I will also then seek to problematise many of the conventional ideas and approaches located in these conjoining fields that seem to be regarded as 'mainstream', in order to seek a more defined problem space for my inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE COACHED E LEARNING MA IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

> 'Thus, in so far as we want to teach expertise in particular domains and practical wisdom in life, which we certainly want to do, we finally run up against the most important question a philosopher can ask those who believe in the educational promise of the World Wide Web: can the bodily presence required for acquiring skills in various domains and for acquiring mastery of one's culture be delivered by means of the Internet?'
>
> *Dreyfus, 2001, p. 173*

At the end of Chapter 1, I had reached the point in my story where I'd identified the idea of an 'online coaching pedagogy of presencing', and wanted to continue taking steps both to improve my practice and find ways of sharing and testing my knowing with others in the public domain. In this second chapter I want to lift my eyes from my coaching practice to look more carefully and critically at the educational world around me in which my own small and local study is located, to find out how my inquiry might link and contribute towards one or more areas in this broad and diverse 'field of practices' (Schatzki et al, 2001, p 2), and identify ideas that might further help me in my quest to improve my practice. This will then set the scene for the more in depth review that follows in Chapter 3 of how my chosen methodology for knowing what can be known, has evolved. So in this chapter, I begin with a brief review of the latest thinking about the doing of educational research and how my own work might link with critical issues being identified in this field. After a brief introduction to the MA in Leadership Studies itself, I then follow with a review of relevant research in what I see as the six practice fields that constitute the immediate context for my work. Finally I identify particular themes which I want to employ to condition my approach to the action research process.

APPRECIATING COMPLEX ECOLOGIES

In their opening to the 2010 AERA Annual Meeting 'Understanding Complex Ecologies in a Changing World', Carol Lee and Ronald Rochon (2009) state that 'education research sits inside what Donald Stokes calls "Pasteur's Quadrant", referring to the dual focus of building basic theory while simultaneously improving practice.' This implies not only that attention be devoted to these two generally separate streams of activity but also to the multiple opportunities for learning and education that occur in formal and informal settings, both physical and virtual, in the complex social, economic, and political ecologies that people now live and work in. Often in our attempts to influence learning and its application we 'try to strip away complexity for presumed efficiency' (ibid, p 301) failing to appreciate the impact of larger cultural, political, and technological forces on the *nature and quality of participation* that's possible. According to Lee and Rochon, there exist a wide variety of differences in norms of participation which require that researchers and practitioners 'recruit' what and how they've learned in other settings, as resources with which to make sense and act effectively in new situations. And this requires that we in educational roles pay attention to the effects of how we organise and facilitate learning in educational settings, on how this facilitates and/or constrains the recruitment of diverse repertoires and their creative

exploitation in other settings. In other words we need to acknowledge and respond to the fact that effective learning for students 'entails cultural navigations.'(ibid, p 301)

So what does it mean to make 'cultural navigations' – and what might this imply for educational researchers? Jack Whitehead makes the point that the learner needs to be creatively engaged for learning to be experienced as educational (Whitehead, 2009). Biesta in his writing supports this view preferring to see learning not as acquisition but as a reaction to a disturbance, as a *response* to what is other and different. From this 'autopoietic' angle (Maturana and Varela, 1992), education is concerned not just with the 'transmission' of knowledge (not a metaphor I'd normally use) and skills, but also very centrally, with 'the individuality, subjectivity, or personhood of the student' (Biesta, 2006, p 27). So how might we create and facilitate settings where such learning might take place? There also seems to be a growing recognition in many quarters (e.g. Harre, 1979, Bohm, 1996 Isaacs, 1999) that we need to place *conversation* at the centre of our attention as it is here that we can focus on fostering the collaboration, improvisation, and emergent learning that will help students learn to appreciate and 'navigate' within the cultural contour lines they will come into contact with, that Lee and Rochon refer to.

In this connection, Maggie Farren in her BERA 2009 presentation, supports Snow's claim that 'the knowledge resources of excellent teachers constitute a rich resource but one that is largely untapped because we have no procedures for systematising it' (2001, p 9). And of course this applies to students too, especially those that are experienced practitioners. So the challenge for educational researchers, is how to systematise the study of the everyday activities involved, and make public the findings in ways which reveal the richness, subtlety, and situatedness of such knowing. As mentioned in my Introduction, this is something that AERA feels needs more attention, and will be the focus of their 2011 conference.

Since Boyer's call for a new scholarship of teaching (1990), and Schon's subsequent call for a new epistemology for a new scholarship (1995) to deal with the dilemma of 'rigor or relevance', the field has gradually opened its doors to new methods of data capture which offer hope of progress in this regard. For example, Eisner's pathfinding promotion of the use and legitimation of new forms of representation in the Academy (Eisner, 1988) has paved the way for the introduction of a range of new forms of digital/multi-media and web-based accounts of educational practices. These are now being used for the more disciplined and detailed recording and analysis of a range of new educational research practices like e.g. 'living educational theory' research submissions pioneered by Jack Whitehead (2009). These permit the exploitation of ostensive means of representation to show the expression of embodied values in which multi-media video can and does show much more than the words themselves, allowing different kinds of knowledge to emerge (Farren, 2009). These include the life affirming flows of energy which are associated with the embodied expression of the values which energise much educational interaction, and which can become the new standards of judgement used to assess the originality and critical judgement being exercised in the work (Whitehead, 2009).

So with this very brief introduction to some of the latest thinking and how these developments are impacting the field, let me turn to my own more limited project: coaching on the MA in Leadership Studies. And as I look upon this scene I'm astonished at how complex a landscape I face, positioned awkwardly in the midst of a

number of other fields which appear to have very different perspectives on my topic of interest. I'm reminded of Barnett's metaphor where he sees a university as a 'mosaic on the move' (Barnett, 2000) – is this what I'm facing? And with my own 'mosaic on the move', how might I frame a field of interest for carrying out action research on my own work that might usefully connect and share ideas with these fields, while perhaps operating on different assumptions and values? And will it be possible to find a way of doing this in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner, and in ways which satisfy Habermas' four conditions of social validity (Habermas, 1984)?

Sandberg and Alvesson's research into how researchers choose interesting questions for their research (2009), offers me a way forward. The most popular is 'gap filling' which is relatively easy to do as it keeps your work close to and in line with mainstream thinking. But they find that it tends to lead to 'boring' findings casting little new light on the subject. The other main approach they call 'problematisation' where the researcher instead questions the basic assumptions/findings of a field. This they say leads to more interesting and innovative research but there is a danger that this can distance and isolate you from the mainstream – so positioning can be a challenge. But I think this framing shows me a way of 'going on': identify the mainstream assumptions of the conjoining fields, review the ideas that have been put forward to contest and/or develop these, and then see to what extent 'problematising' this further might reveal an interesting and perhaps unique area for me to work in. That's what I'm going to do now, 'go on' for a little way, to see if I am able to work towards a more focused area of research, and identify key ideas which I can address more specifically in Chapter 3[9].

THE COACHED E LEARNING MA IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

I will start with a brief introduction to the MA programme so you can see how these various fields might impinge to a greater or lesser degree on how the programme was created and how it is being studied and supported. The Masters in Leadership Studies is a part-time, modularly presented programme delivered online over two years to participants who are in their late 30s and 40s and have at least five years of leadership experience. The students come from a wide range of organizations both in the public and private sectors, from the very large like the NHS and RAF as well as the very small, and with students from many parts of the world in each cohort. The reasons for engaging with the programme vary but typically students are seeking a deeper and more personal form of education and development than that offered by e.g. an MBA, to help them enhance their longer term career prospects within an organisation, support a mid-career change of direction, and/or help them establish their own business.

The programme is delivered over seven 'study phases' delivered in seven-week blocks over an 18 month period via a customized version of WebCT/Blackboard/ELE. During each week of a phase, participants download and engage with a variety of set course materials including notes and articles, video recordings, cases, inventories, and extended readings. The main communication channel between coach and student is provided by the weekly Learning Logs which invite students to reflect on course materials and make relevant linkages to their own experience and organisation, which the coach then responds to. Because of the pace of the academic programme, such responses and any ensuing discussions tend to be focused mainly on the week to week content of the syllabus, but over time longer term, more developmental questions also begin to emerge

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[9] this is an example of the coaching tool I've called 'presencing developmental possibilities' where I'm presencing an opportunity for myself to see where this approach leads to

and feature in these weekly interactions. At the end of each phase students have to submit an essay based on the ideas and experiences covered during that phase which are then formally graded and contribute towards the final award. These more reflective writings and responses from the coach can also begin to focus on longer term academic and practice issues that the learning logs reveal but seldom have time/space to address. After this 18 month period of guided and supported learning, students have to complete a six month supervised dissertation on a topic of their choice to gain the Masters degree. This kind of schedule together with the flexibility afforded by the coaching process itself seems to provide both the structure and give and take that students find useful studying for a part time degree, while engaged in full time employment,

As the marketing literature claims, 'one of the primary objectives of the programme is to encourage *critical engagement* with the theory and practice of leading and leadership…[in order to] delve beneath the surface claims of texts produced by leadership theorists and practitioners…[so that] assumptions of mainstream leadership theory – ends as well as means – are exposed and alternative possibilities considered. …The purpose of this pedagogical strategy is to enable participants to come to their own reasoned judgements about the contrasting views to which they are introduced…' This critical engagement with texts forms the central part of the curriculum, and it is possible for students to undertake the programme entirely and solely through web-based interactions. In practice, many based outside the UK have successfully completed the degree without ever meeting face-to-face, their student colleagues, coach, or academics in the Centre.

Despite this, most students agree that it is the support of their personal coach who can individually tailor and supplement the standard experience, which delivers the real added value of the programme. Because these are one-to-one personal relationships, the nature, purpose, intensity, and methods used in providing the coaching component vary considerably between coaches and with their individual students. Some students, particularly those that are based overseas, only use the online written facilities and have no face-to-face or even telephone contact with their coach, other students, and the Centre. Others, particularly those that are located nearer to the university, attend the induction, dissertation, and other workshops which are offered regularly during the programme, and are also able to have occasional face to face sessions with their coach and sometimes other students, especially if several are from one organisation. Between these extremes, many coach-student pairings make use of intermediary media such as e mail, and telephone and Skype calls, to create a more 'blended' experience in what is essentially a distance learning programme. However, despite this potential for 'blending' and face-to-face contact, for most students the programme experience is likely to be predominantly one of a written, asynchronous, and web-based nature with other media adding just sufficient two-way contact to positively frame and influence the nature of the online interaction.

A final strand of variation within this mix of methods, comes from the different approaches used by particular coaches as they devise and support more tailored versions of the basic degree to offer a more personalised quality of education for individual students. Through supplementing and extending the standard readings and exercises to suit an individual student's interests and challenges, and varying the nature and pacing of development-oriented interventions, coaches can enable students to treat the MA programme not just as a period of study for a higher degree, but also use the experience to significantly develop their own sense of who they are and want to be, and develop the capabilities to support these transformational changes. When the programme works this

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way the impact of the coaching process goes well beyond the epistemological to influence the ontological and axiological dimensions.

The original seven 'study phases' preceding the dissertation period are listed below:
1. *Leadership and You:* understanding own preferences as a leader - *Online*
2. *Leadership Perspectives:* exploring the 'leadership canon' - *Online*
3. *Leadership Exchange:* how leadership is accomplished in practice - *Experiential*
4. *Strategy, Culture, & Change:* strategy, culture and change processes - *Online*
5. *Leadership Interventions:* putting learning into practice – *Experiential and Online*
6. *Contemporary Leadership:* contemporary debates in a global context - *Online*
7. *Research methods:* social science research philosophy and methods – *Online*

THE PLURALITY OF KNOWLEDGE FIELDS AROUND THE MA

You'll see from this very brief introduction that there are a potentially wide range of knowledge/practice fields each with their own traditions and perspectives, that are likely to influence how the programme was and is framed, studied, and led. Sticking just with
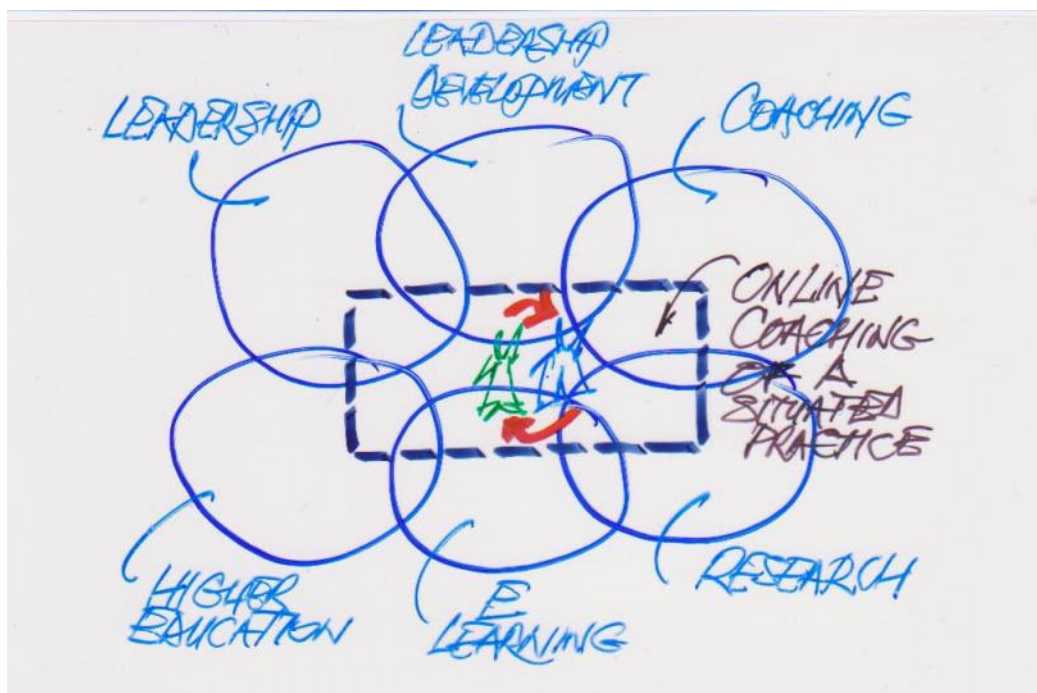
THE COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE
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what we might term the main 'fields', we already have six as follows: the central topic of *leadership*; how *development* of knowledge and capability may be achieved; the institutional setting of *higher education* in which the higher degree is offered and associated ideas of adult development; the particular method of *e learning* used to give the programme coherence and offer/control the processing of educational materials; the long term *coaching* approach used to providing learning support; and the *research methods* used to inquire into, validate, and present the findings of research into the educational process. I will now work my way through each of these in turn, to indicate what I've found to be the mainstream views in each field, what I've felt needed

challenge in seeking to improve my own work practice, and how these challenges have been informed, supported and/or amplified from different parts of that or other field. At the end of each of these sections I will also seek to tease out my own particular angle on the field that I'd like to take forward into my focal inquiry

Leadership

> 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, p 26*

In this section I'm looking for a framing of the phenomenon of 'leading' that will most help my students better understand, develop, and offer appropriate influence in their work environment, not the best or most popular model of 'the leader'. A very quick snapshot reveals that the dominant focus has been on the *individual* and his/her traits/skills. This long term view has more recently, in the face of the new challenge of rapid change, grudgingly moved towards some recognition of the importance of followers and the situation; and more recently, newer models have started to suggest that leadership could also have some distributed characteristics and that these are likely to be influenced by conditions of complexity.

In his recent exhaustive and very authoritative review, Northouse reports that as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership (Northouse, 2007). In attempting to distil all of this, he comes up with: 'leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal' (p 3). He makes clear that by using the word 'process' he opens the way for leadership to be seen as a transactional event *between* leader and followers, and that is interactive rather than linear, and so available to everyone. However by limiting the 'influence' dimension to the leader, and leadership to groups who have a common purpose and goals, he surely sidesteps several central and intimately related questions that are of the essence in understanding leadership: the *mutuality* of influence, the framing of *context*, the establishing of common *purpose*, and the creating of group *coherence*. As is typical of so much academic theory building, key aspects of the *background* are taken for granted so that the model can use propositional logic to focus on the simpler and more contained space that we are asked to accept *is* the leadership domain. As Bolden and Gosling conclude in their 2006 paper critiquing the competency concept, by treating leadership as a series of capabilities to be acquired and applied, the competency approach reinforces trait, behavioural, and contingency perspectives, and underestimates the relational, ethical, emotional, and contextually dependent nature of leadership practice (Northouse, 2004 in Bolden and Gosling, 2006). They by implication point towards a more *practice* oriented approach to leadership (see later comments on the 'practice' concept in the section on Research).

Collins' work on 'level 5' leaders (2001) and Greenleaf on the 'servant leader' (2003), though still caught up with the idea of the individual leader, with their focus on humility, hard work, and service to others, at least seem to support a more relational and less heroic concept. And then moving on further, Heifetz's ideas start to suggest that due to the demands of adaptation (2002), perhaps the leader is not and can't be the most important person in the organisation, and that a more 'orchestrating' role is required to help organisations address the value conflicts that arise. But it is Grint who introduces

some radical new thinking with his ideas about a 'constitutive' model of leadership where neither leadership or context need be seen as 'essentialist' (Grint, 2000). This highlights the central function of 'framing' [which connects with Schon's (1983) ideas about framing as against problem solving] and emphasises the power of rhetoric and the other 'arts'. He also emphasises the key function that understanding and influencing of 'the context' plays in all of this. Students often struggle with Grint because initially at least, he seems to be throwing out much of the edifice of leadership theory created during the last 100 years. But those that persist often find great insights, and because of this, and my own sense of its relative openness to e.g. Wittgenstein's ideas (see later), I find it is a useful one to use as a default of sorts for my action research work with students. I do use it though, specifically in the 'leadership' form (as against 'leader' form) treating this as an unfolding phenomenon of group behaviour-in-context in which so-called 'leaders' and others make situational and timely contributions.

So we've moved (well *some* of us have!) from the sole 'man on the bridge' in command of all 'he' surveys, through more skills, interaction, and situationally oriented models, to the latest thinking about more dispersed and distributed forms of leadership. These are still mostly propositionally formed theories that seek to explain all in their models, largely ignoring the ever-present need also to find ways of opening the model to the local context and conditions or to the needs of the moment, and how people might develop and use these. Though the later models offer the possibility that leadership could be a more relational phenomenon, there then seems to be little serious attempt to deal with the consequent dilemma for 'the leader' – so what do *he/she* do then? In most of these theories, there is a clear split between academic and practice goals and models with little interchange between the two. There are exceptions from people like Gergen in 'social constructionism' (1999) and Stacey (following GH Mead) in 'complexity theory' (2001) who seek to avoid the 'duality' by framing individual and society as being created *together at the same time*. But this provides only light stitching to the fissure which is consequently easily opened: in everyday behaviour most of us tend to quickly fall back to some version of 'great man' theory and, as Gladwell has reported, our preference for *attributional* rather than *contextual* explanations (Gladwell, 2000) seems stronger than ever.

I see the great divide here as being between 'individual' and 'social context' with most theorists seeming to favour one or the other side, and a strong but subsidiary split between 'theory' and 'practice'. The big issue for me is how to frame understanding of the leadership phenomenon in ways which allow students/practitioners to work with a more *situational, relational, and momentary* interpretation *and* one that looks for that kind of answer in expressive and embodied terms i.e. in *ontological* terms. With this in mind, I prefer to use the very open but in some ways quite narrow version of leadership as 'momentary orienting with others' that I take from Wittgenstein's ideas about 'knowing how to go on' (Wittgenstein, 1958, no 154). This allows for the timely and situational assessment not only of what kind of leadership if any, might be appropriate at any moment in time, but also who might do what with whom, so encouraging a more inclusional approach to the phenomenon as against the varieties of 'splitting' that we currently face.

This take on the phenomenon receives some support from a provocative paper by Simon Kelly entitled 'Leadership: a categorical mistake?' (2008). In this he uses Pondy's 1978 thesis that 'leadership is a language-game' as the starting point for an exploration of the idea of 'leadership as a discursive and locally produced phenomenon' (ibid, p 764). He comments that the twin concern of recent ethnographically inspired studies with

language and action has often led to leadership as 'an empirical object of inquiry…to disappear among the milieu of everyday life' and the everyday mundane work that so-called leaders get involved in (e.g. Mintberg, 1975; Stewart, 1997). The effects of the category mistake involved in choosing what the object of inquiry should be in the complex relationship between language and action, encourages him to propose a move away from the focus on the linguistic construction of leadership as a language-game towards what Wittgenstein called 'a form of life', where everyday action precedes and influences the *use,* and hence the meaning, of language (ibid, p 765). The example of a category mistake that's offered is from Ryle (1949) about a foreign visitor arriving in e.g. Oxford wishing to see 'the university' and who after touring all the colleges, playing fields, libraries, etc asks 'but where is the University?'. The mis-allocation of 'the University' – an abstract description for a collection of related organisations - to the same category as that to which these other institutions belong leads to the same confusions as the original 'Cartesian separation of mind and body'(ibid, p 772). He suggests that 'leadership should…be treated as what Wittgenstein (1953, no 71) calls a "blurred concept" around and through which language-games orient themselves. We should accordingly attend to the production of and relationships between language-games', and the 'relationship between "natural reactions", language-games, and forms of life in the production of an organisational setting' (Kelly, 2008, p 779)

And so this is the perspective on leadership I'm planning to use in looking at how the other 'fields' like *leadership development* might be supported, how *coaching* on *e learning programmes* might be offered, and so on. The assumptions in each of my six fields logically need to weave into and influence my thinking in the others. To progress further along this line of thinking, I believe I need to focus more directly on the idea of 'practice' - where practices precede individuals, both historically, logically, and ontologically and where there is no presumption of the primacy of individual action. Yes, the single individual participates in practices but any qualities are *qualities of a practice* and *not* qualities of the individual (Schatzki, 2001).

Development

> The leader's voyage of development is not an easy one. Some people change little in their lifetimes: some change substantially. Despite the undeniable crucial role of genetics, human nature is not fixed. 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 & Torbert, 2005, p 11*

Given this thinking about concept of leadership itself, how might we think fruitfully about the development of people who are 'leaders' and/or get involved in the process of 'leadership'? The dominant concerns here for many decades have been a focus on identifying and teaching sets of knowledges and skills thought to be essential 'input' for successful performance – now popularly known as 'competences' - and then dealing with the so-called 'transfer gap' that arises: how do you help students who learn something in the classroom transfer this learning into effective performance in local contexts? Some progress has been made in using Heidegger's ideas about 'building' and 'dwelling' to suggest that a situated practice like leadership would benefit from the latter (Ladkin, 2006), but despite this, the dominant force remains the competency movement relying on ever more sophisticated lists of behaviours and/or qualities thought to be critical for effective performance, developingways of teaching these, and then trying to find ways of reducing the transfer gap (Bolden et al, 2009). Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) have ventured into this terrain and with their concept of 'close

learning', have sought to bring the context and teaching closer together so that the learning that takes place in the classroom has in a sense less far to go, but it is still very much part of the narrative that dominates thinking and action on development.

Another interesting approach has come through the agency of communities and Wenger's work in particular on how specialist groups can come to possess the wide array of knowledges (Wenger, 1988), much of it tacit and shared, that allow the world to work. Much of this is invisible and undervalued and very difficult for the academic community to capture or do anything very effective with it, when they've got it. I see this phenomenon very much as an example of Foucault's (Foucault, 1976) marginalised knowledges – though we are much more aware of these now, we still seem to favour what we've always found much easier to study, write about, and commercialise i.e. *explicit* knowledge.

My own take on this is both macro and micro. At the micro level I identify strongly with Polanyi's views about how knowledge is personal and is created in tacit and largely unconscious ways: 'when originality breeds new values, it breeds them tacitly; by implication, we cannot choose explicitly a set of new values, but must submit to them by the very act of creating or adopting them' (1983, p xi); and the support he receives from Lyotard: 'The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done' (Lyotard, 1986, p 81). Further I believe this concept is supported in their different approach to this idea by cognitive scientists like Lakoff and Johnson who hold that most thinking/decision making is unconscious and metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). So to truly develop something new, there is a need for dwelling (Heidegger, 1971) or indwelling (Polanyi, 1983) for a period so that the idea/tool or whatever, can be fully 'fleshed out'. And I use this metaphor deliberately to show the need for it to be experienced bodily/viscerally and emotionally if it is to become an embodied part of a person's 'gestural' language with others (Merleau Ponty, 1962).

Furthermore this indwelling needs to fill out the parts of the tacit knowing of the 'subsidiaries' (Polanyi, 1983) that may be said to be 'contextually focused', so that people can be ready and practiced at unconsciously fitting their 'tools' to the issue in context in a timely way. And of course it also has to be value-based if their behaviour is to be experienced as authentic by the people who count – those on the receiving end! This is not something that can be built up once and for all at one time but needs to be a constant part of Polanyi's 'subsidiary', developing not only many options but also the ability to create new options.

At the macro level I believe most practical knowing is created dialogically with others in a constant anticipatory and creative manner, so that the knowing is shared and has a 'from' character that relates it to that context and contexts like it. As Garfinkel states: 'For the purposes of conducting their everyday affairs persons refuse to permit each other to understand "what they are really talking about" in this way. The anticipation that people will understand the occasionality of expressions, the specific vagueness of references, the retrospective-prospective sense of a present occurrence, waiting for something later in order to see what was meant before, are sanctioned properties of common discourse. They furnish a background of seen but unnoticed features of common discourse whereby actual utterances are recognised as events of common, reasonable, understandable plain talk.' (1967, p 40). Shotter in his recent more embodied approach to his concept of 'conversational realities' extends Garfinkel's concept to talk about a special *third kind of knowledge* that 'cannot be reduced to

either of the other two (a "knowing that" or a "knowing how"), the kind of knowledge one has *from within* a situation…or society; it is what we might call a "knowing from". Bernstein (1983) has called it a "practical moral knowledge"' (Shotter, 2008, p 16)

So the development challenge is to do with how to assist in the *revelation* to the other, the knowing they have themselves and with others. Development also needs to take account of embodied values, relations and context if it is to work, and the need to keep updating this knowing dynamically over time (how to go on now/here/with these). In relation to my comments on 'leadership' earlier, the great divide here seem to be between development being seen mainly as about increasing 'knowledge' (an epistemological quality) through a 'building' or 'warehousing' model, and then finding out how to 'transfer' this knowledge once it has been learned into practice; and development being seen as about learning how to do things in context on an everyday basis so that the knowing is much more an embodied, relational, and contexted phenomenon, and possibly also a feature of a 'practice' and not just the individual– so more of an ontological quality. So the big issue for me is how to frame and enact the learning and development process so that e.g. my use of Wittgenstein's 'how to go on with others' guide to leadership can be experienced not as a 'knowledge transmitted' phenomenon but as something that can be experienced and made sense of by students in their relations with me and in 'close learning' conditions in interactions in their workplace.

Higher Education

> Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.
> *John Dewey*

There are three particular aspects of this 'field', the institution of higher education in which the MA programme is based, that I feel deserve comment and critique:

1. Power asymmetries
Not really having worked in a university before – despite my brief time at Kings College London – I became aware of the kind of difficulties 'power relations' can create indirectly. At the induction workshop for the first cohort on the E Learning MA in October 2004, I made some gentle fun in the background during the opening address by the Director (who I was quite friendly with). That evening when chatting to Richard, one of the students allocated to me, he said that my fooling around had made an immediate and positive effect on him: if the coaches behaved like this, he knew that the programme wasn't going to turn out to be the formal, arms length, condescending and

even dismissive experience he was half expecting after his long break from higher education. So there obviously was some kind of relational barrier there between student and university at the outset – which my fooling around had eased. A couple of other little incidents reinforced this impression: the 05-07 student who expressed great surprise that she could use the MA to validate herself; and later, an 08-10 student who'd recently completed an MBA, being surprised when I encouraged him to learn from and develop his own models from his own local experiences.

In an earlier life I had been a senior HR professional, and I'd felt a sense of real shock when first being exposed to Foucault's thinking. Of course I was aware of the dangers of 'managerialism' and the tendency to see working life just through corporate

spectacles. But to realize that rather than seeking truth, we HR professionals were instead using our techniques of assessment and appraisal, to construct a discourse which 'rendered visible the work arena' in order to define what passed for truth in the area of 'human resources', cut much closer to the bone. With the best intentions in mind, I too had been a prime mover in introducing the so-called 'latest thinking' to my organisation e.g. competency frameworks and assessment centres. And as the professional 'expert', I'd used these so-called expert knowledges to create and order reality, and not as I believed at the time, to map what was there. And it had all seemed so natural at the time, as though all I was doing was being a fair and neutral observer, without any axe to grind, without any 'rank' (Mindell, 1995) to blinker my vision and relations with others less expert. I still shudder when I think about how naïve I was at the time, and how I so easily became an active agent of my own subjugation to this view of organisational practice.

So as I felt my way into Exeter university and this programme, I realised that here too, there was a basic and largely unquestioned assumption (on both 'sides') that knowledge flowed one way, and unless challenged could really restrict what students felt able to explore and offer. Students have to write seven formal essays and a dissertation as part of the degree, so there's plenty of scope for knowledge flowing the other way. However the marking and primarily summative grading process which focuses on knowledge of formal theory, makes it clear that it's the university that knows and therefore assesses and decides, thus diminishing what students may offer. And as Foucault (1972) has indicated, there are always a wide range of 'exclusionary practices' that work in the background in order to control and sustain the orderly nature of a discipline – so it's not easy for those on the 'outside' to get their new ideas acknowledged.

And many of these are 'rationally *in*visible' (Garfunkel, 1967)[10] it's very hard for students to realise and then believe they have something original and valuable to offer, unless it fits/adds to what's on already on offer on the academic agenda. And what's on offer is focused on what the university values in it's own closed and competitive circles, where work is focused mainly on 'filling scholarly holes' (Bartunek, 2007) and where the rhetoric of *logos,* rather than *ethos* or *pathos* (Aristotle, 1954) is the preferred medium. Again as Foucault has clarified: 'this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the "privilege" of a dominant class, which exercises it actively upon a passive, dominated class.' (in Sheridan, 1980, p 136). Scarce wonder then that practitioners feel rather shut out, and unless strongly and regularly encouraged, fail to find their own voice and the 'I' that will show them their own path of development and contribution. And that I in return, felt and feel strongly that despite the masking and insidious effects of disciplinary power, I want to help them search for an 'aesthetics of existence' (Foucault, 1989 as quoted in McHoul and Grace, p 125) – in essence a practical way of life – in order to become an *agent* in the production of their own lives and those around them.

2. Split between theory and practice
I'm regularly astonished by the way theorising is valourised ('she's really bright') and how academics are encouraged to follow their own theoretical interests - both with little attention to practice, except at those few universities which recognise the value of experience. Bartunek (2007) in summarising a range of relevant research on the typical gap that exists between theory and practice, proposed that '…we need to enlarge how

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[10] This is an inversion used by John Shotter of Garfinkel's term 'rationally visible' (Shotter, 2008, p37)

we think about bridging academic-practitioner gaps. I propose that we expand Boyer's (1990) scholarship of integration to include academics' relationships with practitioners in ways that go well beyond research per se. That is, I propose that we develop a *relational* scholarship of integration' (p 1324)

In talking about the way academics work, she goes on to say: 'little of the advice includes rationales for intended actions, even though there are extensive conceptual rationales for the studies whose findings lead to the proposed actions (cf. Schulz & Hatch, 2005; Van de Ven, 2007: Ch. 8); that is, implications are typically suggested in a decontextualized, distant way. Some of the advice would appear to many readers to be contradictory, and some of it is simply hortatory. (pp 1325-26)…The typical way that we as academics are accustomed to having an impact in scholarly writing is through the strength of our logic and our data (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2006); we find gaps of some kind, convince others of their importance, and then attempt to fill them in our work. [This is very much the view of expressed by Sandberg and Alvesson earlier!] Although this works for academic scholarship, it is not all there is to having an impact, and it is not likely to appeal to practitioners who are not particularly interested in, or aided by, filling scholarly holes. (p 1326)… *Logos* is what academic articles typically emphasize; it refers to the clarity and logic of an argument and its supporting evidence…Heath and Heath (2007) summarized prior scholarly work to suggest that ideas that stick are those that are simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, emotional, and likely to be told as stories. For example, Weick (1999) wrote that in theories that are "moving," that matter to others, emotions play a strong role. So, he noted, do affirmations, statements that convey to an audience that something they thought or did is acceptable.' (p 1326)

A particular problem is associated with academic-practitioner differences. This has to do with differing and strong opinions among academics about the value of "rigorous" versus "relevant" research (Anderson et al., 2001)… 'As Gulati (2007) noted, especially in situations in which there is, at best, ambivalence on the part of academics about the value of mutually beneficial academic-practitioner relationships, attempts to create such relationships will likely require the efforts of boundary spanners, people who do not identify themselves fully with either the academic or practitioner community and who have the courage and the interest to treat both groups as of value and as having something to contribute to the other… helping academic researchers and management practitioners enter into each others' worlds without needing to cast their own worlds aside.' (p 1330)

3. Impact of 'supercomplexity' on knowledge and learning
As I discovered when reading Realising the University (Barnett, 2000), higher education needs to involve students in understanding the *contestability* of knowledge frameworks. Here are several penetrating quotes which point to the need for a new kind of pedagogy that embraces conditions of 'supercomplexity':

'Research … has to be understood as the promotion of "supercomplexity" in our public understandings. … Teaching, on the other hand, has to be construed as the production of "supercomplexity" in the minds of students and as the development of the capacity on the part of students to handle the resulting dislocation.' (ibid, p162)… Ultimately, the supercomplex world presents not challenges of knowing but of being. This is the

fundamental educational problematic of supercomplexity and it is one from which the university shrinks…arming the student with a repertoire of well understood intellectual frameworks was itself (never) sufficient to carry him or her forward into life…The student's propositional knowledge never could carry him or her fully and satisfactorily into experiential situations; the is-ought gap never was susceptible to a technical solution. (ibid, p 157)…higher education in its pedagogies [is] to be understood as a threefold educational process. Firstly, it has to create epistemological and ontological disturbance in the minds and in the being of students: it has to pose cognitively and experientially the radical uncertainty presented by supercomplexity. Students have to come to feel in every sense the utter uncertainty of the post modern world. Secondly, higher education has to enable students to live at ease with this perplexing and unsettling environment. Thirdly, it has to enable them to make their own positive contributions to this supercomplex world, while being sensitive to the unpredictability and uncontrollability of the consequences of what they say and do' (ibid, p 154). Echoes here of Foucault – to 'know what what they do, does'!

 '…a pedagogy for supercomplexity has also to become a pedagogy that is itself characterised by uncertainty, unpredictability, contestability, and challengeability…we have to give up the notion of teaching as such…The formal lecture is a refuge…ensures that the unsettling that such elements (uncertainty, contestability, etc) can provoke is barely skin deep…the students remain as voyeurs…The challenge of a pedagogy for supercomplexity…is to place students in situations in which they are *required* to handle conflicting ideas…and uncertain situations (Collier, 1993)…Challenges that yield alternative legitimate responses must be obligatory. The responses, too, should be personal and interpersonal… Enabling students to handle their own disturbance calls for a pedagogical transaction in which the student has the pedagogical space to develop her own voice' (ibid, pp 159-60)

'Accordingly the university has a responsibility to assist students on the formation of what Scott (1995) [ibid, p 158] calls their 'reflexive biographies'. These 'biographies' are regarded as being made largely in and through action, through a purposive engagement with the world, enabling students to act positively in what Barnes calls a 'milieu of dislocation', using their powers of meta-reflection and action. Such powers are felt to be necessary to making a reflexive biography, as '…distinct from having one's biography made for one by the manifold forces that dominate this supercomplex world' (Barnes, ibid, p 158-9)

So here the great divide is between academic 'theory' seen as the primary (deductive) basis for increasing knowledge – and this is what the university has and the students don't; and 'theory' derived from more (inductive) analysis and reflection of the practical requirements of work practice. The challenge for me is how to influence the way I work with both kinds of experience and knowing, how I influence how my students grapple with, distil and integrate their own learnings from the many opportunities that the programme presents directly and indirectly online and at work (through e.g. the 'recruitment' of their diverse resources as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter), and how we influence the educational social formation we jointly create with each other, and with other members of the MA staff and student grouping.

E learning

> You can't teach people everything they need to know.
> The best you can do is position them where they can

As I noted in the earlier section on 'leadership development', a major challenge for such programmes and processes is 'learning transfer' - helping learners translate whatever they learn in such programmes into informed action in local situations. As part of the development of the competency approach to address this, there have been attempts to identify and develop what Linstead amongst others calls 'meta-competencies' (1988) which seek to capture what might be involved in contextualising a 'tool' or approach, like being able to cope with greater ambiguity, reading/reframing situations, responding flexibly to changing conditions, and acting with greater critical reflexivity (Carter et al, 2000, Day, 2001 in Ladkin et al, 2009). E learning and other web-based approaches, though growing in popularity especially through the development of more 'blended' approaches (Salmon, 2002) have not until recently featured in academic thinking and research, being seen to be more appropriate for content oriented courses like e.g. geography, statistics, etc. Instead, mainstream thinking about developing these higher level situated skills has generally focused on full time programmes where *face to face* encounters offer the possibility of noticing and working on the complex, multi-level and subtle stimuli and responses that are believed to be involved (Dreyfus, 2001)

But does this differentiation hold up in practice? There is very little research into the online delivery of leadership education, but as part of earlier work on the MA, Ladkin et al (2009) did carry out a review of the growing body of research into the web-based delivery of educational programmes, and the pedagogical possibilities it might offer. Amongst other things the authors identified the following attributes of this research: it's mainly case study based involving undergraduates studying subjects such as statistics (Frederickson et al, 2005; Oliver and Omari, 2001); it seeks to clarify whether online students retain more and perform better than others not using online methods (Frederickson et al, 2005; Holsapple and Lee-Post, 2006); and it assesses how well ICT supports collaborative discourse (Jones et al, 2006; Salmon, 2000) including the impact of specific online features like 'bulletin boards' (Brower, 2003; Palloff and Pratt, 1999). Regarding management education itself, Hodgson and Watland (2004) in a detailed review of research into the use of 'networked learning' methods conclude that the research 'is not looking at what the new and critical issues are, that are raised for learners and teachers when learning via technology'(ibid, p 111) They recommend looking more deeply at how learning occurs rather than at outcomes in web-based delivery processes. However I note that other researchers in the 'networked learning' field like Ryan et al (2000), and Lentell (2003) describe a wide range of academic and non-academic roles for e tutors emphasizing the role of 'educational facilitator' in seeking individual development as well as increases in subject knowledge. My reading of this literature, while more encouraging than Hodgson and Watland's, is that the 'splitting' that occurs elsewhere still permeates this literature: despite more encouraging noises about e.g. learner centredness, the focus is still very much on knowledge and not practice in the field (Denis et al, 2004). Other evaluation studies into management education like those by Arbaugh, 2005, and Legnick-Hall and Sanders, 1997, are of programmes where online delivery had been incorporated as *part* of the process but was not the primary delivery mechanism. (Ladkin et al, 2009, pp 195-6)

The other issue of relevance identified by Ladkin et al (ibid) in the literature in this context, focuses on the differences between learning seen as the 'transmission' of facts and knowledge, versus the idea that it might be 'constructed' through an active process of sense making involving interpretation, selection and personal understanding (Rumble, 2001). I deal with this question extensively elsewhere and here limit my

comments to the apparent impact of distance learning methods on the 'transmitted vs constructed' issue as debated by writers on online education such as Huang (2002) and Oliver and Omari (2001). These writers who link their thinking to theories of adult learning, propose that the 'constructivist/constructionist' paradigm is likely to better capture what happens than the 'transmission' mode – with the former author going further to say that educators should accordingly act as facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of knowledge. This leads to the paradoxical notion that in the new online technology, the 'distance' between knowledge and the knower, in this case leads to greater 'closeness' of learning, in terms of proximity to the scene of performance. This is the overall line taken by Ladkin et al in their paper who, building on work done by Gosling and Mintzberg on 'close learning', highlight the positive role that this proximity to 'context' is likely to play in helping students integrate theory and practice, and so embed their learning informally in work situations, which formal programmes held 'off site' find problematic (London and Maurer, 2004; Taylor et al, 2002)

I see the great divide here as being between seeing learning *about* leadership as mainly being about the 'transmission' of de-contextualised 'knowledge' on which the student 'builds' (Heidegger, 1971) as in the 'warehouse' model; as against learning *of* leadership being of a more situated and embodied nature gained through 'dwelling' (Heidegger, 1971) within practice with others. As highlighted in the section on 'leadership', the issue here for me is how to frame and engage in the e learning process in ways which enable students to experience leadership as more of a *situational, relational,* and *momentary* phenomenon *and* one that looks for feedback on progress in expressive and embodied ways i.e. in *ontological* terms. Obviously the big challenge is how to develop a quality of relationship and interaction that, despite the virtuality, asynchronousness, and 'distance' involved, allows the student to feel sufficiently 'listened' to (O'Reilly, 1998), understood and supported, to engage actively with the greater levels of epistemological and ontological doubt involved in this kind of learning process. So a major question for my research is what such a relationship might look like and how it could be set up and sustained over the two year period of the programme.

Coaching

> To lead people, walk beside them…When
> the best leader's work is done the people
> say, 'We did it ourselves!'
> *Lao Tzu*

When I first became a coach on the e learning programme I approached the role as someone who was a development practitioner in leadership and change management – so mainly interested in practice - but who had an enormous interest in what theory from any field e.g. academic/consultancy/work-based had to offer. Since starting to research my practice I've discovered, perhaps not surprisingly as coaching is essentially a practical real world activity, that as far as HE research is concerned, this appears to be the least well researched of the six areas that surround the MA. Though interest in the field of coaching itself in areas like executive, life, sports, and so on, has burgeoned enormously in recent years, it appears from the lack of relevant academic research in e.g. management oriented journals like Leadership, Management Learning, and Management Inquiry, that HE regards both undergraduate and higher degrees as being primarily about learning propositional knowledge; and that coaching type activity aimed at associated practical application and skills development is not seen as very relevant and/or interesting. Further, as one might guess, there is virtually nothing in the field

concerning *longer term* coaching on e learning programmes – so a very large 'gap' to be filled! As we shall see in my remarks in the later section on 'research', the split between *academic* versus *practice* based theory development in the leadership field is very wide, and this may be one reason for this dearth of interesting research on what might be seen as a largely practical and practice oriented form of support. So, though I will review what I have been able to find in this area, particularly in some of the new journals devoted specifically to coaching, most of my commentary will be on what has been learned about coaching in general, involving traditional coaching as well ideas and methods from a range of therapeutic approaches, and what implications these might have for my research into my own pedagogic practice as an online coach.

Though the word 'coaching' doesn't come up in his work, I regard Donald Schon's work on reflection and professional practice (and his collaborations with Chris Argyris) as providing concepts and tools which are central to the coaching process (Argyris and Schon, 1996). His early interest in the ways in which categories are used to examine things but are not themselves examined as ways of thinking, in time led him to develop an overall epistemology of professional practice, based on the concept of knowledge-in-action. Through studying the reflection-in-action that professionals bring to their everyday practices while operating under conditions of complexity, uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict, he showed how professionals' theories-in-use are *tacit* theories of action. Later he also demonstrated how participating in a reflective practice with others on their knowing and reflecting in action, would allow them to reconstruct their theories of action, making it possible for their action strategies to be explicitly formulated and open to criticism. He brought together his ideas on the development of this new epistemology of professional practice in The Reflective Turn: Case Studies In And On Educational Practice (1991). Together with Argyris he developed a range of practical reflection tools like 'the left hand column', 'the ladder of inference', 'advocacy and inquiry', and 'single and double loop learning' which help practitioners (and their coaches) inquire into the assumptions and values that underpin their thinking.

For me the most insightful ideas have come from my exploration of the therapy field e.g. 'systemic questioning' - the work done by Karl Tomm (1988) to categorise the questioning methods of the Milan School of Family Therapy; Farrelly's 'provocative therapy' (Farrelly and Brandsma, 1974); Cechin's stances of 'curiosity' and 'irreverence' in his work (Cechin, 1987); de Shazer's solution focused Brief Therapy (de Shazer, 1991); the 'dreambody' process work approach developed by Arnie Mindell (Mindell, 1982); Michael White's use of Foucault's ideas to develop his version of narrative therapy devising questioning methods for investigating 'landscapes of action and consciousness', and the 'decentredness' of the therapist (White and Epston, 1990); and finally the development of the NLP approach into a less intrusive mode of 'clean language' questioning of the metaphoric dimension of experience (Lawley and Tompkins, 2000). These have provided a wealth of philosophic, methodological, as well as pragmatic ideas and tools for trialling and refinement in organisational contexts, which I've found more engaging and energising than the more practical routines and tools usually of a psychological turn like e.g. the GROW method, that are used in mainstream coaching areas like executive coaching and the newer field of life coaching.

In an article in Management Learning David Gray (2006) identifies this as an issue and provides a thoughtful review of executive coaching, including some interesting detail on Schon's approach to reflection like e.g. his 'Follow Me' and 'Hall of Mirrors' techniques which I'd not come across before. Though the focus of the article is mainly on 'executive coaching' and typically about shorter term relations, I was interested in

his main argument concerning the differences between coaching approaches influenced by 'adult learning theory' as against what he sees as the dominant 'psychotherapeutic' approach. He talks about the former, particularly transformational learning theory as presented by Mezirow (1994), who holds that 'the most personally significant transformations occur when we are able to critique the premises (perspectives) we hold about ourselves' (p 487). Another commentator Cranton believes that this thinking moves coaching 'beyond adragogy' towards being a kind of 'empathetic provocateur' (Cranton, 1992, p 17 as quoted in Gray, p 487). The quote from Newman (1994) regarding 'we see ourselves seeing the world' (as quoted in Gray, p 487) - which he argues is a level of reflection above that advocated by Schon – seems to be another way of talking about 'critical reflexivity' as described by Cunliffe (2002) and others (though Gray doesn't actually use the term). There are also interesting ideas on the role of 'critical reflection' and what Goodman (2002) describes as 'developmental coaching dialogue' which feels close to what I'm trying to do in my work, and does I believe provide support for the general approach I've been taking. There also appear to be some strong similarities with 'ontological' coaching developed by Sieler (2003) and reported on in The Complete Handbook of Coaching edited by Cox et al (2010). In this approach influenced by the integrative work of Winograd and Flores (1986), the coach focuses on the three 'domains' of language, the body, and emotions, to enable coachees to experience shifts in their 'way of being'. This allows them 'to become a different and more powerful observer of themselves, others, and how they can constructively engage in the world' (Cox et al, 2010, p 118).

Coaching of this nature is often seen as an aid to the learning transfer problem mentioned earlier. In a recent paper on coaching effectiveness Hooiberg and Lane (2009) report that the effectiveness of learning transfer from an executive education programme (using multi-source feedback) was considerably improved by having coaching sessions after the programme but *before* executives returned to work. Interestingly the key finding, which seems to contradict much of the existing coaching literature based on longer term relationships, is that participants in coaching sessions in shorter executive education programs, expect and want their coach to take an active role in interpreting their results and in making action recommendations. They do not talk about 'chemistry' with the coach but rather about the coach creating an open, trusting, and supportive environment - so more about coaching 'skills'. But I feel that a greater limitation is that their framework model for effective coaching is wholly linear in nature with no attention being devoted to contextual or relational aspects – so not one that will cast any helpful light on my coaching situation.

Though not focused on coaching as such, nor web-based, I've been attracted to a couple of interesting classroom-based contributions which deal with what a coaching approach could offer to students of leadership. The first is Caroline Ramsay's work on developing a 'scholarship of practice centred inquiry' (Ramsay, 2011) which suggests amongst other things that the role of the educator should be 'provoking' in the sense of 'interrupting' current understandings, inviting inquiry, and the questioning of assumptions and ideas. In this she introduces the ideas/tools of Frank Farrelly (mentioned in an earlier paragraph); an American therapist who called his approach 'provocative therapy', using humour and devil's advocacy as the basic tools for encouraging new thinking (Farrelly and Brandsma, 1974) . Her basic idea which she has used in the classroom with her work-based learning masters degree students, is to move from explanation or testing of theoretical constructs to the creation and evaluation of local social relations in the light of new practices. In this she is following the pioneering work on 'social poetics' developed by Shotter and Katz (1996). She has also used ideas

associated with narrative therapy, in particular the Foucauldian influenced approach developed by Michael White, the pioneering Australian narrative therapist, to help her stimulate her management students' inquiries through the use of poetry (Ramsay, 2005).

I would point out though, that this kind of second position intervention activity is just *one* kind of provocation. Others I would highlight and want to consider as part of the mix, include the potential provocatory value of ones own personal experience, the views of others both close and distant, and serendipity. However, the transformation of theory, personal experience, the views of others, and serendipity into provocative form doesn't just happen, and so there is a need for some support in the learning situation to reframe and reposition these inputs from 'knowledge' into 'provocations to knowing'. And clearly this is where the online coach on the MA can be so useful, sitting in a position somewhere in the neutral middle and/or 'alongside' the student, looking together at issues, and so able to stimulate new thinking through framing each of these forms of knowing, as provocations.

John Shotter is also a major influence in the second piece of work I want to mention here. This is the approach presented in several papers by Ann Cunliffe who introduces the process of 'reflexive dialogical practice' which she uses in the classroom with management students to sensitise them to the emergent and improvisational nature of meaning making, and the impact of our assumptions and values on this interactional process (Cunliffe, 2008). In her model she talks about three basic interconnecting activities: *reflex interaction* where we just respond spontaneously to the other; *reflective dialogue* where we make sense of such reflex experience by 'talking about' things and invoking and applying theory and ideas *upon* and *to* this experience; and *critical reflexive questioning* which moves us into becoming more aware of the constitutive impact of our participation in dialogue and encourages us to question our basic ways of being in the world and how our values and assumptions play a key role in such processes. Using John Shotter's ideas here (Shotter, 2008) we can talk about making sense *from within* our dialogical relationships. Again, though not framed as 'coaching' as such, I can see how this kind of reflective and reflexive activity in group discussion in the classroom can facilitate the kind of learning that coaching is designed to support.

Articles which appears in newer journals devoted specifically to coaching, like Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice, tend to focus on mainstream face-to-face coaching in non educational settings like executive and life coaching. However they do offer reports on interesting research which might have some application in the more online, asynchronous, and text-based setting of the MA. Two caught my eye. The first reports into research into 'conversational identities' adopted by coaches by Stein (2009) who has identified some 16 different 'hats' coaches can put on during conversations in order to respond appropriately to client needs. Though I find her approach linear rather than relational, looking at actions only from the point of view of coach intentions, and not checking her research claims with any coachees, her Typology of Conversational Identities for Professional Coaches does provide a useful basis of comparison for my own typology that I mention in Chapter 3 and report on in Chapter 7. The second article by Askeland (2008) looks at the effects that different coach ideology/assumptions – in this case 'strategic choice theory' and the 'complex responsive processes' model developed at the Complexity and Management Centre at Hertfordshire - can have on the nature of coaching interaction. What I like about this article is the way it demonstrates the very different effect an ideology based on human interaction being seen as 'a continuous flow of gesture and response' where the coach is *'very much a part of what emerges'* and 'is *not* uncovering something that is already

there and that only belongs to the client' (p 73). Influenced by 'complexity theory' (Stacey, 2003) and the work of G H Mead (1934), these first person research findings very much mirror ideas by others like Shotter on 'conversational realities' (2008) which I believe offers a more fruitful way forward to establishing the nature of the 'local ontologies' in which we all live and work (Foucault, 1984).

So for me the great divide here is between seeing coaching as a well mapped out instrumental process where the coach uses various mindsets and tools to support problem solving by the client, and where the learning, which is mainly of a cognitive 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' nature, is done by the client/student; and seeing it more as a relational and dialogical practice where coach and client mutually interact within a practice and where the knowing, which is of a more embodied and situated nature, emerges in a joint and more uncertain 'knowing from' process. The demands on the coach in terms of receptiveness and responsiveness are much greater in the latter more dialogically structured process (Bahktin, 1986) where, following Barnett's 'supercomplexity' criteria (2000), the coaching relationship needs to imbue the epistemological and ontological uncertainty which the student needs to learn to work within.

Research

> Research is to see what everybody else has seen,
> and to think what nobody else has thought
>
> *Albert Szent-Gyorgyi*

There is an enormous amount of interesting and relevant research on research methodology which, despite considerable change and progress over the past 30 years , still seems to suffer from the division between 'academic' and 'work' based approaches. Though this has been a complex, messy and contested process, the nature of these developments can be to some extent captured by the notion of 'turns'. To begin with, as Reason and Torbert (2001) point out, discussions of research methodology in organizational and social science have for long been trapped in a tussle between 'empirical positivism' which still dominates the academy, and the counter-movement of 'postmodern interpretivism'. They further say: 'In their 1978 ASQ article, Susman and Evered pointed to a crisis in organizational science in that "the findings in our scholarly management journals are only remotely related to the real world of practicing managers" (p 582). They pointed out that the positivist approaches to science which have dominated our perspective on research "are deficient in their capacity to generate knowledge for use by members of organizations" (p 585).' Since then empirical positivist assumptions have been called into question and their place as the dominant paradigm of our times increasingly challenged by e.g. Gergen (1994), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the 'linguistic turn' has swept the social sciences and humanities.

As Reason and Bradbury (2001, p 5) put it: 'The cognitive turn focused on the cognitive structures (schemata or mental models) which allow us make sense of the world. The linguistic turn…looked at the hitherto underestimated role of language in our construction of our world…In scholarly circles it is difficult to suggest that the world exists outside our construction of it (Gergen 1994, 1999; Schwandt 1994; Shotter 1993)' They invite us instead to consider what kind of first-person "critical subjectivity" (Reason, 1994, p 327) can help each of us become aware of, deconstruct, and go beyond our taken-for-granted assumptions, strategies, and habits. These authors emphasize the

important principle that *all* ways of framing and interpreting the world are human constructions framed by language in social interaction. (Reason and Torbert, 2001)

But as Reason and Torbert go on to claim 'still another transformation, this time toward the *action turn*, is necessary to reach a full understanding of the action research that Susman and Evered called for so long ago…we argue that since all human persons are participating actors in their world, the purpose of inquiry is not simply…to contribute to the fund of knowledge in a field, to…deconstruct taken-for-granted realities, nor even to develop emancipatory theory. Rather, the primary purpose of human inquiry is to forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge and moment-to-moment personal and social action, so that inquiry contributes *directly* to the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the ecosystems of which they are part…' (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p 4)…whereas the primary purpose of research in the academic tradition is to contribute to an abstract "body of knowledge" available to third persons, the primary purpose of research… after the action turn is a *practical knowing* embodied in the moment-to-moment action of each research/practitioner…human knowing…is essentially *participative*, growing from collaborative relations with…other…co-inquirers…all knowing is based in the sensing, feeling, thinking, attending *experiential presence* of persons in their world…and all movements of the attention, all knowing, all acting, and all gathering of evidence is based on at least implicit fragments of *normative theory of what act is timely now*…The action turn returns the fundamental questions concerning the quality of knowing to the practice of the knowing person in community (see also Toulmin 1990; Shotter 1993)'. (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p 5)

So, it seems that the instruments of inquiry and the criteria of excellence in social research after the 'action turn' might no longer be primarily methodological (Reason and Torbert, p 6). Or so we might have thought… But alongside this 'turn' there have been a growing body of researchers who have been developing something called 'practice theory' or the 'practice turn', where again we find that we've got interesting but difficult methodological questions to think about! As I noted earlier, in their critique of competency, Bolden and Gosling (2006), by implication pointed towards a more practice oriented approach to leadership. However in their 2008 paper to the International Conference for Studying Leadership in New Zealand, they suggest that despite the criticism of the competency approach, they believe it has a role to play in understanding what Whittington (2006), one of the second generation of practice theorists (Brauchler and Posthill, 2010) calls the 'practice' arm of his three stranded model of practice theory (the other two being 'practitioners' and 'praxis'). They also note that there are several criticisms of the 'practice' perspective due to the varied and confused nature of the definitions used, and due to the emphasis on action, the potential for practice to be seen as just 'what people do', ignoring the view that these actors are also the product of practice, and ignoring the effects of other dimensions like power relations, ethics, and legitimacy. Their conclusion that the interrelation between practitioners and practices influences the nature of praxis suggests that the leadership developer needs to consider a 'more experiential, embedded approach that enables the emergence of contextually appropriate knowledge (Raelin, 2007) and the development of practical wisdom or "phronesis" (Grint, 2007)' (Bolden and Gosling, 2008, p 9).

So let's take a deeper look at this current 'turn' in the light of the criticisms noted by Bolden and Gosling. Though there is no coherent and unified version of 'practice theory', it starts from understanding the history and development of the practice itself, the internal differentiation of roles, and consequences for the people participating in them, and not from individual decision making or the functioning of systems. The first

'wave' of such theorists like Bourdieu (1981) and Foucault (1979) sought a virtuous middle path between the excesses of methodological individualism and those of its logical opposite, methodological wholism. For example 'both social order and individuality … result from practices' (Schatzki, 1996, p 13). Reckwitz distinguishes between 'practice' (praxis) which describes the whole of human action; and 'practices' which are routinised behaviours made up of interconnected elements like bodily behaviours, emotions, mental states etc (Reckwitz, 2002). Schatzki sees two kinds: a *co-ordinated entity* which is a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings; and as *performance* in which practices are enacted in ways which actualize and sustain practices in the sense of nexuses.

Based on a reading of Schatzki et al's work (2001), many of these theorists regard the human body as the nexus of people's practical engagements with the world e.g. Bourdieu's 'habitus' where the world's structural constraints form 'permanent dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1981). Thus the single individual acts as a *carrier* of a practice or practices, of patterns of bodily behaviour, as well as certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how, and desiring. A closely related notion to Bourdieu's 'habitus' is Foucault's (1979) concept of 'discipline' where 'disciplinary power' works through the body as subjects learn to self-regulate their bodily practices, However, in both instances, these are *qualities of a practice* in which the single individual participates, *not* qualities of the individual, with practices preceding individuals, both historically, logically, and ontologically. There is no presumption of the primacy of individual action, and social life is seen as a constant struggle to construct a life out of the cultural resources one's social experience offers, in the face of formidable social constraints; and where one develops predispositions to act in certain ways. Critically, performance presupposes a practice, and practice presupposes performances. 'Dispersed practices' (Schatzki, 1996, p 91-92) appear in many sectors of social life, examples being describing, following rules, explaining and imagining; whereas 'integrative practices' are 'the more complex practices found in and constitutive of particular domains of social life' (Schatzki, 1996, p 98) like farming, cooking, and business.

Practice theories are neither individualist nor holist and comprehend non-instrumentalist notions of conduct, both observing the role of routine on the one hand, and emotion, embodiment and desire on the other. So for Schatzki et al (2001, p 3), 'the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings'. The maintenance of practices over time depends on 'the successful inculcation of shared embodied know-how' (2001, p 3) as well as on their continued performance. Because activities (or actions) and bodies are 'constituted' within practices, 'the skilled body' is where activity and mind as well as individual and society meet (2001, p 3). It follows that we can only understand actions within their specific practical contexts.

So in this brief review of the Research 'field', I feel the great divide between mainstream approaches and more postmodern ideas is between 'I'-less objective knowledge about individuals on the one hand; and increasingly shared and practical understandings based on situated and embodied knowing that is constituted within practices, on the other. With my own preference clearly being toward the latter, I believe the challenge for me is to do with developing a research approach which will allow my students and I to stay open and responsive to the ambiguities and difficulties involved in inquiring into what is primarily a distance-learning, asynchronous, and text-based educational practice. I believe this is going to require open participation between us at both the level of educational 'activity' and educational 'pedagogy', which will

demand a certain minimal amount of face to face dialogue over and above the customary online contact, if we are to fully exploit the learning hidden within the rich textual records generated in the web-based educational system.

IDENTIFYING GENERATIVE CONDITIONS FOR MY RESEARCH

> Psychologists call this tendency the Fundamental Attribution
> Error (FAE)…We will always reach for a "dispositional"
> explanation for events, as opposed to a "contextual" explanation
> *Gladwell, 2000, p 160*

In this chapter I have been talking about six 'fields' as though there really *are* six different areas of knowledge and practice – which is partly why this feels such a complex research ecology in itself. But following the natural inclusion frame (Rayner, 2005), I feel I can also say that these are temporary punctuations of things that are different but not discrete, which enable certain kinds of thinking and behaviour, while at the same time constraining and preventing others. Using Rayner's terminology, they can be seen as 'local neighbourhoods' which show or form certain kinds of figural responsiveness in dynamic spatial relations with each other and omni-space (Rayner, 2005). Though this is a more difficult framing for me to hold, it offers such potential for revealing new kinds of understandings that it's one I definitely want to keep returning to as the meta-frame in which to make sense and offer judgements of the educational practices I'm involved in. So instead of going along with the persistent 'splitting' and division between e.g. the academic and work worlds, theory and practice, explicit and tacit forms of knowing, mind and body, knowledge and behaviour, and so on, I'm hoping that I'll be able to see from time to time, the dynamic multi-dimensioned field in which my work and living theory research is unfolding. And that these fleeting moments of insight will enable me to position and present the knowing emerging from my action research work in an original, useful, and accessible form that contributes to new standards of judgement in the Academy.

The purpose of this chapter has been to look more carefully and critically at the educational world around me in which my own small and local study is located, to find out how my inquiry might link and contribute towards one or more areas in this broad and diverse 'field of practices' (Schatzki et al, 2001) and to identify ideas that might further help me in my quest to improve my practice. After this brief but critical tour across the territory in which my study resides, I think I'm now in a position to identify what these seem to be. It appears that nothing of particular significance has been done in my focal area i.e. online coaching in leadership, apart from the earlier 'pathfinding' paper by Ladkin et al. So this appears to be a 'gap filling' opportunity par excellence!

However there is much of interest that does or could impinge on my studies that flows from the other fields in which the MA resides. These come either from 'gap filling' and/or 'problematisations' of existing approaches which I'm not comfortable with - like faulty thinking about learning and development, the absence of active consideration of the contextualization work needed to apply 'tools' effectively, the under-valuation of the importance of dialogue in constructing local realities, and the lack of attention to the ontological assessment of progress. Or they stimulate building on ideas from people like Polanyi, Foucault, Whitehead, Rayner, and Shotter, which seem to me to offer more fruitful ways of understanding and working with unfolding experience in my chosen field of educational development. And so I want somehow to be able to appreciate and be creatively liberated by all this complexity *while* also being sufficiently disciplined,

critical and focused to draw some original and practical conclusions about how to improve the higher education of situated practices like leadership.

I believe the following vantage points that have emerged out of my reflections in this review will be able to help me do this, by acting as searchlights that not only shine a bright critical light on my current reasoning but also light up the way ahead to a future where amongst other things, students are enabled and motivated to 'recruit and exploit the diverse repertoires of participation and application they may bring from other settings' (Lee and Rochon, 2009, p 301). Following Garfinkel (1967), I believe each of these areas represent ideas that are 'developed and developing' and so are open to further elaboration and refinement from an inquiry such as this one.

Tacit/marginalised knowing: staying open, sensitive, and responsive to widespread tacit and ever-present marginalisation of various forms of knowing particularly those involved in the local contextualising and embodiment of 'tools' (Polanyi, 1983).

Learning from 'practice': counter-balancing the scholarly approach to learning with work-based educational methods (Raelin, 2007) using the 'practice' perspective (Shatzki et al, 2001) to frame and make new sense of embodied interactions between persons and their contexts.

Conversational realities: basing my epistemological and ontological judgements on a 'third kind' of knowing (Shotter, 2008) - to do with how to be a person of a particular kind, not only according to the 'culture' but also the 'exchange' one is engaged in - in a jointly constructed 'knowing from', or what Bernstein (1983) has called a 'practical moral knowledge', that emerges from the creative, improvisational and embodied nature of the dialogically structured events (Bahktin, 1981) that occur in conversations between people.

'Living theory' action research: using an open and dynamic approach to 'action' and 'research' which allows me to attend to and appreciate the values-based, living, embodied, and emergent nature of my own thinking/behaviour and those around me, as we take part in and mutually constitute educational practices on the MA in Leadership Studies (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). And as a key part of this, to make use of multi-media forms of data collection, analysis, and presentation to provide *ostensive evidence* in ontological as well as epistemological terms, of marginalisation and tacit knowing, and the educational influence exercised on my own knowing, the knowing of others, and the educational social formation and practices in which we perform.

Natural inclusion: adopting inclusional thinking (Rayner, 2005) as the overall meta-frame through which to attend to, treat, and devise more 'revelatory' approaches to the multiple splits/divides permeating the researching, teaching, development, and performing of leadership in the 'field of practices' in which my leadership research is taking place.

I return to these 'beacons' in the final chapter when I use them to form a critical framework through which to critique and extend the pedagogy I have developed. With this setting of the background to my research, I'm ready now in the next chapter to take you through how my own 'focal' research approach has been forming and developing over the past seven years and how it's been shaped by the 'subsidiaries' I've been dwelling in and exploring in this chapter (Polanyi, 1983).

CHAPTER 3

A 'LIVING' EDUCATIONAL THEORY FOR ONLINE COACHING

> 'We all have a…two-part corporate responsibility:...maintaining…the communicative 'currency'…in terms of which we conduct all our social transactions, *and* that of developing and updating it to cope with changes in our surroundings as they occur…our ways of 'making sense'…have not been given us as a 'natural' endowment…[they are] what we have 'made' possible'.   *Shotter, 2008. p 21*

In this chapter I want to introduce you to important aspects of how I've gone about *improving* my educational coaching practice *and* how I've gone about *studying* this process and its effects – hence my reference in the Introduction to the AERA mission statement, and the Shotter quote above. In other words, following the more careful positioning of my research in the various 'fields' it conjoins offered in Chapter 2, here I want to talk about my methodologies – both coaching and researching the coaching - and how these then lead to the 'findings' I explore in Chapters 4 to 6, and my conclusions in Chapter 7.

Despite the early doubts identified by Ladkin et al (2009), about how a situated and practical activity like leadership could be taught on a distance learning programme, it has since become clear that not only is this possible but also an effective way of offering this kind of practice focused education. But why and how it works is something that was not obvious in those early years of the new programme. And so it has become the central focus of my own work since then, first in terms of improving my own coaching practice, and secondly, in taking steps to translate this 'insider' knowing into a form suitable for the public domain, where - in holding myself to account for my practice - I'm able to offer explanations for my educational influence in my own learning, the learning of others, and the social formations in which we work (Whitehead, 2009)

DEVELOPING ONTOLOGICAL SKILLS
In Chapter 1 I offered a narrative of my development over four decades which would have shown you the diversity of my intellectual and professional interests. What would not have been evident in that account, is my intense and long term interest in two important dimensions of this diversity: the all encompassing influence on human consciousness and behaviour of *conversation and dialogue*; and the critical importance of considering *embodiment* and ontological expressions of values as the standard against which to judge learning and performance. So here at the start of this chapter I'd like to repair this omission and briefly show you why what I have to say is so strongly permeated by these two perspectives, and why therefore, I can claim to be offering not just an intellectually defensible synthesis of my learning and practice, but also a personally grounded account of my coaching contribution and my research into the pedagogy in which it forms and performs a central function. As in other chapters the basic writings that inform these views is supported in a set of appendices to this chapter.

The effects of multiple exposures
Regarding *dialogue*, I remember many times when facilitating development workshops and 'awaydays' in the BBC and other large organizations, I used the saying 'the fish is

the last to know it lives in water' to provoke new thinking on communication practices. Like fish in water, we humans are unaware that we are immersed 24/7 from birth in the 'hustle and bustle' of conversation/language/words, and we grow up to believe that we can actually *choose* the 'what-when-how-with whom' of communicating, and *not* communicate the rest of the time. My own experience has been that we do so at our peril, and I've spent many enlivening weeks over the decades exploring and experiencing different perspectives and approaches like NLP (Dilts, 1998), Ericksonian Hypnosis (Erickson and Rossi, 1979), Systemic Family Therapy (Jones, 1993), Process Work (Mindell, 1995), Clean Language (Lawley and Tompkins, 2000), and Narrative Therapy (White, 1989) as well as large group interventions like 'future search' (Weisbord and Janoff, 2000) and 'forum theatre' (Boal, 1995) in exposed, vulnerable, and deep ways. In all the approaches mentioned, my involvement has gone well beyond introductory 'taster' workshops, and has usually involved some kind of certification and practice over many years. This active involvement has also been accompanied by wide reading, reflection, and engagement on the theory side with people like Pearce (CMM theory - Pearce and Cronen, 1980), Gergen (social construction - Gergen, 1999), and Isaacs (dialogue - Isaacs, 1999), in addition to the varied writings of e.g. Argyris and Schon (1996) and Shotter (2008). All of this exposure has certainly alerted me to, and deepened my understanding of, the complexity and mystery of human communication that I'm so drawn to.

Perhaps even more intensely, the meaning and practice of *embodiment* has been never been far from my attention. I've been fascinated by what it takes to reach a level where the learning, skills and attitudes, not to mention beliefs, values, and sense of identity, reach a stage where performance could be said to be natural, creative, and embodied. Obviously from what I've said before about Polanyi's ideas, I've a considerable interest, respect, and passion for exploiting and helping others exploit their tacit knowledge – the basis for *all* knowledge – which I see very much as a bodily or embodied phenomenon. So, as for dialogue, I've been 'possessed' by the mystery of embodiment, and the challenges of achieving it, for many years, and have passed through many 'gateways' in search of this, like 'inner game' methods (Gallwey, 1974) , 'shiatsu' (Beresford-Cook, 2010), Feldenkrais (Feldenkrais, 1977), 'dreambody' work (Mindell, 1995) , and various 't'ai chi/chi gung' practices. All of these approaches work directly with the 'body', seeking to enlist all the human faculties in more integrated ways.

What my extended, deep and intimate experiences of this diverse range of conversational and embodied states of being-in-the-world means, is that I'm able to speak from the 'inside' generated through a form of 'joint action' between me and these special states of being (Shotter, 2008). I believe this allows me to claim that what I offer here does very much represent my own living theory situated and grounded in my own experience of these ideas, both as development subject and as facilitator of others' development, in a variety of surroundings over a long period of time.

Learning from one exemplar
Let's now look at how these in-depth experiences might contribute to inquiries into practice *and* what prospects such a view of performance (and the implications for development and facilitating development), might mean in the target context of leadership development on the MA in Leadership Studies. As a case in point, I've been studying singing over the past few years, and here I offer a short video clip from one of my singing lessons which I think, amongst other things, provides a clear example of

what embodied performance means, what is involved in achieving such states, and the close and creative intermingling between dialogic and bodily processes. I believe it also shows the activity of 'presencing developmental possibilities' clearly at work, and the 'inclusional' nature (Rayner, 2010) of the teaching/learning process. In this video clip - *'speak versus sing emphasis'* - my teacher Carol is working with me on the challenge of singing smoothly through a musical phrase i.e. singing *legato* - a critical and central element of an engaging singing performance. In Appendix 1 I provide a more detailed analysis of this clip (and the clip that precedes this) and here provide just highlights as we work on improving my 'legato' style of singing.

6. *speak versus sing emphasis*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyrGD3o5pH4

What initially impressed me in seeing myself in these clips (especially the first one which you can see in Appendix 1, p. 95, clip 5 - *ruddier than the cherry)* is the extent to which I seem to be taken over, even 'possessed' (Wittgenstein, 1958) by the singing process. Once the piano accompaniment starts all my attention and 'bodied' resources like breathing, voice production, facial expressiveness, gestures are fully engaged, and I can't seem to step off the roller coaster. In terms of process there is very dynamic yet co-ordinated interaction with both of us taking our turns to speak and sing with little overlap/interruption, and with the meaning of what we are doing, seeming to emerge from a lively dialogue which mixes humour, serious talking, demonstration, practice, and feedback. The intense level of feedback, vocal, gestural, and in words from Carol, enables me in a short space of time to improve the way I'm uttering quite a difficult phrase.

I'm also aware in looking at the clip of the many 'subsidiary' elements – to use the Polanyi framework – that are brought into play for me to correctly utter the 'focal' phrase in a more legato manner. These include a relaxed posture, control of diaphragm breathing, seeking purity of the vowel/diphthong sounds, keeping an open and relaxed throat ('yawn'), and producing a consistently resonant sound on both low and high notes – what Carol calls the 'ping'. Without these elements, it would be impossible for me to deliver a convincing rendering of the musical phrase in question. I also notice how I'm trying to develop a *bodily* feel for the work I need to do, practicing smooth 'horizontal' moves with my arm, loosening my jaw/opening up my throat, and so on, so I am ready to 'body forth' (Merleau Ponty in Shotter, 2008) my learning in the moment.

What does this clip tell us about the nature of embodiment, the development challenges involved, and what new ideas, if any, this might bring to the leadership development table? I believe the singing lesson provides an excellent illustration of what it means to

learn to be a particular kind of person in an exchange in a context[11] - in this instance learning to be able to deliver a song as a vocalist to an audience in a convincing manner. You can see what it takes to learn something and to see/know when it works – it's all there in front of you. In the tight domain of a singing lesson there is no escape and in contrast to ordinary life, I do know what what I do, does – Carol doesn't hesitate to point this out to me! The clip demonstrates how presencing in the moment can aid the development of ontological skills like navigating, relating, engaging, and so on, that are needed 'to know how to go on' – in this case how to deliver a smooth but expressive melodic phrase, allowing the intentions of the composer to be re-animated for singer-and-audience for yet 'another first time' (Garfinkel, 1967).

By illustrating these ontological skills, singing provides an enlightening exemplar for what might really be involved in learning how to offer leadership in an organisation, and be convincing in the role. Because we can't get the kind of focused feedback and demonstration of what would be 'right' in any specific leadership interaction, as we can in singing, our learning tends to be very hit and miss, and we muddle through. And because we 'don't know what what we do, does', using feedback as the basis for improving practice can be very tricky. So this is the challenge facing leadership development programmes – how to help people develop the 'inward feel' and ontological skills that are needed to do the job 'in a context' and 'in an exchange' – and the consequent challenge to anybody seeking to help facilitate learning and improved performance in this domain.

So with this perhaps unusual and provocative view of the challenge for leadership development – as I see it now after some 7 years in the coaching role – how have I gone about addressing the question I've been using to guide my action research: 'how do I improve my practice as an online coach on the MA in Leadership Studies, helping mature students self-educate and develop their ontological skills to be able offer leadership more effectively in a world of 'supercomplexity' (Barnett, 2000) - to themselves, others, and in the social formations they live and work in?

TRANSFORMING MY COACHING PRACTICE
Following the introduction in Chapter 1 of the many events and elements which provide highlights in my development biography, I would now like to focus more specifically on the development of my *action research* practice as it has emerged in three broad phases which cycle dynamically between action and research in an inclusional way. The emphasis is more on action in the earlier phases with research more foregrounded in the latter, but each is inextricably intertwined in the other throughout the period. This offers a useful distinction in terms of what I was foregrounding for a time but should not be seen as suggesting that 'action' and 'research' are in any real way separate from each other – each reciprocally informs the other. I see them very much in a flow form relation as defined here: '…recognise all natural form as *flow-form*, an energetic configuration of space in figure and figure in space (Shakunle and Rayner, 2009, p 6)… this logic moves on from opposing "one" against "other" or "many" through their mutual exclusion of space to *including each in the reciprocal dynamic influence of the other* through their mutual inclusion in and of space (Whitehead and Rayner, 2009)' (Rayner, 2010, p 2)

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[11] I'm influenced here by the concept of 'dividual', as against 'individual', created by LiPuma to indicate the more momentary and situated identities that people take up in particular roles and contexts (LiPuma, 1998)

- The first phase was about me finding my feet and basically learning *with* the students how to go on in the coaching role, with very little guidance from the Centre or colleagues. This phase included my self study writings and also my 'formative' work on the MA i.e. integrating research in phases, criteria for marking essays, embedding formative feedback in student writings, and so on. So this phase is mostly about the *doing* – and learning from the doing - which has continued of course, most notably with the re-design of Phase 1 in 2008.
- In the second phase I started to take more of an interest in *researching* what I was doing, with the surfacing of various features of my pedagogic approach like my *responsive repertoire*, the identification of *fleeting moments* of influence, indwelling during *development episodes,* ontological changes as revealed in *reflexive biographies,* and the emergence of the idea of a *learning relationship* or *development container* which supports a culture of inquiry.
- Building on this learning, the third phase with the looming need to write a thesis, has been driven much more by the need to meet the formal standards of academic research. This phase has been characterised by the more active involvement of a number of my students in what I'm doing, seeking feedback on my ideas from other Exeter colleagues and fellow PhD students at Bath, and much more dialogue with my supervisor. I also start exploring other 'criteria of progression' which are related more to *ontological* standards of judgement, looking for support through engaging with students in a *third kind of knowing* (Shotter, 2008).

Because many of these developments feature strongly in Chapters 4 to 6 and are put under the spotlight in Chapter 7 when I bring together all the elements of my coaching pedagogy, here I offer a much simpler and abbreviated account creating an impressionistic picture of the nature and sequence of these various transformational developments. A fuller account of these ideas appears in Appendix 2 to this chapter.

FIRST PHASE: finding my feet as an online coach
When I first started being an online coach in 2004, I didn't have a thought-through or set way of working with the students. Although in my facilitation work I'd often worked on a one to one basis with senior executives, I had never done formal 'coaching' as such. The MA programme director at the time, Peter Case, gave me a free hand and so I found myself responding to the learning logs and then the formal essays in quite an open, exploratory 'take things one at a time' basis, just trying to be helpful, finding out 'how to go on' (Wittgenstein, 1958) very much as the students found theirs. After a period I started to get curious about patterns emerging between us, and in the second year, encouraged by Donna Ladkin, initially a colleague coach and then the programme director, carried out some initial interviewing of a sample of the students. I was surprised and encouraged by the results of these informal discussions: the programme seemed to be working in a much more 'constitutive' manner (Grint, 2000) than Donna and I had thought possible. It did seem possible to transform what on the surface seems 'distant' learning into something much closer to work practice.

The evidence for this claim was mainly impressionistic in nature, and so one of the later actions I took was to look far more closely at the foundational data – the learning logs and essays – and to see to what extent these claims could be supported. Being a practitioner rather than a researcher at heart, I was curious just how educational influence of this kind was being accomplished in a largely virtual relationship. I started

looking for personal examples of possible influence from my student logs – what I started called 'fleeting moments', a phrase in an article on a process view of leadership written by an Exeter colleague, Martin Woods (2005). Though obvious examples of these were few and far between, they nevertheless did seem to offer enough support to encourage further inquiry: students raised specific issues, directly or indirectly, in their learning logs, I responded as insightfully as I could, and they seemed to find my responses useful. Encouraged by this and other forms of informal appreciation, I decided at this stage to focus my PhD research very much on this aspect: what kind of contribution can an online coach make on a distance programme concerned with a situated and timely practice, and how is such influence achieved?

During this first phase I also involved myself in some practice improvement work which I later realised was to have a 'formative' influence on the MA (or at least my and my students' experiences of it). I wrote this work up in several internal papers covering what I felt to be important aspects of how the MA was being managed: the idea of *integrating research methods* into all the phases of the programme rather than just the final phase (Appendix 3); developing a clearer set of criteria to guide the *marking and grading of formal essays* (Appendix 4); and proposing that we use a range of more *formative methods of assessment* within the university's grading policy (Appendix 5). I also found myself exploring two other coaching practices which at the time I didn't write up as formal papers as I didn't experience them as unusual. These were the move towards the *personal 'tailoring'* of the nature of programme materials to suit the needs of particular students both in terms of content and timing, and the inclusion of *embedded feedback on essays* and logs of a 'stream of consciousness' nature.

SECOND PHASE: improving my understanding of educational influencing
Though I now see 'leadership' as being more in terms of *framing/relating/orienting* work in order to 'know how to go on' together with others, during these early years I thought my role was more to do with improving students abilities in *problem solving* and increasing the 'know what' and 'know how' needed for this (Kotter, 1996). So during this second phase of developing my coaching practice, I decided to look more closely at my interactions with students to find out to what extent, and how, I was working at this. This meant looking at the extensive and rich textual record captured in the weekly learning logs and termly essays, and seeing if I could tease out any patterns and get glimpses of the kind of influence I might be exercising in this virtual world. As a single student's 'learning logs plus coach responses' can on its own amount to well over 50,000 words, I initially focused on a detailed review of the interactions with just one student (06-08 cohort), carried out sampling checks with half a dozen others, and then based on the findings, started to make this kind of 'noticing' (Mason, 2002) a normal part of my coaching work. I also applied this more sensitive observing lens to my work with students on their essays and dissertations.

Over a period of some five years this 'noticing' and the many cycles of reflection and action on what I was noticing, gradually led me to identifying/creating a range of learning and development concepts and artifacts. Amongst these are six which, as I will discuss in Chapter 7, now constitute the key elements of my own personal coaching pedagogy. These are *fleeting moments, development episodes, reflexive biographies,* the *systemic mindset,* a *responsive repertoire,* and the *learning relationship or development container.* Here I just provide very brief details of each to show how these emerged and transformed my everyday practice. I deal with each of the first three – which provide

different 'glimpses' of development influence - in great detail in Chapters 4 to 6 and the others in Chapter 7.

Fleeting moments: by noticing some evidence of influence in what I called a 'fleeting moment', I meant finding in one or more learning logs/essays a specific comment on something I'd said which the student recognised as having had an immediate impact on their thinking/behaviour. I discuss the concept and how it has developed in Chapter 4 particularly, but to give you a sense of what I mean, here's an example of an interaction in a student's learning logs spread over a period of a few days:

> *KK comment:* Perhaps, rather than using the combative tactics that have served you so well over the years on your climb up the hierarchy, it might be more effective to support/guide and demand more of these more rational/technical efforts of others with less experience than you. Don't fight them - ask for 'more and better' so that your intuitions can be tested against so called 'harder' data. You might see this as 'compensation' but equally it could be seen as shrewd use of your unique talents.

> *Student response* (three days later)*:* Thanks for that comment. I can see that asking for "more and better" is a tactic I can productively use now. I have been asking for this but in a negative way rather than a positive one - by reversing the negative psychology here the whole atmosphere could be far more productive and beneficial to the team.

I gained considerable support for this notion in 2009 when I came across the most recent work of John Shotter in his recently revised edition of Conversational Realities. In this he allows the notions of bodily responsiveness and 'now'-ness (Stern, 2004) to come through in his writing and, using the ideas of Wittgenstein, Vygotsky, and Bahktin in particular, is able to construct a very persuasive argument about the nature of influence in what Bahktin calls 'dialogically structured' situations (Bahktin in Shotter, 2008, p vi). In reading this I realised that I needed to differentiate between 'now' moments that took just a few seconds and that according to Wittgenstein, created a 'reaction', the primitive form of a new language-game (Wittgenstein in Shotter, 2008, p vi), and longer term changes in outlook and development of ontological and other skills that might follow. I decided to reserve the term 'fleeting moments' for these passing but potentially powerful interventions/reframes, and use the term 'developmental episode' for the unfolding of learning and development that might then take place (in context) in succeeding weeks and months, to support real changes in practice.

Development episodes: when working earlier in my career with groups involving different disciplines e.g. accountants and programme makers, I often felt that they were just talking *at* each other with no real communication taking place. There seemed to be little appreciation of one's own standpoint, or that of the 'other', suggesting that they would benefit from becoming more aware of e.g. their own assumptions and beliefs. In approaching this difficulty I found the ideas of Polanyi and his 'we know more than we can tell' conception of tacit knowledge to be inspiring (Polanyi, 1983). He says whenever we use an idea or theory to function as a 'proximal' term of tacit knowledge, we incorporate it into our body and attend *to* the world *from* the theory by *dwelling in* the particulars; and in this process we create at a tacit level an alternative way of viewing experience. However for us to rely tacitly on this new way, so allowing our body to become the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge, we need to

'interiorise' it and use it extensively to interpret experience. So something needs to happen between the 'aha' experience of a 'fleeting moment' and performing effectively.

This perspective helped me understand how I myself have experienced Wittgenstein's 'reaction' which then during a period of *indwelling*, has given me the time to develop the new perspective and abilities – the ontological skills – I needed to become a legitimate player in a new 'language-game'. I decided that such indwelling activity taking place during a development episode, filled an ontological as well as an epistemological 'gap' between the fleeting moment of an arresting insight, and the potential effects on general capability and identity that one might get over the longer term; and so this new framing concept was born. I'm not able to offer a simple example of this process here – as with the fleeting moment - but talk much more fully about it in Chapter 5 providing examples from student work, as a preliminary to looking at what might then follow in the longer term in e.g. a 'reflexive biography' - which is what I comment on next.

Reflexive biographies: in 'noticing' the possibility of there being fleeting moments and development episodes, I felt I'd identified two useful elements of educational influencing in a virtual world. But was there more that I wasn't noticing? In the light of the 'contestability' of knowledge frameworks, Ronald Barnett in his book on Realising the University (2000), suggested that there was. Barnett felt that universities have a responsibility to assist students on the formation of their 'reflexive biographies' which are regarded as being *made* largely in and through action, through a purposive engagement with the world. He felt these were 'distinct from having one's biography made for one by the manifold forces that dominate this supercomplex world' (Barnett, ibid, p 158).

So raising my head from the much shorter and medium term clues occasionally visible in the weekly learning logs and termly essays, I realised that taking a much longer term view of the development process, as suggested here, could add another valuable element to the possible 'mix' of indicators of online influencing. One way of looking at these 'biographies' would be to get myself/students to inquire/respond to basic questions which inquire into issues of identity, values, and behaviour and shifts in these over time (see a possible list of such questions in Appendix 7). I deal with the development of this idea more fully in Chapter 6 which is devoted to this concept and offers examples of how this idea has worked out in practice.

A 'systemic' mindset: while I was exploring the nature of influence in the logs/essays on the Exeter MA, I was also working with other external organisations in leadership development programmes, using what I called a 'systemic ' approach. This was something I'd been doing full time since 1988 and had adopted and adapted the term from my experiences of family therapy with the Milan School of family therapy (Jones, 1993), particularly working with Cechin and Boscolo. I was also doing consultancy work during this period, including working with the late David Campbell who, while based at the Tavistock Clinic, had been one of the most influential supporters of this approach in the UK. During 2007-8 David asked me to contribute to a chapter in a new book on 'systemic practice' clarifying my take on the term and offering some examples of my work in practice (Campbell and Huffington, 2009). In this I introduced the notion of a 'spiral' of seven loosely linked perspectives (see Appendix 13 in Chapter 1), which provides a view of the many 'roots' or ways of knowing that influenced this metaphor. As I say in the paper in that appendix, it has helped me 'loosen the grip of common sense ways of looking at things and find novel ways of knowing a particular

interaction' - which I have in turn been able to offer to others to see problems in a different light. This is something I'll speak to in Chapter 7 as I show how this informs my 'systemic responsiveness' to students.

A 'responsive repertoire: in looking back over the learning logs of various students and my own responses, I began to get the feeling that there were some patterns emerging between what they were offering me and how I was responding. I wasn't too surprised by this – after all I knew I was working from some set of principles that I'd been developing over the years, like the 'systemic' mindset, at a below conscious level. So there should have been some signs of this in how I was relating to the various issues that students were raising, or I was glimpsing in how they wrote about these and other matters. So as I mentioned earlier and will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, I decided to start a more systematic analysis of the textual record contained in the logs and essays to see if I could discern any forms of patterning, and glimpses of influence and relationship development.

Though I did find that there were some patterns that occurred throughout the 18 months of directed work, some were clearly more likely to arise in the early months of the programme when most students felt awed by being at university again, and overwhelmed by the volume of work. Others seemed to arise later when students had settled down, were more trusting of their relationship with the coach/university, and could face up to significant development difficulties they were experiencing. Of course this timing varied considerably with some students 'getting there' earlier than others. The preliminary taxonomy I developed of some twelve plus strategies which inform my 'responsive repertoire' (see Appendix 6) bears a family resemblance to other such tutoring classifications (e.g. Denis et al, 2004, referred to earlier in Chapter 2). But I felt that there were also new 'moves' that appear original in nature in this field, and that the *macro* world view that went hand in hand with this repertoire – see 'identifying the values grounding my pedagogy' later in this chapter - together with the dynamic use of these relational *micro* tools, would in time be shown to constitute a novel form of online coaching that I would later call 'presencing developmental possibilities'.

Learning relationship/'development container': while I found this early model building work on my 'response repertoire' very interesting, I decided not to pursue this line further at that stage. I was by then more interested in looking at another aspect of the pedagogy – what I refer to as the *macro* world view above – which I felt needed further investigation. As indicated above, I seemed to be using a repertoire of 'interventions' to stimulate and support student development of a particular kind. And though this ongoing 'shower of arrows' seemed to involve a high degree of redundancy (in the sense that the student often did not have the time/was not able, to respond specifically to each of them as such), they did seem to be having a positive effect on the learning relationship/climate they and I worked within.

The asynchronous nature of most of the interaction, the unceasing movement each week onto yet new ideas and models, and the predominant focus of log and essay questions on explicating academic theories, works against there being many obvious direct links between the specifics of student offerings and coach responses. So I tried a more hermeneutical approach (Weinsheimer, 1985). This involved me in trying to calibrate my micro–level offerings with the more general metaphors that students offered me when I asked them about the impact of the coaching. The breakthrough eventually came when I started to think of 'influencing' in terms of moderating the nature and depth of

learning that takes place in the virtual time-space that the student-coach interactions construct over time. I realised then that these continual 'showerings' of supportive and provocative 'arrows' could lead to a higher level and emergent *relationship* (which I've since called a 'development container') in which students could freely explore questions about who they were, why they were here, and what leadership might mean for them.

THIRD PHASE: seeking evidence of the effects of my educational influence
While Phase 2 represented a very encouraging development, I had became more and more aware – helped by Jack Whitehead's promptings for 'evidence' – that I myself wouldn't be happy with the quality of evidence of these findings created in largely asynchronous written exchanges. What I wanted/needed was a more *dialogic* form of evidence where the students and I could agree on what had happened between us in the moment, and the logs certainly offered a very indirect and ungainly vehicle for achieving this level of validation. So building on the learning in the first and second more *action* oriented phases – 'how to improve my practice?' - this third phase has been driven much more by my *research* needs.

With this now uppermost in my mind, I encouraged the more active involvement of some of my students in the research aspect, especially Colleen, John, Jim, Paul, and Ian. I also sought critique from other academic colleagues like Ann O'Brien at Exeter, Marie Huxtable and Jacqui Scholes-Rhodes at Bath, my long term Exeter consulting colleague Roger Niven, as well as my various teachers in singing, Feldenkrais, and other interests external to the MA itself. In this period there's a more active and disciplined looking for evidence relating to various working hypotheses. There's also the start of an exploration of *criteria of progression* related to potential ontological work in the 'development container', which I discuss further in Chapter 7. I also have the opportunity during 2009 to translate a lot of my learning and ideas into the re-design of Phase 1 of the MA programme in ways which I hoped would set the tone for the entire programme.

So in this phase I began to work more actively on what I could do to transform the valuable record of evidence in the logs/essays into something more like a 'third kind of knowing' (Shotter, 2008), a dialogically constituted form of knowing between persons in context. In this I needed to show how this model of 'ontological going on', could also usefully be applied within the rather different virtual 'conversations' that take place in asynchronous and online coaching interactions during the MA, and that can be experienced as 'close learning' (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004). To clarify further what I'm saying here I offer a short video clip - *'using video clips to strengthen validity claims'* - showing how I understood the difficulty I faced here, and how I intended to

7. *using video clips to strengthen validity claims'*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlEYoSY-oqg

address it. It comes from a supervision discussion with Jack Whitehead in June, 2010 with the clip starting just as I summarise my viewpoint about the need for multi-media presentations to strengthen claims to validity.

I begin by saying that what I call the 'back up' process for checking the validity of my hypotheses, has to be more 'real' – by which I mean through face to face conversation, as in Shotter's 'third kind of knowing'. I sketch out my methodology for assessing influence online, talking about four glimpses or 'evidences' of influence (note: these later became the three that I've described above). I make clear that in addition, I want to get videos of any discussions I have with the students, so we can develop richer and more rounded understandings to use to check out the validity of any claims. My body language during this clip I think amply demonstrates my 'living' commitment to seeking a more demanding level of validity: 'so that's my research methodology… where the other person and I create a 'joint reality': *that's* what that means to *us*!'

Before looking in more detail at the 'living theory' that I've been 'organising and organised by' in the next section, I'd like to comment briefly on two main developments that came to the fore in this last more research oriented phase: the search for a more 'ostensive' form of evidence of meaning making that I could use to strengthen the validity of claims - that the video clip has just referred to; and seeking 'criteria of progression' within the textual record that I could use dynamically to assess progress along more ontological lines.

Use of ostensive multi-media evidence: as I've just shown, my felt need was to strengthen the validity of my claims through generating face to face conversational accounts that could approximate the 'third kind of knowing' or momentary, localised epistemology that Shotter so eloquently articulates. This kind of knowing is reserved for those participating in the dialogue who are in this sense 'in the know' about the subtleties of gestural language and the important legacies and implicit rules that constitute the relevant history of both the general surroundings and the particular exchange itself (Shotter, 2008).

So how to convey this special quality of communication to outsiders in an informative and convincing manner? As Jack Whitehead has explored in recent writings (Whitehead, 2009), what seems to be key in these exchanges is to be able to show how living/life affirming energy and values combine to convey visually and viscerally the striking qualities of passion and commitment that are felt. In this he looks to Vasilyuk's concept of 'creative experiencing' (Vasilyuk, 1991) which describes transforming reality as a process of *atonement* which can be seen as a 'sensory-practical, bodily aspect' - hence the virtue of an audio-visual record. This is now becoming a more popular approach for research: as Heath et al say in their recent publication Video in Qualitative Research (Heath et al, 2010, p vi), video provides opportunities for 'fine grained analysis of social organisation, culture, and communication' as well as enabling 'new and distinctive ways of presenting insights' in areas as diverse as operating theatres, control rooms in the Underground and news rooms in the BBC'. Furthermore: 'Audio-visual recordings are increasingly used to support research that examines the situated activities and interactional organisation through which knowledge, skills, and practices are shared and disseminated…[and there is]...burgeoning interest in using video to also examine the ways in which knowledge is revealed, shared and embodied in…informal settings.' (ibid, p 8).

My own first videotaping venture came when I interviewed one of my past students, using material from my 'glimpses of virtual influencing' to stimulate our discussion and assess the validity of my hypotheses. When first viewing the tapes afterwards I was rather disappointed in what we'd produced and was rather critical of myself and how I'd managed the session – we didn't seem to capture many of the real changes that I/we both felt had occurred. It was only later after sharing some clips of the video with Jack Whitehead that I realised I was perhaps looking for the wrong things, and often at the wrong person: I had been focusing on the student whereas Jack had focused on me! In doing so he had seen a range of things that I had discounted/taken for granted - like my passion for the work, my close but open and encouraging attention to the views and learning of the student, and my general responsiveness in the moment. I was showing a quality of living energy that Jack associated with the expression of embodied values… and I'd missed all that! It was very good learning and opened a whole new horizon for how I felt I could now approach the task of assessing the validity of my claims.

Criteria of progression: but this 'move to video' did not mean I was finished with the textual record in the online system. I was still wondering how I could extract more value from this rich historical material, and a chance remark at an MA Exam Board meeting in 2009 led to my next sortie into the assessment area. The new examiner at her first meeting expressed some surprise at what she called the 'lack of progression' of student marks as they made their way through the two year programme: they were getting privileged coaching from experienced practitioners, so why weren't their grades improving over the year? As I got over my initial defensive reaction I too asked - but a slightly different question: why don't we have progression criteria that go *beyond marks* to help us assess the quality and level of *development* in e.g. ontological skills? A summary of what I've done so far appears in Appendix 8 to this chapter. This is still very much a 'work-in-progress' and my appreciation of this initial work appears in Chapter 7 when I look at it in the context of my overall pedagogy. I believe this will become an increasingly important area especially if we take to heart Barnett's view that students should be experiencing not only epistemic but ontological uncertainty and dislocation, if they are to develop the qualities needed to perform effectively in a world of 'supercomplexity' (Barnett, 2000).

*   *   *

Beyond the still emerging relations between the *systemic mindset*, the *responsive repertoire,* and the nature of the *learning relationship* - and now links with possible inclusional *criteria of progression* - it seemed to me that I was being energised by other still largely tacit sources of energy and direction. So there was still more digging to do, and it is to these grounding values driving my coaching that I turn to now.

IDENTIFYING THE VALUES GROUNDING MY PEDAGOGY
At the end of Chapter 1 I offered a view of the transformations in epistemology that have come about over the period – from 'systems' to 'systemic' to 'social constructionist' to 'embodied practice'. And of course these have undoubtedly influenced very strongly how I've thought about my overall 'living' approach to my work and life. From the analysis of my ongoing development in both action and research terms, I think it's probably becoming clearer how what I've been doing, though

influenced by the ideas of others, is very much a unique response shaped by my history and how I've responded to my students and the exigencies of the evolving situation. In many ways, and with Polanyi always in the background, it feels like the process Moustakas calls 'heuristic inquiry' which begins with 'something that has called to me from within my life experience, something to which I have associations and fleeting awarenesses but whose nature is largely unknown.' (Moustakis, 1990, p. 13) It's open-ended, self-directed, and auto-biographic and 'requires a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated' (ibid, p. 15). But of course I've not been completely adaptive and flexible, ready to get blown hither and thither by the forces in the situation. No, something has been helping me with my continual re-relating and re-orienting as I've developed my own ideas about how I want to live my life; and it's not just what Polanyi referred to as a scientist's feeling-sense of the characteristics of their still tacit eventual goal (Polanyi, 1983)

As mentioned in the Introduction, Dadds and Hart (2001) highlighted that practitioner researchers often place a great deal of importance on their methodological inventiveness as they seek better resolutions to their challenges: 'what genuinely matters are the purposes of practice which the research seeks to serve, and the integrity with which the practitioner researcher makes methodological choices about ways of achieving those purposes' (ibid, p 169). And it is this kind of framing that has encouraged me to follow my intuitions and inventiveness rather than laid down formal methodology, to improve my own work practices and be motivated subsequently to carry out the more systematic research needed to create knowledge suitable for wider public dissemination.

8. *relating 3rd kind to online dialogue*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkSxsFJ1cHQ

To illustrate this I offer the following video clip – '*relating 3rd kind to online dialogue*' - in which I explain how I'm hoping to relate a *face to face* dialogically structured epistemology, that Shotter calls a 'third kind of knowing' (Shotter, 2008), to what I believe is happening in the *online* written interactions my students and I engage in.

The clip begins with me recounting a story of how one of my students has transformed his leadership style as a result of a 'fleeting moment' of influencing, and that our discussion was captured online – so there's some direct evidence of this. I go on to describe other pieces of evidence for my hypothesis about influencing in face to face situations, using Wittgenstein's ideas about 'primitive reactions' and 'language-games', and how I believe it can be, and is, happening online as well. I emphasise that I see the real challenge (in writing Chapter 3) is to show how a conversational approach to meaning making, where meaning is an unfolding and negotiated process often about 'knowing how to go on', is happening in my coaching interactions with students. I've

seen glimpses of this phenomenon, but…? I believe the video vividly captures my own 'anticipatory' and 'unfolding' vision of how we figure out how to go on in conversation, and my desire to make a convincing case for this alss happening in the virtual world.

So having identified the nature of the challenge facing me, how have I grown to understand 'living educational theory'? As Wittgenstein has said 'to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life' (1958, no. 19), and this has very much been my experience with the language and form of life made possible by the living theory approach to action research. But I've not found it easy to get a handle on the words 'from the inside' so to speak, the forms of living they enable and constrain, and the knowing this generates. As in other matters it has taken me some time 'dwelling in the subsidiaries' to make progress, as shown in my dialogue with Jack Whitehead in Appendix 17 in Chapter 1. Let me summarise my thinking about this concept:

> At the level of everyday knowing-in-action, I'm using some 'inner' momentary and sentient criteria to decide whether what I'm doing, as a person and educator, is right or not. As Shotter notes in this regard 'the character of our judgements…are present to us only in terms of their unfolding temporal contours' (Shotter, 2008, p 29) which I can identify and clarify through reflexive practice as they emerge in my relations with others. And as these values emerge they perform a dual function: firstly, they help me more consciously and confidently improve my practice and direct my actions towards what I regard from a space deep within me, as worthwhile; and secondly, they help me assess and account for the outcomes and consequences of what I'm doing, and how I'm achieving these. In the latter case, these embodied values are transformed into 'standards of judgement' which provide a unique personal resource for helping me evaluate my influence in my own learning and doing, and my influence on the learning of others and the contexts in which we work together (Whitehead, 2009). This ontological framework provides me with the means to realise who I want to be, who I am, and how I can deal with the contradictions between these states, in my daily interaction with others. In this way I am enabled to know something of and be able to offer an explanation for, Foucault's consequential 'does' (in 'knowing what what I do, does'), allowing me to make public and seek validation for my own living educational theory.

So what have emerged as crucial elements in my living educational theory, the fundamental energies that have combined to sensitise, motivate, and enable me to do what I do, in the way I do it, and for the reasons that I do do it? What are the beliefs, values and activities that make my approach distinctive and life enhancing to myself and those with whom I work? I offer my response to these questions by exploring the constellation of flow form dynamic energies that seem to form, mobilise and guide my living and working existence, in three sections: core ontological skills – the 'what'; embodied axiological values – the 'why'; and the momentary epistemological standards of judgement – the 'how'. I support these textual explanations with video clips taken from supervisory discussions with Jack Whitehead.

WHAT – this is *what* I'm doing
I have an educational *practice* which involves me in doing certain things in certain ways. Looking at a video clip of myself, I might see e.g. that I am asking the student questions about a claim he has made, in a certain tone of voice/facial expression that 'casts doubt' on his interpretation as being *the* answer, and encouraging him to seek other and possibly multiple, answers. There might be several reasons why I use this

particular form of behaviour - which I will come to later but for now - 'this *is **what*** I'm doing'. Moving up to a higher level of definition, it's become clear to me as I've inquired into my practice, that there are three main things that I do that seem to form the focus of my unceasing efforts concerned with the question *'how do I improve my practice?'* and that capture the cycle of 'living life as development' (a play on a phrase 'living life as inquiry' used by Judi Marshall, 1999) that energises and guides my work forward: *creating new knowing; developing praxis; and facilitating development.*

Creating new knowing – this term captures an intense desire to find out more about how individuals and human systems 'work', develop, and change. I think you can see this writ large in the narrative of my learning described in Chapter 1, the many sorties into the fields of therapy and bodywork mentioned at the start of this chapter, and the various transformations in perception and sense of self that I've undergone over that period of four decades. But this is only the start of my inquiry cycle…

Developing praxis – Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* defines praxis as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.' (1970, p 36), and this idea captures a seemingly unending drive in me to put new ways of understanding to practical use *and* in so doing, continue to improve that emerging practice and the knowing associated with it. And these improvements have always been inextricably linked to my work with others as referred to earlier on page 16.[12]

Facilitating development – my journey from 'expert consultant' to 'development facilitator' to 'presencing coach' bears witness to a marked shift in focus towards helping others help themselves. Over the years as part of my search for not only personal insight but methods of helping others do the same, I've completed many 'personality profiles' which support this claim. For example in Torbert's Leadership Development Framework I was assessed at being at the 'alchemist' stage, as someone who is committed to transforming themselves and others as well as changing the institutions in which they work, and show an 'ability to renew or even reinvent themselves and their organizations in historically significant ways…an extraordinary capacity to deal simultaneously with many situations at multiple levels…talk with both kings and commoners…deal with immediate priorities yet never lose sight of long-term goals.' (Rooke and Torbert, 2005, p 6).

The video clip that follows - *'three drivers'* - shows me offering a very brief summary of these three basic ontologically or 'becoming' oriented activities. I provide it here because I believe in a few moments it captures the passion that I feel for what I'm doing, and clearly demonstrates the cyclical nature of this process which seems to provides an unceasing flow of energy even as I reach 'three score years and ten'.

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[12] I can identify at least seven clear passages of time where this has been the case, stretching from my first consultancy role in 1975-79, my work as HR director between 1981-89, my second period in a boutique culture change consultancy in 1989-91, as director of the management consulting unit at Kings College London during 1989-91, as a member of several development consulting 'teams' working for the BBC during the period 1990-2000, in two capacities at Exeter - as a CLS Fellow during 2004-08 and as a coach on the MA during 2004-2011, and finally as a founder with CLS colleague Roger Niven of the Proteus Inquiry Network in 2009 – see www.the-pin.co.uk

9. *'three drivers'*
http://www.youtube/watch?v=vgdn2ROeFG8

So these three activities are very much the focus of my work on responding to 'how do I improve my practice?': through working systematically on these three 'whats'; and by noticing and dealing with contradictions that I discover in my practice between the 'is' and 'ought', particularly between how I'm orienting myself to 'how we go on' together in the coaching relationship, as against focusing instead on matters of efficiency and problem solving. This *is* my practice and as I have pursued these activities largely implicitly for many years, I realise that they have been and are fuelled and supported by deeper ontological values that provide answers to the question '*why* do I follow these practices?', which I turn to next.

WHY – this is *why* I'm doing it

Embedded in the previous section of '*what* I do' are *educational 'living' values* that energise and motivate me to choose to pursue these activities, both generally as well as specifically with particular students/clients at particular times. They also shape the way I do these things as I offer clients/students a provocative hermeneutic inquiry process - from framing to micro-practices and vice versa. As the Shotter quote at the head of the chapter implies, our 'two part responsibility' in both framing and sustaining meaning in communications, both of which have to be negotiated within conversation (Garfinkel, 1967, p 40), has a moral-practical side to it which responds to '*why* am I doing what I'm doing?' In identifying these largely implicit values as they have emerged from reflections on my practice with students and clients, I've now reached a position where I'm able to refer to these as *explanatory principles* which I feel are adequate for explaining and justifying my claims of educational influence to others as to 'why I do what I do.' From such reflections, I've identified three core values which I believe provide the 'motor' of my living educational practice: *equity – levelling the field; educational empowerment- carrying the word;* and *efficacy - living a life that works*. Let me explain what these terms mean to me and the role they play.

Equity - 'levelling the field'

The word, together with its adjective 'equitable', speaks strongly to me of fairness, justice, and equality. Why should I be engaged and emotional about this issue? As I revealed in Appendix 8 in Chapter 1, one obvious connection must be to my upbringing in apartheid-ridden South Africa, and my sense of being an 'empty vessel' with little connection to the rich diversity that exists in that country. The notion of neutralizing the unfair effects of social power differentials is one of the things that attracted me to Foucault's approach, where the perception that we're living not in a universal world but in a world defined by particular discourses, opened up new possibilities for influence and sense making for voices marginalised

through inequitable power relations, and for a more diverse, engaging, and equitable 'multiverse' to emerge.

So despite being in an 'elite' of sorts at school and university, at a deep but largely tacit level I have felt frustrated by the domination of discourse by conservative 'mainstream' voices and quite easily slip into a 'problematising' mindset – as a consultant I've often been told not to bite the hand that feeds me! My move towards 'participative' methods of facilitation is another illustration. I began giving up being an 'expert' consultant as far back as 1979 when I started working with the Grubb Institute, and have been 'beating' a path (in the sense of sailing into the wind) towards a more facilitative style ever since. My desire to confront marginalization in my work also explains my attraction to Michael White's narrative style of therapy which has been very influential in helping me find what he calls a 'de-centred' style which seeks to place the issues of the client centre stage (White and Epstone, 1990).

Educational empowerment - 'carrying the word'
This is clearly a value closely associated with 'equity' and is what has motivated me since the mid-70's to commit my career and working life to the learning and development field, and latterly to 'education' and 'educational research' proper. By 'carrying the word' I do not mean in a proselytising way. No, what I mean by this term is acting in ways which help people empower themselves to take practical action to remedy and improve their working situation. And to do this mainly through using my wisdom and ontological skills to facilitate educational experiences which provoke, enrich, elicit and exploit their own embodied knowing. As I discovered in the late 90's when doing 'values clarification' work based on ideas developed by Brian P. Hall (1994) who had been influenced by the work of Freire, Illich, and Fromm whom he met while working with the Anglican Church in South America. What I remember most clearly was the high level summary headline offered at the end: 'you are someone who is not satisfied with gaining knowledge as such – you have a strong desire to "carry the word", to share your knowing with others, so that they may themselves benefit from your wisdom'.

At the time I was not in education but working as a change management consultant, but it was clear from feedback from colleagues that I always went the extra mile to make my work with managers much more than 'training'. This was also one reason why I switched from running large change workshops in the BBC, the main 'service' I had been offering them during the 90's, to facilitating much smaller and more educational action learning sets in my latter years with them. The fact that I was often cast in the role of 'inciter of rebellion against Birtism' does show a certain side to my character and my desire to help people 'learn' their way out of apathy.

Efficacy – 'living a life that works'
Efficacy has always been an important criterion for me - whether as an engineer, work study analyst, line manager, change management consultant, director of human resources, or later in life, a facilitator of educational and development events. In their influential book 'Soft Systems Methodology in Action', Peter Checkland and Jim Scholes (1990) proposed three criteria for assessing the success of a transformation of a socio-technical work system. These were named the '3 Es' as follows: 'efficacy' – does the system work?; 'efficiency' – does it use minimal resources?; and 'effectiveness' – does the system meet the longer term aim? With my old 60's work study engineer hat on, this straightforward 'does it work?' definition of efficacy appeals, and reminds me of the increasing impatience of

consulting colleagues during the 90's who would often despair at my seemingly inexhaustible capacity for re-designing development programmes in order to make them more efficacious, efficient, and effective; but efficacious first, in the sense of 'does it work – for us, situated here, and now'?

As I mention in Chapter 1, I found the idea 'searching for roots in the future' offered a fruitful frame for reflecting on my considerable and lengthy efforts to develop the efficacy of my own practices of consulting/facilitation over nearly four decades. I can also see that part of the energy here also comes from a desire to legitimise *personal knowing* - in the sense of eliciting and validating subordinated knowledges – thus helping create a kind of freedom and equity for others, not just for those who live in privileged positions in society (so back to my 'equity' value!). And, as my intent focuses on timely and situated performance, my criteria go beyond the usual academic requirements of a university, to include the kind of tacit and embodied knowing that leads to authentic and responsive performance in real life situations, and to learning to live a life that *works* and is 'in the service of human flourishing' (Reason and Heron, 1997, p 288).

HOW – this is *how* I'm doing it
I was one of two coaches on the first online MA programme introduced in 2004. Since then Peter Case, the director, Donna Ladkin, the other original coach and then second director, Annie Pye, the third director, all of whom were/are full time academics, have moved on. Scott Taylor, the current director, is also a full time academic. So in this sense, as the only practitioner associated with the programme as a coach from the beginning, and through my PhD studies, I'm probably *the* person who has been most keenly interested in improving the pedagogical effectiveness of the MA. I am in a sense carrying much of the history and dreams embedded in the evolution of the programme.

Here are a couple of quotes from the original online introduction to the MA written by Peter Case which I believe capture the spirit: 'Canonical concepts and toolkits will give way increasingly to what we term "upstream theorising" of the relational processes of leadership…hope to create…a deliberatively reflexive theatre of learning in which your experiences…will play the leading role.' In response to this, in a position paper I wrote in 2009 before revising Phase 1 of the programme, I asked how we might proceed to create this 'reflexive theatre of learning'. My answer proposed that this would come from students 'experiencing a full, intimate and synthesising exposure to three 'domains' of experience and knowing: *literature* and familiarity with the contested nature of the field; *self awareness* and familiarity with one's values, assumptions, and behavioural patterns; and *practice* with familiarity of the subtleties and challenges of improving one's own practice and influencing the practices of others in local contexts'. (the full paper appears in Appendix 9).

Similarly, as all my students have passed well, several with distinctions for their dissertations, I could claim that through successfully mediating the academic standards of the university with my students – or as one student Colleen puts it in Chapter 6: being the 'fulcrum' - I've introduced and have had legitimated at least at a tacit level by the Academy, new forms of leadership knowing, as well as original ideas on how coaches can perform and influence the educational process. In doing this I'm posing new *standards of judgement* as to what leadership and leadership development means, for which amongst others, Furlong and Onacea in their paper on practice centred research, offer strong support.(Furlong and Onacea, 2008).

So what might these embodied new standards be that I've become both more aware of and more consciously committed to, as they've emerged in my inquiry into my coaching practices? As Shotter comments in relation to Bernstein's 'practical moral knowledge' (1983): 'It is our embodied feelings – and the embodied anticipations and expectations to which they spontaneously give rise – that are neglected.....But it is just these *contingent feelings* …that work as the "momentary standards" against which our more explicit formulations are judged for their adequacy and appropriateness' (Shotter, 2008, p 29). I've identified three of these 'action guiding feelings' that seem most pervasive and whose presence I'm continuously monitoring in the moment, or in the 'temporal unfolding' of my actions (Stern, 2004), as evidence of effective educational support that can really make a difference to their scholarship and working lives ('living a life that works'). These standards are: *'presencing developmental possibilities'; 'seeking evidence of ontological achievement'; and 'maintaining a dependable relationship'.*

Presencing developmental possibilities
Since the mid 60's I've had this intense desire to get behind the conventional view of things, intrigued by any 'lens' that allowed me to *peer beneath* so to speak, giving me/us glimpses of other more shadowy forms of living, that gave 'relief' to everyday understandings warranted in mainstream thinking (in the sense of making them visible like a 'relief' [I thank my daughter Clodagh for this metaphor]), as well as relief from dominant viewpoints!) This seeking of multiple understandings, which I can now recognise as primarily *relational* in nature, can be seen as ways of foregrounding and re-punctuating from the tacit and/or commonly subordinated knowledges which are part of a continuous and inclusional background flow of experience, the routine and conventional meanings that guide our everyday behaviour[13].

These experiences are clearly an early expression of what I'm now calling 'presencing developmental possibilities', where I've engaged in 'experiments' seeking and embodying new ontological understandings of living. I've plunged into these deep waters in order to develop the attitudes, skills, and sense of self that might equip me for more intelligent manouevering and adaptation to working and living in an increasingly uncertain and complex world – what Wittgenstein calls learning 'how to go on together' (1958), and in what Barnett has referred to as a world of 'supercomplexity' (2000).

In reflecting on my coaching practice over recent years, I've realized that this is also something I'm doing all the time with my students and that it has in practice become the central and 'leading' element of my pedagogic approach. In the process it has become a key standard of judgement I use to frame and evaluate what I'm doing, and in the next video clip I show how this term first emerged during a supervision session with Jack Whitehead, as a insight that would spark a 'reaction' leading to a new 'language–game' (Wittgenstein, 1958). In this clip - *presencing developmental possibilities part 1* - we have been talking about my practice of 'intuitive inferencing', and evidence that this seemed to be working, discussing in particular

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[13] as Shotter remarks, though these momentarily emerging 'forms' '…have no substantial existence in themselves…[they] have the character of 'real presences' (Steiner, 1989). While invisible as such, they are not 'nothings'; they are 'somethings' with a felt presence. Understanding their nature affords us not only a sense of 'who' the others around us 'are', but also of 'where they are coming from', of how we are 'placed' in relation to them, and of how we might 'go on' with them in the future.' (2003, p 246).

my experiences with one of my students who had found my several interventions 'right on the button' for her.

I've just been exploring my suggestion to her to read about 'womens' ways of knowing' which produced an amazed 'how did you know I needed *this*' reaction from her. As I explain what I thought I was doing, I use the phrase 'which is a kind of a presencing developmental possibilities', offering students something *now* that I think they would find useful in the future. Jack immediately fastens on to this phrase, 'a kind of presencing developmental possibilities', and I admit that, although this notion has been in the back of my mind for some time, I'd not thought about that particular phrase before. The laughter and expressive body language provides visual evidence of the energy that is being released as this insight is revealed to us. As you will see later on in Chapter 4, I use this as an illustration of what, following Wittgenstein, I call a 'primitive reaction' leading to a new 'language-game' (Wittgenstein, 1958). See what you make of it.

10. *presencing developmental possibilities part 1*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZC-DvE7N50

I first came across the term 'presencing' in Scharmer's writing (Scharmer, 2003) and I'll discuss this link further in Chapter 7. But here the idea of 'presencing' is related to something I've long been interested in called 'reducing the transfer gap' created by e.g. off site training/development courses (referred to earlier in Chapter 2). Building on the concept of 'close learning' first coined by Gosling and Mintzberg (2006), I try to create opportunities for people to learn and integrate that learning *while* they are doing; and not just 'doing' but 'doing really well'. What I realized was that I wanted people to learn *and* to develop the skills to apply their learning *in context*, so that they picked up the 'contextualizing skills' - which are generally ignored - as well as the 'tools'[14]. I've grown to believe that this can be done through a special kind of learning in the moment from everyday experiences, and therefore regard everyday work as a major opportunity for development, in which the so-called 'transfer gap' can be minimized. In this process, as in jazz improvisation, the gap between 'composing' and 'performing' can be reduced to a

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[14] This is a good illustration of what I refer to in the Introduction as 'clues' distributed throughout the thesis, that point attention to my deep interest in the issue of 'contextualising' that in July, 2011, quite suddenly came together to form my new version of 'presencing' i.e. presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' – see pp 14-15.

moment in time. I see it also as foregrounding a dimension of the 'hidden curriculum' (Jackson, 1968) so that the issue of context and contextualising becomes a critical and legitimate focus for an educator like myself. As Freire remarked 'it's impossible for education to be neutral' (Horton and Freire, 1990, p 104) and the grounding influence of world view and local context of the teacher will be picked up tacitly by students.

Seeking/valorising evidence of ontological achievement
As indicated earlier, the coach has considerable discretion and influence over the marking process for the six formal essays and the dissertation, as long as he/she has the confidence of the director/external examiner. I have now achieved this for six years - so what kind of evaluative criteria have I applied to my marking practices, and how have I decided to assess and grade students so that they meet my interpretation of the universities standards? In my July, 08 paper on using a 'formative assessment' process (Appendix 5) , I make it quite clear that students need to satisfy me on a broad range of criteria that certainly address obvious academic standards like 'answering the question', 'logical reasoning', 'critical engagement with sources', and so on.

I also use other less academic criteria to reach my final judgements, like e.g. I want to hear their *own voice* in terms of how they have experienced a particular idea/concept both in thought and deed - *in what ways has it changed them?*; and what are they doing or going to do with the now experienced idea, in terms of *applying it in their own practice* in order to improve their own and others' performance. In other words, I'm interested in them making a difference in their world of work: my intent is on their *situated performance*, exploiting the kind of tacit and embodied knowing that leads to authentic performance in real life situations.

It's this wider range of criteria that I look for and comment on in my feedback and grading work. It is also behind my need to seek out what Shotter calls a 'third kind of knowing' in follow-up interviews with past students, to generate a higher quality of feedback on the validity of my 'online'-based claims about the developments that students have achieved during the programme.

Maintaining dependable relationships
This standard of judgement has taken the longest to emerge, probably because it was strongly influenced by early childhood experiences. I frame it as providing ongoing and stable support for others without this being *contingent* on their responses. It plays a complementary role to the other two standards, offering the security of a dependable relationship as students deal with the anxieties and uncertainties of learning and development involved in knowing how to go on.

I first became aware of its important role in my performance when reflecting on my behaviour after some four years of coaching on the MA. Due to the 'isolated' and asynchronous nature of the programme, I have found myself intensely pursuing my aim of making a difference for my students for long periods of time, with little clear and detailed feedback either on how I was doing in regard to my central question 'how do I improve my practice?', or the encouragement and support for general performance one might normally expect – either from students, other coaches, or academic staff. Examples include responding with sensitivity and vigor to 'late' logs, even those submitted after a phase had ended, and feedback from one student

who said he experienced both 'conditional and unconditional regard', where he felt that 'even though this (work) was poor/ weak and could be improved, I (the coach) will STILL give 100% attention to this.' Here *my* standards had not been transferred to others and I've been happy to do what I thought was right, however others might react.

I realized that there was something powerful at work here. It has slowly become clearer to me that this very deep seated behaviour springs originally from growing up in a broken home where because of my Dad's general unreliability, I was telling myself all the time that I would never be like him. So I spend a lot of time in 'second position' thinking about what the other wants/needs, never to let people down, and so on. This is most obvious in my relationship with my youngest daughter who lost her mother at 13, and where I bend over backwards to be an absolutely dependable father and supporter, without looking for anything in return. I can now see that this is also influenced by my desire to be receptive and responsive. So it doesn't feel quite such an automatic response: I am choosing to be dependable in order to improve my educational influence.

So in summary, if I can notice that what I'm doing is meeting these three criteria, I feel able to continue working because there is continuity and coherence between these and the trios of 'ontological skills' and 'embodied values'. As a result I can explain my influence and so claim that 'this is what what I do, *does*', and say 'this is *why* I do what I do'.

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

Having completed this review of the 'steps' I've been taking towards developing my own 'living theory' I can now summarise how I stand in relation to the 'philosophical trinity' of questions facing any serious researcher i.e. what exists or *ontology*, how do I know what exists or *epistemology,* and what is valuable or *axiology?* (Durant-Law, 2005). And of course to this must be added the fourth question about *methodology* that soon follows, which is how can a researcher discover whatever they believe can be known? (Guba & Lincoln 1998)'

THE METHODOLOGY EMERGES
In talking about this quartet of 'ologies', and their own 'participative' form of Co-operative Inquiry, Heron and Reason (1997) position qualitative approaches like ethnography as being *about* people, about 'halfway' between positivist research *on* people and their own form of inquiry *with* people. They also offer an extended epistemology which warrants several forms of knowing like experiential, practical, and presentational which potentially provides a much richer pallette with which to paint pictures of what's happening. I'll come back to their critique of a qualitative inquiry method like ethnography when I look at my chosen inquiry method of critical auto-ethnography in the next section.

'Inventing' an aligned methodology
Here is a picture of my version of the 'philosophical trinity' of axiology, ontology, and epistemology, which is based directly on the material I've provided in the previous section 'steps towards a living theory'. You'll see that the three *embodied values*

represent my 'axiology', and though they don't use the phrase coined by Heron and Reason, these are about 'human flourishing' as the reason *why* I do what I do. The three *ontological skills* represent my 'ontology', the 'becoming' form of reality I'm seeking to create in my work, and the *what* I do. And finally, the three *standards of judgement* represent my 'epistemology', the *how* I will assess and know whether what I'm doing and why I'm doing it, is coming into presence. I believe these are in alignment with each other, at least in the local context of my inquiry, and provide a powerful source of value-associated energy for both my 'doing' and 'inquiring' work.
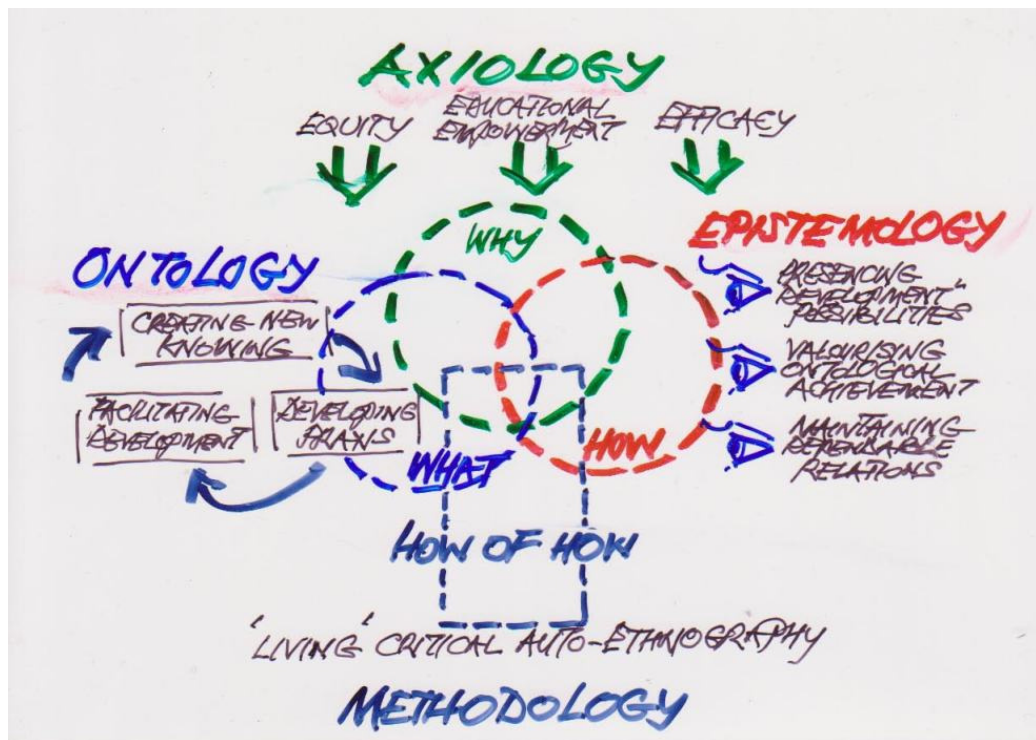
THE CONSTELLATION OF VALUES, BEHAVIOURS, AND STANDARDS OF JUDGEMENT THAT CONSTITUTE MY LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY

They also provide a particularly strong force-field to support my efforts to discover whatever I believe can be known, and the 'methodological inventiveness' I've generated 'to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care' (Dadds & Hart, 2001, p. 169), in building a methodology for supporting my inquiry. So in addition to wanting to understand how educational influencing can take place in an online environment, I've also been driven for a very long period of time to find better ways of doing this. And this has obviously included the issue of finding out how I'm doing at the moment: as, in most forms of action research, I've been inquiring into outcomes, finding out more about the 'what what I do, *does*'.

One way of looking at this so-called 'inventiveness' is to see how in carrying out my research, certainly initially without a specific research methodology in mind , I've made partial use of a range of approaches used in qualitative methods of research. If I use Cresswell's review of qualitative methods (2007) of 'five' such approaches (first pointed out to me by Jack Whitehead), I can begin to see how I've been making use of

all of them to some extent, but in particular ways that have been conditioned by the largely implicit living theory 'trinity' I've been working within while registered at Bath. Here is how I see my 'inclusional entanglement' with each of these:

- as Cresswell indicates, '*narrative* can be both a method and the phenomenon of study' (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2006), and I've used this in 'patchwork' form in Chapter 1 to tell a story of about my development, in Chapter 6 to surface longer term changes in my students using the concept of 'reflexive biography', and in this chapter to make 'rationally visible' (Garfinkel, 1967) various educational influences in my own life.

- again paraphrasing Cresswell, whereas a narrative study reports the life of a single individual*,* in *phenomenology* the focus is on describing what *all* participants have in common, thus reducing individual experiences within a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. Though my use of Wittgenstein's 'primitive reaction' and Stern's 'unfolding contours of meaning' in Chapter 4 smacks of a phenomenological approach, my emphasis is much more on the unique experiences and explanations of educational influencing in individual working lives.

- in *grounded theory* the 'theory' is not something that is taken off the shelf but is generated from the 'grounds' of data generated by participants in a study, in order to provide a general explanation of a process or event. Though my work is 'grounded' in my detailed experiences with students, the explanatory principles I'm using here come from my experience of my *own* living values and their influence on my own education, and those of others I've worked with, and as such, are not abstract generalizations but unique personal expressions

- according to Cresswell, *ethnography* is the study of the meaning of behaviour, language, and interaction among members of a 'culture-sharing' group involving extended observation. I can certainly claim to have immersed myself in the day to day educational process, of myself in a real physical sense, and my students mainly in a virtual sense, where we have shared the culture of inquiry fostered during the MA experience. However I've been studying the educational process not just to 'explain' it but to 'improve' it, so my version of ethnography has involved 'critical' and 'educational influencing' dimensions.

- though some observers see *case studies* not as a methodology as such but as a choice of 'what is studied' (Stake, 2005) the last of Cresswell's 'five' methods is usually seen as a way of studying a complex and possibly 'messy' issue through the study of a bounded system. As you will note in Chapters 4-6 I've made use of the work of three students to act as 'cases' for the much larger group I've worked with over the past 8 years, where I've sought to develop an insider view of the educational process which could provide valuable information for the MA programme as a whole. But rather than seeing each case as bounded, my stance here has been to adopt a more open ended approach to the various influences which have been at work.

This openess is something that Whitehead, following Rayner, has described as being involved in 'a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries' (Whitehead, 2009). In this 'inclusional' space, I believe my students and I have been more open to being mutually influenced by our *creative experiencing* of 'life-affirming energy' that Vasilyuk for one has linked to the expression of peoples' core values (Vasilyuk, 1991). In this process, the educational influence on us of others is always mediated by our own

life history, originality and creativity, a central feature of a living theory approach and a basic difference to these 'five' methods with which it bears a family resemblance. And having now set the scene, I'd like to say a little more about the particular form of the ethnographic method that I've evolved over time to inquire into the educational influence process in an online programme on a situated practice.

Using a critical form of auto-ethnography
In the previous section you can see that I felt I was using a form of this method of inquiry but one that involved both 'auto' and 'critical' dimensions. Let me say a bit more about how I now see myself as using an ethnographic version of living theory in this inquiry. If I submit my approach to the series of definitional criteria posed by O'Reilly (2009, p 52), I find myself nodding vigorously in assent: yes, I am doing all of these!

- uses iterative-inductive approach that evolves through the study
- involves direct and sustained contact with people within context of daily lives and cultures
- watches what happens, listens, asks questions
- produces a richly detailed account
- respects the irreducibility of human experience
- acknowledges the role of theory
- acknowledges the researchers own role
- views people as part object/part subject

Looking further into this, I can point to Chapter 1 as being a patchwork version of an extended period of 'memo writing' that I've been engaged in – both writings to 'diary' as well as seven years worth of digital files recorded on my Olympus voice recorder, most often while driving on the motorways between Exeter, Bath, Oxford, and Eastbourne! These personal thoughts have all been about understanding the meanings of 'sustained contact' between myself and my students, watching, listening, asking questions, producing rich accounts as against 'thin conclusions' (Geertz, 1993), being reflexive, using and building theories, and so on. But I've been doing these things not primarily for the more usual form of post-hoc analysis but to support a continuing process of experimenting and checking validity, in order to improve my practice in the moment. Hence my view that it's a 'living theory' version of ethnography.

With regard to the 'critical' dimension, O'Reilly (2009, p 52) defines this as an 'attempt to expose hidden agendas, challenge oppressive assumptions, describe power relations, and generally critique the taken-for-granted', and, I would add, in order to change situations that are not supportive of 'human flourishing' (a term offered by Peter Reason in response to the 'why' question (Heron and Reason, 1997). So critical ethnography goes beyond just *understanding,* to choose a way of seeing the world in ways that are judged to be 'fairer, more just, even more truthful', and to attempt to *change* situations which don't meet these criteria (O'Reilly, 2009, p 52). When I look e.g. at my writing in Chapter 2 where I'm all the time looking to *problematise* mainstream ways of treating matters, I have little doubt that I'm very much in the 'critical' camp – and here as a major factor in this development, I acknowledge the influence on my thinking of Foucault and his ideas about 'power-knowledge' and disciplinary regimes.

Finally regarding the 'auto' dimension to my inquiry, I can see quite clearly that by foregrounding my own role and experiences in this account, and by writing reflectively

and reflexively about these personal experiences, I'm accepting the intimate relationship between researcher and researched. I remember the shock of recognition of this principle (again) when asked to write about the 'I' doing the researching in my first year at Bath! I say recognised 'again' because I'd first come across this idea a few years earlier when David Campbell, talking about first and second order cybernetics (Keeney, 1983), remarked that the shift occurs when you move from saying 'I see the problem' to saying 'what *I* see is *part* of the problem'. Of course this is something that is very easy to forget, especially when you regard yourself as an observer and not a participant, and don't keep reflecting on the fact that your personal fingerprints are all over your data!

So given this particular approach to the four 'ologies', how am I thinking now about the issue of validity, and what I might need to consider to interest others in my ideas?

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGE OF VALIDITY

While I'm no great respecter of formal discipline boundaries and eclectic to a fault in my search for new ideas I can try out in my professional work, I do remember being struck early on by the need to maintain 'alignment' between the methodology you use and the framing ontology and epistemology: mix your 'ologies' at your peril seemed to be the advice! Due to my interest in social construction and personally influenced by Ken Gergen's relational take on identity, I quite quickly came to the view that my epistemology would be *relational* i.e. I would seek to make sense of events/experiences in the context of relations and the sense making that takes place in conversations between interlocutors. I then struggled for some time to see what my view of ontology would need to look like to align with such a view on knowing. As you will have read in Chapter 1, a possible answer came to me while driving down the M5 to Exeter in an elaborated form of my metaphor of 'seeking roots in the future'. As you may recall I came to the conclusion that my 'seeking roots' in conversations with students, could also be understood as a search for identity in a 'becoming-in-relationship' – a finding out and creating who I am *as* I help others in dialogically structured relations[15].

I believe that the ground I've covered in this chapter will have explored and cast further light on the extent to which my 'ologies' are aligned and appropriate for the purposes of my research, and will also have filled in some of the gaps on the nature of the methodology I've evolved. As I mention in the Introduction, I will be adding to this in each of the four chapters that follow. But since my exposure to Rayner's concept of 'natural inclusion' and Shotter's 'third kind of knowing' I believe I've developed a perspective where these four 'ologies' seem very much to be in relations which are 'including each in the reciprocal dynamic influence of the other through their mutual inclusion in and of space' (Rayner, 2010a, p.2). So e.g. my epistemology seems deeply entangled with aspects of ontological/bodily expressiveness, and my methodology dependent on situated, dialogically structured, gestural interactions which constitute a 'third kind of knowing', a knowing 'from' within a conversation. The boundaries between these philosophical concepts now seem to be more permeable and dynamic than they were a few years ago…and less critical to achieving good outcomes. What I want to do in the final part of this chapter is to look again at this question of alignment

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[15] As Shotter remarks in 'Rayner-like' terms: 'this makes it very difficult for us to characterize their nature: they have neither a fully orderly nor a fully disorderly structure, neither a completely stable nor an easily changed organization, neither a fully subjective nor a fully objective character—hence their primordial nature…They are also non-locatable, in that they are 'spread out' or 'distributed' amongst all those participating in them: that is, a real presence is a distributed structure, constituted in and by contributions from many different participants or participations. (Shotter, 2003, p 458)

and in particular at the question of the likely validity of the claims I make about the kinds of educational influence I believe I'm achieving.

Assessing the validity of 'praxis'
To set the scene for this final discussion in this chapter, I offer a quote from Hirst that Jack Whitehead drew my attention to. He said that much understanding of educational theory will be developed: 'in the context of immediate practical experience, and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices… Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate.' (Hirst, 1983, p. 18). I'm very much encouraged in this support for my own intent to develop theory based on everyday practice, and that will 'stand up to such practical tests'.

There is further support for this view in a recent research paper surveying current methods of assessing quality in practice-based research, by Furlong and Onacea (2005). In this they refer to Gibbons et al (1994) who describe 'Mode 2' as an emerging form of 'context based knowledge production' where 'knowledge is generated in the process of providing solutions to problems which have been identified on the ground in the context of application' (ibid, p. 8). Furlong and Onacea use this idea to broaden the perspective for assessing research quality in general, and put forward a fourfold framework with which to better assess the value of practice based or applied work. These are: economic (e.g. cost effective), technological (e.g. operationalisability), epistemic (e.g. contribution to knowledge), and a final factor they describe as 'capacity to act' or 'value for people' (e.g. personal growth). They suggest the framework could be used in a flexible way with some factors being more relevant to some research projects e.g. one claiming to add to public (codified) knowledge would be different to say, another claiming to make a contribution to developing practices.

This 'capacity to act', usually equated to practical wisdom, is characterised as making a 'contribution to collective and personal growth of practitioners and policy makers: changing them as people through establishing forms of collaboration and partnership, increasing their receptiveness, reflexivity, virtousness and morality. This they call '*capacity building and value for people* in terms of the development of tacit knowledge and of the ethical, interactional and critical dimensions of practice.' (Furlong and Oncea, 2005, p.10). In supporting the claims of 'practical wisdom', the authors turn uncertainty and situatedness from being a weakness (i.e. lack of accuracy and definite knowledge) into a strength (i.e. ethical human encounters where virtue develops and is enacted). This they feel will support critique and collaboration for a better understanding of educational practice through the 'enhancement of (ethically) authentic action rather than the accumulation of (theoretical) knowledge'. They end by saying that 'because the roots of this…are in ethical concerns and in tacit, situated knowledge, it is extremely difficult to capture in the research appraisal process.' (ibid, p.14).

However, given the living theory view that such standards of judgement are implicit in how one goes about work and will usually emerge after the doing (Lyotard, 1979) there seem to be grounds for believing that properly focused collaborative reflection during a practice oriented education like the MA in Leadership Studies, could make a useful contribution to this area. This is very much about 'practice' in spaces where there is a need for *practical wisdom* e.g. where there is uncertainty and situatedness and ethical encounters where virtue is enacted; where benefits arise from a receptiveness and

responsiveness to tacit knowledge and practitioner viewpoints; where self reflection involving deliberation and choice and a critical attitude/expansion of self regulation is recognized; and finally where partnership and willingness to collaborate are valued.

Conceptualisations of validity
Obviously in such a venture, I'm going to be involved in questions of 'interpretive validity' and how we might validate what are likely to be creative practices which don't necessarily fit into the conventions of the Academy. So my mind has reached towards some ideas I first came across at the Social Construction conference I attended in 1993 when I heard Patti Lather talk about four different kinds of validity for post modern research. Here is what I wrote in June, 1993 as a file note on my visit to the conference which I mentioned earlier in Chapter 1:

> 'validity is less a matter of looking harder or more closely but of seeing multiple frames which are able to co-exist while at the same time appearing to be mutually incompatible…It is important to be open to counter interpretations and to look for inconsistencies as well as consistencies…and to the question of what one backgrounds and foregrounds' (Kinsella, 1993 in Chapter 1).

So I've become increasingly interested in the concept of *rhizomatic* validity that Lather referred to then. Though there are various approaches to this idea, one metaphor that I'm happy to sign up to is again from Lather who argues that to act rhizomatically, is 'to act via relay, circuit, multiple-openings, as crabgrass in the lawn of academic preconceptions ...There is no trunk, no emergence from a single root, but rather arbitrary branchings off and temporary frontiers that can only be mapped, not blueprinted ... Rhizomatics are about the move from hierarchies to networks and the complexity of problematics where any concept, when pulled, is recognised as connected to a mass of tangled ideas, uprooted, as it were, from the epistemological field.' (Lather, 1994, p 45). As le Grange and Beets continue in their paper on re-conceptualising validity in postmodern research 'Rhizomatic validity troubles the single rootedness of validities underpinned by positivist assumptions…Rhizomatic validity dissolves inferences "by making them as temporary, partial [and] invested" (Lather, 1994, p 46). Teachers/ assessors might therefore self-reflexively engage with the inferences they seek to draw…[and to] acknowledge they have an autobiography marked by the significations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and so on' (le Grange and Beets, 2005, p 117) In this context, Ronald Barnett's views that I mentioned earlier, are also relevant: for students to learn to live and contribute effectively in an age of 'supercomplexity', they need to experience not only epistemic but ontological uncertainty and dislocation – and therefore many conflicting views or 'roots' of what is or might be.

What else might I need to consider to assure myself and others that I've subjected my findings to appropriate and adequate criteria of validity? Jack Whitehead has always emphasized the importance of Habermas' four criteria of social validity (1976, pp 2-3) in evaluating and improving the quality of living educational theories. So how might my work measure up in the light of these four standards?
- questions of *comprehensibility* of the writing
- the *evidence* used to justify assertions
- the *explicitness of the values* constituting the normative background of writings
- *authenticity* in showing a commitment to living the values explicitly espoused.

At this stage of reading the document to this point, I hope you'll agree that my work is meeting the first, third, and fourth criteria satisfactorily. Your assessment of the second

will need to wait until you've seen all the evidence supporting my claims which I offer over the next four chapters. But as Barbara Czarniawska (1998, p 15) implies in the Weick quote below – I hope you are finding this a 'good story' so far!

> ''If accuracy is nice but not necessary in sense making, then what is necessary? The answer is, something that preserves plausibility and coherence, something that is reasonable and memorable, something that embodies past experience and expectations, something which resonates with other people, something that can be constructed retrospectively but can also be used prospectively, something that captures both feeling and thought, something that allows for embellishment to fit current oddities, something that is fun to contrast. In short, what is necessary in sense making is a good story'. (Weick, 1979, pp 60-61)

I'd like to end this section and chapter with some words on influence and originality from Said. Using a letter from the poet Valery to his friend Mallarme, he says that: 'We say that an author is original when we cannot trace the hidden transformations that others underwent in his mind; we mean to say that the dependence on what he does on what others have done is excessively complex and irregular. There are works in the likeness of others, and works that are the reverse of others, but there are also works of which the relation with earlier productions is so intricate that we become confused and attribute them to the direct intervention of the gods.' (Said, 1997, p.15). He calls this 'derived achievement' in contrast to perhaps the more usual process of 'the weight of one writer coming down in the work of another'. In this thesis I engage with the ideas and writings of many other authors and while my use of 'their' ideas may sometimes be rather superficial, or on the other hand, risky and ill-advised, I hope that you will also find ideas in my work whose originality might approach the benchmark of a derived achievement.

As a first step towards persuading you of this I end with a second video clip - *presencing developmental possibilities part 2* - exploring further the idea of 'presencing developmental possibilities'. This comes towards the end of our discussion when we are reviewing the ground we've covered. Jack is talking about Lather's notions of rhizomatic and ironic validity (Lather, 1993) and pointing out that however we describe the educational relationship, 'it's not "it"'… but we can get closer to authentic and valid representation''. I interject with 'and also we stay *playful*…could be this…could be that…but it's good enough for the moment'. Jack continues 'out of the playfulness

11. *presencing developmental possibilities part 2*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6PiA7txcuk

you've articulated something spontaneously…that I felt was a highly original, distinguishing characteristic of an educational relationship'. I point out that this is something I hadn't realised before, and now can see that all my work on the logs is in fact 'pointing' students towards these possibilities - *it's in the logs*! The discussion continues and Jack confirms that 'I felt your energy…it has been life affirming'. We continue talking about the many ways in which I'm able to express my creative engagement and quality of reflection, concluding that this is not 'work' but my way of being. Jack's outburst of laughter and vigorous arm rubbing provides the backdrop for his warming conclusion: 'I don't often come out of these conversations feeling like this: that's really great…you've really got it!

This takes me back again to Polanyi and his notion of validity as being concerned with 'fruitfulness' - by which he meant the possibility of one's 'conclusions' at any one time, not being final but susceptible to further improved 'approximations' to a hidden reality. Hence his idea of a 'hierarchy of ontology' i.e. that it's possible for there to be further 'achievements' – 'each a rich nexus of meaningful relations, involving an interplay of "knower and known," that constitute an emergent comprehensive entity.' (Takaki, 2010, p 36). As Takaki goes on, his colleague Phil Mullins, 'who emphasizes the continuity of ontology and meaning in understanding Polanyi's notion of a comprehensive entity, writes: "Knowing and being are woven inextricably together…the ontological status of entities is not tied largely to existence and tangibility, but to an entity's intelligibility and its prospect for greater intelligibility." (Mullins in Takaki, 2010, p 36). Thus the emergence of achievements establishes an (ongoing) ontological hierarchy'. So perhaps I *have* 'really got it'…but perhaps there are still prospects for 'greater intelligibility'!

*   *   *

In this chapter I've offered a range of ideas and evidence concerning how I think about my living theory approach to the action research I've been carrying out over the past decade, and which I've used to explore, analyse, and organize my ideas and findings on a coaching pedagogy of presencing on a distance learning programme. However I've not yet finished with methodology, and my natural 'inventiveness' will continue to generate further ideas in the next three chapters as I look at and interpret what I've 'found' (or co-created) in my educational practice, providing evidence for the claims which I will finally pull together in Chapter 7.

PREFACE TO CHAPTERS 4, 5 AND 6

The first three chapters of this thesis have been devoted primarily to introducing you to who I am and what sort of developmental experiences I've had, how I see my research topic in a larger more complex context, and my methodological approach to the doing and researching of this work. In the next three chapters the focus will shift quite significantly from 'ideas about' and 'models of' to more practical evidence of how the educational process actually works, what has been achieved and - at least in my view – what claims I feel I can make in terms of educational influencing.

For reference, I am providing in this preface and the attached appendix, some background information on the different kinds of evidence, reflections, interpretations and kind of argumentation that I will be employing in these later chapters. This material falls into four main sections:

1. how I've selected, organised and made use of student-coach interactive textual and video-based material across the chapters to offer a rounded illustration of what can and has been achieved;

2. how I've coded the textual materials provided to help the reader know who is speaking, when, and whether these are original or reflective comments, to create richer and more multi-levelled texts; this also shows how I've embedded my own comments in student texts to help make these interactions feel more conversational/dialogic in nature;

3. how I've used video clips of interactions to illustrate the implicit, intense, and energy-infused nature of the kind of educational communication my students and I are involved in; and finally

4. how at the start of each chapter, I've elicited from inquiring into my own evolving practice, a 'developed and developing' (Garfinkel, 1967) 'artifact' (Ilyenkov, 1977) or way of perceiving and making sense, which I hope might offer readers a means or 'perceptual extension' to seeing and understanding these materials as I see and understand them, and appreciating 'being-in-the-world' as I appreciate it.

The more detailed explanations of these preliminary considerations appear in the Appendix to this brief preface.

CHAPTER 4

FLEETING MOMENTS:
NEW WAYS OF BEING-IN-THE-WORLD?

'The *present moment*…has a sense of meaning in the context of a relationship…are
what we experience as an uninterrupted *now*…is structured as a micro-lived story
with a minimal plot and a line of dramatic tension…is thus temporally dynamic…'
Stern, 2004, p 245

What I want to do in this chapter is show that it's possible to alter the learning
experience of students in written online interchanges during what can be regarded as
asynchronous 'moments' of the kind: 'student writes - KK responds - student has an
"aha" experience'. Barnett-Pearce has referred to these minimal communication patterns
as 'conversational triplets' (Barnett-Pearce, 1989). My primary claim is that the process
of *presencing of developmental possibilities*, the key coaching activity introduced in
Chapter 3, can be initiated and energised within these momentary 'fleeting moments' of
educational influencing, brought about through the skilled, situated, and timely use of a
range of verbal and text-based dialogical interventions. These improvisatory
interventions which are offered into the 'space between' one response and another, are
both anticipatory and suggestive. As Bahktin (1993, p 32-33, as quoted in Shotter, 2008,
p 53) says: 'everything that is experienced is experienced as something given and as
something-yet-to-be-determined, is intonated, (and) has an emotional-volitional tone'.
In commenting on this Shotter suggests that 'when one has finished speaking and the
other has to respond, the bridging of that "gap" is an opportunity for a completely
unique, unrepeatable response, one that is "created" and "crafted" to fit the unique
circumstances of its utterance…it is on the boundary between…two subjects, that the
life – whatever it is that is "living" in the communicative act – is manifested' (Shotter,
2008, p 55)

These 'movements' which may be marked through a tonality, a particular gesture, or an
apt phrase, are in the MA offered mainly in online text-based communications, as well
as in less frequent telephonic, Skype, or face to face interactions. I believe that a
'fleeting moment' of educational influencing arises when a comment, gesture, tonality,
facial expression, metaphor, or set of words, *reframes* the direction of meaning flow.
This to some extent catches the recipient 'offside', and has the effect of momentarily
jolting or nudging them towards a different way of orienting themselves towards their
ongoing experience in a particular situation. As Wittgenstein says: 'the origin and
primitive form of the language-game is a reaction' (Wittgenstein, 1980). This 'now'
moment may only take a few seconds but 'as the drama unfolds it traces a temporal
shape like a passing musical phrase' (Stern, 2004, p 4 as quoted in Shotter, 2008, p 129)
to infect and influence the explicit and tacit sense making process related to the issue of
orientation, as the student continues to work at its resolution.

TEMPORALITY AND SENSE-MAKING: implicit communication
According to Shotter's detailed analysis in Shotter (2008) of thinkers like Bahktin
(1993), Voloshinov (1973), Garfinkel (1976), and Merleau Ponty (1962), these
interchanges can be experienced as 'dialogically structured' (Bahktin, 1993) and so

allow/encourage us to anticipate and improvise the 'developed and developing' (Garfinkel, 1967) meaning(s) of what we are talking about. Further, using Wittgenstein's ideas about 'primitive reaction' and 'language-game' (Wittgenstein, 1980), I want to show that through the textual 'gestures' in my written responses, that I effectively 'body forth' when I'm writing them (Merleau Ponty, 1962), I provoke students to react in new ways i.e. think again and re-orient themselves to 'how to go on' with the issue they are addressing. This can initiate a potential new language-game which in time will become more fully fleshed out through 'indwelling' activity (Polanyi, 1983) during what I'm calling 'development episodes' - which I explore in detail in Chapter 5. And so this *joint work* (Shotter, 2008) - admittedly taking place in an asynchronised manner – will have initiated the presencing of a developmental possibility to re-orientate and learn how to go on in the particular situation/exchange that the student is engaged in. And potentially in the medium term, it will be also be identity influencing in its effects and therefore ontological in nature.

Can implicit communication lead to *mutual* understanding?
Let me start with a brief example to illustrate the kind of *implicit* communication that I believe permeates this whole process and so allows much to be achieved that may not be immediately apparent. In talking about Stern's idea about the 'temporal unfolding' of experience, John Shotter (Shotter, 2008, p 130) recounts a story related by Stern (2004) about watching a talented street mime who is surreptitiously mimicking the moods, postures, and walks of passers by, to the amusement of onlookers. But one woman who realises this, upbraids him. Unfazed by this, the mime simply continues to mime her upbraiding him. Then she begins to imitate his imitating of her, and he vice versa, till both of them laugh, shake hands, and part while the onlookers clap. At that point Stern stood up to go, as did a couple of others sitting near him: 'We looked at each other, smiling, raised our eyebrows, tilted our heads in a funny way, made some kind of indescribable facial expression, and opened our hands, palms to the sky – as if to say, "it's a crazy, amusing world". Then they went their way, I mine.' (Stern, 2004, p 21) Stern notes that the unfolding events happening between people in such moments of meeting create shared knowledge to do with relations with each other that is often understood *implicitly*, and need not be talked about to have its effect.

No words had been exchanged but everybody sensed each had participated in the others' experience. Though very brief, a story had unfolded, a memorable *moment* that could be recalled time and again but that led to a variety of verbal formulations. As Shotter goes on to say (ibid, p 131), such moments matter to us in that they accommodate novelty or resolve a difficulty, particularly those of orientation or relations. They provide us with exemplars or examples to remind us of ways of relating that Wittgenstein (1969) felt were needed in establishing and teaching a practice, and in guiding us as to how we could respond to rules. I believe that as I seek inductively to help students relate differently to a range of basic human sense-making operations, this implicit meaning-making process is frequently at work.

Have a look at this excerpt from the video clip - *implicit communication* - first shown in Chapter 3, which illustrates what I believe is going on here. It's taken from a supervision discussion between Jack Whitehead and myself and captures a moment when I'm recounting an example of what I called 'intuitive influencing' that occurred with one of my students, where I end by saying: 'and she exclaimed – how did you know I needed *that*?' The exchange plays out between 17 and 24 seconds from the start of the clip, with the crucial gesture coming between 20 and 22 seconds. At this point,

just after I've delivered the punch line, I touch my forehead, start laughing, and then my facial expression goes through several rapid contortions as I shake my head. This 'gesture' is immediately responded to by Jack's nod and hand movement – 'there you go', followed by a burst of laughter, arm movements, and close attention. Apart from Jack's 'it *is* fascinating that…the quality of an educator', no words are exchanged about what has just happened but, as with Stern's example, there's no need to say more. When asked to review the video clip Jack agreed that we seem to know exactly what sense we're making of that moment - a rueful 'well, you just can't account for some things, can you?' It seems to me to be just the kind of 'temporal unfolding' moment that Stern refers to in his work.

12. *implicit communication*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0ri167_0AA

Implicit communication as 'intervention'
To further illustrate the power of the implicit that can be energised by gestural means, like a glance or a few pointed spoken or written words, here is another brief video clip - *complacency and gestural nod* - from a review I had with one of my students, John, after he'd completed Phase 6 – the 'diploma' level - and was taking a break from the programme as he started a new life outside the military. Unlike both Stern's example and the preceding example with Jack Whitehead, where the gestures communicate some kind of implicit *understanding*, in this video the 'gesture' is intended as an *intervention* to get John to look again at something he'd said. Prior to this clip John has been explaining how he became aware of what he called his 'complacency' while attending an internal senior leadership programme. During this programme he'd realised that he had to do something about the mismatch between his self image and how his staff regarded him. This clip starts with him listing all the new assignments he was given right after this realisation; which in practice allowed him to procrastinate and leave the 'complacency' issue on the back burner. I'm nodding that all these job moves had put a great deal of pressure on him, giving him little time to address the complacency issue – but at the same time imply that these very challenges were unlikely to have allowed him to remain complacent in the way he had described.

The critical moment comes between 1 minute and 2 seconds and 1 minute and 3 seconds where, to get him to review this apparent loss of focus on his development needs, I innocently ask him if, when he arrived at Exeter, he no longer felt he was complacent. This seems to plunge him into deep reflection for some moments until I in a sense 'give the game away' by leaning forward and tilting my head towards him with

an expression of teasing inquiry. He (and I) immediately burst into laughter as we seem to recognise the provocation embedded in my question. Neither of us comment on what this moment means to us but it seems clear we both share an understanding which seems to suggest: 'OK, so I *was* complacent about my complacency'. As a result of this 'gesture', he launches into a detailed description of how he has in fact now been directly addressing any danger of complacency by e.g. 'sharing my [MA] essays' with immediate staff, thus opening himself up to the feedback he'd avoided in earlier periods of his career.

13. *complacency and gestural nod*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfNggM50Dp0

So far I've offered a couple of examples of video evidence illustrating the idea that powerful communication can take place during the implicit 'temporal unfolding' that can take place within 'fleeting moments' of communication. Let me now position this idea more concretely within the MA educational process.

The structuring of the influencing process
To begin with I see learning and sense making as being situated primarily in the learning log interactions and the 'dialogically structured' (Bahktin, 1993) relationship and interactions that the student and I jointly create, week by week over the 18 months of the structured programme, prior to the dissertation. How might these be looked at, and what might they really be about? In my view these form the 'conversational background' within the overall 'hustle and bustle' (Wittgenstein, 1953) of everyday living that we are engaged in. It is here against this dialogically structured background, in the 'exchange' or 'moment of meeting' for 'yet another first time' (Garfinkel, 1967), where words can be experienced as 'instructions' (Vygotsky, 1978) or interventions 'within a temporal unfolding' (Stern, 2004). And these instructions can provoke what Wittgenstein called a 'primitive reaction' (Wittgenstein, 1958), the pre-cursor to the evolution of a new language-game.

Using this loose framework discussed by Shotter (2008) to map the complexity of these exchanges, I see the 'conversational background' as primarily being the back home work/life context in which the student studies, works, and develops, and *not* the WebCT (now ELE) distance learning system, which contains/presents/stores the formal learning materials/responses. So the student's sense making and learning takes place closer to the context of performance than the 'seat of learning', and illustrates what Gosling and Mintzberg have called 'close learning' (Gosling, and Mintzberg, 2006). Within this, I regard the 'exchanges' as the fleeting or 'now' moments that can arise at potentially

critical learning points in the student log/coach micro-interchanges, and which can either pass unnoticed, strike an immediate chord, or possibly lie fallow pending the arrival of a more appropriate educational context. Within these 'developed and developing' (Garfinkel, 1967) micro-interchanges I see the variety of interventions, taken from what I'm calling my 'responsive repertoire' (see Appendix 6 in Chapter 3 for more detail), as spontaneous but 'specifically vague' (Garfinkel, 1967) 'instructions' which from time to time can 'call out' new responses from students, that inaugurate the beginnings of a new language-game.

Wittgenstein says in Shotter (2008, p 74) 'The origin and primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language - I want to say – is a refinement, "in the beginning was the deed" [quoting Goethe] (1980, p 31)…The primitive reaction may have been a glance or a gesture, but it may also have been a word'…(Wittgenstein, 1953, p 218). But what is the word "primitive" meant to say here?...Presumably that this sort of behaviour is *pre-linguistic:* that a language-game is based *on it*, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought (Wittgenstein, 1981, no 541)' This last statement reminds me very much of Schon's crucial distinction between 'framing' and 'problem solving' behaviours (Schon, 1983): this is very definitely 'framing' work as students seek to re-orientate themselves in order to establish an effective relationship with the context, others, and the issue they are addressing. So let me now look at how this re-contextualising process can begin within these fleeting moments of influence.

FLEETING MOMENTS: the beginning of educational influence
I will now examine in more detail the evidential justification for this conversational view of influence, and argue that though it generally arises and has been written about primarily in face to face situations, it also applies to the more asynchronous world of long term online text-based dialogues. I'll provide both video and textual examples to offer evidence of this process in action. By doing this I hope to persuade the reader that the idea of momentary sparks of influence taking place within fleeting moments of dialogue can occasion significant examples of change in thinking/feeling, which over time can lead to embodied development and improved practice. And further that this development coaching process can be usefully framed as the 'presencing of developmental possibilities'. Let me first offer some audio-visual evidence of these 'fleeting moments' in action that I believe play such an influential role in the development process.

Initiating 'primitive reactions'
The video clip - *fleeting moment leading to a primitive reaction* - is similar to clips I previously showed in Chapter 3 to capture the emergence of the idea of 'presencing developmental possibilities', and earlier in this chapter to illustrate Stern's 'implicit communication'. But here I use it to demonstrate the instructive effect of a word/phrase/gesture in initiating a 'primitive reaction'. As you'll recall, Jack Whitehead and I had been discussing my experiences with one of my students who found several of my interventions 'right on the button' – in particular my intuition that she'd find useful something on 'womens' ways of knowing' (Belenky et al, 1986): 'how did you know that I needed *that*!'. In trying to understand what was happening here, I use the term 'presencing' that I'd come across in Scharmer's writings (Scharmer, 2007), and say the phrase 'presencing developmental possibilities'. The crucial interchange comes

between 1 minute and 3 seconds and 1 minute and 17 seconds. You'll notice that Jack immediately fastens onto this phrase saying that 'I've never heard that phrase before', repeating it in a deliberate and strongly nuanced manner. He then ramps up the overall gestural effect of the different tonality, his direct gaze, the leaning forward of his body, and so on, by slowly repeating the words 'the presencing of developmental possibilities'. Even though this duly becomes the centrepiece of my thesis, I don't immediately react in a 'wow', wide-eyed fashion to his statement, but instead segue into my own response – 'it's been in the back of my mind' , and confess that I hadn't used that phrase until that very moment: 'well, I just thought of it now; it just came up!'

14. *fleeting moment leading to a primitive reaction*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDUU3P7W4Pc

What we have here in my view is a clear case of a 'receptive, responsive, and relational' intervention (Rayner, 2010b) from my supervisor which shines a bright light on a critical 'something' that would normally just flit through the conversation and be forgotten, were it not for his timely intervention. In this instance what he 'bodies forth' (Merleau Ponty, 1962) is a combination of my words with a more intense tonality, gesture, and body energy to give the words a new sense of meaning. And though I'm not 'shocked' in the moment by his intervention, it does begin to worry away at the edges and grow in impact as I drive home and reflect on the session as a whole. Within days my thinking about my coaching work has been transformed and I realise that yes – this *is* a way of thinking about what I've been trying to do. And, perhaps in a similar manner to Judi Marshall, I've been not 'living a life of inquiry' (Marshall, 1999) but in this case living a life of 'presencing developmental possibilities'. Here's my first written response in an e mail to Jack on 19 November a few days later, when after a follow-up Skype conversation, this full realisation finally dawns on me:

> You used the phrase 'using intuition to offer freely, and in response to what a student seems to be needing, ideas for future development'. This *is* what 'presencing future developmental possibilities' is about. You also talked about me 'presencing myself to myself" on the video of the session as a key example of this behaviour: so I use this approach for my own development too! An immediate example of this were my reflections towards the end of our conversation where I started to imagine how I was going to progress this discussion. So I'm using a process I have found effective for myself – it's an embodied behaviour - with others too, so there's a kind of mirroring taking place. This means I can use all of my own experiences related to this idea as well, in exploring and explaining this potential standard of judgement.'

Primitive reactions in online text-based interchanges

I've now demonstrated what I mean by momentary influencing in a 'live' face to face dialogue, and I hope you're persuaded that Shotter - and all the esteemed authors whose ideas he's working with - have a point of view that is worth considering. But such face-to-face interaction, while clearly illustrating how fleeting moments of influence occur, is not the 'stuff' of online learning. And so now I'd like to turn to look at how this process can also occur in *online interchanges* which are text-based, asynchronous, and embedded in what is customarily regarded as a 'distance learning' educational form. Obviously we can't experience and observe the instant effect of a gesture or an intonation that the face to face situation allows. So can this same phenomenon apply here, where the need to write distances knower from known, and the mode of transmission creates delays in one way communications between writer and reader? Is it possible to imagine that the literary medium of words might be potentially as potent as the oral face to face option, given the apparent capacity of writing technology when interiorized, to increase reflexivity and alter the sensual experience of communication (Ong, 1982)? To explore this further, I now want you to look at some examples of what can happen in the online medium, taken from learning logs/essays written by a range of students I've worked with over the past seven years. Before I offer the examples, I want to point out a few things about the differences between 'live' and 'text-based' dialogues, that I'd like you to bear in mind:

- The first thing is that though these log interchanges are *asynchronous* i.e. taking place over time rather than in time, and sometimes separated by days if not weeks, they can be experienced by student and coach as occurring in the present. Because I now generally *embed* my comments within the student's text, when they read the combined voices in the document they are in effect replaying a conversation by, in a sense, having to mouth both voices in the context of their emergence, 'now'. Or as Shotter puts it: 'There are…a number of reasons why a second-person role is important. The most obvious…is that…I need, if not your actual presence, then an imagined surrogate now (at each moment in my writing), as an audience to evaluate my attempts to write…It is necessary continuously to co-ordinate the management of our sense-making practices as our communicative activities proceed…*you* [my emphasis] provide the motivation for my remarks' (Shotter, 1989 , p 144)
- The second thing is that though I offer these as brief extracts, they are not single, isolated comments but part of a sequence of comments over many logs and many weeks – so these 'events' lead to 'patterns' of discourse being built up which prepare the student for certain experiences and reactions, and as mentioned earlier, create expectations and anticipations.
- Finally, it's evident from discussions with students that when they read my comments they are in fact imagining me saying these things, and picturing my expression and tone – which they would have had some exposure to in face to face, telephone and Skype interchanges. So what appears to be asynchronous and monologic pieces of text/feedback can be experienced as 'dialogically structured' (Bahktin, 1986) - a virtual dialogue, both in the head of the student when he/she reads over the material, and similarly when I think of my responses and read their responses to these. So we are in effect both 'rehearsing' their dialogical nature when we read and respond to them, and the patterns that develop, serve to foster a particular kind of educational relationship – something I talk about later in the context of what I call the 'development container'.

To provide support for this claim I provide here a short video clip - *learning log as conversation* – of one of my students, Ian, and I, as we review his early experiences on the programme. He is comparing it with the MBA programme he'd just completed which was full of face to face activity and team working. He confesses that at the very outset of the MA, he felt that an online process like this would just not work for a subject like leadership. As the conversation continues, it becomes increasingly clear that his early online experiences soon completely overturned this initial negative view; and that quite soon the learning log interchanges had become 'addictive', and that the kind of engagement he experienced really set him on a very productive developmental 'journey'. So it seems - 'primitive reactions' *are* possible in such online dialogues!

15. *learning log as conversation*

PRIMITIVE REACTIONS: some online text-based examples
The first example I want to share with you is one of the clearest illustrations of how a thoughtful response can provoke an immediate *primitive reaction* in the student – which is the main process I want to map in this chapter - which in due course, as you will see in Chapter 5, can develop into a new 'language-game'. In my experience, the development and elaboration of the new language-game usually takes some time to form and evolve, so in this chapter I will focus mainly on showing how the initial 'primitive reaction' is created and captured in the learning log interchanges. Then in Chapter 5, through providing further text and video evidence, I will show you how these 'reactions' developed and why I feel I can claim that they did lead to new language-games, allowing students to alter their leadership practices.

 The text sequences you are about to see are extracted from a series of learning logs completed by three students on different cohorts but all during the first phase of their programmes, as they respond to a series of pre-set guide questions based on readings and reflections they're encouraged to study and try out. The colour coding (introduced in the Preface to Chapters 4, 5, and 6) that shows the 'what', 'who', 'when', and 'why' for each entry, appears below. As indicated, there are two main 'voices' in operation in that 'present': the student's log entry (in black), and my first response to his/her log (in black underlined). I have subsequently added further 'voices' where those in blue are my later reflections on what I recall was going through my mind at that time with the green and yellow highlighted texts providing further relevant information 'in the

background' regarding this reflection. The remarks in ==acqua== offers a meta commentary added during the writing of this thesis, designed to help the reader follow and appreciate different aspects of my argument.

> ==Highlighted – dates/instructions for learning log entries==
> Black – original text of student in response to question/task
> <u>Black – original comments by KK on student's log entry/essay</u>
> ==Highlighted – key words/phrases that most resonated with and influenced KK's immediate response==
> ==Highlighted – key words/phrases/'gesture' that constitute the influencing action believed to lead to a *primitive reaction*==
> Blue – reflections by KK when reviewing the interaction at a later date
> Aqua – positioning and linking commentary to assist reader understand the context/meaning/significance of the text that immediately precedes or follows

What now follows in this first extract are three pairs of interchanges with John (numbered 1-3) of 'student log followed by coach response' that take place over 10 days during the second month of the programme. At the start of the first 'pair' of learning log plus response, John is responding to what he's learned from applying Kolb's model to a learning experience of his own. In the later part of the log, he reflects on how he might best use his natural tendencies/strengths in his work with immediate staff, to improve the impact on the major project he's leading. In my own response I make several connected interventions including appreciating his frankness, affirming his learning, and proposing he builds on his strengths. Towards the end of my response I offer a specific recommendation that he 'ask for more and better' ==(highlighted)== which is the *gesture* that I believe stimulates the *primitive reaction*.

JOHN – 'ask for more and better' *(see Appendix 1 for more detail)*

1.
Date: *Sat 11th November 2006 7:42 pm*   Title*: Phase 1 - Week 5 - Activity 2*
Prompt: *Think of a skill or knowledge that you have acquired recently. Try applying the Kolb Learning Style Model to that learning experience. Does it help you make sense of the process or not? Make some notes on your example and your reflections.*

In the Kolb Learning Style analysis I am positioned well into the Accommodating (CE style)…quadrant of the model. I note that this is suitably the preserve of those in management, education and government and I am currently involved in each of these functional areas. This chimes with other leadership style analysis I have conducted in the past 6 years and is therefore not news; indeed I have attempted to strengthen areas of weakness (deductive reasoning and objective analysis in particular) but have not found this easy.

My biggest issue at the moment is the ██ programme which my College is involved in. Evaluation is complete and the period of decision taking and preferred bidder negotiation is about to start. I have been aware that I have delegated a significant amount of work to my project director; who is very definitely in the AC area, with great strengths in deductive reasoning, planning and objective analysis. ==I see us being a strong==

partnership together although I suspect that he would like me to play a more hands-on role; or at least have a greater knowledge of some of the detailed analytical work. I cannot do this easily; I acknowledge I am weak in the field of verbal reasoning and process modelling and the fact that I cannot devote the required time to understand these aspects tends to make me avoid them.

I am also facing another issue at the moment in that my strong practical and subjective views are being subordinated in the evaluation to detailed analysis, scoring and financial investment appraisal. I have strong gut instincts about the most sensible way forward and this is tending to clash with the outcome of the more objective work. It is always too easy to then discredit the detailed analysis as being based on flawed parameters and weak complementing methodology. I have a habit of criticising such process but without the skills, time, knowledge or patience to suggest alternative methods.

There is a fascinating situation building in the ▬ project which I would call the "3-dimensional" issue.
- 1st level – my own "accommodating/CE" style which I instinctively trust
- 2nd level – the deductive, logical AC style which predominates in this project
- 3rd level – the more "accommodating/CE" strategic and political decision taking level that is based on the second level for support but which has a different subjective agenda to my own

I can see that I should have been more involved in Level 2 issues to ensure that the required analytical and financial evidence was in place to influence Level 3. I am beginning to see that by sticking to my own "subjective guns" at Level 1 then I have failed to adequately influence the strategic debate. A major lesson learned and one which I can still try and influence. In summary, another useful exercise; but past experience indicates that I am so extreme in my leadership, personality and learning style that it is very difficult indeed to make changes to it. A second best must be to acknowledge the fact and compensate accordingly when appropriate.

Tutor comments: *added by "Keith Kinsella" on Tue 14th November 2006 10:02 pm*

I found this a very powerful log where you are being almost brutal in your honesty about your normal patterns/'strengths' of working and how these are playing out in the more dynamic, politically charged situation you are now working in. Full marks for a sound and insightful appreciation of the 'what is' situation - the first step in thinking creatively about how to 'go on'.

I use the phrase 'how to go on' - a phrase used by Wittgenstein in his major opus Philosophical Investigations (don't worry I haven't read it either!) - quite deliberately to conjure up the notion of people feeling their way forward in a constantly changing game (he used the term 'language-game'), not to a distant future but to the next step. If we follow some of the ideas of complexity theory, something that came well after his work, I think it becomes more obvious that he was on to something here. So we're talking about influencing the *next* steps which I'm pleased to see you are still including in '...A major lesson learned and one which I can still try and influence...' Yes!

In this section I show appreciation for his frankness and try to positively affirm what he has reflected on and accepted: the need to face up to the 'what is' situation first. And then, working with his 'three level' view of the issue, I use a version of Wittgenstein's

concept of 'how to go on', to offer the possibility of being able both to change his pattern now *and* to focus on doing something about 'next steps' in the immediate future, rather than fall back on creating some abstract plan about future changes

The reader will notice that while I highlight (in green) many words/phrases that resonated with me at the time, I do not then respond to all of them in my own comments. Instead I focus on either what I sense is a crucial learning point that is associated with these, or on one or two that at the time I felt were most relevant/potent. So e.g. in my first response above, I value his insight into current patterns – the 'what is' – and using his phrase 'A major lesson learned and one which I can still try and influence' as an entry point, offer another frame for his 'still try and influence' intention, using Wittgenstein's notion of knowing how to go on (Wittgenstein, 1958) and take *just* that 'next step' with others.

I would strongly recommend you do not lose faith in your primary 'accomodating' style - for this I read your 'intuition'. This is your foundation and your trump card so use it wisely. You're right of course to talk about the relevance and application of other styles (like AC) according to the 'level' of work and the particular phase you're in - but you work within a network full of these other capabilities, so mobilise these in the service of the task and keep your own powder dry for those tasks/events where your stronger grasp and feel for the political dynamics of the situation is critical.

Here, because he has expressed doubts/negativity, I'm continuing to positively affirm his natural style/strength/sense of who he is e.g. his 'intuition', and to suggest that he could with benefit differentiate between situations where he might make his special contribution, and make more use of his 'network' of resources. By using the phrase 'in the service of the task' I'm also trying to get him to attend to the 'system' level in addition to his 'interpersonal' level.

You talk of '...I have strong gut instincts about the most sensible way forward and this is tending to clash with the outcome of the more objective work. It is always too easy to then discredit the detailed analysis as being based on flawed parameters and weak complementing methodology. I have a habit of criticising such process but without the skills, time, knowledge or patience to suggest alternative methods.' Isn't this an area to work on now?

Here I come back and quote this crucial and insightful paragraph in full and using the question – isn't this an area to work on now? - set the frame for my more direct and specific intervention which comes next

Perhaps, rather than using the combative tactics that have served you so well over the years on your climb up the hierarchy, it might be more effective to support/guide and demand more of these more rational/technical efforts of others with less experience than you. Don't fight them - ask for 'more and better' so that your intuitions can be tested against so called 'harder' data. You might see this as 'compensation' but equally it could be seen as shrewd use of your unique talents.

When I wrote this I was thinking of my experience of a coaching session offered by Bruce Reed, Director of The Grubb Institute, to a senior ITT executive in 1980, that I was observing. This was where I first came across this idea of shifting from a 'fight' to a 'support' stance to others, and got the impression that it made a difference to how the executive was thinking about an important relationship. I can see now that it is probably

related to what Wilfred Bion called underlying 'basic assumption' activity (Bion, 1961), in this context suggesting a move from the emotions of 'fight/flight' which support 'climbing up the career ladder' activity, to some mixture of 'hope' and 'dependency' that better supports the different kind of relations one needs to facilitate and support staff when one has reached a certain level in the hierarchy.

The idea of proposing that he 'ask for more and better' is probably linked to my experience of the effectiveness of Arnie Mindell's idea of 'amplification': by 'encouraging more' rather than 'pushing back or suppressing' (Mindell, 1995), he might well disturb the current dynamics and allow new patterns to emerge which might better 'service the task'. So my action here was shaped by a number of ideas that influenced me in the past, by my appreciation of the dilemma that John was expressing in his learning log, and by my wish to help him develop a new frame and behaviours which would disturb a current negative pattern and hopefully lead to more productive relations with his senior group (and ideally other groups in the future)

A possible 'chain of influence' might flow from the effect of the Reed/Mindell generic type interventions on my own appreciation of what might work here, the effect of my particular version of these ideas in this specific episode on how John might now think about and behave in the situation, and the consequent influence of any changes in his own behaviour/interactions, on the performance of his team. The latter two stages of this possible chain will obviously need to be checked out with John when we next talk face to face (which is picked up in Chapter 5)

You may indeed be 'extreme' in your patterns but let's wait and see on this. I bet that with careful observation you may well find you already have a wide range of alternate behaviours in your portfolio, perhaps not at your command but certainly close to your fingertips. If you can disengage a little from your 'dominant story' of who you are and how you behave, you might be surprised to discover lots of other patterns which at the moment don't get much recognition.

Perhaps now's the time to let them out into the daylight and give them some support?

This now continues the initial intervention by suggesting he takes his time and, by disengaging from his 'dominant story' i.e. 'I have a habit of criticising such process but without the skills, time, knowledge or patience to suggest alternative methods.', he observes more closely what he is actually doing. This comes from my experience and appreciation of Michael White's Foucault inspired version of narrative therapy: changing the narrative frame can allow currently unnoticed and unvalued experiences and behaviours to become visible and get 'voiced' (White, 1989). In other words I'm suggesting he already possesses the resources he needs and doesn't have to 'change' by making up 'lacks' as such; and should allow more of what he already has, to come out as appropriate to the situation, and take part in the emerging 'dance' with his colleagues. Here I'm encouraging a more *relational* view of his interactions with staff.

While there can be days/weeks between an entry and a response, in this instance there is an immediate response from John who acknowledges the usefulness of my 'ask for more and better' proposal, in helping him shift his frame from negative to positive. Though he doesn't provide any revealing detail about how he goes about this, he does sound more confident about how to proceed

2.

Thanks for that comment. I can see that asking for "more and better" is a tactic I can productively use now. I have been asking for this but in a negative way rather than a positive one - by reversing the negative psychology here the whole atmosphere could be far more productive and beneficial to the team.

When first reading this I'm pleased and surprised that my comment has produced a positive reaction, leading to a voluntary 'diary' type entry as against a 'directed' entry. It's a good example of the meaning of my communication being determined by the receiver – so only now do I know what I 'meant' when I wrote 'ask for more and better'! However I'm left wondering what was going through John's mind when he first read my response… and in particular the 'ask for more and better' point? What was it that caught his attention and persuaded him this was something he could 'productively use now'? And what would he need to do to again ask for this, but in a 'positive' way?

This last reflection reveals one of the particular challenges of text-based online coaching. In contrast to working face to face, I'm often left wondering about the impact of what I'm doing – students generally don't devote precious time to telling their coaches what they're finding useful even when prompted. Even when, as here, I am told that something specific was helpful, I'm unclear about what it was it that enabled this to have its particular effect. This is why as you'll see in later chapters, I've felt it necessary both to hold face to face reviews to check out working hypotheses, and to explore other text-based means of assessing progress – see comments on my development of 'criteria of progression' in Chapters 3 and 7

My timelines are tight but I know exactly "where" to focus - the "how" to focus has become much clearer through this analysis. Developing alternative courses as all positives rather than negatives is feasible, and I am sure will help perceptions of others.

So this sounds like a breakthrough of sorts…but what is it about the 'how' that has become clearer, and how might he now 'go on'?

Because of the structure of the programme, students regularly get 'moved on' by the changing topics and focus in log entries that occur each week. So immediately after the 'intervention' on the 14th and John's response 1 day later, he's asked to comment on 'ideal leadership' and then on 'personality theory', each with their 'directed' logs. Nothing obvious appears in these logs about any further thinking about, and action in response to, the intervention except this next log four days later:

3.

I now have the advantage of a portfolio of 360 degree feedback, MBTI preferences and psychometric analysis. As an ENFP hating routine, schedules and structure I am not overly-concerned about these results; I am more concerned about other people, their development and contributions as I see myself more as a figurehead within the organization than a "doer". I have previously commented on the critical stages of the ███ I am involved in and I note that ENFPs: may not take care of details and routine required for implementing their aspirations; fail to apply reason and logic to assess their inspirations and decisions.

I certainly recognize the characteristics described and have already taken corrective action in a number of ways to ensure that reason and logic are being applied where necessary and possible. I have discussed this with my project manager who has affirmed that he is very comfortable working to my intent and providing the required analysis to support the vision. Believe there is more gain to be had by sharing the ENFP summary page with subordinates and discussing ways in which we can, together, optimize our management of the organization through greater understanding.

So here is one practical outcome – a new sharing of personal information with immediate staff to encourage greater openness and involvement. But I'm wondering what else his taking 'corrective action' might entail and whether these are to do with 'ask for more and better', what he and his project manager have 'affirmed', and what this 'sharing' activity has led to?

I have looked at the other 15 types and if there is an alternative category applicable it is INFP. Recognizing and respecting emotional and psychological needs of others, asserting my own viewpoint and sometimes withdrawing from people and situations are all characteristics I sometimes see. There is probably evidence here of introvert personality but over-compensation in a clear military leadership situation through extrovert behaviour…I am in a position to use this knowledge in the current, complex, environment I face and am more knowledgeable about the impacts on my development and that of my management team. The key to me is having the self-discipline and rigour to use all this information and evidence.
…
Perhaps one immediate action should be to close my office door in order to concentrate on strategic issues, rather than listen to everyone who visits my PAs office and immediately think how I can assist them with their individual problems – no matter how trivial. Or would that make me a worse leader?

Tutor Comments: *added by Keith Kinsella on Tue 21st November 2006 3:42 pm*
You do seem to be getting much clearer about your preferences with big increases in the E, N, F dimensions. This might suggest you have both been growing in confidence and also that others have been able to relate to you better as you've presented a more stable and visible communication 'target'. It might also have something to do with your role becoming less STJ in nature. Has this been your experience over the past 3 years?

Despite your very clear preference for E you say that there might be a strong 'I' in there somewhere that has been downtrodden by too many years in the military. Maybe now's the time to see whether this might be so...not in terms of psychologically introverted behaviour but in terms e.g. of the thinking styles that I's can employ to do deeper and more sensitive thinking? Again this doubt about your self discipline surfaces: 'The key to me is having the self-discipline and rigour to use all this information and evidence.' At least you can laugh (or offer prayers) about this, the first step in getting a bit of distance from a too onerous imposition of 'history' on yourself.

One approach is to work from strength, both in terms of your 'everyday' work, and your concurrent 'development' work to improve the 'everyday'. Closing the office door doesn't quite sound like that! But like the 'more and better' fit for purpose response we came across a week ago (and in what ways was that an ENFP response?), you could ask yourself what a more 'strategic' ENFP orientated set of responses might look like. So not working or 'competing' at the same level as others, but like your 'figurehead' image

==above, working at a higher level in the service of the whole, to enable others to be more productive.==

Apart from the single statement '…have already taken corrective action in a number of ways…' there is still little evidence as to any practical effect the intervention has had, and/or if anything happened, how it was carried out. So in this response I go over the rationale underpinning the original intervention; using his thoughts on his MBTI profile, 'strengths', and the 'figurehead' role appearing in his current log entry, I persist and reprise the basic ideas of asking for 'more and better', focusing on 'servicing the whole', and working in a more collaborative manner.

Does this make any sense at all?

About 6 weeks later John completes his Phase 1 essay in which he addresses what he's learned about himself and leadership, and there are several comments which are or might be linked to this intervention. As this is more to do with the development activity that follows/might follow the first 'primitive reaction' to the 'ask for more and better' stimulus, and that transforms the primitive reaction into a more fully fleshed out language-game, I've positioned these in Chapter 5

So here I've offered a specific and fairly extended example of a textual intervention i.e. 'ask for more and better', that is acknowledged as a learning influence in the log response of the student, and seems to meet my understanding of Wittgenstein's *primitive reaction* that can lead to a new language-game. I will offer more to support this in Chapter 5 and show how in this instance, it does lead to a significant change in approach and behaviour with others. In retrospect it might seem to the reader that I've provided rather more text than is strictly required to identify and support this initial claim: perhaps I could have just shown the specific yellow highlighted passage and John's acknowledgement?

However in my view, while it might appear in this example of a 'fleeting moment' of influence, that the 'ask for more and better' comment is the central 'it' of the intervention, I want to make the point that this is very unlikely to be the whole story. Following Stern's idea of 'temporal unfolding' involved in communication that I mentioned earlier, I believe that everything I say that comes before the 'ask for more and better' is in fact preparation for this moment: e.g. 'I would strongly recommend you do not lose faith in…your 'intuition' This is…your trump card so use it wisely…you work within a network full of these other capabilities, so mobilise these in the service of the task… Isn't this an area to work on now?'. As is the dialogue that then follows the intervention – e.g. 'you could ask yourself what a more 'strategic' ENFP orientated set of responses might look like. So not working or 'competing' at the same level as others, but like your 'figurehead' image above, working at a higher level in the service of the whole, to enable others to be more productive.' All of these anticipate, shape and provide support for a particular meaning to emerge, grow stronger, and help energise the inner and outer work needed to transform this 'primitive reaction' into a full blown language-game.[16]

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[16] as I point out later on p 188 of Chapter 7, this passage (pp 110-116) provides a good text-based illustration of 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' in action. You might want to re-read these pages when you have reviewed that section in Chapter 7

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

As I mention in the Preface to Chapters 4-6, I've selected materials primarily from just three students to illustrate and support the claims in my thesis, using examples from each of them in every chapter, but focusing on just one to provide the main evidence for each chapter. I selected material from John to illustrate the 'primitive reaction' concept here in Chapter 3 but in addition will show briefer examples of material from the two other students who will feature more strongly in the next two chapters. So the next text-based learning log example I want to show you – that of Colleen - is much briefer than John's as I'm going to use her work as the main illustration in Chapter 5 regarding 'development episodes', when I look at the nature of the 'indwelling' development work that takes place after a 'reaction' and evolves into a full blown 'language-game'. Fuller textual material will appear in that chapter and here I include just enough of Colleen's text to show that a similar process to that described above, seems to be taking place. By this I mean that a particular written comment performs as a 'gesture', catches Colleen's attention, and starts to influence in a significant way how she is judging her experience and orienting herself towards her development challenges.

The fuller excerpt you'll see later, covers a period of some 8 weeks or so, and shows the broad range of interventions and responses that were taking place over time. Here I'll just show you a couple of briefer excerpts from learning logs in Week 5 when the 'gesture' – <mark style="background:yellow">'stark choices'</mark> - is first offered and then when it is acknowledged in her essay at the end of the phase. During the earlier part of the phase, Colleen had been doing a lot of soul searching about an earlier career setback, and her ability and confidence to keep afloat in the face of a major restructuring, while bringing up a family. In a previous week she expressed concerns about holding down a job – 'pay the mortgage' – and fulfilling her ambitions to be herself – 'seeking harmony'. The following abbreviated responses show her continuing ambivalence and her 'dramatic' responses to the choices she sees facing her. The colour coding is as used earlier.

_____

COLLEEN – 'stark choices?'

Week 5
Learning log: *a response about match between her Myers Briggs Type and work role:*
…This is an area that I am particularly interested in as the time comes for a restructure in my organisation, where all staff, including myself, will be put at <mark style="background:lime">risk of redundancy if redeployment is not a possibility</mark>. Will I allow myself yet again to <mark style="background:lime">be herded into a role to pay the mortgage</mark>, or should I <mark style="background:lime">hold out for a role</mark> that suits my learning style, with the implicit risks to employment?...

Comment: *added by Keith Kinsella*
… <mark style="background:yellow">You pose stark choices</mark>: mortgage or harmony?; being herded or holding out? Hopefully there is more of a choice than this...even in the tightest bureacracies there is usually scope to create mini-cultures where one can keep paying the mortgage while being a little different to the prevailing norm; and where you can hold out for something while being herded. Can you think of ways of breaking up these simple black and white

<p style="text-align: center">117</p>

distinctions that seem so depressing, to generate a bigger range of more complex options that you might be able to create in your and others' minds?

Here I pick up on a tendency she has been displaying in earlier logs, to see things in black/white, either/or terms, and feed it back to her using her own metaphors e.g. herded or holding out, and my own phrase 'stark choices', to offer a frame for what she's doing in this entry. I challenge her to seek out some space beneath the 'gaze' of the bureaucracy where she can break free from these simple distinctions, and generate more options and choice.

Between the entry in Week 5 and the next entry I've selected which is in Week 7, Colleen continues to study other psychological profiles like Belbin Team Roles. In this entry she is commenting on how this profile is helping her see why there are difficulties in her own work team and why she often finds herself 'taking the blame' for problems

Week 7
Learning log: *a response to using Belbin to understand dynamics of her team*
…We are lacking in the Resource/Investigator, Co-ordinator and Shaper roles, and, as previously discussed, I realise that I naturally take on these roles in the group. This will explain a lot about why I feel so tired, exhausted, frustrated and even 'put-upon' at times, as I am prepared to take the blame for issues that are not actually of my making, on the basis that nobody else will!!

To me this is an issue…martyrdom or immaturity? The former is an unseen team situation that I do not relish but regularly find myself in - somebody has to take the blame and if nobody else will…in the latter situation, for me to be considered immature is a label that I would cringe from, as it was considered a weakness in my family….

Comment: *added by Keith Kinsella*
…Do you have any ideas why you feel it incumbent upon yourself to 'take the blame' because nobody else will'? What is it about the situation and your own patterns of behaving that leads to this seemingly inevitable outcome? Do you like being 'put upon' and frustrated, and experiencing 'martyrdom'…are there some real 'gains' that I can't see that keep you coming back for more? And to take a different tack, are you ever able to duck/escape/trick yourself out of these inevitable situations, when you defeat your dominant story about 'Colleen'? Maybe it's possible for you to find an alternative story that you'd prefer to follow and that others would support? Again you offer yourself rather stark and dramatic choices - martyr or immature? Not a very enticing choice is it? I'm sure you can think of others given enough time and persistence!

There is further evidence here of her tendency at this point in time to be framing her experience and choices not only in a 'black and white' way, but also in rather punishing terms like 'martyrdom' and 'immaturity' which she confesses she would 'cringe from'. So I attempt to provoke her with the 'do you like being put upon' challenge, and, as I did in the example with John earlier, use the White narrative therapy technique asking her to find times when she has 'escaped' the influence of her dominant story, as a source of resources for a more uplifting perspective. Again I use the term 'stark choices' to remind her of how she is framing things

Students complete two types of log entry: 'directed' which ask them to respond to a particular question/task associated with the topics of the week; and 'diary' which they can use at any time to explore and/or reflect upon something more personal. As these latter logs are not required, when a student offers them it usually indicates that they are looking for some particular help. The next entry is of the latter type where Colleen is trying to sum up some of her main learnings during Phase 1 – in particular becoming more acutely aware of the basic dilemma she feels she faces - and what career options the MA might be opening for her.

Learning log: *Diary entry at the end of the phase*
I am definitely having a mid-term crisis! I am torn between the sort of leader that I want to be: passionate and capable, respected and authentic, and the sort of person who 'achieves' in my workplace, that is, passive with seniors but aggressive with peers, lacking in loyalty and very often in ability!

…During this term I have undertaken the set reading but also found that I wanted to stray into other areas which built on the reading and work undertaken on-line and in activity…

…One way for me to break the cycle is to consider self-employment as a consultant, and so it is key that I find what motivates me. However, because of my practical situation it also has to financially reward me. That is the ultimate dilemma.

Comment *added by Keith Kinsella*
Again those stark alternatives...although this time at least one of them is positive! Keep trying to break these simple either/or's up a bit more so there are more angles to look at. Phase 2 will help you do this I'm sure....and there's really no need to feel you have to go the 'passive with seniors but aggressive with peers' route to be effective and successful, even in the ████.

I persist with mirroring back to her the dramatic way she is viewing life – 'stark alternatives' – and continue provoking her to try and break out of the polarities she uses to frame her tactics here i.e. ''passive with seniors but aggressive with peers' , even though this appears to be part of the received wisdom in her organisation

At the end of each 7 week phase of work, students are required to complete a 5000 word essay which forms part of the assessed work counting towards the degree (there are 7 such assignments). There is a different emphasis for each of these that is associated with the content of the phase and the particular focus of the learning during that phase. In Phase 1 – Leadership and You – the focus is on increasing self awareness, framing/choosing the kind of personal engagement with the programme the student wants, developing productive relations with the coach, and becoming familiar with the way the distance learning resources and systems work. Colleen had not done any academic studies for over a decade so she was anxious about her ability to tackle a testing programme like this, and how the 'e learning' nature of the educational process would suit her. These are some of the things she addresses in this first essay. In this very brief extract it's clear that she's finding the coaching process helpful and now has a new appreciation of her default strategy towards her life choices – 'obsessional and perfectionist' – and what she needs to do about e.g. being happy with 'good enough'.

'...I have been greatly enlightened by my Learning Log, and my tutor's responses on several occasions, and the revelation for me is contrast - namely that I either see a positive side to outcomes, or a stark one. I find it challenging to compromise in my personal and professional life, as I appear to be obsessional in attempting to achieve the best in both. I am beginning to realise that my behavioural (and attitudinal) resolution must incorporate 'good enough' and 'compromise' as factors to embrace....

…

So here her response to my repeated 'provocations' is specific –'a stark one'. Her use of the word 'revelation' also provides a good example of the idea mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, that one way of looking at my coaching, using Rayner's concept of inclusionality (Rayner, 2010), is to see it as *revelatory* i.e. not about making/offering new 'connections' but making 'rationally visible' (Garfinkel, 1967) what is already there.

Although this illustration of a 'primitive reaction' is not as concise as John's 'ask for more and better', and does not show up immediately in successive logs, the describing of her behaviour as seeming always to involve 'stark choices' does eventually reveal something important to Colleen. How this influences her and the other processes that seem to be at work, are covered in more detail in Chapter 5 where her work provides the central illustration of 'development episodes' and what might be involved in moving the quality and embodiment of learning from a 'primitive reaction' to a 'language-game'

*   *   *

The next example comes from work I did with Ian during his Phase 1 studies. I'm offering it here in Chapter 4 because it both offers a good but different example of a 'fleeting moment' of influencing, and because I will be using his development story as the central illustration of a 'reflexive biography' in Chapter 6 - this example provides an important insight into the nature of his development that will take place during the programme. These extracts are taken from a series of learning logs we exchanged early on in the phase at the very beginning of the programme. What these show, in contrast to the examples with John and Collen, is a situation where it is the *student* who offers the key intervention – leadership must be viewed in context - and the role of the coach here is to recognise, appreciate, offer resources, and so on, in order to amplify the 'signal' that has been provided. And further in this case, what is being worked with is not a few choice words like e.g. 'stark choices' but a higher level and more complex piece of communication - regarding the critical importance of context in leadership and leadership development - that will take some time to reach fruition . This log is a 'directed' one, the very first one, and Ian is responding to a question about his own personal experience of leadership.

IAN – 'leadership and context'

Topic: *Week 1 - Activity 2 - Learning Log*   Date: *Sunday, 5 October 2008*
Subject: *Context - different situations can change perception on leadership*

In leadership (when deciding if someone is a good leader) each situation needs to put into context. A person will be viewed as a good leader in one situation but in a different he may be seen as an autocratic tyrant. I remember a general manager at my time at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ who was excellent in a crisis, motivating staff, taking decisions (and the responsibility if they turned out to be wrong) pulling everyone together, and eventually solving the problem on a new £65 million plant, which was experiencing major commissioning problems and lots of early life failures. The problem was that this manager took the same approach to managing in less critical times, causing his team to feel stifled and held back. On the one hand this manager showed good leadership in solving a problem; on the other (and in a different context) the very skills that won him praise in solving the problem were seen as an issue later on. He failed to adapt to the situation, taking a one style fits all approach to leading.

Comment: *added by Keith Kinsella*
What a good start – you're onto the importance of 'context' already! Your example of the 'command and control' approach working effectively in a crisis but not in more routine situations, illustrates very well the point that Contingency Theory posits - that you need to fit the style to the situation, and so pick 'horses for courses'. Situational Theory works on a different assumption suggesting that managers need to be able to flex their style to the needs of different situations. You'll come across both of these approaches in several guises in Phase 2 next January. A little later on during Phase 2, I'll send you a copy of a paper by Keith Grint who develops Contingency Theory a little further by connecting it to some new thinking on context and the manager's ability to 'constitute' rather than 'read' context. In the meantime hope you enjoy Phase 1!

I'm very pleased to see this statement in an opening log - many students take much longer to appreciate the importance of 'context' – so I make a bit of a fuss about it: 'what a good start'! Ian had recently completed an MBA so I suspected he'd had some exposure to some leadership models, like 'situational management'; but importantly here he doesn't use any academic terminology, and relies instead on describing and making sense of his own experience. This is something I would normally reinforce as many students find this difficult but for some reason here I choose to counterbalance this focus on experience with a very quick summary of some relevant theory – a tactic that I discover some timwe later, is one that really stimulates Ian's learning. I also try and engender a sense of anticipation by pointing towards some interesting reading on 'context' in Phase 2, and trailing Grint's provocative 'constitutive' model.

During this month I was also working with Exeter CLS colleagues Roger Niven and Jonathan Gosling in a development workshop with a defence electronics company at which the Grint paper on context was explored (Grint, 2005). During this event Roger showed me an HBR paper on leadership and context by Snowden and Boone (2007) which covered similar ground. I decided this latter paper offered a more straightforward and practical introduction to these ideas, having none of the social constructionist underpinnings that Grint employs, and which Ian would be introduced to in Phase 2. I decide to send it to him before Phase 2 starts to see what he makes of it. Encouragingly he reads it straight away and uses a 'diary' log to offer his reading of the article.

Topic: *Week 4 - Activity 3 - Learning Log*   Date: Monday, *3 November 2008*
Subject: *Week 4 - Snowden and Boone*
Snowden, D., J., and Boone, M., E., 2007, " A Leaders Framework for Decision Making", Harvard Business Review, November, 2007: 69-76. Review of Article:

In this reflection I have added my comments under separate headings under each section, plus a summary at the end. The article is intended for managers and its purpose is to give a framework to enable better decisions to be made if the differing complex situations that occur in leadership situations. The authors put forward that not all leaders are successful when facing situations that require a variety of decisions and responses. The article draws on a variety of relevant case material to support their arguments… They believe that Leadership is not a one size fits all proposition.

Ian then goes on to provide a very detailed review of the model and how he can use it to help him understand a number of situations he's been involved in, and is now facing, which I don't include here. At the end of his log he summarises his views as follows: …

The framework presented offers a useful analysis of the different situations and the behaviour that occurs in each context. In an earlier log I have discussed a manager I knew who was excellent in a crisis (chaos), but could not adapt very well to the other contexts. This model helps me understand what was happening there. On reflection on my own style I would suggest that I go into "command and control" mode a stage early e.g at the 'complex' context stage rather than the 'chaotic'. Moving in to control the activities in order to resolve the issue quickly. I see that using the model it makes a strong case for not doing this, rather letting the team get on with getting the job done. The main learning point for me on reviewing this paper has been the importance of changing my behaviour to match the situation I am in. I believe I spend the most of my time in simple and complicated contexts, I am the leader and an expert and the comments about entrained thinking in the article have made me reflect that I am guilty of this on occasion. In addition, it has allowed me to understand the way other managers who work for me and along side me behave when in discussions…

Comment: *added by Keith Kinsella*
You've done a thorough job in explicating what S and B's ideas are in this important area. I hope you found the framework useful, and I'm sure it's something that will prove of value in the future. Keith Grint has a slightly different and probably more interesting take on the same topic - certainly his writing style is rather more entertaining! Instead of 'simple' he talks about 'crisis' contexts in which *command* is the appropriate response: just give me the answer! He talks about *management* or offering process for 'complicated' contexts; and advises *asking questions* for 'complex' contexts - what is the question we need to find an answer to? In this he joins Ronald Heifetz in believing that the role of the leader in adaptive change situations is about engaging the collective intelligence of the organisation. The other kind of difference with Grint is what he calls the 'constitutive' position where both situation and style are things which the leader can define, espouse, and enact, rather than just 'read' and respond to i.e. using the social construction idea, context is not necessarily something real but something that a leader can take the lead in co-constructing with others. I'll give you the references to the Grint and Heifetz articles later this week. You are working hard on this material - good stuff!

I thought that Ian's log provided a very good example of what a student can achieve through reading a (semi) academic article on a quite complex topic, and applying what he'd learned reflectively to his own practical experience. This is what Ann Cunliffe (2002) in her writing on education terms 'reflective' learning – applying theories and models to ones experience in order to make better sense of it; as against 'reflexive' learning where the focus is directly on inquiring into our own experience – a turning back on self – in order to better understand the frames, assumptions, and values which

afford/constrain how we make sense of the world. At this stage I thought Ian was just entering this exciting territory and so felt I could bring forward the more challenging material written by Keith Grint (2005) and what I felt were useful supporting ideas from Ron Heifetz (1994), and encourage him to go further with this very fruitful line of thinking – 'good stuff!'.

These logs also illustrate the considerable discretion the coach has on this programme, to tailor the specifics to the needs, interests, and readiness of each student. None of the articles worked on in this extract e.g. Snowden and Boone, Grint, and Heifetz appear in the 'body of knowledge' offered on the MA programme: some of Grint's other work is used in Phase 2 and Heifetz gets a passing mention. I brought these forward into Ian's Phase 1 programme because *he* had offered me clues and I had receptively and inductively responded to them. So the academic materials had been *drawn in* by the student's interests and readiness, as against the more usual programmatic basis as in 'we deal with Grint's constitutive model in Week 7 of Phase 2'! In this way each student does have the possibility of working with the coach to co-create their own *personal* MA that is tailored in an emergent way to their learning, skill development, and practice improvement needs. I believe this approach is one of the key enablers for 'presencing development opportunities' on a timely and situated basis.

As in the first example of 'ask for more and better' involving John, and the 'stark choices' of Colleen, the proper recognition of the effect of the intervention becomes visible at the end of the phase in Ian's Phase 1 essay. Again, as this is more properly part of what I'm calling the 'development episode' part of 'presencing developmental opportunities', I will come back to it in Chapter 5.

<center>*   *   *</center>

As I mentioned at the start, my primary claim in this chapter is that the 'presencing of development opportunities' can be initiated and energised within momentary 'fleeting moments' of educational influencing brought about through the skilled, situated, and timely use of a range of verbal and text-based dialogical interventions. So having provided both theoretical and practical evidence for this claim, in this last part of the chapter I want to review the various examples I've offered to show how it's been possible to use the written word to create 'psychological instruments' (Vygotsky, 1978) which can 'instruct' us in new ways of 'learning to direct [our] own mental processes' (Vygotsky, 1986, p 108), which as Shotter comments, 'bring otherwise unarticulated aspects of our own activities into 'rational-visibility' (Garfinkel, 1967), and thus render them amenable to critical discussion' (Shotter, 2008, p 61).

Let me summarise the argument so far:

1. I began with an illustration of Stern's concept of the 'temporal unfolding' that takes place in even very brief moments of communication, using his own example of the power of implicit communication between strangers while watching a street entertainer. Here the 'moment' is about an implicit sharing of understanding.

2. I then offered an example of my own using a video clip of a moment between Jack Whitehead and myself, to demonstrate the implicit but expressive power of even a momentary face/body gesture to convey and share an emotion and assessment. Here too, the 'moment' is about an implicit sharing of understanding.

3. I further supported this line of thinking by using another video clip of a moment between John, one of my students, and myself, where a bodily gesture I use – a leaning forward with an inquiring tilt of the head - leads to a burst of shared laughter and recognition, which then encourages the student to further explore what had happened following my original 'ask for more and better' intervention. In contrast to the previous two examples, here the 'moment' while also being about a shared understanding, has a more provocative feel to it, asking for comment on the issue of 'complacency'. Though I don't see this as a good example of Wittgenstein's 'primitive reaction' it does begin to show how such work can stimulate a re-view of a current way of looking at matters.

4. Remaining in 'live' face to face video mode, I then turned to a very significant example of the 'fleeting moment' idea: my discovery helped by Jack Whitehead, of my central creation in this thesis – the 'presencing of development opportunities'. In this example I believe we do have a very clear exemplar of Wittgenstein's 'primitive reaction leading to a new language-game'. Jack inductively responds to something I say, gesturally marking it through his intonation, gaze, facial expression and bodily movement, as well as by repeating the phrase several times and noting that he'd 'never heard that phrase before'. Interestingly, though I acknowledge his intervention in the moment, it takes some time before the significance really dawns on me – so here we are beginning to get a glimpse of the different processes that can follow the 'reaction' part - which is the subject of Chapter 5.

5. Having demonstrated what I mean by a 'fleeting moment', I then showed how this can also occur in text-based communication. Here I provided three concrete examples taken from the learning logs/essays of three of my students, restricting what I offered to the reaction/'fleeting moment' part of my framework and leaving the language-game/'development episode' part to Chapter 5. The three examples covered the following ground:

   - *John* – 'ask for more and better': here we have a quite specific 'instruction' to be different and there's an immediate positive response in the next learning log – so it's quite easy to pick this 'moment' up. And then later in his phase essay and much later post-Diploma interview it becomes clear that this has evolved into a full blown language-game where John is behaving differently and more effectively with his staff.
   - *Colleen* – 'stark choices': the basic issue of positioning different situations as 'stark choices' takes time to evolve but supported by various preparatory and supporting interventions during the phase, does over time create a new perspective for Colleen which allows her to challenge her habit of framing issues in this punishing way. The medium term effects of this realization will be looked at in detail in Chapter 5.
   - *Ian* – 'leadership and context': this example is of a different kind in that there is no particular set of words/phrase that captures the intervention and reaction. Instead my initial inductive response of welcoming and

recognizing his opening view - about how the success of leaders he knows seem to be related to the 'context' they're in - 'marks' this as an important issue. Supporting this first with the Snowden and Boone article – which he analyses in great detail - and then later with the Grint article, seem to provide Ian with a new 'tool' which he immediately takes to. At this early stage, his 'reaction' I believe is limited to the idea that this is a useful 'tool' which - as a recent MBA graduate where 'tools' are of the essence - he probably feels he can use without any further development or changes in himself. However, as you will see, particularly in Chapter 6, this reaction does develop over time into an influential language-game which allows him to develop new ontological skills which completely transform the way he thinks and performs leadership.

6. These examples show that the interventions and the reactions that form these 'fleeting moments' can take a variety of forms and can be longer and complex: like my own 'presencing' example, or the intervention on the importance of 'context', or 'stark choices'; or can be very brief and even throwaway in nature, like 'ask for more and better'. And while in retrospect they may seem like I'm using quite specific 'tools' to do the job, they are in fact 'specifically vague' (Garfinkel, 1967) – that is, until feedback from the student makes them otherwise!

As a final comment to end this chapter, I'd like to re-iterate something I mentioned earlier in this chapter viz. that through my more recent practice of generally embedding my commentary/feedback within the relevant phrases of student's logs (see example in Preface to Chapter 3 to 5), I'm effectively transforming it into a *dialogue* of sorts: the student has to read what he said and then what I said…and then respond in his head if nowhere else: so the 'conversational triplet' (Barnett-Pearce, 1989) is played out in the head. Of course the student could just ignore it as of no import; or feel irritated and say 'oh yes, I thought of that and rejected it!'; or find it of interest and think of following it up; or find it takes him unawares and delivers a bit of a shock. Whatever the specific reaction, the student might then tell me about this in the next log/Skype or not; or if she/he doesn't comment on it, it may nevertheless show up in the next essay – as part of the 'development episode' level of the intervention; or even in a later essay or final dissertation, so forming part of what I've called his/her 'reflexive biography'. The key to this process is to expect, hope, anticipate – and be patient! - that one or more of the many suggestions/challenges I am making will have struck a potent chord at some point, to be observant about what comes up in the logs/essays and other contacts, and to be receptive and responsive in supporting (or to use Mindell's apt phrase [Mindell, 1995] to 'amplify') whatever signals of potential development and opportunities to work on these, emerge.

So here, we are not looking at a simple black and white, linear, 'one shot' action, but a more complex, multi-levelled, and non-linear process that takes place over time. I will also make the point after presenting further evidence in Chapters 5 and 6 on *development episodes* and *reflexive biography,* that this initiation of change is also just a part of a larger creative and mediated process. In this the 'provocative' presencing of developmental opportunities is going on at all levels all of the time, involving the immediate – 'fleeting moment'; the short-medium term – 'development episodes'; and the mid-longer term – 'reflexive biography'. In other words the development process is not just about a magic moment every now and again: everything I do is about preparing the ground, seeding the moment, supporting and extending the language-game, and

helping students integrate and embed their learning about 'how to go on with others' so that it becomes an ontological, identity influencing process.

I hope that in this chapter I've made some progress in persuading you of the existence of 'fleeting moments' of educational influence and what constitutes them, and to show you how they can be a precursor to the creation and evolution of new language-games. In my usage, these new language-games are essentially new 'orientational' framings that enable students to re-contextualize their experience of situations sufficiently, to 'know how to go on' to develop new embodied capabilities. What new language-games might look like in this particular context and what might it take to create these, are questions I respond to in the next chapter.

DEVELOPMENT EPISODES:
THE EMERGENCE OF NEW LANGUAGE-GAMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16a. *primitive reaction, indwelling, language-game part 1*

16b. *primitive reaction, indwelling, language-game part 2*

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

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

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

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

Tacit development of new ontological skills
If a 'primitive reaction' within a 'fleeting moment' of influence does have an educational impact, it should result in some *changes* we can recognise - in the ideas and language being used, behaviours, and ideally in changes to practices within the situation. In conventional training/development programmes we might regard and refer to such a new method or skill that is being taught/learned, as being *transactional* in nature, in line with the 'banking' or 'warehouse' metaphor of knowledge: something bounded and known is handed over in a linear manner from one who knows to someone who doesn't, usually for a fee that places a value on the expert's expertise. And then the trainee still faces the challenge of using this new knowledge/tool to perform more creatively in their own local context.
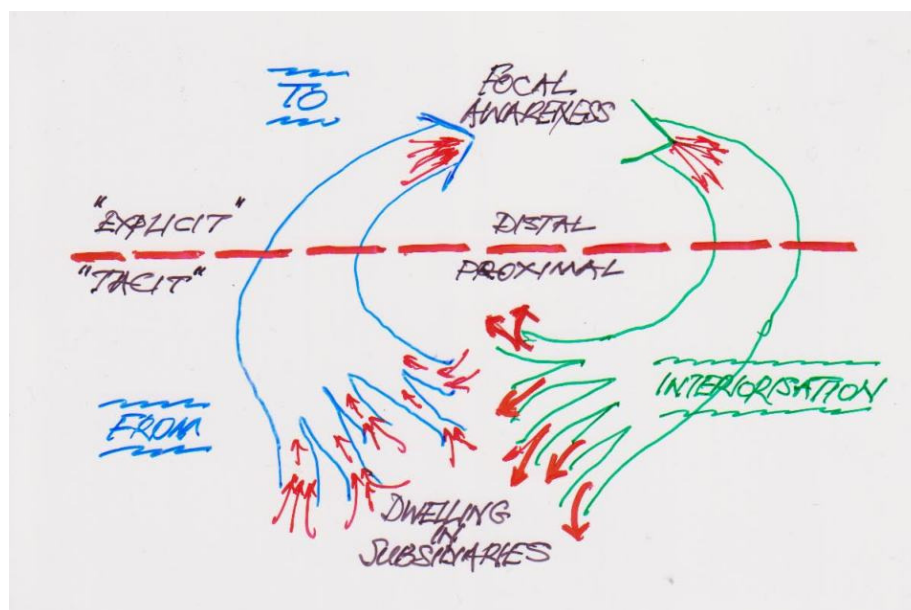
KNOWING AS AN EMERGENT 'FROM-TO' TACIT LEARNING PROCESS

In contrast, the development of the kind of situated embodied knowing that I'm talking about, is complex and not completely knowable in explicit terms: it is *transformational* in nature and cannot be absorbed through a 'training' process. Here the different kind of learning, developing, and performing work that is required to transform the momentary reframing of an issue/perception in a face-to-face or virtual dialogue - the primitive reaction - into appropriate ontological (embodied) skills, is in my experience achieved through a largely tacit learning process which Polanyi calls 'indwelling' (Polanyi, 1983), as illustrated in the diagram. And this is what the newly forming language-game helps frame, energise and guide – the new embodied capabilities and sense of identity to go on more effectively with others[18].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEVELOPMENT EPISODES: exploring examples of what happens

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

Introduction to the cases

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week 4

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

Week 5

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

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

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

Week 6

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<center>*   *   *</center>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

<center>*   *   *</center>

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".

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'.

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

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*

<p style="text-align:center">164</p>

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.

<center>*   *   *</center>

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 – overeacting, 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

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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.

CHAPTER 7

TOWARDS A COACHING PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF REQUISITE SITUATED PRACTICE

'People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what
they do; but what they don't know is what what they do, does'
Foucault (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p 187)

Now I've reached the final chapter of the thesis, I believe I am able to a greater extent to respond more positively to Foucault's challenge above: yes, I do know what what I do, does! I've just in the latter part of Chapter 6, provided evidence that my three exemplar students have during the course of their online higher degree programme, been able to develop their scholarly and leaderly situated practices. And in so doing I've also provided evidence that they have been helped in this by the online coaching that I've been providing. Accordingly I see that my main task in this chapter is to identify and bring together the various elements, dimensions, and dynamics of the coaching pedagogic 'black box' I've been developing and using with my students over the past seven years, and to show how it has contributed towards an effective learning and development process and the practical results achieved. And as part of this, in line with the title of my thesis, I need also to demonstrate how *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice (PERTRSP)* has become an original and vital standard of judgement, energising, guiding and bringing coherence to my educative practice.

I'm going to address the central questions about what I now regard as a 'coaching pedagogy of presencing', in five main sections. In these, using the language of natural inclusion, I aim to articulate the various differentiated 'parts' *and* show how they are all also dynamically and reciprocally linked with each other. The five sections are:

1. the what, how, and when of 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice', outlining how this inclusional and ontological form of coaching intervention helps me and my students appreciate, mobilise, and use enhanced awareness of self, other, and context to offer 'requisite' leadership in the form of 'empathetic responsiveness', in the different situations we face.
2. the development of a 'responsive repertoire' which has offered both a stance as well as a resource of conversational 'moves' for such presencing work.
3. the formation, maintenance, and energising of a 'development container' in which students have been able to engage in critical and creative inquiries.
4. the kinds of short, medium, and longer term 'online indicators' which I've found useful to guide my use of these pedagogic tools.
5. the influencing of the overarching educational social formation in which the MA programme is constituted, and in which I and my students have worked together to achieve both academic and practical outcomes.

You will note that sections 1, 3, and 5 are about three closely linked levels of *context* which both act together to influence, and are influenced by, the educational interactions my students and engage in: the *educational social formation* provides the slow moving 'macro' higher education context for the more responsive 'meso' or middle level

development container, which then mediates the 'micro' context for the detailed *PERTRSP* interactions which govern much of the 'subsidiary' work we do together.

After bringing together all the elements of the pedagogy in this section, I will then show how this pedagogical process helps students work with the 'barriers' to developing their situated practice set up by the online delivery vehicle and higher education ethos that I identified in the Introduction. And I'll then conclude the thesis with a brief 'in hindsight' critique of my approach and look ahead at what I see as key resources for future action research work of this kind. And so with this introduction, let me now make a start on the main work of this chapter – my working pedagogy.

In the Introduction to this thesis, I identified six reasons why this programme at first glance seemed unlikely to succeed in helping students develop a situated practice like leadership: the 'distance' between provider and receiver, the rigidity and packaged nature of delivery, asynchronicity, educational power-relations, the learning transfer gap, and theory-practice discontinuity. In the following six chapters, my inquiries have suggested that something paradoxical might be happening as, despite this outlook, my students and I have been finding ways of sidestepping or leapfrogging these obstacles to learning, enabling them to improve their scholarship and enhance their leadership capacities to make a worthwhile contribution in an increasingly uncertain world. And what has been emerging as central to these educational interactions and the pedagogy which has framed them, is the process I began to call 'presencing developmental possibilities'. I now see this as a living example of Wittgenstein's concept of a 'language-game' where I am engaged in an ongoing ontological process of orientating myself to 'knowing how to go on' with my students, so that they more fully reap the benefits of their two years in the programme, not only as scholars but as leaders of self, others, and the social formations in which they work and live.

However, despite this apparent success in helping my students improve their scholarly and leaderly practices, I need to stay calm and carefully martial my arguments if I'm to persuade the Academy that this represents an educational breakthrough of sorts. As Joseph Raelin, an enthusiast of work-based educational pedagogy, wryfully admits in a recent review of what he calls 'spoon-feeding' practices in management education, 'the pressures to conform to standardized classroom teaching are highly resistant based on deep-seated and long-standing consensual beliefs and traditions. The principal alternative of employing practice-based and critical approaches has been diluted in favor of the promotion of reductionist and mythological active learning strategies which, though useful, are unlikely to lead to the acquisition of prudential wisdom' (Raelin, 2009, p 401).

The reality of this position was brought home to me strongly when the current Director of the MA programme, asked to comment on whether or not I had influenced the 'educational social formation' of the MA, suggested that though I was sincere and committed in my efforts, I was just 'tilting at windmills'. By this I think he meant attacking imaginary enemies e.g. the 'disciplinary regime' within universities, and/or fighting unwinnable or futile battles through seeking a more practice-based form of education in academic institutions. And this comes after some three years of quite close collaboration between us on improving the programme! I'm pleased to confirm that following further interchanges, he has since softened his position somewhat as you will see later on in an appendix to this chapter. However, with this experience still fresh in

my mind, I devote the bulk of this chapter to mounting what I hope will be a persuasive argument about the value of the approach I've developed. Let me now start with the pedagogic 'blackbox'…

AN ONLINE COACHING PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCING

In the diagram below I gather together and relate what I have grown to see as the main elements that together constitute my online coaching pedagogy. I've talked about most of these in Chapter 1 where I described important steps along my development journey. And again in Chapter 3, where I showed how all of these activities-cum-artifacts, helped me transform my coaching practice from being in many ways a complete 'novice' in the world of academic education, to someone who could claim to be at least an experienced 'intermediate'. And then finally in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, where I went into a lot more detail on three of these elements that I've chosen to 'mark' what I see as different stages or aspects of the learning and development process.

So you'll already be familiar with all of these terms and how I understand and use them in this thesis. What I aim to do in this chapter is to revisit and show you how I see them working in concert, as an 'ecology of ideas' (Bateson, 1972), to produce two main effects which I've identified above: using the findings of educational research to help students improve their practice; and, using a self-study version of educational research to create an original standard of judgment which I hope will serve, as quoted in the Introduction, to 'improve education and serve the public good' (Ball and Tyson, 2011).

Below I offer an impressionistic sketch of the key elements in my pedagogical framework. I'll now work my way through these showing how each has been developed, what role(s) they play, and how they come together in this dynamic and emergent educational influencing process. I will begin first with 'presencing developmental possibilities' - which I've now refined to PERTRSP **-** which forms the central embodied 'tool/artifact' around which my pedagogical approach is organized.
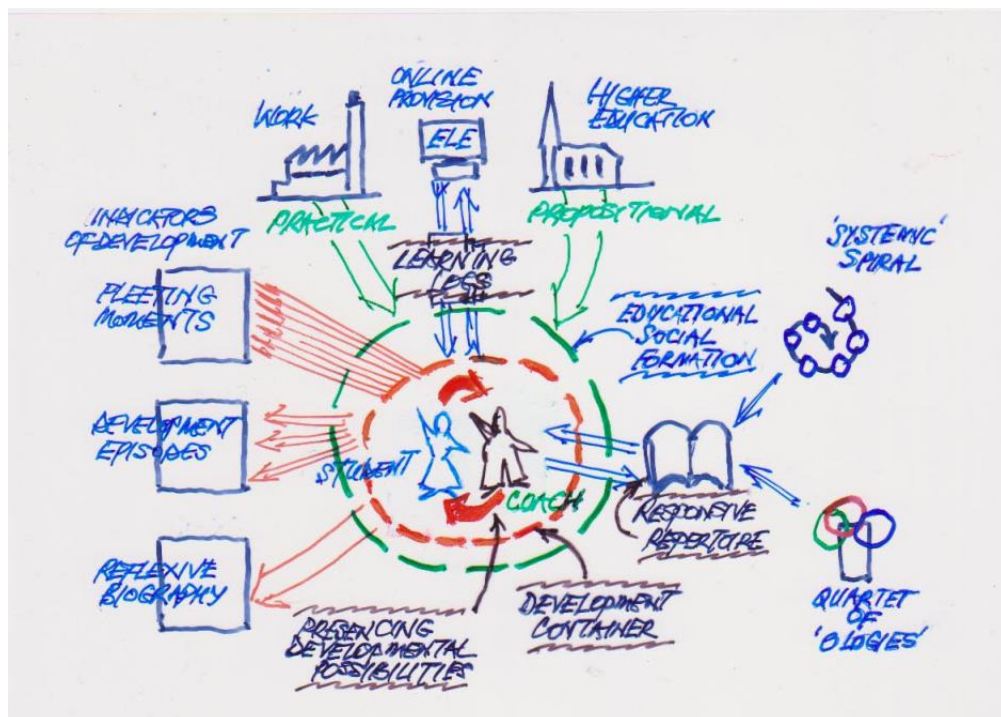
AN ONLINE COACHING PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCING

Presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice
As I say of 'presencing' when it's first revealed in the video clip in Chapter 3, 'I offer students something *now* that I think they would find useful in the future'. It might be an affirmation and extra reading (Ian), a question, reflection, or challenge (Colleen), or an action proposal (John) that I offer in the moment, anticipating that their experience when they read and respond at some future time, will provide them with a resource they will find useful. In this sense it's a little like Milton Erickson's 'conversational' hypnotic interventions, where he provided his clients with an experience, a resource, which would give them access to what they needed, to resolve a difficulty (Erickson and Rossi, 1979).

What has become clearer over time is that this artifact operates at three levels. First of all, I've been presencing developmental opportunities for myself over very many years, as you'll have noted in Chapters 1 and 3: if I'm interested in something I immediately set in motion some developmental activities. I then realised that I was also doing this in the educational relationships between myself and my students i.e. I was presencing an 'empathetic responsiveness' to what my students seemed to require to develop their scholarly and leaderly practices: see here, for example, Colleen's comments about me 'knowing exactly what I need'. And then finally, and this has been the main focus in the thesis, in my intuitive responses to my students in logs and essays, both empathetic and provocative, I've been inviting them to presence in their *own* relationships, an empathetic responsiveness to the leadership practices that seemed appropriate, needed, and requisite in the situations they're facing. So there has been an unfolding recursive process at work here, where there has been a 'focal' emphasis on improving the quality of responsiveness to the leadership practices required in first, second, and third person development situations.

In the Introduction, I confessed that my understanding of this ontological skill had been subjected to a range of minor after-shocks following one of my final supervisions with Jack Whitehead, when notions of 'contextual empathy' and 'contextualising' – though already appearing in a wide range of places within several of my chapters – surfaced again but in a newer higher level and more sophisticated form. As Alan Rayner might say, in this I've not made a 'new connection' but I've 'revealed' to myself what I've always known (see comments in Chapter 1, Excerpt 18)! In the days that followed I became aware of further implications and possibilities and these have helped me to more fully articulate what this form of presencing is really about for me and how I believe it works. I now think of 'presencing developmental possibilities' (PDP) as a basic and *generic* term which can take different forms: so though it does tell you *something* about what's happening, you need to go further to enhance the impact. And so as mentioned in the Introduction, I now see it more clearly in the higher level form of *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice (PERTRSP).* Let me draw together the various threads to explain how I got to this understanding of what has been an emergent phenomenon, looking in particular at how responsiveness and empathy can be enhanced while sustaining an optimum level of epistemological and ontological doubt.

1. Presencing – developing empathy through 'dwelling in the subsidiaries'
This emergent activity is not something that can be tackled directly or in a mechanical way like adopting a tactic of e.g. 'asking open questions'. Instead this kind of 'presencing' is the 'focal' outcome that becomes visible by working more directly, but in an intuitive and emergent fashion, on lower level activities like e.g. asking probing

questions, challenging premature judgements, suggesting further reading, encouraging more experimentation, seeking evidence of influence and so on – in what Polanyi called 'dwelling in the subsidiaries' (Polanyi, 1983) This is certainly how I became aware of the 'what what I do, *does*' aspect of the largely tacit and dynamic workings of many different kinds of activities that together constitute this meta activity. What are some of the distinctive aspects of this process?

- **what is it that's being 'presenced'?:** in Scharmer's use of the term, he describes 'presencing' as a blend of the words 'presence' and 'sensing'. In his Theory U he suggests that the way in which we attend to a situation determines how a situation unfolds and so 'presencing' refers to the ability to sense and bring into the present one's highest future potential; which in group situations he describes as being about 'letting come' a 'future wanting to emerge' (Senge et al, 2004). As Patricia Shaw says, his language here is 'strikingly mystical' (Shaw, 2002). In my own use, I am focusing more on improvements in personal practice - on helping students engage in developmental activity *while* doing what they ought or want to be doing to achieve preferred outcomes in a particular situation. So the first dimension that is being presenced is an interest in using an everyday opportunity to work on their development *now* rather than plan to do something in the future.

- **increasing receptiveness/empathy:** within this opportunity that's being presenced, I am intent that they pay attention to and appreciate important aspects of the *context*. And so presencing here is about experiencing a greater sense of *receptiveness* or *empathy* towards the situations in which they are or may be performing. So there is a deeper listening and sensing to what might be wanted or being 'called forth' by this situation and the people in it, before there is a move to action. In my use of the term 'requisite' I'm suggesting that they ought not just to respond to what *is* happening – the current situated practice – but to what *ought* to be happening: how should the situated practice *change* and how can they help this happen? In other words I'm asking them to think about what kind of *leadership* practice now seems appropriate – what I've called 'requisite' - and how they can contribute towards this new 'going on' with others.

- **changing situated responses:** but it's important that this development opportunity is more than just an empathetic reflection, a thinking about others and what might be done, or planning of some kind: there needs to be a move to action, an enactment and embodiment. And so presencing is also about increasing *responsiveness,* with this responsiveness not being about individual intent and action – what *I* do - but action in terms of a *practice* i.e. an activity that is an expression of the relatedness between person(s) and situation on a moment-to-moment basis. And so it's responsiveness to *situated practice*, *requisite* situated practice.

- **revealing continuities:** further, how might this 'presencing' process increase empathetic responsiveness? Here I turn to the ideas of Rayner with his concept of 'natural inclusion' (Rayner, 2010a) for inspiration. In this view 'subject' and 'object' are not seen as discrete phenomena separated by an empty 'excluded middle', but 'reciprocally linked' in receptive flow-form space. This allows me to think that 'presencing empathetic responsiveness' initiates a process which effectively 'dissolves' the 'excluded middle' (or using Rayner's latest Twitter

influenced languaging: 'reveals the continuities – space cannot be cut'). And it does this through an omni-directional *contextualising* process which enables a person (or 'complex dynamic self') to sense and appreciate what's happening and being 'called forth' in a local situation (or 'local neighbourhoods'); and then respond in ways which also take account of the values/capabilities of this 'complex dynamic self' and leadership practices required in that situation[25].

So presencing here involves contextualising skills which enable greater empathy towards leadership practice needed in local situations, greater awareness of the values and capabilities of the contextualiser to engage in these requisite practices, and a greater responsiveness to actually do so, and with passion and curiosity about the consequences of one actions. A similar perspective is offered by Spinoza et al who in their book on entrepreneurship (1997, as reviewed in Shotter, 1998) use similar languaging like 'retrieve sensitivity to' that allow people to include 'new practices into old practices' which expand your 'ability to appreciate and engage in the ontological skill of disclosing new ways of being' (1998, p 279). Both of these ideas feel much like Wittgenstein's metaphor of language-games which enable people to 'know how to go on', with 'retrieving sensitivities' much like 'presencing empathetic responsiveness', and which enable people to 'disclose new ways of being', or 'respond to requisite situated practice', by embodying new ontological practices of 'going on'.

I've already pointed out that because this is a 'focal' outcome, it's not something I can go to directly and straightforwardly – it has many tacit sources and emerges over time. But to end this section, I offer a *simplified* illustration of the kind of effect the move from the PDP to the PERTRSP version of 'presencing' can and has had on my responses. For example one of my Middle East based students identified that in his organisation the task of 'strategy development' is being treated as a planned, 'top management' only activity. As a result he feels many staff are not really thinking about the meaning of important aspects of the strategy like e.g. 'offering excellent customer service'. Here's how my typical initial response to such issues has changed:

- PDP: 'why don't you try now to get people to start thinking about the everyday implications of the strategy, while you talk with them about the day's work?'

- PERTRSP: 'given that the current practice amongst staff is to try to meet *all* demands of *all* customers, what could you do now to find out what is supporting these patterns of behaviour, and how might you in future respond to them in your daily meetings, in ways which will fit into the different practices you think are needed, in order to encourage their engagement?'

Though this too simplifies the process, a good practical example of this process 'in action' in the textual record, appears in Chapter 4 on pp 110-116 where I analyse a

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[25] in the new discipline of 'transdisciplinarity studies', Lupasco's associated logic of subject and object being linked by means of a 'third space' (the included middle) located at a higher level of reality, encourages a similar kind of thinking. Nicolescu says: 'The included middle logic is a tool for an integrative process: it allows us to cross two different levels of reality or of perception and to effectively integrate, not only in thinking but also in our own being, the coherence of the Universe. The use of the included third is a transformative process. But, at that moment, the included third ceases to be an abstract, logical tool: it becomes a living reality touching all the dimensions of our being. This fact is particularly important in education and learning. (Nicolescu, 2011, p 31)

learning log interaction with my student John. Although this incident took place in 2006 nearly five years before I arrived at my new framing of PERTRSP, I think it shows me paying attention to the idea of a 'requisite situated practice' in his interactions with his staff, inviting him to find a way of 'responding empathetically' while taking account of his own resources as well as those of others, and in a style that is appropriate to a practice that would better achieve the goals they are seeking.

2. Presencing – seeking practical and requisite outcomes

Let me now take this discussion to a more practical level, moving away from the conceptual framing to the 'doing' that leads to development activity that initiates changes in embodied behaviour and improvements in local situated practice. I comment on my practice from four angles:

- **Bricolage - working 'from-to':** in my experience, students typically seem to want to learn about leadership by *absorbing* a wide range of academic ideas and tools *about* leaders and leadership – the so-called 'warehouse' or 'building' model of knowledge (Heidegger, 1971). I initially respond to this attitude to learning by taking whatever they offer me - stimulated by e.g. the online resources, their own experiences, my questioning, and so on – and use this as a kick-off point to evoke and provide a receptive and responsive contribution very much in the role of bricoleur, working with what I've to hand (Levi-Strauss, 1996). While acknowledging where they are coming from, my responses seek to encourage, broaden, deepen, provide resources, provoke action, and so on, in order to stimulate and extend their engagement to their own development of capability, performance, and practice. I intend this development to be of an embodied nature going beyond just knowing *about* to a knowing *of*, and then in time to a knowing *from* (Shotter, 2008). I believe I do this by bringing into the 'present moment' (that is in 'conversation' in online learning log terms), reasons for and/or a framing of ideas for how they might progress this interest/issue and bring it into new practice. In this I seek to create in our immediate 'languaging' of the issue, ideas and terms that anticipate possible paths and motivations for going ahead. So like Polanyi, I am also working very much with his basic 'from-to' metaphor i.e. *from* whatever 'subsidiary' issues/materials we have to hand *to* improvements in the 'focal' situated practice.

- **Panopticon-like responsiveness:** to be experienced as offering this kind of 'live' in-the-moment support in the distance learning world, I have *to be present* to what they are offering me, or, given it's all happening in a virtual world, *felt* to be present by the student. So very much like the prisoner's experience of the Panopticon (Foucault, 1977), students need to feel I'm paying close attention and appreciating their situation all of the time even though it's not actually possible for me to do this. If this quality isn't present, the time delays between student log and coach response (and vice versa) would carry little energy or influencing force. How do I go about doing this? Above all I have to be *alive and responsive* to any clues they may offer as to their own local interests or dilemmas that are identified or in the subtext of what they're writing, as well as to what is in the ELE material and what they are making of it. This means being reasonably timely in my responses, paying attention to what has gone before, and what might lie ahead, and keeping my field of vision wide open. Perhaps more importantly when I respond, I need to show that I really am interested and involved in what they're thinking and doing - providing a stream of questions,

challenges, ideas, and personal appreciations through my comments in the logs and essays - and not just going through the motions in a non-engaged way.

- **Intensive 'fishing' activities:** I generally do this by showing an intense interest in their work - as Jim, one of my students, remarked: 'I am amazed at the sheer intensity and attention to detail of the responses to my work'. My ideas are offered very much in 'fishing' mode i.e. casting ideas out based on intuition, empathy, and resonance, and all the time looking for glimmers of interest: is anything I'm offering ringing any bells? What's important about this process is that it's not a wholly rational and explicit intellectual process where I work through formulas of some kind. Instead I liken it to a tacit activity where through an 'intuitive inferencing' process, I spontaneously cast out a range of 'baited hooks' and then scan the logs/essays for signs of interest which I can then start 'playing' with. Ian's metaphor of 'rallies in a tennis game' (see section in Chapter 6 regarding his reflexive biography for more on this) also conjures up this image. If I suspect that something is, then I attempt to amplify this by offering praise, further relevant materials, and encouragement to take the idea further. In this way this 'fishing' process acts very much as an heuristic helping me find ways through the complex meaning –making 'jungles' that my students are living and working in.

- **Focusing on changes in practice:** As part of this 'fishing' activity, I also encourage them to try things out for themselves, create their own practical 'fishing' experiments, and learn from the feedback: what influences are they having on others in their context and in the social formation of the organization in which they work. If any of the ideas are to lead to anything practical, they need to be tried out and experienced in real everyday situations – 'jumping into the water' as Mintzberg has suggested (Mintzberg, 1975, on p 26 in HBR, 1998) - so that through an indwelling process, embodied knowing about the dynamic fit between tool and context can be generated. So the wide open 'fishing' activity gradually gives way to a more focused inquiry into what's being done to use the knowledge, and exploring the boundaries of application.

- **A values driven process:** As I mention above, students typically expect to absorb explicit knowledge from the university to add to their own again largely explicit knowing. I don't believe this is sufficient to support the kind of critical engagement and embodied development they need, to improve their practice and performance. I want instead to provoke them into gaining a more personal and embodied kind of knowing. I do this through encouraging them to critically engage with their own and others ideas, through trying out and experimenting with these in context, through reflective and reflexive work on their experiences (Cunliffe, 2002), and by refining their knowing, skills, and confidence for delivery in context. As I discussed in more detail in the section in Chapter 3 titled 'identifying the values grounding my pedagogy', the main driver for this seems to be a deeply felt desire to raise awareness of what and how those people who I'm serving as coach, friend, and colleague, can make the most of their talents and transform these into successful interaction, practice, and outcomes with others. This is also linked in some ways to my desire to a find ways of legitimising personal knowing - very much in the Foucauldian sense of eliciting and valuing 'subordinated knowledges'. And though my own personal focus is on individuals and the groups they are part of, this is driven by a desire to foster and support a kind of wider freedom and justice for all.

3. Presencing - maintaining epistemological and ontological doubt

As quoted earlier, Barnett has said students need to have the opportunity to *make* their reflexive biography, as 'distinct from having one's biography made for one by the manifold forces that dominate this "supercomplex" world' (Barnett, 2000, p 158). This need he posits is well served if they can do their learning and performing in similar conditions, so that in the former situation, there is a regular need to act into uncertainty where they are subject to similar levels of both epistemological and ontological doubt. In the online programme, the coaching required to support this kind of more open ended, contested, uncertain, and dynamic intertwined 'learning while practising' *and* 'practising while learning' - both at the same, and for yet another *first*, time (Garfinkel, 1967) – needs to be thought of as taking place within a pedagogy which for example: consistently provokes alternative perceptions and feelings to develop a capacity for multi-perspectival framings; helps 'presence' or make visible and present the many developmental possibilities latent in their everyday lives for inquiring into these; and encourages experimentation and reflection on feedback in practical situations. In the face of ontological challenges such as 'how can I become and practice what is being called forth in this situation?', as well as dealing more sensitively and responsively with the demands of more routine forms of problem solving, the 'focal' act of 'presencing developmental possibilities' I believe provides students with the kind of side-by-side support they need to feel their way forward as they learn how to develop their practices of re-orienting and 'going on'…*by doing just that!*

Of course, it's tempting when they make progress to then give praise freely. But, as in Walt Disney's three part formula for success – dreamer/realist/critic (Dilts, 1995) – it's important also to be quite rigorous and demanding as to the accuracy of claimed outcomes and how they think about what they've done. After all this is not just about improving practice but also becoming a better scholar who is able to attain a better than average masters degree. So often I caution 'premature closure' and ask students to hold back on rapid judgement, stay uncertain, and allow further time for ideas to take shape, and the meaning of feedback to become evident. This is very much what I believe Barnett was meaning when he stressed the need for students to do their learning under conditions of epistemological and ontological uncertainty (Barnett, 2000) – so I keep challenging them to see things from many points of view.

In fact, following Garfinkel's 'yet another first time' dictum, I now stress that while they tuck new learning into their quiver, they need always to stay open to the reality of what is in front of them in the *present* moment. And while I'm interested in helping them improve the quality of their learning and development, I'm also very keen that they also appreciate the double level nature of the process i.e. learning yes, but also learning about how they learn, particularly how they go about the Wittgensteinian framing task of knowing how to go on together with others. So I often offer supplementary materials that address this meta task, and encourage them to go further into the framing and modelling aspects of what they're doing, and the social and collaborative dimensions involved in 'knowing of the third kind' (Shotter, 2008). So there is always an implied contextual framing being delivered as I speak into the space between us, that is expectant of a certain trajectory of thought…but this is of course also open to shifts! So I'm hoping that students will be learning at an ontological level about what it is to become and be-in-the-world as particular 'dividuals' (Lipuma, 1998) in the many varied local situations they live in, as well as in the more usual sense of having an individual identity.

To end this section with something more vivid and expressive than straight text, in Appendix 1 I've included video excerpts, written commentary, and an e mail exchange for your further information. The two edited video clips come from an hour-long wide ranging review with one of my 07-09 students, Jim, held some 6 months after he had completed his MA. In it are comments on a range of interesting aspects of the programme and the nature and influence of the coaching process, which illustrate and support many of the claims I've been making in this section, including:

- 'it's the coaching relationship that makes the difference…the learning logs are the most useful aspect as students know they are going to be responded to' - it's what energises the process
- [in the draft dissertation] 'it's the feedback that made the difference…your amendments took every spare minute for three weeks to work through! But very grateful…that gave me the steer more than anything, that I needed'
- 'it's the level of detail and attention to assignments that's had the greatest impact…it anchors the experience of learning around an interactive experience' and this relationship 'steadies the buffers in terms of the quality of reflection…'
- [regarding the 'development container]…'very helpful in shifting my mindset…paradigm thinking' – coach provides a different slant…about *personal* practice…very deep…quite personal'.
- can online learning log/essay experience approach conversation and dialogue with fleeting moments of influence – 'very definitely!'
- can regular written/online interchanges create a 'development container' which enhances learning - 'that is the crux of it!'
- 'smartened up a lot academically' due to the detailed feedback on the essays

Perhaps just as importantly, the audio-visual record shows the kind of living energy, presence, humour, and good feeling that infuses an educational relationship characterized by this kind of conversational coaching and which enables the range of positive outcomes that were achieved.

These two video clips appear in Volume 2 in the Appendix 1 to this chapter, on p. 240.
24. *Jim's review of MA part 1*
25. *Jim's review of MA part 2*

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

As you can see from the earlier diagram, the organic 'engine' which supports this presencing 'artifact' is composed of three main elements: the *learning log/essay interactions* which, as well as describing problems and raising questions, provides textual signs of learning and development; my improvisatory responses to these student writings spontaneously and intuitively selected and creatively fashioned from what I've called my *responsive repertoire* - to emphasise that it is responsive and dialogical rather than mechanistic and formulaic; and the *development container* which is constituted, energized, and sustained by the regular cycles of action and research taking place between the first two elements, and which provides the conditions which encourage a climate of inquiry between students and myself. I've provided many examples of how the first of these 'cogs' operate in earlier chapters, so here let me focus on how the latter two 'cogs' of the presencing 'engine' use the 'fuel' provided by the learning logs and

essays, to work their educational influences (please forgive the intrusive 'machine' metaphor!).

Developing and using an empathetically 'responsive repertoire'
In this section I will talk about the emergent structure of my coaching interventions, how they can be seen as empathetic 'responses' generated through values-driven improvisation, and understood as inviting participation in new language-games. As I mentioned in the previous section, I take whatever students offer me in their logs and essays, and very much in the role of 'bricoleur', use these to evoke a receptive and responsive contribution. I decided to start analysing the textual record contained in the logs and essays and my responses, some four years after I'd begun coaching, to see if I could identify some patterns of educational influence and relationship in our work together, beyond occasional glimpses that were obvious in some log and essay entries.

As stated in Chapter 3, I did this initially with just one student's complete set of logs over a period of 18 months together with my responses, amounting to some 80,000 words in all! As a result of this 'first pass' I tried to create an inductive framing of what the various responses suggested I was wanting to do, and my strategy for doing these. I summarised these thoughts – the detailed interventions I'd been making – and this summary appears in Appendix 6 to Chapter 3, hoping that this would help me derive a more communicable narrative about what I was doing. Having since done some further work of this nature I can see that there is much, much more that could be done along these lines, which could lead to yet another seemingly very comprehensive repertoire of potential actions for online coaches, as has been attempted by others e.g. Denis et al, 2004. But creating a rather deterministic framework in what I regard as essentially a much more flowing, dialogic, creative, and timely process, was not really what I wanted to achieve, and so I haven't pursued this any further, and it remains on the back burner. The 'first pass' itself turned out to be enough to give me a sense of, and a general shape for, the sort of systemic responsiveness I was and am interested in, which could be further developed over time *but* primarily in response to the diverse and changing needs of my students.

1. An outline structure of empathetic pedagogic responses
From this initial analysis of learning log responses, it appears that I have developed a broad range of approaches to the 'encourage, broaden, deepen, provide resources, provoke action' activities that are involved in presencing work, deepening and extending students' engagement with their own development while also creating a learning climate which frames and supports these behaviours. The initial synthesis I've developed is suggestive rather than definitive (if the latter were actually possible!) as it is not based on a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis. But the set of activities that has emerged indicate that I seem to work from a coaching stance that, while embodying a basic receptiveness and responsiveness, makes creative use of other interventions, like being provocative, demanding rigour, and providing a wide range of supplementary resources. In performing this stance, I appear to use a varied repertoire of behaviours which are in a sense 'called forth' (Maturana and Varela, 1992) by what the student is offering, and my intuitive sense of what might be relevant and timely. These seem to include the following four broad, generic responses on a reasonably regular basis, varying of course with the person, the issue, the phase, and the learning and/or development issue I'm wanting to foreground:

- **Influencing expectations:** recognising, supporting, affirming student's explicit and tacit knowledge and establishing the rules of a development oriented 'language-game'. I do this by e.g. taking steps to 'level' power relations in a knowledge field, empathising and affirming other's views/feelings, and casting doubt on too ready an acceptance of academic concepts.

- **Challenging perceptions:** questioning conventional understandings, challenging self imposed boundaries and encouraging both reflexive and creative thinking. I do this by e.g. using humour to provocatively challenge behaviours and interpretations, reframing understandings and conclusions, and cautioning 'premature closure' – 'slow down/stay open'.

- **Extending personal knowing:** provoking new perspectives through questioning and reframing, and adding new ideas and resources relevant to the issues being raised. I do this by e.g. seeding the 'negative capability' field (Keats, 1817) through 'fishing' work, broadening and/or deepening the inquiry, and providing a range of additional resources in timely fashion.

- **Presencing knowing-in-action**: encouraging moves to action new knowledge and assess influence and outcomes. I do this e.g. by encouraging the taking of action/applying insights, seeking reflexive action and the re-valuing of tacit knowledge, and asking for evidence of influencing and being influenced.

2. Values-driven improvisation of interventions

In practice I believe I use this loosely framed set of questions *not* as a template or 'scorecard' which I have in front of me as I read the essays, but as a background frame of reference, intuitively picking these out of the 'quiver' and tailoring them to suit, if and when I'm stimulated by something in the text itself, or embedded in the sub-text. My general intention is to help each individual get the most learning out of the MA experience, which includes becoming a good scholar, achieving a good pass, *and* improving leadership practice. Whereas the emphasis in marking essays needs to be more on the *summative* aspects i.e. 'what ought I do to get a better grade', the emphasis in the learning logs is more on the *formative* aspects – 'how might I learn to become a better leader/accomplish leadership more effectively'. As indicated above, my main strategy is one of presencing empathetic responsiveness in these virtual interactions. By this I mean using whatever aspects of experience they present in their logs, to spark off and encourage them firstly to extend and deepen their learning, and secondly to take practical steps to embed this learning in their everyday practice. A third aspect - which obviously crosses over into the essays - is to help them reflect, articulate, and express this process and the knowing that accompanies it, in their formal writing. Social constructionism, systemic thinking, power-relations, and emergence appear regularly among key guiding concepts. I approach the role as one involving the student and I in a *mutual* meaning making enterprise, helping contribute towards a 'third kind of knowing' (Shotter, 2008).

Obviously this repertoire has been particularly influenced by the 'spiral' of multiple perspectives that I talked about in Chapter 3, which helps me offer a 'systemic responsiveness' to student offerings. These educational interventions might well have a multi-level form which speaks to matters of 'intention, identity, strategy, capability, behaviour, and outcomes' (Dilts, 1993) and thus, in addition to the 'double loop' learning associated with framing activities (Argyris and Schon, 1978), potentially

creates opportunities for 'triple loop' reflections which take students more deeply into questions of values and identity (Torbert and Associates, 2004). So here I'm implying that if students want to change their capability to offer leadership in a more fluid, dynamic and context related manner, they probably need to alter the way they perceive these different levels of outcomes and their relations with each other – and seek to improve the quality of alignment between them to really improve their practice. The overall intent behind this responsiveness is accordingly to presence developmental possibilities which students can exploit to improve and potentially transform their scholarship and leadership practice. This is clearly guided and energised by the philosophical quartet of 'ologies', also explored in some detail in Chapter 3, which integrates the constellation of values, beliefs and presuppositions that taps into the living energy I bring to my work. As I covered these in some detail before, I won't offer further explanation here.

3. An invitation to engage in a new language-game?

Because of the essentially *virtual* status of the communication process, getting this to work effectively is always a huge challenge because of the lack of true face-to-face dialogue in the present moment. Nevertheless the programme has achieved good scholastic results and practice based outcomes. With this in mind, another way of looking at my 'responsive repertoire' and the educational relationship that it stimulates (I talk about this as a 'development container' next), might be to see it very much as an invitation to *construct together the nature, rules, and resourcing of a new language-game* (Wittgenstein, 1958). This new meta-game of games is one that stimulates and supports a much higher level of empathy and developmental consciousness in the student-coach relationship which can rise above the virtuality hurdle. So for example coach responses that seek to 'level the playing field', invite students to fashion their own 'personal' MA experience, use propositional knowledge as a 'provocation' to conventional wisdom, encourage greater 'reflexivity', 'reframe' blocking assumptions, and so on, can encourage students to 'go on' in a more developmentally aware manner.

This is in a sense a form of modelling of a kind of leadership that is open to being influenced, and influencing the other and the wider social formation, where I seek to orient myself to the unique 'always occurring for the first time' episodes (Garfinkel, 1967) of the learning log, essay, and work background in which students perform. So in trying to resolve these orientational difficulties for myself in my 'rooting' work with students (perhaps now also to be regarded as 'routing' i.e. how to go on?), I'm offering a lead of sorts for students with their own orientational work. And so in this way, we are both engaged in ontological, as well as associated epistemological activity, together. I find some support for this in a form of coaching called 'ontological' which is based on work done by Winograd and Flores (1986) stimulated by ideas from people like Heidegger, Gadamer, Maturana, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty (Sieler, 2003). The focus here is also on triggering shifts in 'ways of being' through working with language, emotions, and 'physiology' to develop perceptions that were previously unavailable. Despite the interesting history and focus on ways of being, a closer reading suggests that this may be rather more coach-centred (I am an 'x' coach and this is what *I* do) and less inclusional and responsive than the approach I'm seeking to follow. Still I like the term 'ontological' and feel it can also be applied to my approach where language, emotions, and embodiment are central.

<center>*   *   *</center>

In an earlier paragraph I highlighted the influence my use of this responsive repertoire has on the *educational relationships* I enjoy with my students. I also used the term 'developmental container' to direct attention to what I believe this relationship is primarily about, and it is to what this might be that I turn my attention to next.

Co-creating a 'development container'
This element of my pedagogy has in many ways proved the most difficult to grasp, as well as the one offering the greatest opportunity for gaining insights into the mystery of the development process. To capture some of the richness of this phenomenon, I make use in the text below of the metaphor of a 'chrystal' to comment on six aspects or 'facets' of this powerful virtual learning space, which though invisible, conveys a real felt presence to those participating (Shotter, 2003, p 442).

The basic challenge I've faced in analysing and interpreting how the responsive repertoire works, in particular the kind and level of educational influencing I might exercise using it, is that in the textual record of logs and essays, there is very little direct evidence of the impact and meaning of these everyday and ongoing responses from the coach, to what the student is offering. It's not something we ask for in a formal way. Further, the asynchronous nature of most of the interaction, the unceasing movement each week onto yet new ideas and models, and the implicit focus of log and essay questions on explicating academic theories, works against this happening as a natural feature of student/coach interaction. Typically students will read the coach's responses to their original entry, one or two weeks later after they've already encountered and responded to further ideas – and so it takes a very determined and conscientious student to keep going back to offer feedback to the coach. It has happened from time to time with just a few students but is not something that can be counted on.

So the question is: if, apart from the 'fleeting moments' of influence I've already referred to, there aren't many obvious links between the specifics the student offers and coach responds to, what if anything do the multiple interventions offered by the coach actually achieve? Are they just 'mutterings after the fact' into the ether of the virtual world, or are they contributing to something that might be 'invisible' in the weekly cycle of logs, but nevetherless critical or at least important in the overall pedagogic process? Over the past few years I have come to believe that over time these multiple responses, though often not hitting the mark in an obvious and immediate way, do in fact make a significant contribution at the level that I've referred to as 'relationship building' and 'climate influencing'. And the challenge for me here has been to find a way of capturing and describing this largely invisible process, so I can subject it to questioning and challenge and hopefully be able to draw some justifiable conclusions as to its existence, its efficacy in development terms, and how coaches may go about establishing it with their students.

I have worked at this issue at two levels – macro and micro – and in a hermeneutical manner (Rorty, 1979). At the 'macro' level I've been imagining what the *educational 'target'* of these interventions might be, and then compared these ideas with the 'micro' findings from the logs/essays; and at the 'micro' level, I've been going through the 'blow by blow' interactions within the logs to identify the regular response patterns which I seemed to use – my 'responsive repertoire' - and compared these to my 'macro' imaginings. Having already just discussed my experience of using the 'responsive

repertoire', what follows now is my general working hypothesis based on the sense I've derived from relating it to what I've variously called the educational 'target', learning relationship, and now the 'development container'.

Log interchanges tend to be 'asynchronous' i.e. my response is read many days after students have written their log, and often after they've responded to other log questions and quite probably other topics too. So perhaps a better framing of this process might be that I speak not only to *specific* entries as they come up but also at the same time, to a kind of virtual and dynamic 'learning space' in which students and I exist within an ongoing dialogue about leadership. My responsive 'peppering' of students with regular 'showers' of supportive and provocative 'arrows' can often seem to be out of time and, as in practice they don't have time to offer a response to most of them, frustrating, redundant and perhaps even irritating. Certainly that is what my student John said he often felt – 'I wanted to go back and respond but never had the time!' Despite this initial view it has gradually dawned on me as I've reviewed my practices with a sample of students, that these multiple 'arrows' that 'support, deepen, broaden, and provoke', do in fact perform a useful and even critical educational service. Instead of a 'blow by blow' interactive model of communication – 'they say this, I respond thus' – I began to realise that these 'arrows' in sum were having an important effect at a higher relational level. While it wasn't easy to put my finger on what this was, it did seem to be a more fruitful path to go down: though I was getting only a few immediate responses to my 'interventions', my students did seem to be fully engaged, curious about what leadership might mean for them, who they wanted to become in the context of creatively living worthwhile lives, and how they might use the MA experience to take steps to get there.

Since first coming to this view some years ago, I've been alert to any signs, ideas, and feedback that might help me further clarify and develop what I for the time being have termed a 'development container'. I've also discussed this idea with several of my students. As a result of this I've been able to develop a guiding metaphor that I believe satisfactorily provides a 'macro' frame for making sense of the 'showers' of 'micro' actions directed towards influencing the quality of student education and practice improvement. I see this metaphor very much in terms of a multi-facetted chrystal which enables a variety of viewpoints as to what can happen and does happen within the space of the 'development container'. My description uses this idea of 'facets' through which different possible views can be appreciated, as the organising principle for my thoughts.

1. FACET A - a space that enables a natural creative exploration of possibilities
This view is characterised by Keat's concept of 'negative capability' - an openness to the promptings of the creative imagination 'when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.' (Keats, 1817). Here the mind, when free of the left hemisphere's demands for certainty, is seen as a vast source of potential creativity, a judgement that is now being backed up by the latest research on how mind and world influence each other (McGilchrist, 2010). A concept that for me has similar connotations is that of 'liminality', a psychological, neurological, or metaphysical subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of, or between two different, existential planes, a period of transition where normal limits to thought, self-understanding, and behavior are relaxed –and which can lead to new perspectives (Turner and Bruner, 1986). Although it comes across as less psychological, Rayner's concept of 'natural inclusion' (Rayner, 2010) also seems to me to share the ideas of flow through dynamic permeable boundaries, and possibilities for living a creative life. A final strand to this viewpoint comes from the Chinese idea of change being something that is concerned with 'the propensity/potential in the situation' to

evolve naturally, and to allow this process to play out rather than force on it external views (Julien, 2004).

2. FACET B - a space that values the potential for self organising

In this space people are expected to have a natural potential to 'know how to go on' with others and the world in which they live (Wittgenstein, 1958). Being able to self organise and take responsibility to lead oneself through life's challenges is seen as something everyone can aspire to: the emphasis here is on Foucault's view of power relations as allowing the positive shaping of identity, as against the more usual one of self monitoring against externally set norms (Foucault, 1972). An inspiring example of this comes from Ted Hughes while teaching poetry to young children – 'In these talks I assume that the latent talent for self expression in any child is immeasurable.' (Hughes, 1967, p 12). Milton Erickson's story about helping a lost horse find its way home 'I didn't know, the horse knew – all I did was keep his attention on the path', also provides a powerful metaphor for helping the other: people know at a deep level what they need/want – your job as facilitator is to help them stay on their 'path' by a very sensitive and light touch, 'following' from behind (Gordon and Meyers-Anderson, 1981, p 166). Finally from the pen of Japanese actor and author Yoshi Oida comes the story about the drama teacher who said he could teach anybody the symbolic gesture called 'looking at the moon' but added that he could only teach the movement up to the tip of your finger which points to the sky. From the tip of your finger to the moon 'is your own responsibility.' (Oida and Marshall, 1997) – thank you to Vreni, my Feldenkrais teacher for this example.

3. FACET C - a space that frees the 'body-mind' to learn

Though this view is not often noticed/commented upon in the academic world, I've found it an enormously powerful mode of learning and teaching. Most obviously in the popular approach to improving performance in a sport like tennis or golf, Gallwey's 'inner game' has helped thousands of people to improve their game, making use of what he called 'Self 2' – the natural ability of the body to tacitly/automatically notice and make small adjustments to meet improvement goals, through a synaesthesic process (Gallwey, 1974). Moshe Feldenkrais' development of his unique approach to healing the body called the Feldenkrais Method, was also based on a special kind of 'attention' during movement. For example he felt that the recapturing of a 'feeling of ease' after an injury takes time: 'The moment we do these movements for the gain of feeling better, we lose something of the inquiring mind. If I can let go of wanting to feel better and simply stay with wanting to observe whilst varying the movements around a central idea, I can understand more, and so will my body, and then the pain goes anyway....one day.' (Feldenkrais, 1977). I provide a simple video clip example of this powerful process in Appendix 2, p. 245 - *experiencing the continuous nature of the body* - showing how this can work, as my Feldenkrais teacher Vreni helps me become more aware of the folding fulcrum-like role of my pelvis, that 'reveals' the continuity between my upper and lower body. In so doing she reminds me of how good an illustration of the 'inclusionality' principle (Rayner, 2010) the Feldenkrais method provides, as here with the light touch of Vreni's hand, it reveals 'primitive reactions' which lead to new ontologically led language-games which help me know how to go on in a healthier way. Arnie Mindell's 'process psychology' approach to healing and change also uses the notion of a 'dreambody' where clients are encouraged to express themselves through their bodies, to reveal and heal not only deep seated psycho-somatic illness but important features of the 'self' (Mindell, 1982). Finally, my experiences of learning to draw and paint portraits using the 'right side of the brain' (Edwards, 1999) and singing legato (which I looked at in Chapter 3) lead to the same conclusions:

progress comes more quickly and surely when you keep the conscious left hemisphere analytical mind at bay or preoccupied with something else (McGilchrist, 2010).

4. FACET D - a space that encourages learning from the 'shadow'

Frank Farrelly's concept of 'provocative therapy' is an approach in which the therapist plays the devil's advocate, siding with the negative half of the client's ambivalence toward his/her life's goals, relationships, work and the structures within which he/she lives. The main 'weapon' is warm-hearted humor in all its varied forms: exaggeration, irony, self-deprecation, and so on, which 'call out' different behaviors like affirming self-worth, engaging in risk-taking; asserting/defending self in a realistic manner, and so on. The goal is to help clients learn necessary discriminations to respond adaptively (Farrelly, 1974). Focusing on similar goals, Australian Michael White's narrative therapy based on Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, helps clients through deconstructive questioning, to 'externalise the problem', finding alternative life stories which are 'exceptions' to the rule, to replace the dominant one that is restricting or harming them (White, 1989). He also encourages clients to create new social networks which can perform as 'witnesses' to consolidate such changes. Kegan and Lahey's more language focused approach also pays attention to what's often hidden within the ways we talk about things, and which tacitly block desired change, to help clients find new framings to reconcile these 'competing commitments' (Kegan and Lahey, 2002).

5. FACET E - a space that looks to the tacit for insights into knowing

In this space the focus is on the process of knowing. My primary example here comes from Michael Polanyi's concept of 'indwelling' which is about experiencing and living something unconsciously/tacitly without necessarily knowing beforehand where it will lead. So new values can't be consciously adopted and instead 'we submit to them by the very act of creating and adopting them' (Polanyi, 1983, p ix). Barnett's view that the university teacher is responsible for creating conditions of 'ontological uncertainty' in the learning space, I believe makes a similar point: to be able to perform effectively in a real world characterised by 'supercomplexity', students need to learn actively rather than passively receive knowledge (Barnett, 2000). In the context of creativity in art, Foucault's colleague Lyotard seems to be on the same page when he states that 'rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done' (Lyotard, 1986, p 81).

These are all ideas that I've found particularly useful in forming my own understanding of what can be happening in the spaces within the 'development container' created by the virtual interaction between student and coach. But how do my students view this place of heightened developmental consciousness? Here are some views.

6. FACET F - a space that provides the challenges you're seeking

From my students I get the impression that there are many different kinds of reflection and reflexivity, and many different kinds of resources, they can seek and acquire in this space. For example here are individual responses from a sample of my students:

- Receiving coaching as 'a form of conditional *and* unconditional regard… it anchors the experience of learning around an interactive experience… This means that the relationship steadies the buffers in terms of the quality of reflection but still respects (or so I found it) the learner's nervousness that they may not be up to the job'. When asked to explain what he meant, he offered: 'Conditional regard in the sense that if something is poor/weak and could be

improved then that feedback is given; but there is also a strong sense of unconditional regard felt in the nature of this relationship - and I think, perhaps, this is held in the space that says metaphorically speaking even though this was poor/ weak and could be improved, I (the coach) will STILL give 100% attention to this.'

- Experiencing coaching as providing that important role of 'holding up the lens' and 'acting as the catalyst for reflection'.

- Referring to the coaching relationship in terms such as 'so challenging, so wise and gives me so much material to work on, that I feel continually supported and blessed… intuitive response to directing me to papers/issues that will challenge me further… response from my tutor to my work becomes the real assignment… challenging material and challenging responses…my tutor…is the fulcrum'.

- Experiencing the 'development container' as like being in a tennis match where 'my understanding changes as the rally proceeds' and I get 'a new way of doing, a new way of thinking, and new way of being'.

- Experiencing the coach 'as a catalyst for change who respectfully and constructively triggers shifts in the coachee's way of being, to enable him or her to develop perceptions and behaviours that were previously unavailable - so enhancing resourcefulness and enabling students to have greater awareness of the choices they have in any particular situation'.

- Feeling that the Skype relationship/online discussions are 'bizarre': 'I have known Keith for a year now and never met him but at the same time feel like I am popping into a friend's house for tea; and it is this comfortable atmosphere that creates a sense of security that sets the framework to challenge very deep and meaningful issues. I have become very conscious of my academic growth and the [extra] readings that are supported by our Skype sessions. I feel that sometimes the university webpage is like a backdrop to the more intricate work that is extracted from the video chat...In general the coaching has led to no longer feeling worthless under the umbrella of academic studies and I have experienced new subjects I could excel in. There are also new questions that arise and I am not sure who they belong to, like the idea flirting in my mind of studying a PhD, but it's new and interesting'.

- Experiencing the coaching as fostering a 'climate of inquiry' where the student feels that he and the coach are taking a journey together which, though it does not have a pre-defined goal, nevertheless is one which provokes options and offers choices which help the student take the next step [know how to go on] along his own development path. The video clip - *a climate of inquiry* - and commentary on a conversation with Paul in Appendix 3, p.247, illustrates how this has evolved, and shows in the great warmth and pleasure we share, the high level of empathetic resonance and responsiveness characteristic of our work together.

If there is a common theme here I believe it's to do with the intense and unceasing but supportive level of challenge that students experience when they are 'virtually' speaking 'in the development container'. Like Peter Senge's description of inquiry practices as developed by people like Bohm and Isaacs (Senge, 1990), this can be experienced as a place where assumptions can be 'suspended', new forms of dialogue can be explored, and new framings for how to go on in more efficacious ways, can be developed.

*   *   *

The basic idea of thinking about 'influencing' as mediating/moderating the kind and depth of learning that takes place in a virtual time-space that the student-coach interactions construct over time, does seem to offer a useful way forward, and is supported by the ideas and 'findings' reported on here. Thinking of negative capability and other metaphors as constituting the frame, context, or contextual container, in which we make meaning, offers a guiding metaphor which re-introduces the mystery and uncertainty of living, and helps us peer into and make greater sense of things, and discover the effects 'of what what we do, does.' (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). What might these kinds of indicators be in my own role as online coach?

Noticing online indicators of development
As mentioned in Chapter 3, I now see 'leadership' as being very much about *framing/relating/orienting* in order to know 'how to go on' together with others (Wittgenstein, 1958) in situations which are always happening for yet another *first* time (Garfinkel, 1967). This move from seeing my role mainly as improving students abilities in *problem solving* came about when during the 'second phase' of developing my practice (Chapter 3), I started looking more closely at my online interactions with students as captured in the extensive and rich textual record of weekly learning logs and termly essays. As you will have read in that and the following three chapters, I realised that beyond the everyday problem solving level of work, there were other signs or 'glimpses' of learning in the texts, that I had engaged with, and could engage with, in assessing and supporting progress in a dynamic, in the moment and 'timely' basis.

The three main signs of development that I felt I could identify and work with, and that indictated the kind of influence I might be exercising in this virtual world, covered different spans of time: *fleeting moments* covered those momentary flashes of recognition/insight which Wittgenstein referred to as a 'primitive reaction'; the *development episode* covered the longer period of time needed for someone to transform that insight into something that was starting to influence everyday perceptions and behaviour which, following Wittgenstein's earlier lead, I referred to as a new 'language-game'; and I used the term *reflexive biography* to act as a container for the longer and more significant developments that involved ontological skills and were exercising 'formative influences' on a student's values, belief, and sense of self, and that led to developments in their situated practices. As I've already devoted a chapter to each of these ideas, here I will just summarise my findings in the context of the model of working pedagogy I'm outlining in this section.

1. Fleeting moments – *experiencing primitive reactions*
My primary claim in Chapter 4 is that the 'presencing of development possibilities' can be initiated and energised within momentary 'fleeting moments' of educational influencing brought about through the skilled, situated, and timely use of a range of verbal and text-based dialogical interventions. As argued in the text, 'these improvisatory interventions which are offered into the "space between" one response and another, are both anticipatory and suggestive'. I provided academic and practice based research to show that it's possible to use the written word to create 'psychological instruments' which can 'instruct' us in new ways of 'learning to direct [our] own mental processes' (Vygotsky, 1986, p 108), which can 'bring otherwise unarticulated aspects of our own activities into "rational-visibility" (Garfinkel, 1967), and thus render them amenable to critical discussion' (Shotter, 2008, p 61).

The three examples covered in the chapter showed that the interventions and the 'primitive reactions' (Wittgenstein, 1958) that take place in these 'fleeting moments', take a variety of forms and can be longer and complex – like my own 'presencing' example, the intervention on the importance of 'context', and 'stark choices'; or can be brief and even throwaway in nature – like 'ask for more and better'. As I concluded in that chapter, my practice of embedding my commentary/feedback within the relevant phrases of student's logs effectively transformed it into a *dialogue* of sorts leading to several possible responses. If not immediately in a learning log, they might turn up in an essay – as part of the 'development episode' level of the intervention; or even in the dissertation, forming part of a 'reflexive biography'. As I emphasised in those chapters, a key aspect of this process is to expect/hope/anticipate that one or more of the many suggestions/challenges I am making will strike a potent chord at some point, and to be receptive and responsive in supporting these.

These 'short wave' frequency indicators tell me whether I'm beginning to develop empathy with the student, help me understand what's on the student's emerging agenda, and how the student is experiencing the e learning environment, and stimulate my intuitive responsiveness.

2. Development episodes – *constructing language-games*

In Chapter 5 I build on the idea, following Wittgenstein, that 'primitive reactions' can be a precursor to the creation and evolution of new *language-games*. Here words get their meaning from *use* in the specific contexts in which a practice unfolds, showing that meaning is embedded in local fields of practice, where speaking is part of an activity or form of life. It is the particular language-game associated with the situated practice that provides the 'conversational contexting' to help the student know how to go on. So in my usage, new language-games are essentially orientational and conversational framings that enable students to know how to go on to develop new embodied capabilities through situated action. This dynamic and situated framing process is essentially a means through which people construct conversational contexts to make sense of the practice(s) in which they are involved, and to account to others for this sense making.

In my own example concerned with 'rooting', the initial 'instruction' came to me from my less than conscious mind, after a seminar in 2002: '*that's* what you're doing - searching for your roots in the future!' By 2006 this initial primitive reaction had undergone two further important changes: one was to place the rooting process in *relationship*; and the second was to locate the process in a *living present*. From this new 'developed and developing' viewpoint (Garfinkel, 1967), I was seeking to 'presence' myself in the very moment of educational interaction with others: the primitive reframe had become a more developed, embodied, and influential new language-game for me, through a process of largely tacit learning (Polanyi, 1983). The learning, developing, and performing work that I needed to transform the momentary reframing of an issue/perception in a face-to-face or virtual dialogue, into appropriate ontological (embodied) skills, had been achieved 'by the very act of creating and adopting them'. (ibid, p xi).

Accordingly the development of the kind of situated embodied knowing that I'm talking about here, is complex and not completely knowable in explicit terms: it is transformational in nature and cannot be absorbed through a 'training' process. Instead I now see it as involving the *creation of new artifacts*, a more fruitful way of looking at this kind of development process, and very much in line with the ideas of Polanyi

(1983) and Ilyenkov (1977) as well as others like Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Bourdieu (1991). To take one of Polanyi's best known examples, the blind man soon begins to regard the end of his body not as his hand but as the point of his white stick. This is not because of any real deliberate and conscious thought, but because this is how embodied change happens (Polanyi, 1983). In a similar way, more abstract frameworks like say, family therapy's 'systemic thinking' or my own 'rooting in the present' are able to extend our reach and influence well beyond our physical body, and allow us new and more complex experiences of being-in-the-world. So such artifacts, whether they be theoretical models or more practical/technical tools, are able to touch and transform our everyday practices in our social and material environments.

If we use practice theorist Helle-Valle's definition of a 'language-game' this becomes even clearer: 'practically formed communicative contexts that provide statements with meaning' (Helle-Valle, 2010, p 193), Clearly this can also be seen as a particular and very powerful form of social artifact which can serve both to change practices and, through how people account for themselves to themselves and to others, to provide evidence of such changes. All three cases and my own examples offered in Chapter 5 show that further 'indwelling' work is required for the momentary reframing of an issue/perception in a face-to-face or virtual dialogue, to stimulate the development of the ontological (embodied) skills needed for a more significant process of development and change. This longer emergent process enables students to more fully re-orient and embed the values and skills needed to deploy this different way of being and 'going on' more effectively with others. What they end up achieving is the creation of new artifacts which enable them to relate and engage in different practices and in their environments as different 'dividuals' (LiPuma in Helle-Valle, 2010).

I believe my examples in Chapter 5 provide good evidence of this phenomenon in action, and serve to provide a very useful mid term indicator of how the development process is evolving. This 'medium wave' frequency indicator works at a level that is above the everyday events, issues, and questions raised by students, and shows me whether any of my 'fleeting moment' interventions are ringing bells, and why, and what I might do to encourage the further indwelling work needed to develop detail and confidence in an emerging language-game.

3. Reflexive biographies – *developing ontological skills*
How might LiPuma's 'dividuals' become linked and dynamically integrated from time to time such that an 'individual' appears at the nexus of their different practices (Schatzki, 2001)? And further, as I ask in Chapter 6, if these other learning events can be happening in the short term, there must be a question as to what happens as a result of these many small changes when coaching continues over much longer periods of time, as in the two year MA. What I'm looking for in all this complex unfolding of primitive reactions and language-games, is for something of a higher and longer term nature, which I could use informally on an 'as I go along basis', to assess how my students' writings, and hence at least their potential capabilities or 'forms of life', are and could be developed during the programme.

Language-games can of course continue growing/altering over longer periods but as I extend the period of observation to years I prefer to think of the change process now more in *developmental* terms i.e. progressive change in the process of learning and adaptation, leading to higher levels of differentiation and organisation, as mentioned in Chapter 6. What kind of 'walking alongside' might be helpful as students confront

contestability and uncertainty in a 'mileau of dislocation' to form new embodied artifacts with which to make sense of the world? Might it be possible to use changes in these kinds of qualities as 'indicators of progress', not just in terms of academic accomplishment, but also in terms of leadership? In comparison to the 'fleeting moment' and 'development episode' materials, the more patchwork version of texts that I used to construct proxy reflexive biographies required greater engagement of the students in sense making, which I achieved in two instances. But even without this, the achievements identified in the case studies, clearly showed that formative changes influencing values and identity had taken place, and that the idea of a reflexive biography can be a useful indicator of a slower, deeper type of developmental progress leading to improvements in situated practice, and which can be assessed and supported over the longer term.

This 'long wave' frequency indicator has helped me understand what kinds of shifts in beliefs and values can be occurring over the longer term, and why; and how the student is going about influencing others in their context, working within the new language-games they've developed; and gives me ideas as to how I can support this deeper form of development.

As I conclude at the end of Chapter 4, '…we are not looking at a simple black and white, linear, "one shot" action, but a more complex, multi-levelled, and non-linear process that takes place over time…this initiation of change is also just a part of a larger creative and mediated process. In this the "provocative" presencing of developmental possibilities is going on all of the time, involving the immediate – 'fleeting moment'; the medium term – 'development episodes'; and the longer term – 'reflexive biography'. In other words the development process is not just about a magic moment every now and again: everything I'm doing is about preparing the ground, seeding the moment, supporting and extending the language-game, and helping students integrate and embed their learning about "how to go on with others" so that it becomes an ontological, identity influencing process.

These indicators certainly have helped me make sense of how students might be learning and developing, how my practice might be influencing these changes, and what I might do to improve my educational practice. But as mentioned earlier, I'd not yet finished with the textual record in the online system, and was still wondering how I could extract more value from these rich materials. The next section looks briefly at a different set of potential indicators of development which I've started calling 'criteria of progression'. Though this idea is still very much a work in progress in terms of researched validity, I realise I've been using these ideas for some time in a tacit way to guide my own efforts to improve the service I'm offering – and so worth at least mentioning in the context of exploring a personal working pedagogy.

4. 'Ontological' indicators of progression – *glimpses into the dynamics?*
As mentioned in Chapter 3, I got this idea at the annual exam board for the Centre where the newly appointed external examiner felt uncomfortable with the 'lack of progression' of student's *marks* over the 18 month period of study prior to the dissertation. As a result I began to think in more detail about the different *qualities/behaviours* I was hoping to encourage in students through use of my 'responsive repertoire': would any of these represent progression in valid ways, and could the language being used in logs and essays show this in some way? The standard academic criteria focus on scholarly aspects, and take little account of other qualities

that are important in a situated practice like leadership roles like e.g. emotional maturity, strategic insight, dealing with complexity and so on.

I decided to see if I could track the development of what I thought of as 'ontological skills' which enable students to operate effectively under modern conditions of 'supercomplexity', requiring them to grapple with epistemic and ontological uncertainty and dislocation (Barnett, 2000). As mentioned earlier, there is support for this view in work reported by Bullough and Pinnegar: 'The consideration of ontology, of one's being in and toward the world, should be a central feature of any discussion of the value of self-study research' (2004, p 319). Ontological skills that are more about *becoming* rather than knowing, can also be linked to Torbert's 'leadership maturity framework' with its seven levels of action-logic or sense making, where he and his colleagues make specific use of the analysis of writing style to locate and 'centre' a person within their model.(Torbert and Associates, 2004).

And I was also encouraged by the practice-based research work of Furlong and Onacea discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the 'capacity to act', a practical wisdom, 'which involves the development of tacit knowledge and the ethical, interactional and critical dimensions of practice and is characterised the 'enhancement of (ethically) authentic action rather than the accumulation of (theoretical) knowledge' (Furlong and Onacea, 2005, p. 14). Though I concluded that knowledge about the most important aspects of practice-based research, was hidden below the surface, embedded in 'the tacit dimension' (Polanyi, 1983), I began to believe that it would be possible to identify and use indicators like these to track progress in a student's thinking and action. And while it might be more effective to hold focused face to face and/or telephonic discussions to assess this, or to use a tailored version of e.g. the Questionmark online assessment tool, I also wanted something that was alive and embedded in the dialogue that I could use in the moment.

What if a careful reading of what students are writing each week in their logs and essays, in a kind of 'virtual dialogue' with the coach, could help re-orient a coach to where students are coming from, are, and where they are heading to in their ontological development? If this could be done, it would enable a more formative and timely version of responsiveness from the coach, and these other methods could then be used to run checks from time to time on the validity of such ongoing more intuitive assessments. As I comment briefly in the three reflexive biographies' in Chapter 6, these kinds of indicators do seem to have some purchase on what is happening developmentally in 'ontological' terms, so I believe it remains an interesting proposition but one that for the moment runs beyond this inquiry. So here I just offer in Appendix 8 in Chapter 3 a summary of the results of my analysis and thinking to date about a set of potential 'ontological skills' that I believe could be associated with a more *inclusional* 'know how to go on' approach to leadership involving being more *resilient, receptive, rigorous, relational, responsive,* and *reflexive* – a potential framework (of 6 R's) against which to assess the important characteristics of ontological development and how a coach might adjust his/her responsiveness to help students develop such capabilities.

<center>*   *   *</center>

In this last three sections I've outlined how the three main organic 'cogs' work together to help create and support the primary 'presencing' process. But of course these three

activities and the emergent presencing activity, aren't happening in a vacuum. For instance, I've shown how the kinds of measures the university use to assess learning and progress in capability, can have marked effects on what is focused on. However, despite the rather academic 'studies' title of the MA, I've always worked as though the focus was on developing embodied practice as well, and so have never been satisfied with the formal marking scheme. The indicators I've been exploring in the thesis and summarised here, do demonstrate I think, that it's necessary to have broader and more varied criteria for a situated practice like leadership, and also that it's possible to discern these in a mainly online virtual programme. Of course using such indicators doesn't just effect how formal marks are determined but do also extend their influence into the wider educational system in which students work. And it is to this notion of an 'educational social formation' which influences and is influenced by coach-student activities, that I turn to next.

Influencing the educational social formation

First mentioned in Chapter 3, I'm coming back to this idea here in this last chapter because it is effectively what I might call the 'macro' context for the 'meso' context of my 'development container', which correspondingly forms the 'micro' context for 'presencing developmental possibilities'. And as such, it is something that I've discovered, exercises various influences on the effectiveness of the educational process, and so is an important dimension of the pedagogic structure of the programme. To put it in simple terms, it plays a significant role in how I/we assess and reach judgements as to the limits of discretionary space open to us, and the rightness of what we are doing as educators/teachers/coaches and what our students then do.

As I've already explored the main actions I've taken in this regard in Chapter 3, I will restrict myself here to reviewing the impact I believe they've had on how the programme is understood by academic staff, coaches, and students, and on important aspects of programme structure and process. As many of these initiatives were documented at the time in one form or another and these original background documents appear in the appendices to Chapter 3, I will just remind you of these when they are referred to. I will talk about the potential impact of these actions in three groupings covering philosophy, structure, and process.

1. Philosophy – *from an emphasis on 'studies' to 'practice'*

In my opening paragraph in a 2006 paper to Director Donna Ladkin on how we should treat 'research methods' in the MA (Appendix 3 in Chapter 3), I wrote: 'We both have ambitions to create a higher degree pedagogy and programme that aspires to the ideal of "close learning" and is therefore particularly suited to supporting inquiry and learning from practice. A necessary part of such an approach is to view students as 'practitioner-researchers': experienced people who become better at what they do, in this case leadership, through studying their own and others' practices, as much as by learning from the ideas of the Academy'. Some three years later in my 2009 paper to MA Director Scott Taylor on a re-design of Phase 1 of the programme (Appendix 9 in Chapter 3) I return to this idea and affirm 'that the basic purpose of the MA programme is the improvement of *leadership practice* through effectively creating a "reflexive theatre of learning" at or within the students' local contexts of performance through creating fruitful conditions for "close learning"'.

I think it's clear from this that counter to the 'studies' emphasis implicit in the title of the programme, and the predominant focus of the university on 'propositional' knowledge, I've been seeking to persuade the Centre to adopt a stronger *practice* orientation, with academic 'theory' seen more as a *provocation* to learning from practice than as the preferred way to look at and do things A quick skim through the 2009 paper on redesigning Phase 1 with this in mind, reveals a range of supporting illustration and evidence as to what I mean by this and how we might go about achieving it, including exposure to the three 'domains of *literature, self awareness,* and *practice.* While there has not been a wholesale acceptance of all the implications of this philosophy, there is plenty of evidence in the new format of Phase 1 and the nature of learning log and essay questions in this and subsequent phases, to show that this is now more acknowledged as a central aspect of the programme.

In addition to this proposed greater emphasis on practice and work based learning, I have also sought to bring a more *formative* emphasis to our approach to assessment against the summative approach that in the end is used to decide how students have done. The detailed arguments are contained within the paper I submitted to the Centre's 'teaching review group' in 2008 (see appendix 5 in Chapter 3), but to give you a flavour of the strategic nature of the argument I offered, here is a scene setting quote from that paper:

> '…Though the benefits of adopting formative methods are probably no longer in dispute, this is not an approach that can just be "tacked onto" existing systems and cultures. Instead we are talking about a "second order" level of change in that not only will teachers/facilitators of learning have to alter the way they look at their educational project and pedagogic philosophy; they will also have to adapt the roles they take up, develop the practical skills that are required to work in this way, and embed these naturally in their teaching/facilitation practices. And for this to be more than an isolated and short term change, these changed methods will also need to find support within the broader strategic, commercial, and educational disciplines being followed by the institution – in our case the new business school.'

I then went on to talk through a range of operational level 'devices' we use/could use to implement such an approach like questioning, feedback though marking, peer and self assessment, and formative use of summative tests identified by Black et al (2003) amongst others; and regarding the last mentioned, exposed to critical review one of my own devices which is offering 'more informal and fragmentary feedback in the body of the essay texts themselves. These take the form of questions, supportive comments, grumbles, offering further resources, challenges, suggesting experimentation and action, etc, and seem to focus more on what I see as their broader developmental agenda as leaders.'

Again, while this was discussed by the group, there's been no formal acknowledgement or obvious further development of this proposal by the academic staff in the Centre, though it has, through the earlier paper I wrote on grading essays which is infused with this idea, influenced several of the coaches who make use of it in their work with students. But being realistic about things, I believe the greatest effect has been to give me the discretionary space to allow me to adopt a much stronger formative focus in my own coaching style – both in the roles of development facilitator and examiner - without too much resistance from the Centre. This freedom has not only influenced the

development process but also enabled me to make a stronger case to academic examiners to appreciate the practice and performativity dimensions in dissertations, and grade these aspects more positively.

2. Structure - *towards a more integrated approach to 'teaching' and 'research'*

At the end of 18 months of directed study, students have 6 months in which to do a research based dissertation, with the last phase, Phase 7 being devoted to research methods. After a couple of years of coaching experience, I proposed in the 2006 paper to Donna Ladkin referred to above, that we treat research and research methods as an integral part of the programme, and not something tacked on at the very end just before students started their dissertations. My reasons for this were straightforward:

> 'Providing a large amount of detailed information on research philosophy and methods right at the end of the programme in Phase 7 doesn't seem to be an effective way of nurturing these thinking and doing skills which take some time to develop. As things stand, students have to learn to use the methods *as* they do the dissertation, which doesn't seem sensible if we are looking for quality work. It would be better if they were practicing these skills in some way throughout the 18 months before the in depth research. (Appendix 1 in Chapter 3)

Straightforward, perhaps obvious, but nonetheless going against mainstream thinking where subjects like 'research methods' are usually seen in bounded terms so they can be scheduled separately and taught by specialists. The detailed argument and initial proposals for implementing this approach appear in the paper in Appendix 3 in Chapter 3. Though the MA Director at that time reacted positively to the ideas, no action was taken on the proposal till two years later when I was asked by the current MA Director to re-design the Phase 1 module in 2008. In the new design first experienced by the 08-10 Cohort, the research mindset and its importance to learning about leadership, was featured very early on, together with an introduction to the uses and pitfalls of one such method i.e. interviewing. While this more integrated approach has had the full support of the MA Director, it's certainly not in any way yet a central plank of the programme: in the new structure of the MA we still end up with 'research methods' being offered right at the very end of the directed programme, this time cutting deeply into the usual time allowed for the dissertation – so really a worse position despite acceptance of the basic point. Such is the irony of organisational life!

As with my attempts to influence the philosophy of the programme, my intention to alter the structure of the programme to suit a more broadly-based educational process, has not yet been met by any real practical success at the level of the programme as a whole. Again the main beneficiary of this attempt to influence the social formation has been my own students, as I have been able to follow this line of thinking in how I've introduced the research mindset and relevant research methods as part of the tailoring I provide for individual students, in responding to what they're offering me in the learning logs. For example I often introduce ideas and tools from 'action research' fairly early on as I've found that students generally find such methods of inquiry of immediate use in their ongoing studies. And I also make a point from the very beginning to highlight potential areas/issues arising in their logs which could contribute towards potential topics for their dissertations.

3. Process - *creating a formative 'dialogue' about practice*
While philosophy and structure are 'high profile' aspects of the programme, and therefore potentially much harder to influence, the educational processes used within each coach/student relationship by their very nature operate below the critical 'panoptical' gaze of the Centre. This discretionary 'space' for local variation that has already been alluded to in the previous two sections, is even greater here. Though there is some central oversight particularly of the summative aspects of such processes, there is much greater freedom for the central educational relationship between coach and student to evolve in ways which suit the needs of each student. I will review briefly three of my interventions in this area – they have already been commented on in Chapter 3 - which I believe have exploited this space for the benefit of students, particularly in fostering a more dialogic and formative feel within the virtual coaching relationship.

- *Personalising the development experience*
  While my other attempts to influence thinking were targeted on the programme as a whole, this intervention was very clearly focused on improving the experience of individual students. Because there is less detailed surveillance and control by the Centre, each coach has the potential to vary the scope and kind of contribution they make as well as when and how they make these. This can allow coaches for example to offer more/less face-to-face/telephonic support, to change the mode of interaction to suit student preferences. They can also vary the timing of introducing certain topics/themes against the fixed schedule of the formal programme, offer a wide range of additional materials relating to individual students questions/interests, focus on particular angles/issues of study and/or work, use e mail exchanges to explore something in more depth, and so on. Through varying this 'mix' in response to student abilities and needs, it becomes possible to personally tailor the MA experience to each individual, to a significant degree. Other coaches do offer extra materials, but what I've found is critical here, is that this extra material is not just further input to an already dense syllabus but is 'called forth' by the particular issue and context the student is engaged with. For example as you'll have read in Chapter 4, my student Ian showed an immediate interest in the concept of 'context' and by introducing him to further relevant ideas in this area, I was able to help him progress rapidly along a path which was to significantly influence his development as a leader.

- *'Conversationalising' feedback practices*
  Having emphasized the importance of dialogue in meaning making, learning, and generating valid knowledge, particularly in Chapter 2, I struggled with the contradiction between intention and actuality with the online programme based mainly on writing and text. I was also finding it tricky and time consuming to write the usual end of essay summaries required, and discovered that students often found it difficult to understand what I meant in these – so a thoroughly unsatisfactory situation! What I found helped through experimentation was my offering of a kind of 'stream of consciousness' commentary as I read through the log or essay, of what was going through my mind as I read what the student had written. These were in the moment responses to e.g. what questions and ideas sprang to mind, how convincing was the logic, was there adequate support for claims, what other material might be helpful here, and so on? Using an idea I'd originally got from Judi Marshall, a professor at Bath, I started embedding these passing thoughts right in the student's text where they arose - in a different font colour/highlighted so easy to

recognise – so that their text provided the immediate local context for my remarks. I thought this would make it easier for students to make sense of what I was thinking/saying and this certainly seemed to be the case when I checked the idea out afterwards with several students. In several cases I discovered that students actually imagined me 'talking' with them when they read the comments – so despite being asynchronous, these were being experienced as more 'conversational' in impact! In working this way I also found it was much easier to frame this more episodic and pointed feedback as more dialogical and formative in nature than the monological end of essay summaries.

- *'Liberalising' marking practices*
There is a formal set of criteria the university has established for marking graded work like formal essays, covering such things as structure, logic of argumentation, and style which we as a group of five coaches and Director did review on a couple of occasions when we looked at our marking practices and standards. Though these did help a little, I felt that the marking process was problematic: it was not adequately defined or well understood, and despite the received wisdom about the validity of marks and marking, I felt the marking standards and marks awarded were much more subjective and susceptible to individual whim than generally accepted. For example in one blind marking exercise with other coaches, our ratings for one essay varied from a near A to a fail! In addition, as you will suspect, I was also troubled by the lack of attention on the 'practice' aspects of the programme. To deal with the tensions I experienced when assessing and grading formal essays, I decided to develop a more detailed marking schema and offered this in a paper to the coaching group in 2007 (the full paper appears in Appendix 4 in Chapter 3). The approach has been debated to some extent within the coaching group and is being used by several as a guide to themselves and their students. Influenced by my learning about formative and summative feedback discussed earlier, I also resolved that while I would do my best to meet the summative requirements of formal essay grading, my emphasis would be on the more formative aspects in my feedback to students: while gaining a degree was a necessary requirement, I felt the programme was more about supporting the development of effective practice in the 'real' world.

*   *   *

In contrast to my attempts to influence the philosophy and structure of the programme, I believe my efforts at this less visible and more local level have been better rewarded. Again the main beneficiaries of these attempts to influence the social formation have been my own students, but other coaches have been encouraged to follow their own ideas in this regard to a greater extent than previously. So in summary I feel that through these various initiatives I can claim to have exercised some positive influence on the nature of the primarily academic educational climate we all work in, which has certainly given me more scope and encouragement to work in ways which have been more supportive of student development both scholastically and in terms of improving their leadership practice.

As endnotes to this section I offer two encouraging examples, one from my Director and one regarding a current student who is in his first year of the programme:
1. I alluded in the second paragraph to this chapter that my MA Director had poured cold water on my claim that I had influenced the social context of the MA - just 'tilting at windmills'! Subsequent discussion on this point reveals that

on the contrary, he very much supports my mission but is following an alternative more 'academic' strategy: 'I don't really think you're tilting at windmills with this work, thinking, and writing. I'm absolutely clear that the vast majority…of what goes on in universities is completely opposed to the way you think and practise…So I'm fully in support of what you're doing, writing, thinking, and saying – you're coming at it from a different angle to the one I think will be fruitful'. Furthermore he is persuaded that I meet Habermas' criteria of social validity (1984) e.g. ' I 'believe' that you are profoundly committed to a particular form of learning, which you in turn believe is marginal and/or neglected, and I 'think' that you are very uncomfortable with the implications of modernism as they are manifest in education…I trust you, I really enjoy working with you, and I suspect that you seek coherence between what you believe and what you do…If that's authenticity, then you've got it.' That's good enough for me! (see e mail correspondence in Appendix 4)

2. In Appendix 5 to this chapter I include my grading feedback to one of my students, a teacher and choreographer, who happens to suffer from dyslexia and who despite achieving distinctions in his dancing education, has never before got good grades in his academic work. In this feedback you will see that he's already reached a standard of work that is encouraging me to accelerate his studies. As a result of this, in the Skype discussion we had about his grading, we've agreed that he will engage in a special personal study of research methods which I will devise for him, alongside his other MA work. We've also framed a research topic which he's interested in – a self study of entrepreneurship – so he can immediately start using his research tools to generate research 'field notes' which he could eventually use in his dissertation. So it seems that 'I've got my way' with one student if not the Centre! And this will provide very useful information on the challenges and benefits of more systematically adopting this idea of spreading research methods across the programme in future years. So, as they say, there is more than one way of skinning a cat!

*   *   *

So this now concludes the argument I've been exploring in this thesis about my 'online coaching pedagogy of presencing', showing how the various elements come together to help me make the contribution to helping students develop their scholarly and leaderly practices. However, at the very outset of this final chapter I highlighted again the several barriers to learning that an online programme in higher education, devoted to a situated practice like leadership, is likely to suffer from. Now that I've outlined the key features of my working pedagogy, and the educational social formation in which it operates, I'd like to show how this has helped me and my students deal with these in ways which have exploited what Ladkin et al called the 'paradoxical possibilities' of the MA. (Ladkin et al, 2009).

EXPLOITING 'PARADOXICAL POSSIBILITIES'?
In the Introduction I identified six barriers to learning that distance methods are considered to suffer from. Based on the preliminary findings in an earlier piece of research carried out by Ladkin et al, and further inquiries made by myself over a much longer period, I realised that contrary to expectation, the performance of students on the MA in Leadership Studies did not appear to be suffering as much from these drawbacks

as might be expected – in fact quite often to the contrary. Instead, good and even startling results were being achieved. Ladkin et al referred to these situations as being 'paradoxical possibilities' in the sense that this should not have been happening but was, leaving us with the pedagogical question – how might this have come about? Now that I've laid out my argument over seven chapters and summarised the elements of a pedagogy which I believe successfully addresses these barriers, let me offer some possible explanations of this phenomenon. In this I treat each barrier and its 'remedy' on its own for clarity's sake but of course in real life there will undoubtedly be cross-over 'knock on' effects which serve to amplify certain aspects of the process.

Transforming 'distance' into an advantage: the Ladkin et al article claimed that with appropriate support from the coach it seemed that 'the web-based delivery of course materials…enables participants to experiment with new theoretical ideas almost immediately within their workplaces' (2009, p 194). Though this didn't apply to all students, this unexpected outcome has been influenced by the 'close learning' stance adopted by certain coaches including myself. In this approach we see the ideal form of learning as that occurring close to the workplace where it can be immediately applied and feedback attended to. This embryonic form of action inquiry effectively converts propositional knowledge into conceptual fuel for experimentation and inquiry into improved practice. This delivers the incalculable benefit of the almost automatic tacit contextualisation of these management/leadership 'tools', thus closing the 'transfer' gap that so limits the outcomes of conventional training initiatives.

Making a virtue of 'packaged' knowledge provision: the Ladkin et al article also claimed that 'the routine of receiving weekly "packages" of material to read and respond to, served in itself to demonstrate the contingent nature of 'truth' within the leadership field; and further that this process 'seemed able to combine both rigidity and flexibility in such a way that participants learned how to exercise choice and discernment about how they engaged with course materials and similarly encouraged their critical engagement.' (2009, p 194) While this seems a surprising outcome, students have reported over the years that the sheer weight of reading and exercises each week forced them to make choices about what they devoted time to, and in this they were helped by a flexible and generous attitude amongst coaching staff to overruns and missed deadlines, as well as active help in selecting those parts of the syllabus that were either central or of particular value to a particular student.

Overcoming the challenge of 'asynchronicity': students have the freedom to complete their log entries at any time and the mainly written responses from the coach and any subsequent interactions can occur at times from as little as a few hours to several weeks after the initial learning log has been submitted by the student. Yet it seems that when students read the materials and the coach then responds, these time and location gaps do not seem to cause the communication difficulties one might expect. Instead it seems that the student and coach are able to read these textual messages as though they were in some kind of living 'present' within an ongoing conversation between coach and student. Among the activities that encourage this are a more conversational style involving the embedding of coach feedback directly in students' texts, both in essays and logs, which in a sense calls forth a dialogic reading of the interchanges. The other and probably more important factor is the creation over time of a learning relationship or what I've called a 'development container' which appears to overcome the usual effects of asynchronous exchanges. One extreme case was a foreign-based student (who achieved a distinction grade in his dissertation) who was habitually so late with his learning logs that I generally ended up responding to them *after* the phase had ended.

Despite this he told me several times how valuable he found my responses and this was often evident in his essays.

'Levelling' the knowledge hierarchy: while there is still the all powerful presence of expert knowledge issuing from the university in the form of programme material, key academic articles and professorial comments, it appears that the seeming heavy hand of a distantly located expertise can be experienced by students as being offered on a more level playing field. In this, propositional knowledge can be experienced more as challenges to conventional wisdom and 'common sense' rather than words from on high. The more 'side by side' approach offered by the coach, where both look at the academic materials together, encourages a more questioning attitude towards the theories and models on offer rather than as knowing they should be subscribing to. Instead this expert material can be treated as a form of 'provocation' to how students are framing their experiences and unexamined common sense views, leading to more informed learning outcomes.

Closing the transfer gap between new cognition and performance: the university's focus on the (re)production of primarily propositional knowledge that constitutes the knowledge base of the MA programme, and the generally summative approach to the grading process, leads one to expect that the learning and knowing achieved by students would be largely of a cognitive nature. But the more complex and multi-level nature of learning and knowing that is demonstrated, often leading to the development of new ontological skills and leadership practices suggests otherwise. One factor that supports this more transformational kind of knowing is the persistent 'presencing of development possibilities' by coaches and their students where the focus is on embodying the ontological skills needed to influence others and their contexts of performance.

Reducing discontinuity between theory and practice: though the programme design and role of the coaches on the MA is to encourage students to seek connections between the domains of theory and practice, theoretical considerations dominate in the university, and the students as practitioners of leadership, are dominated at work by matters of immediate practicality, with little bridging work generally taking place. However, from a natural inclusion point of view (Rayner, 2010) this 'connectionist' perspective still takes for granted and perpetuates a false dichotomy between theory and practice. What seems to help students is when the coach instead seeks to reveal *what already exists* in the dynamic flow of different kinds of knowledge between what Rayner would call different 'local neighbourhoods'. This more even-handed and revelatory approach which also seeks a better balance between left and right hemisphere views of knowing (McGilchrist, 2010) creates a more liberalising atmosphere in which students are encouraged to pay attention to and value the various contradictory feelings and knowings they experience while grappling with the dilemmas of leadership as they progress through the programme.

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

The pedagogical relationships developed over the past seven years, have enabled students to surmount these barriers and achieve worthwhile outcomes both in academic as well as practical terms. In so doing I believe these outcomes substantiate my overall claim: an inclusional and ontological form of coaching pedagogy which embodies 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' as the 'focal' goal

of a range of educational interactions operating at a 'subsidiary' level, enables students studying on an online higher degree programme, to improve both their scholarship and *practice*. But there is more that can be done, and in the next section I adopt a more self-critical mode of appreciation, in order to subject my personal pedagogy to a more rigorous and forward looking critique, but still one that asks readers to judge my work in terms of the framework of meaning that I've been developing throughout this work (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THIS PEDAGOGY - KEY PERSPECTIVES

At the end of my scan of the relevant research fields circumscribing my own research in Chapter 2, I identified a range of areas which I hoped had and would, continue to inform and enliven my own ongoing research and the writing of this thesis. These related to issues like the importance of 'tacit knowledge', the possibility of 'conversational realities', and the educational benefits to be gained from work-based learning. At the conclusion of this work of writing I believe that these ideas have undoubtedly influenced my working pedagogy and how I understand and engage in it. But against an ideal 'what ought to be' version of my pedagogy which I now might be in a position to devise, there is more to be gained, in terms of structure, process and performance. And so now right at the end of my research story, it's to these aspects that I briefly turn so I can clarify and affirm implications raised in this inquiry regarding ways in which higher education might more fruitfully frame, resource, develop and assess programmes that focus on improving capability in situated practices. I've arranged these in seven themes which address the four 'ologies' reviewed in Chapter 3, which I'd like to put forward as design criteria to inform higher education programmes that seek to develop situated practices, particularly those that are offered online. I will look at each of these in turn, clarifying what I mean, and why and how I believe they should be exemplars for future action based research of this kind.

1. An axiology based on 'natural inclusion'

Given my antipathy towards what I see as unnecessary 'splitting' and arbitrary punctuations that permeate the academic domain, I look first for a macro frame which I can use as the background 'hustle and bustle' (Wittgenstein, 1958) in which the more contained activity that I wish to research, can be seen to take place. Until I came across Rayner's 'natural inclusion', I was looking to 'conversation' to provide this background frame as it plays such a central role in human activity, and provides the 'water' in which we human 'fish' make our way through life. But the primary focus tends to be on language. While this is a very exciting area, it can limit what we notice, over emphasising the metaphor of text, backgrounding influences from the physical body and natural/built environments, and ignoring the key role that energic relations play in our lives (Vasilyuk, 1991). For these reasons I think it would be more fruitful to adopt *natural inclusion* as the fundamental macro frame to attend to, treat, and devise more fluid, flowing, and 'revelatory' approaches to the multiple splits/divides permeating the researching, teaching, development, and performing of leadership in the 'field of practices' in which it's located. As a receptive, dynamic, relational understanding of space and boundaries which recognises space as a continuous, intangible presence and where 'our boundaries are energetic interfacings that make us distinct, as natural flow-forms, but not discrete' (Rayner, 2010, p 9), it offers a fluid, free flowing and dynamic 'axiological' background for this kind of work. I use the term 'axiological' here because for me this framework with it's focus on co-creation and collaborative relations, seems to me to hold dear the idea of 'human flourishing' even if only implicitly, as the

fundamental purpose of our working and living together, which many in the field of action research at least, feel strongly about (Heron and Reason, 1997).

As Chapter 3 will have shown, my own axiology has been very much bound up with values to do with e.g. 'creating new knowing', 'carrying the word', and 'presencing developmental possibilities', against a background where I've sought to downplay the conventional idea of the lone individual. Instead I've been looking more to ideas from systemic thinking and practice theory with 'individual' being something that occurs at the nexus of various relations. In this view I saw my role in a self-organising 'connectionist' or 'enactive' frame (Varela and Dupuy, 1992) offering interventions that I thought might cast useful new light by offering new 'connections' to help students and clients make good their intentions. Moving across to the 'natural inclusional' frame in 2010 felt very natural offering me instead the option of 'revealing continuity' as an outcome of my 'presencing' activity. And this is very much the overview I'd recommend for future studies of situated practices, as it offers both the practitioner and researcher the greatest scope for expressing and living out their values unencumbered by artificial boundaries – but of course with the added responsibility to account personally for not only the 'what' and the 'why' aspects, but also those to do with the 'what what they do, does'.

2. An ontology based on 'practice'
Given the fluidity and dynamism of the macro frame of *natural inclusion*, there is a need to find ways of temporarily 'punctuating' (Bateson, 1973) interactional flows so that we can focus on something less fluid, *but* in a way which doesn't immediately reduce us looking again at just the 'individual' trying to assess what 'skills' they may be using, as the product of our inquiry. Here I see 'practice' as providing an appropriate focus, and 'practice theory' the vocabulary, a 'way of talking', that could help us communicate with and learn from each other about the 'what' – the situated performance/practice - we are trying to research and improve. Many philosophical approaches like phenomenology, pragmatism, and the late Wittgenstein regard 'practice', in the sense of bodily interaction with environment mediated by artifacts, as primary in comparison with cognition and knowledge. There is no opposition between persons and 'world', so 'practice' is seen to offer a solution to the dualism of subject and object, mind and body, and so on (Miettenen et al, 2009). As Dewey remarked 'We are at root practical beings, beings engaged in exercise. This practice constitutes at first both self and the world of reality. There is no distinction' (1958, p 154). This approach also avoids the challenge of distinguishing between 'agency' and 'structure': through actions, structures are both reproduced and transformed. This is a line of thinking adopted by many such as G H Mead with his idea of conversation as a continuous process of gesture and response (G H Mead, 1934), Goffman in his work on 'frame analysis' (Goffman, 1974), Bourdieu with 'habitus' (1977), the CMM theorists Pearce and Cronen (1980), and the modern wave of 'practice theorists' like Schatzki (2001).

My first move to this kind of ontological framing came in 2004 when I started talking about having a 'becoming' ontology where I saw myself constituting myself in relations with others as I sought to help them develop. But it was only much later when I came across 'practice theory' proper in the work of Schatzki et al (2001), with its non-dualism, and Shotter's three level framing involving 'background', 'exchange' and 'instruction', that I realised that this would help me work with the basic orientating process initiated by Wittgenstein's inquiry about 'knowing how to go on' (Shotter,

2008). So I've come rather late into this way of thinking about ontology but can now appreciate how it offers a way of seeing and a way of talking about what I'm seeing, that militates against context-stripped knowing, allows understanding to go beyond the closed boundary around the lone individual, and makes it possible to see how Polanyi's idea of a 'hierarchy of ontology' can offer a never ending journey of increasing 'achievement'. (Takaki, 2010).

3. An epistemology based on 'conversational realities'
The 'punctuation' of *practice* encourages one to look not at the lone individual but how individuals interact with each other using 'instructions' in 'exchanges' of various kinds within the 'background' situation, in order both to resolve 'framing' questions of knowing how to go on, as well as 'solving' questions to do with problems (Schon, 1983). Given the macro context of natural inclusion these interactions can include the sensory influences and effects of all artifacts that transform the human experience, like the natural and built environment, technology, and energic and bodily relations, as well as that of languaging in all its modalities (Burkitt, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986). But how then to assess and agree what the 'truth' of any claims in such situations of practice might be? In contrast to the knowing *that* (theoretical) and knowing *how* (technical) basis usually adopted for validation work (Ryle, 1949), I feel more committed to a 'knowing-in-practice-that-is-held-in-common', what Shotter calls a 'third kind of knowing'. This is seen to be embodied in the conversational background to our lives, and which is what is agreed in dialogically structured interactions (Bahktin, 1981) between persons *in* that situation; a knowing *from,* an embodied form of practical-moral knowing (Bernstein, 1983), where people influence each other in their *being* (Shotter, 2008).

As you will have noticed I've made wide reference to this body of ideas so admirably synthesised by Shotter (ibid), and have in the various video clips offered in the text, sought to provide evidence of such a third kind of knowing between students and myself. But much of this has been done after the fact in a 'reflecting back' mode, and so while very useful for my research, has not in fact met the 'timely' criterion I seek i.e. offering something I could have used to improve my practice in the moment. So an obvious area to consider for future action would be to create conditions for such dialogues to take place on a more systematic and regular basis, and for video clips from these to be reviewed with students on a timely basis, so that the full sensory range of verbal and non-verbal communications could be noticed, appreciated, and exploited.

The next four points are all concerned with **methodology** and ways of making visible and making sense of the richness and uniqueness of momentary embodied experiences.

4. 'Living' educational theory: a methodology for researching *while* improving situated practice needs to provide practitioner-researchers with the capacity to notice, punctuate, and interpret the dynamic flow of momentary, relational, and embodied experiences that constitute our everyday reality. Further it needs to enable such researchers to understand the value-based lenses they are using to do this noticing, punctuating, interpreting, and so on, and to be able to account for their (the values) influence on any claims they make i.e. account for their own 'fingerprints' that are all over the 'evidence'! To me this means that we should be using an open and dynamic approach to 'action' and 'research' – like that offered by *living educational theory* (Whitehead, 2005) - which allows us to attend to and appreciate the values-based, living, embodied, and emergent nature of our own thinking and behaviour, and those

around us, as we take part in, and through 'joint action' (Shotter, 2008) mutually constitute the educational practices we are involved in.

As explored in Chapter 3, my own version of a critical auto-ethnographic approach to my action and research on the influence of that action, has felt to be very much a part of this 'living' take on lived experience, and has helped me become more confident in and committed to the living values I became aware of as they emerged in my practice with others. It has also helped me to become more attuned to the possibility of using 'living' indicators of development – referred to here as 'criteria of progression' – which could act as a primary basis for ongoing formative assessment that looks at knowing and development as an ontological rather than epistemological achievement. Again, looking to the future, I would encourage a greater use of ethnographic methods which help the observer to get in really close to the action/practice they're involved in/researching, while still having a means of deciphering and articulating their influence on what is happening, and how this deciphering is being further influenced by their own embodied values as expressed in that situation and time.

5. 'Tacit knowing': to give researchers the opportunity to notice and work with this 'dynamic flow of momentary, relational, and embodied experiences that constitute our everyday reality**',** we need to stay open, sensitive, and responsive to *all kinds of knowing* including knowledge that is tacit, marginalised or, like that involved in local contextualising and embodiment of tools/artifacts, hidden in the background 'hustle and bustle', and use these as resources for the inquiry. Given that much of this knowing is if not invisible then 'rationally invisible' (Garfinkel, 1967) we also need to make use of a wide variety of *multi-media* methods to both capture and make available for inquiry, and then to present, rich 'living' evidence of our understanding(s) of the educational influences exercised on our own knowing, the knowing of others, and the educational social formation in which we perform and practice. This will allow us to see and interpret the values-linked 'living energy' that enlivens knowing in relations, which though generally ignored (Vasilyuk, 1991), can in video clips be seen to be in continuous play as we seek to engage others in fruitful conversation.

Though I've long been fascinated by the tacit aspects of knowing, first coming to these via sport, it took me longer to become aware of the power of 'indwelling' (Polanyi, 1983) to help me form artifacts which extended my body more deeply into the world of experience e.g. systemic thinking, which allowed me to see and influence this world in new ways. While I was able to notice and support these processes in me I found it much harder to do so for others especially in the virtual world of online learning, until my first experiences of the use of video in 2008 with Jack Whitehead and one of my students. These opened my eyes to what is possible and the fruits of this new way of capturing, noticing and empathetically resonating to the energy currents and multi-sensory information flowing between people, can be seen throughout this thesis. It has completely altered the way I now think about 'data gathering', 'analysis', and 'presentation', and would form a key part of any future research I undertake.

6. A 'rounded' pedagogy
In his book The Master and his Emissary McGilchrist (2010) stresses the dangers our society faces in continuing to allow 'aloof' left hemisphere thinking to dominate how we relate to our world, and argues cogently for what he calls a more 'rounded' approach where the 'in touch' right hemisphere plays a stronger balancing role. To create

conditions for the 'rounded' approach to learning and development needed to improve performance and practice, something similar is needed: higher education's reliance on de-contextualised knowledge and teaching methods where the student 'builds' propositional knowledge, needs to be counter balanced through learning of a more situated and embodied nature gained through 'dwelling' (Heidegger, 1971), using practice or work-based educational methods. Raelin amongst others, comments favourably on the results being achieved by a number of exemplars of practice-based education, who employ what he calls the 'engaged pedagogies averred by an epistemology of practice' like a systems perspective, reflective practices, work-based projects and different forms of coaching and action learning support (Raelin, 2007, p 512). In the e learning field itself there have also been promising developments of a pedagogic nature, using what's called a 'blended' approach, where arms length online 'transmission' of knowledge is enriched and balanced with a range of other more interactive modes of engagement like e mail, online chat rooms, Skype, and telephone calls, as well as face to face meetings. Despite this, in neither of these does there seem to be any active exchange or circulation of knowing between the domains of scholarship and work.

Though there is no action learning/action research component, the 'leadership exchange' and 'coaching' parts of the Exeter programme, and Skype discussions with coaches, do provide students with opportunities for greater engagement. Further my experience as reported here, suggests that it is possible, through the use of appropriate coaching and formative assessment processes operating in the 'shadowlands' at the borders of what's permissible, to achieve many of the advantages that these exemplar programmes enjoy. It seems possible, using Foucault's term, to create 'local ontologies' in which significant development is possible. Ideas that I would now want pursued here include students being regarded as 'practitioner researchers' and being helped to use ethnographic action research as a primary learning process; and secondly, encouraging students not only to apply scholarly concepts at work and feed back their experiences, but also to contribute their own original local knowing and theorizing based on their *practice* at work, and seek to integrate these two knowing streams.

7. An emphasis on 'presencing'
The tendency in education as in other forms of life, is to focus on planning and preparatory work and to look to the future for signs of success, as indicated in graded essays and examinations. And very necessary too. But in doing so, attention drifts to the future and we can ignore the influence and effects of what we are doing in the present, on the present…and hence that future too. So I feel we need to do something to bring a 'here and now' urgency to energise and influence the unfolding and emergence of all aspects of these pedagogical and inquiring processes. Though I first came to the term 'presencing' in Scharmer's work, I've since found I'm far more comfortable with how it's used by 'complexity' theorists like Patricia Shaw who work with the idea of 'complex responsive systems' (Shaw, 2002). In contrast to Scharmer's 'fertile but timeless void' in which presencing mystically takes place, in this view we engage more directly with others in reconstructing in a 'living present' how we view the past and future, so that through how we talk and interact, we bring a preferred future into the present, in that moment. In this view we are not 'manifesting in awareness' what lies beneath (Shaw, 2002, p 157) but taking direct action in an everyday manner to bring about desired change which, if effective, can be experienced in that living present, and so can be accounted for in a contextualised 'oral' mode (Ong, 1982), or to use Shotter's term, in a 'third kind of knowing' (Shotter, 2008).

Given that my version of 'presencing' has turned out to be the central educative activity of the pedagogy explored in this thesis, I feel I've probably gone further here than in the other areas discussed above, in implementing the idea in my practice. As my own standards of judgement discussed in Chapter 3 have shown, the constant pressure to bring desired aspects of one's practice into an ongoing present, where ontological experimentation can be carried out 'in context', enacts 'close learning' and so reduces the 'transfer gap', allowing a desired future to unfold in the present. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I see my own 'presencing' (PERTRSP) very much as an emergent 'focal' process which, using Polanyi's 'from-to' functional structure, is achieved through 'indwelling the subsidiaries' – which themselves need also to be created and practiced so they can spontaneously contribute towards the emergent goal when required. In my case, developing these 'subsidiary resources' – which led Judi Marshall to comment that I was 'formidably resourced' - has followed a unique and often circuitous route and taken a very long time.

So it's not helpful just to say that 'presencing' is something practitioner-researchers should strive to include in their own work. What would be helpful here is to work backwards from the high level 'focal' activity of 'presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' to seek out the potential crucial 'subsidiary' components which seem to support the emergent 'focal' process – very much like the work I've done so far on my 'responsive repertoire' and 'criteria of progress' reported on here, but which in their current form represent just the beginning of the work required.

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

Taken together I believe these seven aspects promise to offer what Ross Ashby called 'requisite variety' (Ashby, 1952) for action research work on higher education programme seeking to develop situated practices. Each successive 'level' represents a frame for the next level of sensing and meaning making, enabling 'know how to go on' work to the next level of detail, so that by the time we get down to the 'presencing' level we have created a sensing system which can penetrate deep down into the workings of a situated practice. In this sense they constitute the core of a 21st century approach to educative processes that aim to improve practice *and* research that improvement practice at the same time…and as Garfinkel would say 'and always for another *first* time'.

I believe that my application of these ideas, as elaborated on in these pages, does support my claim to 'originality' as made at the end of my Abstract on pages 5-6:
> 'The originality of the thesis lies in the synthesis of and creative linking between the development of this situated learning, the methodological inventiveness[x] of the pedagogy, key ideas on communication and learning from the literature, and the embodied values that have enabled me to become a better educator.'

And further, they also seem very much to answer the question I raised on p. 15 of the Introduction about the AERA mission statement: yes, this approach as summarised here and as performed, not perfectly but adequately, and reported on in this thesis, does meet both parts of the mission and so can be offered as an example of a process which not only *uses* the products of research for teaching purposes but *researches* that teaching

and coaching in order to use 'research to improve education and serve the public good' (AERA, 2011).

Finally, I end this story of my long journey with a final question to you the reader. You'll recall that at the end of the Introduction, I set out five criteria that I felt I needed to support in the thesis to legitimate my claim that coached online education can support the development of a situated practice like leadership. Here are the five criteria I set out:

- *conversation* understood as an anticipatory and improvisatory dialogical process, is the 'ultimate context in which knowledge is to be understood' (Rorty, 1980).
- 'gestural' language (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and psychological 'instructions' (Vygotsky, 1986) offered in 'dialogically structured' interactions (Bahktin, 1986) can provoke 'primitive reactions' which through 'indwelling' (Polanyi, 1983) lead to new 'language-games' (Wittgenstein, 1958).
- engaging in new language-games that enable students to 'know how to go on' together with others, develops the tacit knowing and ontological skills that lead to improvements in scholarly and leaderly situated practice.
- similar development processes can take effect in online, written, and asynchronous online interactions when coach and student are able to co-create a 'culture of inquiry' that generates and values multiple ways of knowing and ontological experimentation.
- *presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite social practice* is an inclusional and contextualising coaching tool that forms the centerpiece of an online coaching pedagogy that supports inquiries that lead to improvements in scholarship and situated practice.

In Hubert Dreyfus' seven stage model of 'skill acquisition' (Dreyfus, 2001), he points out that 'At every stage…beyond the first three, involvement and mattering are essential to the acquisition of skills…[and further that] in so far as we want to teach expertise in particular domains and practical wisdom in life…we finally run up against the most important question a philosopher can ask those who believe in the educational promise of the World Wide Web: can the bodily presence required for acquiring skills in various domains and for acquiring mastery of one's culture be delivered by means of the Internet?…[and he ends with a challenge] The promise of telepresence[26] holds out hope for a positive answer to this question…So our question becomes: how much presence can telepresence deliver?' (ibid, p 173).

In articulating and providing evidence in this thesis that meet these five criteria, I believe I can respond to Dreyfus' final question: quite a lot of 'presence' - especially when supported by regular Skype conversations – and certainly enough to help students improve and acquire new ontological skills and 'expertise' to perform more effectively in their situated practices. What do you think?

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[26] that which enables human beings to be present at a distance in a way that captures all that is essential about bodily presence

EPILOGUE

I hope that you've been able to tease out the different strands or levels in my writing, and how they relate to each other, and so been able to get the most of practical value from reading this thesis. As I said in the Prologue, I see four main narratives that are woven into the work:

1. What the student does to learn, develop and perform on the main 'stage'…and evidence of influence from the coaching relationship, and outcomes in terms of fleeting moments, development episodes, reflexive biography, and potential criteria of progression
2. The range of invisible and/or tacit processes that are at work 'in the background' and that have a profound effect on how we understand what is going on and our involvement and responsibilities in this
3. How the coaching 'practice' works 'backstage' in terms of the various detailed moves I make e.g. using the responsive repertoire to go 'fishing', to develop a productive learning relationship with students in which I can help them resolve everyday issues as well as develop their capabilities and sense of identity.
4. The final narrative is about how I am able to offer this kind of coaching support through continual improvement/preparation/getting ready work in order to be fluid, able to 'float', and be responsive. That is how *I've* done it through e.g. becoming more of an 'alchemist' in terms of Torbert's leadership development model. But this has very much been a *personal* journey which has enabled me to be able to work in conditions of uncertainty in appreciative and flexible ways. This has included value clarification and personal development work that has allowed me to both use and leave modeling in all its forms e.g. developing models, applying models, and modeling models, to one side, so I can maintain a 'blank mind' in the heat of action.

Because this kind of embodied and responsive coaching is inevitably a very personal thing, you will need to devise and follow your own personal journey to develop the kinds of attitudes and skills that are appropriate to what you want to do. Clearly one of the most critical is the ability to stay open and responsive in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, and this is something you might most fruitfully approach through doing work on your own personal dilemmas and doubts, as well as those topics/questions that you find you're most naturally interested in. Here I would recommend exploration not only of the cognitive aspects but also what is involved in engaging in the embodied dance of dialogic communication.

As a possible contributor to such development work of your own, I offer brief working hypotheses of what I believe are original framings and approaches to thinking about the core topics in this thesis viz. leadership, learning, development, coaching, and web-based learning, that I've arrived during my own development journey. I hope you might find some of these interesting and so provide a useful influence on any work you might do in this area of higher education or elsewhere:

- **Leadership** seen as a blurred concept involving a dynamic array of 'language-games' to do with 'knowing how to go on' in situated practices, where 'dividuals' (see explanation of this special term on p 134) act into uncertainty in

order to develop the particular meanings of their contextualising language-games, through dialogic use in that situated practice.

- **Learning** seen as the elaboration of 'primitive reactions' through an 'indwelling' process that is stimulated by acting into situations in the present moment, in order to actively flesh out the language-game and associated ontological skills required to effectively perform particular roles in a situated practice/form of life.

- **Development** seen as the dialogical creation and embodiment of 'social artifacts' which take account of embodied values, responsive relations and context, and which can usefully be seen as being located within practices in social and material environments. In these the nexus of this/these practices, the human agent(s), is the one who through the meta activity of frame making, breaking, and repairing, is able to (re)define social contexts, (re)define actions, and presence appropriate attitudes and skills, to know how to go on with others.

- **Coaching** seen as 'an invitation to engage in and co-construct the nature, rules, and resourcing of a new language-game' embodying epistemological and ontological uncertainty, and 'revealing continuity' between different forms of knowing, and between opportunities for development and performance. In this the coach uses academic knowledge not as *the* knowledge but as a provocation to improving embodied and responsive practice, and uses 'presencing empathetic responsiveness' as a dialogical coaching tool for supporting the development of ontological skills for 'knowing how to go on', with others. The dialogical relationship that emerges provides a living example of a mode of coaching where the coach learns from the student what development means for that student and what and how to offer support for this learning work.

- **Web-based learning** seen as a medium for creating 'dialogically structured' development relationships in which students can be enabled to use 'close learning' practices to develop both scholarly skills and the ontological skills required for contributing effectively to situated practice

Finally I feel that what's needed above all is a commitment to the belief that *conversation* is the crucial situation in which we become the human beings we are and can be, and that this two-way interactive process is one that we generally don't understand well. And so we both deny responsibility for, and so cannot easily influence, the effects that are produced. Through adopting a more dialogically structured view of living and working with others, we are presented with the wonderful possibility of being able to continuously live a creative life, able to improvise with others a much broader, enriching and worthwhile way of being in this world. I wish you good fortune in your endeavours.

Final note: as I mentioned at the start of the thesis, the idea of writing a special prologue and epilogue to finally 'complete' my thesis, arose during the two-and-a-half hour dialogue I had with my examiners. And as I remarked in the Prologue, this is an example of what in the thesis I've called 'empathetic responsiveness'. If you are interested in exploring how this emerged in response to our dialogue, you can see the first two hours of the viva in a You Tube video very kindly filmed by my supervisor, Jack Whitehead. The url for this video is: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPx1cUNflB0

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